



Policy – Assistance for Dependent Children

Eligible Employees

Full time employees (including Locally Funded Employees) in administrative, professional, and supervisory positions (those considered to be exempt from Federal and State Wage and Hour Laws), may receive tuition assistance for dependent children who attend denominational schools. Living Well employees whose category remuneration factor reaches 102% are eligible for assistance.

Assistance is provided to the employee's child(ren) who must attend a denominationally-owned and operated school on the elementary and secondary levels. Although not an expectation to attend an SDA College or University, assistance is provided if they do attend. A fifth year of graduate education can be included for the specific purpose of securing professional credentials as approved by ADCOM.

Students Eligible for Tuition Assistance

To be eligible for tuition assistance the student must be:

1. An unmarried dependent of employee
2. Less than 24 years of age unless the student has given compulsory military service, volunteer service for the Church, or has a documented medical consideration.
3. Eligible to be claimed as a dependent on the employee's income tax return.
4. Born to, or legally adopted by, the employee and/or spouse or is a stepchild by marriage receiving more than 50% of support from the new family unit.

Students Eligible in Divorce and Remarriage Situations

To be eligible for tuition assistance the student must be:

1. Under the custody of a divorced employee and eligible to be claimed as a dependent on the employee's tax return.
2. Under the custody of the ex-spouse of the employee and eligible to be claimed as a dependent on the employee's tax return.

Assistance

Potomac Conference will provide assistance at 70% of the tuition and all required fees for dormitory students and 35% for non-dormitory students.

The assistance on the academy or college level should be calculated on the gross charges for tuition and required fees, according to the current bulletin, before family or other discounts granted by the school. In cases where an employee's church provides a subsidy to cover the differential between constituent and non-constituent tuition rates, the tuition assistance from the employer shall be based on the net tuition expense to the employee.

This shall not include charges for private music lessons except where such lessons are required for credit toward music majors or minors, in which case the above percentages may be applied on the basis of the tuition ordinarily charged for an equivalent number of credit hours.



Professional Programs

Assistance provided for professional programs not requiring an undergraduate degree before beginning graduate study shall be based on, and shall not exceed, the normal tuition costs for a maximum number of semesters or quarters as listed in the section entitled *Limitations on Assistance*.

Limitation on Assistance

Assistance shall be provided for a degree program for a maximum of ten (10) semesters or fifteen (15) quarters (or a combined equivalent). An additional two (2) semesters or three (3) quarters may be granted only to complete work necessary to secure teaching credentials. Governing committees may also grant assistance of up to an additional two semesters or three quarters for valid undergraduate programs that require a fifth year for graduation.

Assistance for Pre-Kindergarten is not available.

Summer Sessions

Students who attend summer sessions shall be eligible for tuition assistance. Such attendance shall not count against the maximum semesters or quarters referred to in the section entitled *Limitations on Assistance*.

Attending Schools Outside the Potomac Conference

Assistance will not be granted for children not attending elementary or secondary schools owned and operated by the Potomac Conference unless exceptions are authorized by ADCOM.

Griggs University and International Academy

Tuition assistance shall be provided for studies through Griggs University and International Academy as per regular policy. Tuition assistance is provided on credits that are earned through the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) and once the course is completed. The assistance for both institutions is 35% whether or not the student is residing in a school dormitory.

Attending Schools Outside the NAD

Students independently attending denominationally owned and operated colleges and universities located outside North America may be granted assistance up to 70% of the actual tuition provided the same amount of assistance is not greater than the amount they would receive if attending their home college/university.

Method of Payment

Assistance for students enrolled in an academy or college/university shall be paid directly to the school. Organizations providing assistance shall make the appropriate arrangement for students attending elementary and intermediate schools.



Division of Assistance

When both employee and spouse are denominationally employed by separate organizations and both provide tuition assistance based on NAD Working Policy, each organization shall be responsible for one-half (50%) of the assistance. The method of paying the assistance and dividing the cost may be mutually agreed on by the organizations concerned. Only one tuition assistance shall be provided per student. *Note:* Potomac Conference will only support if child of the employee is attending a Potomac Conference School.

Exceptions

This policy is intended to apply only to employee's children who attend SDA denominational schools. Exceptions may be made as follows if approved by the conference Administrative Committee:

1. Attendance at privately operated SDA schools if the school is approved by the union board of education.
2. In cases where an undergraduate level program of study or a trade/vocational program is not offered in a denominational school in the NAD, the total assistance shall not exceed the amount which would normally be granted for attendance at a denominational school in the student's union.
3. In the event that the local Seventh-day Adventist school cannot serve a child's needs, an exemption may be requested for enrolling the child in a private or publicly funded program that provides specialized services. In this case, an IEP or a learning assessment directive must accompany the exceptions request.

Employees Who Become Disabled

This policy would extend tuition assistance to the dependents of employees who become disabled as outlined in NAD Working Policy. Assistance would be continued through the school year in which the employee's elimination period occurs, but in no event would it be carried more than one school year.

Policy - Continuing Education, Masters & Doctorate Assistance

The Potomac Conference provides full time exempt ministerial employees and office exempt staff with a “Continuing Education Bank” that will start accruing on a monthly basis at the beginning of employment. The balance in the employee’s bank will be indicated on the payroll stub. This bank may be used for any type of approved continuing education event the employee chooses, and can be accessed on a year-by-year basis or accumulated over a period of time.

Guidelines:

1. Forty dollars (\$40) will be placed into the employee’s bank each month.
2. Funds may be used beyond those accumulated as long as they can be recovered by year end
3. If the employee leaves the conference, any “borrowed” funds must be repaid and will be deducted from final payroll check.
4. Once an employee has determined to leave the conference, the bank cannot be accessed, unless authorized by ADCOM.
5. Accumulated funds will not be paid out upon termination.
6. The funds in the bank are to cover 100% of the costs of the event, including all per diems and travel expenses.
7. Time away from the district will count against the employee’s 18 day travel policy or vacation.
8. A report form must be completed for all events. This form, along with receipts for tuition, travel, food and lodging must be submitted before funds will be released.
9. For overseas or higher-cost events, an employee may request an advance from his/her bank which will be treated as any other payroll advance until such a time as receipts are submitted for reimbursement.
10. This policy does not apply to conference required events.

*Pastors/Office Staff – must submit CEU’s to be eligible



B. Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry

The Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry degree program (MAPMin) offers professional training to pastors who are 35 years old or older. Andrews University Seminary provides the major part of this training at off-campus centers in North America. In our union, classes may be offered at Washington Adventist University (WAU), or at the Columbia Union Headquarters. This degree is not a substitute for the MDiv degree. It is basic training for Adventist ministry. To earn a Masters in Pastoral Ministry degree requires 48 credit hours. This takes most pastors about two years to complete.

Please let the Vice President of Administration know that you are interested in this educational program and he will take your name to ADCOM for approval. Once approved, pastors may apply directly through Andrews University. There is no limit regarding how many pastors can be in this program at any given time.

Potomac Conference pays a flat rate each year towards tuition to Andrews University. The rest of the costs are the responsibility of the pastor. Specific costs to the pastor are for books, travel, housing and food. Accrued Continuing Education funds may be applied toward these expenses.

Pastors must fill-out the out of conference travel form letting administration know when you are out of your district attending classes. This education time is not counted against your 18 day travel policy or vacation.

C. Doctor of Ministry

The Doctor of Ministry degree program is available to all full-time pastors (and office exempt employees) interested in pursuing higher education. Potomac Conference Administration highly encourages pastors to pursue a degree from Andrews University. The following criteria must be considered before applying:

Prerequisites:

1. Completed six years of service following the M.Div degree or MAPMin degree.
2. Show high levels of professional skill in the following areas:
 - a. Administration
 - b. Church Growth
 - c. Preaching
 - d. Evangelism
 - e. Pastoral Leadership
3. Candidate's church/churches must show a high level of health.
4. The local church board must vote approval for candidate to enter doctor of ministry program. A copy of the church board voted action must accompany the advanced degree application.



If you qualify, please submit an Advanced Degree application to the Vice President of Administration at least six months before you enter the program. The following stipulations will apply while enrolled in the program:

- The candidate must maintain a high level of pastoral competency and leadership through the duration of the academic program to remain in the program. This will include full attendance at all workers meetings, camp meetings, and LEAD meetings.
- Funding for doctor of ministry degrees will be subject to available finances.
- A candidate will be allowed 6 years to complete this program. All conference and Union financial assistance will cease after the 6th year.
- Time away from the district will not count against the employee's 18 day travel policy or vacation.

Financial Provisions

a. Tuition

Current tuition cost at Andrews University after the NAD 56% discount:

- New students will be also charged a cohort fee.
- For information regarding the cost of the program please contact Andrews University

b. Financial responsibility as follows:

- 33% Potomac Conference (Subsidy for pastors choosing to pursue a Doctor of Ministry degree from an institution other than Andrews University will be the same as for those attending Andrews University.)
- 33% Columbia Union (up to \$1,000)
- 34% Employee (employee may use their continuing education bank to pay their portion)

c. Payment to be billed as follows:

- Andrews to bill Conference for Conference and Union portion. Conference will pay Andrews directly and will bill the Union their portion once a year.
- Andrews will bill employee his/her portion.
- All other institutions: Institution to bill employee. Employee to submit statement showing classes enrolled. Conference to pay Conference and Union portion directly to the institution and bill the Union their portion once a year.

d. Room, board, travel, and books – It is the responsibility of the employee to care for these expenses. The continuing education bank may be used to cover these expenses. Reimbursement will be made by receipts.



e. Amortization – The Potomac Conference (33%) portion will be amortized over a period of four years following the issuance of the degree. If the pastor leaves employment during the first two years, Potomac Conference will be due 100% reimbursement, 50% reimbursement between the third and fourth years, and 25% reimbursement during the fourth year. The reimbursement will be the responsibility of the employee unless written acknowledgement of reimbursement is received from the calling organization.

D. Doctor of Philosophy

The Doctor of Philosophy degree program may be available to some full-time pastors and office exempt employees. While Administration understands the desire for some pastors to pursue this degree, please note this program is more expensive and there is no financial assistance from the Union. Pastors wishing to apply are subject to the following criteria:

Prerequisites:

1. Completed six years of service following the M.Div degree or MAPMin degree.
2. Show high levels of professional skill in the following areas:
 - a. Administration
 - b. Church Growth
 - c. Preaching
 - d. Evangelism
 - e. Pastoral Leadership
3. Candidate's church/churches must show a high level of health.
4. The local church board must vote approval for candidate to enter doctor of philosophy program. A copy of the church board voted action must accompany the advanced degree application.

If you qualify, please submit an Advanced Degree application to the Vice President of Administration at least six months before you enter the program. The following stipulations will apply while enrolled in the program:

- The candidate must maintain a high level of pastoral competency and leadership through the duration of the academic program to remain in the program. This will include full attendance at all workers meetings and camp meetings.
- Funding for doctor of philosophy degrees will be subject to available finances.
- A candidate will be allowed 6 years to complete this program. Conference financial assistance will cease after the 6th year.



- Time away from the district will not count against the employee's 18 day travel policy or vacation.

Financial Provisions:

a. Tuition

Please contact Andrews University for current tuition costs. **The NAD and Columbia Union do not subsidize this program;** therefore there is no financial provision available from these institutions.

b. Financial responsibility as follows:

- Potomac Conference: Up to \$1500/year
- Employee: Remaining Cost (employee may use their continuing education bank to pay their portion)

c. Payment to be billed as follows: Andrews and all other institutions to bill employee. Employee to submit statement to Conference. Conference will pay its portion to the institution.

d. Room, board, travel, and books – It is the responsibility of the employee to care for these expenses. The continuing education bank may be used to cover these expenses. Reimbursement will be made by receipts.

e. Amortization – Total Potomac Conference subsidy will be amortized over a period of four years following the issuance of the degree. If the pastor leaves employment during the first two years, Potomac Conference will be due 100% reimbursement, 50% reimbursement between the third and fourth years, and 25% reimbursement during the fourth year. The reimbursement will be the responsibility of the employee unless written acknowledgement of reimbursement is received from the calling organization.

E. Doctoral Research within the Potomac Conference Territory

5. Any doctoral student planning on conducting doctoral research within the Potomac Conference territory must first obtain proper authorization from the Potomac Conference Executive Committee. Please submit request to the Vice President for Administration at least 60 days before start of doctoral research.

