



Employee Degree Program



Earn a Cornell degree while you work.

The Employee Degree Program provides benefits-eligible employees with full tuition toward both undergraduate and graduate degree programs at Cornell University after one year of full-time employment.

To be considered for funding, you need to be accepted into a degree program at Cornell and have your supervisor's approval for each semester that you will attend. See complete details below.

- [FAQs](#)
- [Undergraduate application \(pdf\)*](#)
- [Graduate application \(pdf\)*](#)

**Note: the applications above are designed to be fillable and printable, and work best by opening with Adobe Acrobat or using Chrome or Internet Explorer browsers; Firefox and Safari browsers may present issues.*

Related:

- [Staff Graduate Reception](#)
- Meet our recent proud [graduates!](#)

[accordion]

Important Information For Graduate Applicants

Applicants for the Johnson School

- Have you reviewed the Employee Degree Program information on the website;
- Obtained an admissions packet from the Johnson? 111 Sage Hall, 255-4526;
- Asked about requesting that the application fee be waived;
- Discussed necessary paperwork that should accompany your application with The Johnson?

Once you have been admitted to The Johnson and your Employee Degree Program application has been approved, you will be registering for coursework during regularly scheduled college registration periods for each term. For additional information on The Johnson, you can visit their website: www.johnson.cornell.edu

Applicants for the Graduate School

- Have you reviewed the Employee Degree Program information on the website;
- Consulted the Graduate School's application guidelines: www.gradschool.cornell.edu or 255-5820;
- Discussed with the Graduate School the necessary paperwork that should accompany your application;
- Discussed registration units and how they may apply to your degree;
- Asked about requesting that the application fee be waived?

Once you have been admitted to Graduate School and your Employee Degree Program application has been approved, you will be registering for coursework during regularly scheduled college registration period for each term. For additional information on the Graduate School, you can visit their website: www.gradschool.cornell.edu

Details

Additional Coursework Costs: EDP does not cover any costs associated with books, labs, supplies, etc.

Application Fees: Application fees are not covered by EDP. If the application fee will cause a financial hardship for you, you may apply for a fee waiver, by submitting an application and any required supporting documents to the appropriate program (see links below for requirements and additional information):

Undergraduate Applicants: <https://admissions.cornell.edu/apply/transfer-applicants/admission-requirements>

Graduate Applicants: <https://gradschool.cornell.edu/admissions/apply/application-fees/>

Benefits Eligibility Impact: EDP participants may opt to reduce their work schedule to part-time status (between 20-34 hours) when enrolling for more than eight credits during a semester. When reducing your standard weekly hours to part-time status, benefits such as health/dental insurance (if applicable) will continue in full. Salary-dependent programs e.g. basic life insurance, retirement contributions and Tax Deferred Annuities contributions are likely to be impacted. Accrued time off including vacation, health and personal leave, as well as paid holidays will be prorated based on the reduced weekly standard hours. Employees should confirm their benefit status with HR Services & Transitions Center.

Class Registration Requirements: You are not required to register for classes every semester while participating in the EDP.

Employment Commitment Clause: There is no requirement for employees to remain at Cornell upon completion of a degree.

Degree Completion Deadline: The EDP does not mandate a deadline for degree completion; graduation date is open-ended. (with the exception of certain MBA programs at Johnson)

Credit Transfer: It is up to the college to which you apply whether prior credits from another school will transfer toward your Cornell degree. In general, undergraduate degree programs will accept a maximum of 60 credits; graduate credits are considered on an individual basis. For more information, contact your College Registrar's Office.

EDP Exclusions: The Cornell Law School, the Sloan Program in Human Ecology and the DVM Program in the Vet School do not accept EDP participants as they require that the programs are completed as full time students.

Job or Career Related: Your degree must be related to your job or career at Cornell.

Ongoing supervisory approval: You must have your supervisor's permission to register each semester.

Test Prerequisites: It is up to the college or grad school to which you apply to decide whether entrance exams are required. For more information on required tests, please contact the Graduate School or Field of Study for your program.

Second or multiple bachelor's degrees: the university does not confer a second bachelor's degree in order to accommodate more first-time applicants.

Stipends & fellowships: Graduate EDP participants are not permitted to accept internal or external stipends or fellowships.

Student Access: As a registered student (via the EDP), staff members will have the access, rights and privileges afforded to any Cornell student, including Career Services – see link for additional information: <http://www.career.cornell.edu/>. [Student Disability Services](#).

Student Loan Impact: For information on the possible deferral of your current student loans (if applicable), additional information may be available from the Graduate School or Undergraduate Admissions (see contact links below).

Graduate School: <http://gradschool.cornell.edu/about/contacts>

Undergraduate Admissions: <https://admissions.cornell.edu/webform/contact>

Tax Liability: See Tax information section below.

Tuition Aid and Part-time Study Benefits: While in the Employee Degree Program, you cannot use the Tuition Aid or Part-time Study benefit.

Eligibility

Cornell University employees who have completed one year of regular, full-time work (35 hours or more per week), whose employment status is one of the following:

Full-time Status: Nonacademic employees and non-professorial academic staff members who have completed one year of full-time service¹ and who do not hold voting status on any college, university, or graduate faculty; ROTC military personnel.

Part-time Status: Benefits-eligible part-time employees who have previously completed one year of full-time service¹.

Ineligible Employees: The following university statuses are *not* eligible for this benefit program: Temp with benefits; Retiree; Position leave; University leave; Termination

Layoff Status: EDP participants who are placed on layoff status may continue participation in EDP or apply to be admitted to the university and receive funding during their one year layoff period if eligibility was established prior to the effective date of their layoff status.

Disability or Family Medical Leave Status: Employees who are approved for family medical leave, short or long term disability leave, or workers' compensation, may continue participation in EDP or apply to be admitted to the university if eligibility was established prior to the effective date of the disability.

¹ Employees who have completed one year of full time service during prior employment with the university, may be responsible for providing proof of service.

How To Apply

- **Supervisory Approval:** Your first step is to discuss your goals with your immediate supervisor. Then you will need the endorsement of your immediate supervisor, your supervisor's manager, and the dean or executive officer.
- **Acceptance by School or College:** You must apply to and be accepted by a school or college as a regular degree candidate (special student status does not apply).
- **Submit EDP Application:** After being accepted to a college, submit the completed degree application form to HR Services & Transitions Center at least three (3) weeks prior to the beginning of the semester.

Undergraduate: Participants receive a tuition waiver to enroll in up to eight (8) credits per semester. Participants also have the option to enroll in *over* eight (8) credits two times while in the EDP. During those two semesters, you may reduce your work status to below full-time (35 hours), but no less than part-time (20 hours). This reduction in hours is from the first day of classes to the last day of classes during that semester.

Graduate: The same credit limits apply as described above for undergrads. Note that graduate EDP is taxable, and the taxable tuition value is calculated using the number of registered credits per semester. See Tax information section below.

Note: The EDP defers to the registration guidelines of the Graduate School.

Application Fees: Application fees are not covered by EDP. If the application fee will cause a financial hardship for you, you may apply for a fee waiver, by submitting an application and any required supporting documents to the appropriate program

(see links below for requirements and additional information):

Undergraduate Applicants: <https://admissions.cornell.edu/apply/pdf/transfer-application-instructions>

Graduate Applicants: <https://gradschool.cornell.edu/admissions/apply/>

Release Time From Work

Each Semester, employees in the Employee Degree Program should discuss proposed courses with their supervisor to ensure the time out of the office for class will not negatively impact the effective operation of the department. Supervisors have the option to allow employees to be flexible in how they claim time out of the office to attend classes and may provide paid release time for class. There may also be semesters, due to work demands, where the supervisor is unable to provide time out of the office. In all cases, homework must be completed outside of scheduled work hours.

Tax Information

Employee Tax Liability: Not applicable for Undergraduate EDP participants. Graduate EDP courses valued over \$5,250 are taxable under section 127 of the IRC. In order to calculate your tuition value, EDP uses the full-time semester tuition for your program and divides it by 12. This value is multiplied by the number of credits you register for during that semester. Amounts that exceed the \$5,250 tuition value will be forwarded to Payroll and additional tax withholdings will apply based on your tax-withholding card (W-4 Federal; IT 2104 New York State) on file in Payroll.

While individual tax status and tax withholding situations may vary, the additional tax withholding is typically between one-third and one-half of the EDP benefit amount that exceeds \$5,250 per calendar year. To estimate your tax implications, you may wish to use the website: www.paycheckcity.com. At this site, you can model various scenarios to determine how different tax withholding adjustments may impact future paychecks. Contact tax@cornell.edu with general tax withholding questions.

Note: This calculation does not apply to those in Metro or Americas MBA Programs through the Johnson School. If you are interested in applying to the Cornell Executive MBA, Metro NY or EMBA Americas Program in the Johnson, there may be special tax handling regarding this program. Please visit the Division of Financial Affairs website <https://www.dfa.cornell.edu/tools-library/forms/executive-mba-program-tuition-waiver-taxation-form> to learn more or contact tax@cornell.edu. Please keep in mind that you will need to provide the Tax Office with a Tuition Waiver Taxation Form, completed by you in Parts I and II, your Supervisor in Part III and your department HR representative in Part IV. This completed form should be sent to the Tax Office along with a copy of your current job description and resume. You will be notified once the form has been reviewed for approval.

Also note: Although the university applies spring tuition values to bursar bills in December of each year, due to the taxation issues, the EDP credit is not applied until January. Should you need to declare your tuition and taxes that you paid in any given calendar year, it is suggested that you use your W2 as issued by the university.

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