Applying for a Graduate Degree Through the Employee Degree Program

This brochure is designed to provide information on how you might complete a graduate degree while an employee of Cornell University. Please use this as a guide along with the checklist of suggested steps to follow. Should you decide to apply to a graduate program, please complete the attached EDP application once you have been accepted and return it to Benefit Services, 395 Pine Tree Road along with a copy of your acceptance letter from the college.

Please keep in mind that eligibility for the Employee Degree Program (EDP), is available to full time employees of Cornell University who have reached one year of service on or before the first day of classes during the semester in which they are applying. There are also special circumstances that allow employees to continue to participate or enroll. Please refer to the EDP Web site for more information: www.hr.cornell.edu/benefits/education/edp.html

The EDP is your funding source to complete your degree. It is part of your benefits package as a benefits-eligible employee of the university. But in order to use this benefit, you must first apply to a graduate program on campus and receive an acceptance. Prior to going through this process, it is strongly suggested that you speak with your supervisor as you will need your supervisor’s approval to enter the EDP. You will also need to discuss your course work plans with your supervisor prior to enrolling each semester. As there is an open graduation date for EDP participants, you may find that there will be semesters that work/personal responsibilities will preclude enrolling for classes.

Another factor to consider is the tax issue that is part of the graduate EDP. Information on this topic can be found on the back of this brochure.

I am sure you realize that furthering your education is an important decision. If, during the process, you or your supervisor have any questions regarding this educational benefit, please contact me as noted above.

Cornell University is an equal opportunity affirmative action educator and employer.
Applicants for the Johnson School of Management

The following is for use as a general guide; your chosen field of study may warrant other steps of action.

Have you:
- Reviewed the Employee Degree Program information online at: www.hr.cornell.edu/benefits/education/edp.html?
- Discussed with your supervisor your intention to pursue a degree through the Employee Degree Program?
- Spoken with faculty members or a Graduate Representative in the Johnson School?
- Obtained an admissions packet from the Johnson School? (111 Sage Hall, 255-4526 or the Registrar at 255-9395 or 255-0013)
- Taken the GMAT?
- Submitted the completed application (including fee) to the Johnson School? It is necessary that the Johnson School be informed of your proposed status as a participant in the Employee Degree Program.
- Submitted essays, transcripts, and recommendations to the Johnson School?
- Received a letter of acceptance from the Johnson School?
- Spoken with the Johnson School regarding your plan of study? (If not, have you submitted a statement of purpose and application?)
- Discussed your plan of study with your supervisor?
- Secured the endorsement of your supervisor, department head and dean or executive officer on the Employee Degree Application?
- Submitted a completed Employee Degree Application and a copy of the acceptance letter from the Johnson School to Benefit Services, 395 Pine Tree Road?
- Received confirmation from Benefit Services of acceptance into the Employee Degree Program?

Once you have been admitted into the Johnson School and your application for the Employee Degree Program has been approved, you will be registering for course work during regularly scheduled college registration periods at the beginning of each term. This includes not only the fall/spring terms, but the summer term as well. If you register for summer courses, please contact Benefit Services at 395 Pine Tree Road, 255-3936, with your summer credit hours. If you have questions, please call the Johnson School Registrar’s Office at either 255-9395 or 255-0013. For further information on the Johnson School, please visit the web at www.johnson.cornell.edu.

Applicants for a Degree at the Graduate School

The following is intended for use as a general guide; your chosen field of study may warrant other steps of action.

Have you:
- Reviewed the Employee Degree Program information online at: www.hr.cornell.edu/benefits/education/edp.html?
- Discussed with your supervisor your intention to pursue a degree through the Employee Degree Program and the Graduate School requirement to reduce or flex your working hours to no less than 20 hours per week when registered for more than 8 credits? Employees may petition the Graduate School for an exception to this policy.
- Spoken with your graduate student service representative regarding your plan of study? (If not, have you submitted a statement of purpose and application?)
- Spoken with faculty members or a graduate student service representative in the graduate field to which you are applying?
- Consulted the Graduate School’s application guidelines? www.gradschool.cornell.edu or 255-5820
- Taken any required examinations for your chosen college and degree program? (GRE, Miller Analogies, GMAT)
- Determined the registration unit** requirements for the degree to which you are applying?
  - **registration unit** – A registration unit is awarded to a student who has been registered and enrolled for the full semester and in conformity with employment limitations specified in the Code of Legislation.*
  - *EDP participants are eligible for a 1/2 registration unit each semester. Ph.D. students are expected to complete two semesters of full-time study during which the student receives a full registration unit for these two semesters. The employee must reduce working hours to 20 hours per week (unless an exception is granted).
- One-half of a registration unit is the smallest fraction that will be recorded toward the minimum requirement for a degree.
- One registration unit corresponds to the satisfactory completion of one academic semester of full-time study and research. The fraction of a registration unit granted for a semester of full-time study thus represents an evaluation of the student’s academic progress by the special committee chair.
- Two registration units are the minimum requirement for a M.A. or M.S. degree.
Six registration units, two of them after the A exam, are the minimum requirement for the Ph.D. degree. At least four registration units are required for a special master’s degree.

Submitted the completed application (including fee) to the Graduate School by the deadline of your college?

Received notification of acceptance from the Graduate School?

If you plan to register part-time: MA/MS/MPS students must submit a Special Committee form identifying a chairperson and one minor member.

Ph.D. students must submit a Special Committee Form identifying a chairperson and two minor members.

Submitted an Employee Degree Program application complete with your acceptance letter to the Graduate School (with the endorsement of your supervisor, department head, and dean or executive officer)? When your EDP application has been approved, a copy of your acceptance into EDP will be sent to the Graduate School. You will have the option of registering for either part-time or full-time study during any given semester.

Tuition Charges/Taxable Income:
Tuition is based on the per credit hour of your degree program. An easy way to calculate what the per credit hour tuition rate will be is to take the semester tuition amount and divide it by 12. For those employees who register for more than 12 credits, the taxable value will never exceed the rate for 12 credits. Please refer to tax information for the EDP below.

For those in some of the professional programs, e.g. Queens MBA, Executive MBA, tuition is charged at the cost of the program and is not prorated.

If you have any questions regarding the completion of your degree, please call the Graduate School Student Service Representative, whose contact numbers are below or visit the web at www.gradschool.cornell.edu. Please be aware that EDP participants are not eligible for stipends or fellowships.

Admissions, Registrar & Records, and Fellowships:
(All functions are performed by each of the following Graduate Student Services Representatives)

Biological Science: Janine Brace, (607) 255-5832, jmb20@cornell.edu

Engineering Programs – Field Names A through E: Barbara Edinger, (607) 255-5817, bae2@cornell.edu

Engineering Programs – Field Names G through T: Anne Haessner, (607) 255-5826, ah33@cornell.edu

Humanities and Arts, and Physical Sciences: Shirley Weaver, (607) 255-5819, sjw5@cornell.edu

Social Sciences – Field Names A through K: Michael Skinner, (607) 255-55832, mrs32@cornell.edu

Social Sciences – Field Names L through Z (and CRP; International Agriculture and Rural Development; International Development): Anne Haessner, (607) 255-55826, ah33@cornell.edu

Tax Information

The Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization and Job Creation Act of 2010 provides for the tax exclusion of employer-provided educational reimbursement up to $5,250 per year. Any amounts over this cap are taxable. This provision is currently set to expire on Dec 31, 2012.

As a participant in the EDP, you are allowed to register for up to eight credits a semester. There are also two semesters in which EDP will provide funding if you register for more than eight credits. During these two semesters, you may also reduce your work time to no less than 50%.

Often, employees confuse the eight credit limit and taxable values. EDP allows registration for up to eight credits but it is the per credit charge that begins the accrual towards your taxable value. The per credit charge is reached by taking the semester tuition for your program, dividing it by 12 and multiplying it by the number of credits for which you will register. Keep in mind that the per credit charge usually increases with the onset of each new academic year but you will never be taxed on a tuition value that is higher than the semester tuition. Note: This tuition calculation does not apply to those in Executive or Queens MBA Programs through the Johnson School.

The taxable portion of the educational assistance (amount exceeding $5,250 per year) will be taxed over the semester by increasing the normal taxable gross of your paycheck. Additional taxes will be withheld from your pay to cover the taxable amounts. The withholding is based on the tax withholding card (W-4 Federal; IT 2104 New York State) submitted by the employee. Contact Cornell Tax Withholding Helpline if you have questions: phone (607) 255-8201 or e-mail rb244@cornell.edu;

Should you register with the Graduate School full time but not take any courses, you will not accrue any amount towards taxation. Taxable values are only calculated on credits taken.
Application for Employee Degree Program

Date of application: ____________________  Date of Hire: ____________________  Employee ID: ____________________

Last Name: ____________________  First Name: ____________________

Job Title: ____________________  E-Mail Address: ____________________

Please check one:

 Contract College Semi-Monthly (exempt)   Endowed Semi-Monthly (exempt)

 Contract College Bi-Weekly (nonexempt)   Endowed Bi-Weekly (nonexempt)

Administrative Unit: ____________________

Department: ____________________

Campus Address: ____________________  Campus Phone: ____________________

Supervisor: ____________________  Supervisor’s Phone: ____________________

Supervisor’s Address: ____________________

School/College Enrolled in: ____________________  Degree Sought: ____________________

Applicant, please complete (or attach a separate sheet):

Please use the space below to describe how you anticipate that this degree program will assist you in either maintaining or improving your current job skills at Cornell or enable you to work toward changing your career path at Cornell.

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

[ ] I attest that I have read the information regarding Section 127 and how this tax legislation may affect my EDP participation (see Tax Information in the EDP document.)

[ ] I attest that I am enrolled in one of Johnson's Executive MBA Programs and have reviewed the tax issues with Benefit Services.

Employee Signature: ____________________  Date: ____________________

Immediate supervisor, please complete:

The candidate meets the following eligibility criteria: has been employed for at least one year of regular full-time service at Cornell; is a nonacademic employee or academic staff member who does not hold voting status on any college, university or graduate facility; is ROTC military personnel with a minimum of one year of service at Cornell. These endorsements are contingent upon the employee remaining in good standing both as an employee and as a student and the practicality of the program in relation to the future operational requirements of the department.

I have reviewed this application and my signature below indicates my understanding and endorsement of the applicant’s participation in this academic program.

Name of Employee’s Immediate Supervisor: ____________________  Signature: ____________________  Date: ____________________

Name of Dean or Executive Officer where the employee works: ____________________  Signature: ____________________  Date: ____________________

For Division of Human Resources use only:

Approved: ____________________

Benefit Services 5/29/14  Benefit Services Representative  Date: ____________________