



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER

Operating Policy and Procedure

HSC OP: 70.62, **Learning Incentive Program (LIP)**

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) Operating Policy and Procedure (HSC OP) is to establish a policy that reflects our commitment to our team members' growth by encouraging the pursuit of continuous learning and inspiring curiosity in alignment with our Values-Based Culture.

REVIEW: This HSC OP will be reviewed on August 1 of every even-numbered year (ENY) by the Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer, with recommendations for revision forwarded to the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer (COO) September 1.

POLICY/PROCEDURE:

1. Eligibility.

- a. *Staff Members.* Full-time staff of Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in a 1.0 FTE status, with at least six months of continuous service at TTUHSC, are eligible to participate in the Learning Incentive Program (LIP).
- b. *Students, Residents and Faculty.* Employees in positions that require student status as a condition of employment are not eligible for the Learning Incentive Program (LIP). Employees classified as faculty or residents are not eligible for this program.

2. Definitions.

- a. *Certificate.* A certificate is typically awarded by an educational institution or training provider after an individual completes a specific course, program, or series of courses. It indicates that the individual has acquired a certain level of knowledge or skills in a particular subject or field.
 - b. *Certification.* Certification refers to the formal recognition or documentation by an accredited organization or authority that an individual has met specific standards or requirements in a particular field or profession. It often involves passing examinations or completing a prescribed course of study and is typically granted by nationally recognized professional organizations or licensing bodies.
 - c. *Degree.* A degree is an academic qualification awarded by a college or university to individuals who have completed a specific program of study. Degrees come in various levels and represent the attainment of specialized knowledge and skills in a particular field. The degree is issued by an accredited educational body recognized nationally.
- (1) *Baccalaureate Degree.* An academic qualification awarded by a college or university to individuals who have completed a specific undergraduate program of study. Baccalaureate degrees represent the attainment of specialized knowledge and skills at the undergraduate level in a particular field. Examples include Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Science (BS), and other undergraduate degrees.

- (2) Master's Degree. An academic qualification awarded by a college or university to individuals who have completed a specific graduate-level program of study. Master's degrees represent attaining advanced specialized knowledge and skills in a particular field beyond the undergraduate level. Examples include Master of Science (MS), Master of Arts (MA), Master of Business Administration (MBA), and others.
- (3) Terminal Degree. The highest academic qualification awarded by a college or university in a particular field of study. Terminal degrees are typically awarded at the doctoral level and represent the highest level of specialized knowledge and skill attainment in a specific field. Examples include Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), Doctor of Medicine (M.D.), Juris Doctor (JD), and others, depending on the field of study.
- d. *Licensure*. Licensure refers to the official authorization or permission granted to an individual by a government or regulatory body indicating that they have met the necessary requirements and qualifications to practice a certain profession or occupation. Licensure is typically required for professions such as healthcare, law, engineering, and others to ensure public safety and competence in the field.

3. Eligibility Guidelines.

- a. This incentive program supports external professional development activities that significantly enhance an individual's professional knowledge, skills, or competencies. All certificates, certifications, licensures, and degrees must include structured instruction, documented attendance, and objective evaluations, typically through testing or examinations verifying the acquired knowledge or competency. The following activities are not eligible:
 - Any of these options are part of the required minimum qualifications for the employee's current position.
 - Programs developed out of a department or school without external accrediting or involvement by a professional body for certificates, certifications, licensures, or like credentials.
 - Informal or non-nationally recognized courses from consumer-based platforms rather than professionally affiliated organizations or learning institutions (e.g., Udemy, LinkedIn Learning, Skillshare, Khan Academy, Google Career Certificates, etc.).

Degrees issued by any of our Texas Tech University System colleges are qualifying under the Learning Incentive Program.

- b. Eligible employees may receive a base salary adjustment or Employee One-Time Payment (EOP) based on their education or other professional learning achievements. All amounts listed below may not be exceeded. The actual amount issued may vary.
- c. Certificates: Up to \$1,000
 - (1) Employees who have completed a relevant certificate program that enhances their job-related skills and qualifications, as approved by the Dean, Provost, or Vice President, may be eligible for either a base salary adjustment or an EOP for the particular certificate up to a maximum of \$1,000. The actual amount approved may vary.
- d. Certifications: Up to \$1,000
 - (1) Employees who have obtained a professional certification that is job-related and enhances their qualifications, as approved by the Dean, Provost, or Vice President, may be eligible for either a base salary adjustment or an EOP for the particular certification up to a maximum of \$1,000.

- e. Degrees: TTUHSC offers a consistent maximum salary increase, or EOP amount, for approved degree completion under the LIP.
- Baccalaureate Degree: \$1,500
 - Master's Degree: \$2,000
 - Terminal Degree: \$3,000
- f. Licensures: Up to \$1,000
- (1) Employees who have obtained relevant professional licensure that is job-related and enhance their qualifications, as approved by the Dean, Provost, or Vice President, may be eligible for either a based salary adjustment or an EOP for the particular licensure up to a maximum of \$1,000.
- g. The final determination of the salary adjustment amount or EOP payment will be made in consideration of departmental funding availability and evaluation by the Dean, Provost, or Vice President and Human Resources.
- h. The maximum salary adjustments and/or payments under LIP for any employee shall not exceed \$4,000 in a single fiscal year. All salary increases will be in compliance with compensation rules set forth in [HSC OP 70.04](#), Compensation.

4. **Program Administration and Procedures.**

- a. *Responsibility of Departments.* Individual departments, in coordination with the appropriate Dean, Provost, or Vice President, are responsible for administering the Learning Incentive Program (LIP) to their employees. The employee's department head is responsible for ensuring timely submission for both pre-approvals and post-approvals, as well as the appropriate PASS or EOPs after program completion.

Department Head's Recommendation. The department head must provide the Learning Incentive Program (LIP) Request [Form](#) to the appropriate Dean, Provost, or Vice President for pre-approval before the employee completes the qualifying program. The request must explain the job-related value that the completed certificate, certification, degree, or licensure will bring to the employee's department and Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center prior to the completion date.

To ensure the learning program is a recognized provider and meets established standards, supporting documentation—such as transcripts, certification details, course descriptions, program requirements, or other relevant records—must be provided. A copy of the approved recommendation, along with a transcript or other official documentation verifying the obtained degree, certificate, certification, or licensure, shall be attached to the PASS or EOPs transaction to initiate the payment request after completion.

- (1) It is the employee's responsibility to provide a copy of the transcript or any other documents showing the date and degree being conferred within the *Timing of Requests* requirement.
- (2) Personally identifiable information such as birthdate or social security number shall be redacted prior to submission to PASS or the EOP system.
- b. *Employee Responsibilities.* All LIP considerations require pre-approval and post-approval. Employees must submit a request to participate in the LIP to their department head prior to completion of the program and no later than within 90 days of completing the qualifying certificate, certification, degree, or licensure. This request must include proof of completion and the required pre-approval. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure all pre-approvals and program requirements are met and to notify their manager upon program completion.

- c. *Retroactivity.* This program has no retroactivity. Only qualifying programs completed on or after the effective date of this policy, June 1, 2025, are eligible for consideration.
 - d. *Effective Date.* The effective date for the new pay rate or payment issuance will follow normal PASS or EOP processing timeframes.
 - (1) In cases where funding is not immediately available, future effective dates may be established provided the request was still submitted as required in 5(c) above.
 - e. *Funding.* LIP is not institutionally funded, and adjustments and approval for participation in this program are subject to professional relevance and departmental funding availability.
5. **Right to Approve or Deny.** Human Resources reserves the right to approve or deny compensation requests in accordance with any applicable policies and compensation practices. Exceptions to this policy will be evaluated case-by-case with the Chief Human Resources Officer and the appropriate Dean, Provost, or Vice President.
6. **Right to Change Policy.** TTUHSC reserves the right to interpret, change, modify, amend, or rescind this policy in whole or in part at any time without the consent of its employees.