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TUITION REFUND EXCEPTION POLICY (MILITARY STUDENTS)

1.0 Purpose

Lord Fairfax Community College (LFCC) policy statement providing for the tuition relief, refund, and reinstatement of students whose service in the uniformed services has required their sudden withdrawal or prolonged absence from their enrollment.

2.0 Revision History

This is a policy required by VCCS policy 4.3.2.3 and corresponding SCHEV Guidelines.

3.0 Applicability

Service in the uniformed services is defined as service (whether voluntary or involuntary) on active duty in the Armed Forces, including such service by a member of the National Guard or Reserve, for a period of more than 30 days under call or order to active duty of more than 30 days.

4.0 Policy

It is the policy of LFCC to provide for the tuition relief, refund, and reinstatement of students whose active military duty during a time of national emergency has required their sudden withdrawal or prolonged absence from their enrollment.

5.0 Definitions

National Emergency – Refers to any operation, including a defense crisis in which the President of the United States declares a sudden mobilization that includes members of the Virginia National Guard or the active or reserve forces of the U.S. armed forces.

6.0 Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of students and staff to adhere to the guidelines in this policy. Students on active military duty who are called away due to a national emergency should notify the appropriate College officials as soon as possible to initiate the processes outlined in the policy.

7.0 Procedures

Service in the uniformed services is defined as service (whether voluntary or involuntary) on active duty in the Armed Forces, including such service by a member of the National Guard or Reserve, for a period of more than 30 days under call or order to active duty of more than 30 days. When this occurs, and the student requests to be withdrawn from the college after the census date, the student has two options:

1. The military student may elect to be deleted from the registration file and be awarded a full refund (the refund process is outlined below). The college shall provide, at the option of the student, for such refunds to be retained and to be applicable to tuition and fees charged in the semester or term in which the student returns to study. Refunds shall include, as applicable, the Technology Student Activity, Auxiliary, and Capital Fees. LFCC does not require deposits from students, therefore deposits and the corresponding refund request are not applicable to this procedure.
2. The student may elect to be administratively withdrawn with no refund and assigned a grade of "W". The college shall provide, at the option of the student, for such refunds to be retained and to be applicable to tuition and fees charged in the semester or term in which the student returns to study.

Military students requesting to be deleted from the registration file or administratively withdrawn after the final drop date must contact the Admissions and Records Office for the proper procedures and paperwork that must be submitted.

In addition to being refunded or withdrawn from classes, the student has two other options available:

1. The student may be given the opportunity to receive an incomplete grade ("I") until released from active duty (for reservists) or mobilization (for active military personnel). All course requirements shall be completed within one year from the date of release from active duty or mobilization.
2. The student may be given the option of taking their examinations prior to regularly scheduled times as an exception to VCCS policy 5.6.1.

Reinstatement to LFCC after return from service

Students as defined in Section 4.3.2.3 shall be assured a reasonable opportunity to be reinstated in the same programs of study without having to re-apply for admission if they return to the same community college after a cumulative absence of not more than five years so long as the student provides notice of intent to return to the institution not later than three years after the completion of the period of service.

Textbook Refunds

According to VCCS policy 4.3.2.3 (c), each community college shall process refunds for textbooks according to contractual arrangement with local vendors. LFCC contracts with an external bookstore for textbooks. Refunds for textbooks are made according to the contracted bookstore's standards and are handled independently.

Tuition Refund/Debt Removal Process for Military Students

Military students wishing to be deleted from the enrollment file or administratively withdrawn after the final refund date must complete the withdrawal process:

Step 1: The military student withdraws from the courses with the Admissions and Records Office. The Admissions and Records Office will give the student a Tuition Refund Request form. The Admissions Office will verify the student does not have financial aid or veterans benefits.

If the student has financial aid: military students receiving financial aid will be required to speak with the Director of Financial Aid or designee to discuss implications/consequences for withdrawing. The Financial Aid Office will verify on the Tuition Refund Request form the Director or designee has spoken to the student regarding their financial aid.

If the student has veteran's benefits: military students receiving veterans' benefits will be required to speak with the Veterans' Specialist to discuss implications/consequences for withdrawing. The Veterans' Specialist will verify on the form he/she has spoken to the student.

Step 2: The military student returns the completed tuition refund form and copies of military orders to the Admissions and Records Office.

Students requesting refunds for courses in which they have received a letter grade will also need approval from the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs or designee. The Admissions and Records Office will forward all documentation to the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs or designee if the student has already received a grade. The Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs or designee will note decision on the Tuition Refund Request form and forward all paperwork back to the Admissions and Records Office.

The Admissions and Records Office verifies all the documentation, and completes the appropriate section of the form. The Admissions and Records Office then forwards the paperwork to the Office of Financial and Administrative Services.

Step 3: The Office of Financial and Administrative Services will verify a final time that the student does not have financial aid and then forward the paperwork to the Refund Committee for review and final determination.

Return of Unearned Tuition Assistance Funds for Active Military Students Covered by U.S. Department of Defense Military Tuition Assistance Program

Military Tuition Assistance is a U.S. Department of Defense program. Tuition Assistance rules vary by branch of service and even vary between different units within the same branch depending on whether the unit is active, reserve, or National Guard. Tuition Assistance funds will be applied to tuition costs only.

Military Tuition Assistance Recipients

Military Tuition Assistance (TA) is awarded to a student under the assumption that the student will attend school for the entire period for which the assistance is awarded. When a student withdraws, the student may no longer be eligible for the full amount of TA funds originally awarded. To comply with the U.S. Department of Defense policy, Lord Fairfax Community College (LFCC) will return any unearned TA funds on a proportional basis through at least 60% portion of the period for which the funds were provided. If a service member stops attending due to a military service obligation, LFCC's Business Office will work with that service member to identify solutions that will not result in a student debt for the returned portion.

Withdrawals

A student's official withdrawal date is used as the last date of attendance and to calculate earned percentage of TA. A student's official withdrawal date is determined by using the last date of attendance that is documented and submitted to the Admissions and Records Office.

Once the last date of attendance has been determined, LFCC will recalculate a student's TA eligibility based on the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Number of Days Completed}}{\text{Total Days of the Course (start to end date)}} = \text{Percent of TA earned}$$

The amount of TA funding that is earned is determined on a pro-rata basis. For example, if a student completed 30% of the course, he/she earned 30% of the TA funds that he/she was originally scheduled to receive, in turn, this portion will be retained by LFCC and paid toward the student's balance. The remainder of the unearned funds (70%) would be returned to the TA program. If this results in an unpaid tuition balance, payment would be the responsibility of the student. Once a student has attended at least 60% of the period for which TA funds were approved, the student is considered to have earned 100% of the TA funds.

8.0 Interpretation

Authority for interpretation of this policy rests with the Vice President of Financial and Administrative Services in conjunction with the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs.

9.0 Authority/Reference

Virginia Community College System Policy Manual, Section 4.3.2 "Tuition Refunds;"