

# Accredited Distance Education Courses for Employee Training and Development

## What Can You Study by Distance Education?

Accounting  
Advertising  
Building Maintenance  
Business Administration  
Communications Technology  
Computer Programming  
Computer Repair Technician  
Data Processing  
Desktop Publishing  
Electronics  
English  
Executive Assistant  
Finance  
Human Relations  
Management Development  
Microcomputers  
Multi-media Training  
Office Management  
Paralegal  
Secretarial  
Supervisory Development  
Word Processing  
Writing

. . . and hundreds of other job improvement subjects from more than 60 accredited distance education/correspondence schools.

For years, employee training has played a major role in America's industrial capacity and efficiency. Its educational methods have been copied and used as models by countries around the world. Companies in the United States spend billions of dollars to train old and new employees each year.

Various supplements to traditional classroom methods, such as short courses, evening and Saturday classes, early morning TV sessions and off-campus programs, have been used to alleviate some of the urgent training pressures. However, one important method of training is often overlooked: distance education/correspondence training.

With the advent of the "information superhighway," distance education has assumed a more prominent role. It has become a valid training option. On line learning, just-in-time and embedded training can be delivered to employee work stations.

Over the years distance education has shown managers that:

- industry and business can effectively supplement their in-house training with distance study;
- distance education can provide quality job-related and self-improvement education to the employee at the management, administrative, technical and clerical level;
- tuition reimbursement plans can be used by businesses to foster active participation by employees;
- distance study is an efficient and economical training method for business and for employees;
- distance study saves the lost working days, travel and living expenses associated with resident and workshop programs.

Distance education is training received through lesson materials specially prepared in a sequential and logical order. The subject matter is divided into small learning units with all of the steps and divisions in subject matter fully explained. Student questions and discussions have been anticipated and made part of the text. Before moving to the next unit, the student's learning achievement is examined thoroughly through lesson assignments and examinations.

Upon completion of each lesson, the student returns assigned work to the school for correction, grading, comments, guidance, and motivation by qualified instructors. The personal student-instructor relationship through the written word, by telephone, or even via computer data communication, distinguishes correspondence instruction from self-study.

Final examinations require the application of the principles learned in the course. Vocational guidance and continuing information are available after courses have been completed.

The sign of quality for distance education schools is the seal of accreditation. All schools belonging to the Distance Education and Training Council (formerly National Home Study Council) are accredited. They have been examined and found to meet the educational and business ethics standards set by the Accrediting Commission, an independent Commission which has been listed by the U.S. Department of Education as a "nationally recognized accrediting agency."

Accreditation means that a school has met rigid requirements. It has made an intensive study of its own operation, opened its doors to a thorough inspection by a qualified Examining Committee, supplied all information and material required by the Accrediting Commission, and submitted its instructional material for a thorough review by competent subject matter specialists.

Standards for accreditation mean that a school:

- states its educational objectives clearly and offers courses that are accurate, up-to-date, and educationally sound;
- provides student services and has a qualified faculty;
- provides comprehensive examination services, encouragement to students, and attention to individual differences;
- shows satisfactory student progress and success, and maintains student records properly;

- carefully selects, trains, and supervises its field representatives (if applicable);
- is financially sound and demonstrates a satisfactory period of ethical operation; and
- has a satisfactory refund policy.

Management and employees have a lot to gain from distance education courses:

- Companies can expand their programs without much added cost for training personnel, facilities, and materials.
- Training is carried out without loss of time from work.
- Courses and programs can be tailored to meet a company's needs. Therefore, a company is assured of control and uniformity of the course in relation to the effect desired.
- Distance study provides flexibility in meeting the changing and immediate needs of a company in a short period of time. More than 1,500 courses are available from accredited schools.

There are obvious advantages for the student and for the company. Each student:

- is in a class of one, receiving the complete attention of the instructor;
- establishes a study schedule that is personally convenient;
- sets the pace for advancement through the course;
- learns what needs to be known. With a job-related course, the employee often can apply during the day what has been learned the night before;
- doesn't have to worry about transportation problems or extra living expenses;
- can pay for courses by installment reimbursement plans or be fully or partially reimbursed by the employer; and
- is supplied with learning aids and kits if such materials are needed to learn the subject or skill.

Many American businesses offer tuition reimbursement to those employees who study job-related courses, (sometimes called Educational Assistance Program, Educational Refund Policy, Employee Assistance Plan, or Educational Aid Plan). No matter what the plan is called, its purpose is to motivate employees to improve their professional and personal capabilities for both company and self-benefit.

There are a number of techniques for providing tuition aid to students. Here are some of them:

1. The company advances the full tuition at the time of the enrollment and uses wage deductions to recover money from the student. At the end of the course, the student may be reimbursed in full or in part.
2. The employer recognizes completion of the course (or part of the course) with salary increases, but without specific rebates of the money paid for the course.
3. The employer reimburses for each lesson completed with a passing grade. Some companies have a sliding scale for reimbursement based on grades to encourage higher academic excellence and proficiency.

4. The employer reimburses at the end of the program or in set increments within the program.
5. The employer buys and owns the courses; the employees complete these as a condition of their employment.

Tuition aid may be for as much as 100%, but is usually no less than 50% if there is a reimbursement program.

The main factor that seems to keep the student motivated to study is employer interest. If this interest is clearly understood by the student, any number of ways of tuition support can be effective.

Tuition Refund Plans are most effective when administered through established company policy. They may take the form of written or oral agreements between employer and employee. A written agreement is the recommended method.

The following pages contain samples of written agreement forms. Some variations of tuition plans may take into consideration full or part-time employees, length of employment, employees who resign or are discharged, employees unable to complete the course, expenses covered (such as books and miscellaneous supplies), and types of courses.

The Distance Education and Training Council will provide general guidance and information to companies that are setting up a Tuition Refund Program.

For more information about the Distance Education and Training Council, the accreditation process, or if you would like a current copy of the free *Directory of Accredited Institutions*, write or call:

Distance Education and Training Council  
1601 18th Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20009-2529  
202-234-5100

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## XYZ Company Tuition Aid Plan

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Job: \_\_\_\_\_ Dept: \_\_\_\_\_

Desires to participate in the XYZ Company Tuition Aid Plan.

Title of Course: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Instruction: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Course Begins: \_\_\_\_\_ Length of Course: \_\_\_\_\_ Tuition Costs: \_\_\_\_\_

Explain how you believe this course relates directly or indirectly to the improvement of your qualifications as an employee of the XYZ Company: \_\_\_\_\_

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What is your educational background:

High School: \_\_\_\_\_

College: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

What other educational background have you acquired through experience? \_\_\_\_\_

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Action by: \_\_\_\_\_ Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_

Disapproved: \_\_\_\_\_ Reasons: \_\_\_\_\_

Request for Tuition Refund

I, \_\_\_\_\_ have successfully completed the above course as per the attached certification, and therefore request that the tuition fee be paid to me in accordance with the XYZ Company Policy.

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_

Received Payment: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_