NEW YORK STATE/UNITED UNIVERSITY PROFESSIONS
JOINT LABOR-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

Certification and Licensure Exam Fee Reimbursement Program (CLEFR)
Guidelines

1. Program Description

The New York State/United University Professions Joint Labor-Management Committees Certification and Licensure Exam Fee Reimbursement (NYS/UUP JLMC CLEFR) Program reimburses the cost of examinations for first-time certification, licensure, or designation of UUP-represented employees. The NYS/UUP JLMC CLEFR Program enables employees to improve job-related skills in their profession and gain the knowledge and skills necessary for promotional opportunities and career mobility within the State University of New York (SUNY). Examination fees to renew certifications, licenses, or designations previously obtained by an employee are not reimbursable through this program. For renewals, please see the CLRP-Renewal Program Guidelines and Application here (CLRP-Renewals).

2. Program Highlights

Highlights of the CLEFR program include:

a. Reimbursement is provided for the cost of exam fees for first time certification, licensure, or designation of UUP-represented employees for exams that begin during the period of January 1, through December 31, of each calendar year.
b. Maximum reimbursement is $1,200.
c. Reimbursement requires a passing exam grade. The NYS/UUP JLMC CLEFR Program will not cover incomplete or failed exams.
d. All NYS/UUP JLMC CLEFR Program applications and supporting documentation must be submitted within 90 days after the end date of the exam. In instances where an applicant does not expect to receive a grade confirmation within 90 days after the end date of the exam, the applicant must notify NYS/UUP JLMC staff in writing within 90 days after the end date of the exam and provide documentation that the grade will not be available and when it will be provided to determine eligibility. The postmark or email date will be used to determine the timeliness of the application.

All reimbursements issued during the calendar year are reported to the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) during the month of October. Once these reimbursements are reported, no further payments will be issued until after January 1 of the following calendar year. **The IRS considers reimbursements under the NYS/UUP Certification and Licensure Exam Fee Reimbursement Program as taxable income, therefor the Office of the State Comptroller will withhold estimated taxes at the end of the calendar year. This may result in substantial withholding from paychecks and applicants should plan accordingly.** NYS/UUP JLMC nor the Office of Employee Relations can provide any tax clarifications. Employees should consult a tax expert with questions regarding taxation of these benefits (reimbursements).

3. Employee Eligibility

Employees are eligible to participate in the NYS/UUP JLMC CLEFR Program under the following conditions:

a. *Current UUP-Represented*
   Employees At both the start and end dates of the exam, the applicant must be on the payroll, on approved leave (whether paid or unpaid), or off obligation between consecutive appointments.
b. *Retrenched Employees*
   Employees who are retrenched and are eligible for the NYS/UUP JLMC Retraining Fellowship Program may apply for the NYS/UUP JLMC CLEFR Program through the NYS/UUP JLMC Retraining Fellowship Program: oer.ny.gov/grant-opportunities#employment-committee

4. Exam Eligibility

The NYS/UUP JLMC CLEFR Program is available for job-related and career-related exams that result in first time certification, licensure, or designation at an approved institution or professional association including, where an eligible employee, by virtue of experience and training, is permitted to seek an evaluation of credentials in lieu of an examination.

Job-Related or Career-Related

a. Job-related exams must directly relate to the employee's current profession or job assignments, duties, and responsibilities.
b. Career-related exams must provide the employee with the knowledge, skills or abilities to increase opportunity for advancement or career mobility within their current profession or in an occupation which currently exists in SUNY.
c. Exams leading to certificates or licenses in fields such as real estate, personal tax preparation, and self-help will not be eligible for reimbursement unless the applicant can demonstrate that the subject matter is directly relevant to their job or career in SUNY.

NYS/UUP JLMC maintains sole discretion for making the final determination on whether an exam is eligible for reimbursement. Documentation may be requested from the applicant's supervisor to assist in determining eligibility.

Certification, Licensure, or Designation

The exam must result in first-time certification, licensure, or designation for an occupation that currently exists in SUNY including, where an eligible employee, by virtue of experience and training, is permitted to seek an evaluation of credentials in lieu of an examination.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

a. *Information Technology:* Exams for certification in specific software programs or hardware by corporations, such as Microsoft, Novell, and Oracle
b. *Substance Abuse:* Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor written exams
c. *Law:* New York State Bar exam
d. *Finance:* Certified Public Accountant exam

e. *Nursing:* Certification in specific nursing disciplines, such as psychiatry or forensics
f. *Engineering:* Certification in specific engineering disciplines such as storm water management
g. *Medicine:* Board Certification in specific medical fields or specialties

5. Provider Eligibility

The certification, licensure, or designation must be awarded by an eligible provider who is defined by one or more of the following:

a. Chartered, approved, or authorized by the New York State Board of Regents or an equivalent recognized body.
b. Licensed or registered by the New York State Education Department or an equivalent recognized accrediting body.
c. Licensed, registered, or approved by a department or agency of the State of New York to provide specific certification or licensing exams.
d. Certified computer or software corporations, such as Microsoft or Oracle, and authorized third parties who administer classes and certification exams on software, hardware, and other related information technology equipment.
e. Nationally recognized professional associations or their state or local chapters accredited to administer specific exams and award certification by the appropriate accrediting body.
f. Other providers may be approved at the sole discretion of the NYS/UUP JLMC.

6. Application Time Period and Deadline

The NYS/UUP JLMC CLEFR Program covers eligible expenses incurred for exams that begin during the period of January 1 through December 31. All NYS/UUP JLMC CLEFR Program applications and supporting documentation must be submitted within 90 days after the date of the exam. In instances where an applicant does not expect to receive a grade confirmation within 90 days after the end date of the exam, the applicant must notify NYS/UUP JLMC staff in writing within 90 days after end date of the exam and provide documentation that the grade will not be available and when it will be provided to determine eligibility. The postmark or email date will be used to determine the timeliness of the application.

7. Release Time

The NYS/UUP JLMC CLEFR Program does not entitle an employee to receive release time to take the exam.

8. Expenses Covered

a. Eligible employees will be reimbursed for the cost of exam fees for first time certification, licensure, and designations.
b. Where an eligible employee, by virtue of experience and training, is permitted to seek evaluation of credentials in lieu of an examination, reimbursement of fees paid for this evaluation will be permitted provided the evaluation leads to initial certification, licensure, or designation in New York State and all other program requirements are met.

9. Expenses Not Covered

Costs and fees **not** reimbursed by this program include, but are not limited to:

a. Civil Service exam fees
b. Fees for renewing or maintaining existing certifications, licenses, and designations whether by application or re-examination
c. Any fees that are not part of the examination fee (application, processing, academic fees, shipping fees)
d. Study material (e.g., books, CDs, DVDs) and supplies
e. Fees for exams leading to certification in a career that doesn't exist in New York State service
f. Fees for exams leading to college credit for life experience

10. Maximum Reimbursement

An applicant can receive reimbursements of up to $1,200 per program year.

11. Alternative Sources of Funding

The NYS/UUP JLMC CLEFR Program reimbursement will be secondary to any other financial assistance received. If the applicant receives assistance from any source, such as other NYS/UUP joint labor-management funded programs, the applicant's campus including department, program, or unit, or a professional organization, the source and amount must be reported on the NYS/UUP JLMC CLEFR Program Application and on the paid invoice. This amount must be subtracted from the total reimbursement amount requested. An employee who fails to report the amount of assistance must repay the overpayment and may be excluded from participating in future programs.

12. Taxation of Certification and Licensure Exam Fee Reimbursements

Important details about reimbursement reporting and tax withholding include:

a. The IRS considers reimbursements under the NYS/UUP JLMC Certification and Licensure Exam Fee Reimbursement Program to be taxable income.
b. All reimbursements issued during the calendar year are reported to the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) during the month of October. The tax reports are based on the reimbursement check date. Once these reimbursements are reported, no further payments will be issued until after January of the following calendar year.
c. At the end of each calendar year, OSC will withhold estimated taxes. Employees should consult a tax expert with questions regarding taxation of these benefits (reimbursements). This may result in substantial withholding from paychecks at the end of the year and applicants should plan accordingly. Neither OER nor UUP can provide any tax clarification or advice.

13. Application and Reimbursement Process

A completed application must be submitted to be considered for reimbursement of exam fees. For a printable application form

a. Go to: oer.ny.gov/nysuupclefr or
b. Email NYS/UUP JLMC staff at nysuupclefr@oer.ny.gov or
c. Call NYS/UUP JLMC staff at 518-486-4666.

14. Step 1: Complete the Application Form

Read the NYS/UUP CLEFR Guidelines prior to completing the application and provide all the information required.

a. Applications can only be submitted after successful completion of the exam and must be submitted within 90 calendar days after receipt of notification of a passing grade. Failure to submit an application within the 90-day period may result in a denial of the application.
    i. Applications submitted prior to receipt of notification of a passing grade will not be accepted except where an applicant does not expect to receive a grade confirmation within 90 days after the end date of the exam, In such instances, the applicant must notify NYS/UUP JLMC staff in writing within 90 days after the completion date of the exam and provide documentation that the grade will not be available and when it will be provided to determine eligibility.
b. The postmark or email date will be used to determine the timeliness of the application.
c. An incomplete application cannot be processed until all information is submitted.
d. A separate application must be submitted for reimbursement for each exam.

15. **Step 2:** Attach the Required Documents

The following documents must be attached to the application when submitted:

a. An unaltered invoice, receipt, or itemized account summary from the provider showing the registration cost.
    i. Proof of payment such as a bank statement, credit card statement, or cancelled check.
    ii. Documentation showing any financial assistance that has been received or will be received toward the cost of the exam indicating the name of the entity providing the assistance.
    iii. Documentation showing the date of the exam (month, day and year).
    iv. Documentation from the provider confirming successful passing (a license or certificate will not be accepted).
b. All supporting documentation must have the applicant's name printed on it by the issuing entity.
c. Documentation must be converted to a PDF format and attached to the completed, signed, and dated NYS/UUP JLMC CLEFR Program Application for reimbursement. All other formats (JPGs or other photo formats, Word documents, links to documentation or websites, etc.) will **not** be accepted.
d. Applicants should retain a copy of all documentation for their records.

Please Note: If all required documentation is not submitted within 90 days after completion of the exam, the applicant's reimbursement request may be denied. In instances where an applicant does not expect to receive a grade confirmation within 90 days after the end date of the exam, the applicant must notify NYS/UUP JLMC staff in writing within 90 days after the completion date of the requested exam and provide documentation that the grade will not be available and when it will be provided to determine eligibility.

16. **Step 3:** Submit the Application

Submit a signed, dated NYS/UUP CLEFR Program Application and PDF version of supporting documentation in one of the following ways:

a. *Email:* Email the application and supporting documentation by the application deadline to: nysuupclefr@oer.ny.gov.

b. *U.S. Mail:* Mail the application and supporting documentation, postmarked by the application deadline to:

NYS/UUP Joint Labor-Management Committees
Agency Building 2, 11th Floor
Empire State Plaza Albany, New York 12223

17. Step 4: Application Status

After an application has been received, the following notifications will be sent via email. Accordingly, please be sure all applications include a valid email address.

a. Notification of Receipt: Applicants will be notified within 10 business days that the application has been received and is being reviewed.
b. Notification of Hold: Applicants will be notified when additional information is needed or supporting documentation has not been received. Failure to provide the required documentation may result in denial of an applicant's reimbursement request.
c. Notification of Denial: Applicants will be notified when their application has been denied and why. If the application is denied for reasons such as being ineligible or incomplete, the applicant may resubmit the claim for reimbursement with additional documentation, provided the application is still submitted within 90 days after the completion date of the requested exam. In instances where an applicant does not expect to receive a grade confirmation within 90 days after the end date of the exam, the applicant must notify NYS/UUP JLMC staff in writing within 90 days after the completion date of the requested exam and provide documentation that the grade will not be available and when it will be provided to determine eligibility. Applicants will have 30 days from the date of the denial to appeal the decision for any other reason(s). The denial appeal may contain additional supporting documentation and a letter from the applicant's supervisor.
d. Notification of Approval: Applicants will be notified when the application has been approved for payment.

18. Step 5: Reimbursement Payment

Once an application has been approved, reimbursement checks will be mailed from the Office of the State Comptroller to the employee's home address included in State payroll records. This check will resemble a paycheck or travel expense check, tear away three sides in order to open the check. This is an actual check and is not automatically deposited. Please allow up to four weeks for check processing and delivery.