

**SUMMARY PLAN DESCRIPTION  
FOR THE BOYCE THOMPSON INSTITUTE  
TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PLAN**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Tuition Reimbursement Plan provides eligible employees with the opportunity to maintain or improve job-related skills through participation in course work at accredited colleges, universities and other educational institutions. The Boyce Thompson Institute (“BTI”) offers three (3) different types of tuition reimbursement: 1) undergraduate and graduate level course work; 2) professional certification; and 3) lifetime learning. Tuition reimbursement is subject to current tax regulations.

The information contained in this Summary Plan Description is intended to summarize the major features of the tuition reimbursement plans. It is not intended to be a complete explanation or list of benefits provided by the tuition reimbursement plans.

Individuals should contact the Director of Human Resources of BTI, with an address of Tower Road, Ithaca, NY 14853, and telephone number of (607) 254-1234, with any questions relative to the Tuition Reimbursement Plan.

## **EMPLOYER INFORMATION**

Your employer’s name, address, telephone number, and identification number are:

Boyce Thompson Institute  
Tower Road  
Ithaca, NY 14853  
(607) 254-1234

Employer Identification Number: 13-1739923

## **ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

The Tuition Reimbursement Plan is administered by BTI, with an address of Tower Road, Ithaca, NY 14853, and telephone number of (607) 254-1234.

The Administrator is responsible for the day-to-day administration and operation of the Tuition Reimbursement Plan. For example, the Administrator maintains the Plan records, including your account information, and provides you with the forms you need to complete for Tuition Reimbursement Plan participation. The Administrator will also allow you to review the formal Tuition Reimbursement Plan document and certain other materials related to the Plan. If you have any questions about the Tuition Reimbursement Plan and your participation, you should contact the Administrator. The Administrator may designate another person or persons to perform some duties of the Administrator.

The Administrator has the full authority, in its sole discretion, to determine all questions arising in connection with the administration, interpretation, and application of the Tuition

Reimbursement Plan (and any related documents and underlying policies). Any such determination by the Administrator is conclusive and binding upon all persons.

Lucy Pola, with an address of Boyce Thompson Institute, Tower Road, Ithaca, New York 14853, is designated as the agent for service of legal process. Service of legal process may also be made upon the plan administrator.

## **TYPES OF TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PLANS**

### **I. Undergraduate and Graduate Level Courses**

**Eligibility:** After one year of service, regular full and part-time employees working thirty (30) hours or more per week may apply for reimbursement for undergraduate or graduate level courses. Courses may be part of a degree program, or may be taken in a non-matriculated status. Courses must be taken through an accredited college or university.

**Summary:** BTI establishes an annual budget each year for tuition reimbursement. Employees will be reimbursed for eighty percent (80%) of tuition, books and applicable course fees for job related course work, up to a maximum of \$5,250.00 per calendar year. Classes that are not job related, but are part of a degree program, will also be reimbursed, however preference will be given to classes that relate directly to career advancement. Whether a class relates directly to career advancement will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Director of Human Resources. BTI will consider all requests for reimbursement up to the annual budgetary limit. Staff intending to undertake such coursework will be requested to notify Human Resources in writing by **September 1** of each calendar year as part of the annual budgetary process.

**Non-Degree Courses at Cornell:** BTI employees are eligible to participate in the extramural education program at Cornell University after six (6) months of employment. Cornell University guidelines apply. Eligible employees may also take up to four (4) credits per semester at Cornell University in a non-degree status. Registration forms are available from Human Resources. Coursework must be approved in advance by the employee's supervisor and the course instructor.

**Reimbursement (includes reimbursement for non-degree courses):** The following are reimbursement guidelines:

1. For undergraduate or graduate level coursework, tuition and eligible fees are reimbursed only for courses taken and completed with a final grade of at least "C" or equivalent.
2. Reimbursement must be approved by Human Resources within 7 days of receipt of the final grade.
3. Reimbursements are subject to IRS regulations.

**Not Reimbursable:** The following are not reimbursable:

1. Application fees, transcript fees, test preparation fees, admission testing fees, placement fees, course waiver fees, late fees, parking fees, equipment purchase, tutoring fees, deferred tuition fees, student activity fees, and other similar fees.
2. Fees are not reimbursable when an employee voluntarily terminates employment, or if they are terminated for cause, prior to course completion.
3. Fees are not reimbursable if they have not been approved in advance.

## **II. Professional Certification Programs**

**Eligibility:** After six (6) months of employment, regular full and part-time employees working thirty (30) hours or more per week may apply for reimbursement for coursework leading to professional certification. Certification programs may include proprietary programs and college level certification programs.

**Summary:** Programs leading to professional certification must be job-related, and should provide the participating employee with knowledge and skills applicable to their current position or career path.

**Reimbursement:** BTI will reimburse employees for 100% of course fees and books, upon successful completion of the course, up to \$1,000 per calendar year, based on funds available. Employees will not be reimbursed if they do not complete all courses related to the certification program. For multi-class certification programs, employees may be reimbursed after completion of each class. If, however, all coursework is not completed for certification, employees will be required to pay BTI back 20% of the cost of each class completed.

## **III. Lifetime Learning and Wellness**

**Eligibility:** After six (6) months of employment, employees working a minimum of twenty (20) hours or more per week may apply for reimbursement for coursework leading to professional certification.

**Reimbursement:** BTI will reimburse employees for up to \$100.00 per calendar year for non-college coursework, or for participation in wellness programs, including health club membership. To be reimbursed for a lifetime learning program, a receipt and proof of class completion should be submitted to Human Resources. Life time learning classes do not need to be approved in advance.

## **INFORMATION APPLICABLE TO ALL TYPES OF TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PLANS**

**Work Schedules:** Participation in the Tuition Reimbursement Plan should not in any way interfere with the employee's ability to perform his or her job. Permission to take a course during scheduled working hours will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the employee's supervisor and Human Resources.

With supervisor and Human Resources approval, employees may use flex time to adjust their hours around their course work. Hours spent taking classes do not count as hours worked for the purposes of computing overtime.

**Procedures:** Employees must apply for tuition reimbursement in advance of taking classes. To apply, the employee must complete a Tuition Reimbursement Application Form and submit it to Human Resources prior to beginning the class. In addition to the application form, the employee should submit material describing the program and courses. Human Resources will notify the employee in writing as to whether the application has been approved.

To request reimbursement, the employee should submit the Tuition Reimbursement Form, along with a copy of the receipt for tuition, books and eligible fees, and a copy of their grade. If the course is incomplete, or a grade of below a "C" is received, the employee will not be reimbursed.

Employees will be reimbursed through accounts payable within 30 days of submitting reimbursement form to Human Resources.

**Plan Year:** The Plan Year shall mean the twelve (12) month period that ends on December 31 of each year. The records of the Tuition Reimbursement Plan are kept on a calendar year basis.

## **CLAIMS PROCEDURES**

Requests for information and claims concerning eligibility, participation or other aspects of the Tuition Reimbursement plan should be submitted to the Benefit Plans Committee. Written requests should be sent to:

Benefit Plans Committee, Boyce Thompson Institute, Tower Road, Ithaca, NY 14853.

The Committee will review the disputed claim within 60 days of receipt of any such request and will advise the employee in writing of the decision on review, including the reasoning behind the decision and the Plan provisions upon which the decision is based. If special circumstances require an extension, the Committee will request an extension from the employee within the initial 60-day review period.

Decisions on claims where no review is requested and decisions on review shall be final, binding and conclusive on all interested persons for all purposes and to the maximum extent permitted by law. If appeal is denied, in whole or in part, however, the employee has a right to file suit in a state or federal court.

## **CONTRIBUTIONS**

Employees are not required or permitted to contribute to the Tuition Reimbursement Plan. BTI is the source of financing for the Tuition Reimbursement Plan.

## **AMENDMENT OR DISCONTINUANCE**

Although it is BTI's intention to keep the plan in effect permanently for the benefit of its employees and their beneficiaries, BTI necessarily reserves the right to amend, discontinue, or terminate the plan at any time.

## **ERISA RIGHTS**

As a participant in the BTI Tuition Reimbursement Plan employees are entitled to certain rights and protections under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA). ERISA provides that all plan participants shall be entitled to:

**Receive Information About Your Plan and Benefits:** Examine, without charge, at the Plan Administrator's office and at other specified locations, such as work sites and union halls, all documents governing the Plan.

Obtain, upon written request to the Plan Administrator, copies of documents governing the operation of the plan. The Plan Administrator may make a reasonable charge for the copies.

Receive a summary of the plan's annual financial report. The Plan Administrator is required by law to furnish each participant with a copy of this summary annual report.

**Prudent Actions by Plan Fiduciaries:** In addition to creating rights for plan participants, ERISA imposes duties upon the people who are responsible for the operation of the employee benefit plan. The people who operate your plan, called "fiduciaries" of the plan, have a duty to do so prudently and in the interest of you and other plan participants and beneficiaries. No one, including your employer, your union, or any other person, may fire you or otherwise discriminate against you in any way to prevent you from obtaining a (pension, welfare) benefit or exercising your rights under ERISA.

**Enforce Your Rights:** If your claim for a pension benefit is denied or ignored, in whole or in part, you have a right to know why this was done, to obtain copies of documents relating to the decision without charge, and to appeal any denial, all within certain time schedules.

Under ERISA, there are steps you can take to enforce the above rights. For instance, if you request a copy of plan documents or the latest annual report from the plan and do not receive them within thirty (30) days, you may file a suit in a Federal court. In such a case, the court may require the Plan Administrator to provide the materials and pay you up to \$110 a day until you receive the materials, unless the materials were not sent because of reasons beyond the control of the Plan Administrator. If you have a claim for benefits which is denied or ignored, in whole or in part, you may file suit in a state or Federal court. In addition, if you disagree with the plan's decision or lack thereof concerning the qualified status of a domestic relations order or a medical child support order, you may file suit in Federal Court. If it should happen that plan fiduciaries misuse the plan's money, or if you are discriminated against for asserting your rights, you may seek assistance from the U.S. Department of Labor, or you may file suit in a Federal court. The court will decide who should pay costs and legal fees. If you are successful the court may order the person you have sued to pay these costs and fees. If you lose, the court may order you to pay these costs and fees, for example, if it finds your claim is frivolous.

**Assistance with Your Questions:** If you have any questions about your plan, you should contact the Plan Administrator. If you have any questions about this statement or about your rights under ERISA, or if you need assistance in obtaining documents from the Plan Administrator, you should contact the nearest office of the Employee Benefits Security Administration, U. S. Department of Labor, listed in your telephone directory or the Division of Technical Assistance and Inquiries, Employee Benefits Security Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20210. You may also obtain certain publications about your rights and responsibilities under ERISA by calling the publications hotline of the Employee Benefits Security Administration.

If this Plan is maintained by more than one Employer, you can obtain a complete list of all such Employers by making a written request to the Plan Administrator.

## **SUMMARY**

<b>Name of Plan</b>	Boyce Thompson Institute Tuition Reimbursement Plan
<b>Type of Plan</b>	Tuition Reimbursement Plan
<b>Plan Year</b>	January 1 through December 31
<b>Plan Sponsor - Employer</b>	Boyce Thompson Institute Tower Road Ithaca, NY 14853 (607) 254-1234
<b>Employer Identification Number</b>	13-1739923
<b>Plan Administrator</b>	Boyce Thompson Institute Tower Road Ithaca, NY 14853 (607) 254-1234
<b>Claim Administrator</b>	Benefit Plans Committee Boyce Thompson Institute Tower Road Ithaca, NY 14853
<b>Agent for Service of Legal Process</b>	Lucy Pola, Director of Human Resources Boyce Thompson Institute Tower Road Ithaca, NY 14853 (607) 254-1234