

Tuition Benefit Program Guidelines

1. [Categories of Supported Graduate Students](#)
2. [Registration Requirements](#)
3. [Financial Support Requirements](#)
4. [Service Requirements](#)
5. [Residency and Meritorious Status](#)
6. [Restrictions](#)
7. [Administration](#)
8. [Petitions for Exception to Tuition Benefit Policy](#)

*****Note to students: In order to qualify for tuition benefit, your academic department must be a participant in the tuition benefit program. Please check with your academic department if you are unsure about their participation. The David Eccles School of Business and the School of Dentistry currently do not participate in the Tuition Benefit Program.**

CATEGORIES OF SUPPORTED GRADUATE STUDENTS

The four eligible classifications qualifying a student for TBP participation are:

- **Graduate Teaching Assistant (TA), (job code 9416, Exempt):** A graduate student with instructional responsibilities as instructor of record, assistant to the instructor of record or tutor. Duties may include lecturing, holding discussion or problem sessions, conducting laboratory sections, conducting studio or performance work, online instruction, grading, tutoring, and holding office hours. International students must be cleared through the [International Teaching Assistant Program](#) before being placed in jobs coded 9416.
- **Graduate Research Assistant (RA), (job code 9314, Exempt):** A graduate student assigned directly to an externally funded research grant (**5000 fund only**) and doing research for that project.
- **Graduate Assistant (GA), (job code 9330, Exempt):** A graduate student assigned work related to his/her degree program and not covered in the previous two categories. A GA must be funded by his/her department and not supported by external 5000 funding. **If a student wishes to work as a GA outside his/her home department, prior approval must be granted by the Dean of The Graduate School.**
- **Graduate Fellow (GF):** A graduate student on a fellowship, whose tuition is not paid by the award. TBP has right of first reversal if other sources of tuition funding are available, meaning if tuition money is included in the fellowship award, the student should not use tuition benefit. Fellowship payments may be distributed as a scholarship through the University's Scholarship Administration System, or in special cases as a monthly traineeship disbursement. Fellowship payments made through the Scholarship Administration must be paid from item types set up as fellowships in order to count toward the student's TBP-eligible

income (with budget category code 66900). No employer-employee relationship exists in a fellowship. The University administers the award and a service expectation may or may not accompany it.

These four specific job codes satisfy current federal policies and regulations for graduate students working toward post-baccalaureate degrees at the University of Utah. Graduate students should be classified as exempt whenever feasible and not hourly. Students on stipends should receive prorated monthly payments. Nonmatriculated students, part-time students, and students on probationary status are ineligible for the TBP.

PeopleSoft fund codes 1000, 2000, 5000 and 6000 satisfy TBP payroll eligibility. Note: Graduate RAs (9314) must be paid from research grants with a 5000 fund and eight digit project number. To be eligible for participation, no job code other than 9314 (RA) can be used on an e-PAF with a 5000 fund. Please note that RA's who participate in the subsidized health plan must have a benefit allotment attached to the 5000 fund that they are paid from that can cover the 80% of the premium for the health plan. If there is no benefit pool for student researchers on the grant that the student is paid from, please contact the Graduate School for further guidance.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Students participating in the TBP must be:

- full-time, matriculated graduate students in good standing
- maintain cumulative GPA of 3.0 (Law School, 2.0). Students on academic probation are not eligible for a Graduate School tuition benefit.
- TBP full-time student status means registration for at least nine credit hours throughout the semester (Fall and Spring). This provision does not affect full-time definitions or requirements currently employed for the purpose of loan repayment, student insurance, or other reporting requirements.
- FTE cannot exceed .74. An FTE of .5 is the recommended maximum.

TBP covers:

- 9-12 graduate credit hours per semester during Fall and Spring, except for RAs whose tuition benefit is a minimum of nine and a maximum of 11 credit hours in Fall and Spring semesters and three credit hours in Summer semester.
- Non-resident tuition is covered in full, **except for in cases of RAs who have exceeded 84 cumulative credit hours. At that point, the benefit will only cover resident tuition for RAs. This condition will be implemented in the semester when cumulative registration exceeds 84 credit hours as a University of Utah graduate student.** Please ensure that students apply for state residency as soon as they are

eligible. RA's who have finished their coursework may register for 9 thesis hours ONLY to avoid being charged nonresident tuition.

- Undergraduate, contract, and/or audited courses, repeated courses, and credit/noncredit courses count toward the required minimum nine credit hours **but do not qualify for a tuition benefit**. The benefit will not pay for those courses. A student registered for fewer than nine credit hours may make up the difference by registering for 6970, 6980, 7970, 7980, or other appropriate graduate credit. Students may register for a maximum 16 semester hours but are responsible for tuition for hours exceeding 12 credits.

IMPORTANT: Students adding and/or dropping courses after the semester's published add/drop deadlines are responsible for any and all charges incurred, including withdrawals. Tuition benefit will not pay for withdrawn credit hours, and if registration falls below nine credit hours at any time during the semester, a student becomes ineligible for TBP participation and will be billed the full tuition for that semester.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS FOR A TUITION BENEFIT

All students receiving a tuition benefit must meet minimum financial support requirements paid through the University of Utah for each semester in which a benefit is received.

2019-20 Academic Year Minimum Support Levels (Fall/Spring)

1. \$7,950 per semester: 100% tuition benefit
2. \$5,962 per semester: 75% tuition benefit
3. \$3,975 per semester: 50% tuition benefit

2018-19 Academic Year Minimum Support Levels (Fall/Spring)

1. \$7,750 per semester: 100% tuition benefit
2. \$5,813 per semester: 75% tuition benefit
3. \$3,875 per semester: 50% tuition benefit

No tuition benefit is granted to students receiving less than \$3,875 for the semester for the 2018-19 academic year. Required minimum support level is annually indexed to general salary increases to prevent gradual erosion of established graduate student salaries and stipends.

SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

Graduate students receiving a tuition benefit are expected to fulfill the responsibilities appropriate to their specific assignments. No student is required to work more than 20 hours a week (0.50 FTE) in order to receive a tuition benefit. Faculty may expect up to 20 hours of work a week (0.50 FTE) from students receiving a 100% tuition benefit, 15 hours a week (0.375 FTE) from students receiving a 75% tuition benefit, and 10 hours a week (0.25 FTE) from students receiving a 50% tuition benefit. Students working one or more on-campus jobs with a combined FTE greater than a 0.74 FTE are ineligible to participate in the Graduate Tuition Benefit Program.

NOTE: In order to participate in the TBP, student information, including combined salaries, stipends, and FTEs (from university departments) using job codes (9330, 9314, and 9416), must be entered on the TBP Web page by the “home” department (department in which the student is pursuing a graduate degree). These data must be entered on the Web before the ‘state registration census’ is taken, e.g., 15th day of classes.

RESIDENCY AND MERITORIOUS STATUS

As approved by the University of Utah president and according to Utah law and the Board of Regents’ policy, out-of-state TBP students are exempt from paying nonresident tuition. Their graduate tuition benefit is at the in-state rate for the appropriate TBP level (100%, 75%, or 50%). Tuition and fees not covered by the TBP are the student’s responsibility. Out-of-state, non-international graduate students receiving a tuition benefit must apply for Utah residency upon fulfilling 40 semester credit hours at a regionally accredited Utah institution of higher education. Comprehensive and aggressive action should be taken by departments to ensure that U.S. citizens apply for Utah residency once 40 graduate credit hours are reached. A student’s ability to establish residency will not affect receipt of a tuition benefit. (Go to <http://admissions.utah.edu/apply/residency/> for details on how to apply and qualify for residency reclassification).

Graduate meritorious status is established by:

- Admission to the University of Utah as a matriculated graduate student;
- Selection on the basis of merit, determined by written policy in each department, as a supported graduate student receiving a salary or stipend from the University of Utah under the provisions and subject to the minimum levels of support provided in the Graduate Council guidelines;
- Recommendation of the department chair;
- A candidate for a graduate degree maintenance of a 3.0 GPA or higher (except where otherwise approved, such as a 2.0 GPA in the Law School). GPAs are

verified at the end of each academic year. A grade below C- is not accepted for credit toward a graduate degree; some departments further restrict C grades.

RESTRICTIONS

A graduate tuition benefit is available only to graduate students compensated through the University of Utah. The TBP covers general graduate tuition and mandatory fees. Differential tuition charged by various university graduate and professional programs is the responsibility of the graduate student, department, and/or college. Students may participate in the TBP for a limited number of semesters, which need not be sequential. Time limits for participation in the TBP are as follows:

1. Students in a master's program are limited to two years (four semesters) of tuition benefit support.
2. Students in a doctoral program who entered with a bachelor's degree are limited to five years (10 semesters) of tuition benefit support.
3. Students in a doctoral program who also received a master's degree at the University of Utah are limited to five years of tuition benefit support (two years for a master's + three additional years for a doctorate).
4. Students entering a doctoral program with a master's degree from another university are eligible for four years (eight semesters) of tuition benefit support. Doctoral students who fall under categories 2 and 3 above and who have served a minimum of four semesters as full-time TAs (0.50 FTE or 20 hrs/ week) may receive an additional year (two semesters) of tuition benefit support beyond the limits described above. In order for the student to receive this time extension, departments must send a written request to The Graduate School that includes the student's name and uNID. These restrictions do not limit the number of years or semesters a program, department, or college may choose to support a student in addition to the TBP. Established time limits for completion of graduate programs still apply.

The student and department are responsible for maintaining an accurate count of the semesters of tuition benefit support a student has received. A student who receives more terms of tuition benefit than he or she is eligible for may be retroactively billed for the tuition of the ineligible semester(s).

Tuition benefit support is only available for Research Assistants during summer semester. To qualify, a student must be paid as an RA during either Fall or Spring semester, then paid again as an RA during Summer term. All other requirements remain in place. Summer TBP covers only 3 credit hours and students must register for 3 credits to be eligible. Summer semester does not count against the total number of semesters that a student is eligible for.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE TUITION BENEFIT PROGRAM

The Graduate School administers the Graduate Tuition Benefit Program. Verification of a student's TBP eligibility is the department's responsibility. Note: If a graduate student received a conditional tuition credit for the semester but (a) withdrew from courses, dropping below the minimum nine credit hours; (b) received less than the minimal financial support; or (c) in any way did not meet all requirements or restrictions associated with any of the TBP graduate student components or Graduate School policy, the tuition credit will be rescinded. The student will be billed for tuition and fees at the full, relevant rate for that semester. Department administrators should diagnose TBP problems using their Graduate Tuition Benefit Report, and escalate issues to the Graduate School when necessary.

Students are not eligible to receive a tuition benefit after a semester has ended if they were not entered on the Web prior to the date the 'state's registration census' (15th day of classes) is taken. It is a department's responsibility to enter eligible students on the TBP Web page in a timely manner prior to the 15th day of the semester the student expects to receive the benefit. No retroactive benefits are awarded.

PETITIONS FOR EXCEPTION TO TUITION BENEFIT POLICY

With a petition from the student's department chair to the dean of The Graduate School, exceptions will be considered for personal emergencies such as illness or family emergency. Petitions related to tuition benefit should be formatted as a letter printed on letterhead. While a student may submit a petition on their own behalf, typically the student's faculty advisor or Department Chair writes the petition. Petitions should be submitted to the Graduate School's Office of Fellowships & Benefits, where they are routed to the Dean for review.

Please follow the below guidelines before submitting a petition:

The Tuition Benefits Program (TBP) has been designed to cover most of the cost of the graduate student tuition, but it was never intended to guarantee 100% tuition coverage for all students. In cases where a graduate student exhausts their TBP allotment before completing their degree, there are several options:

- 1) The student may register for the minimum credit hours necessary to maintain continuous registration (1 credit hour) and pay directly. In some cases, visa

and/or student loan or health insurance issues require the student to register for 3 credit hours of dissertation in order to maintain full-time student status. For example, the University's student health plan currently requires 3 credit hours enrollment.

2) In many cases, the student is appointed as an RA and their stipend is paid for by a research grant. Under most circumstances, the PI of the grant can pay the tuition directly from their grant funds. In this case, the student does not have to register for the full 9 credit hours necessary for TBP. The grant can be charged the minimum necessary (1 or 3 credit hours of dissertation) in order to maintain continuous registration/full time student status, respectively. The Office of Sponsored Projects has posted guidelines for [paying tuition from grant funds](#).

3) It is also allowable for the PI to pay the 1-3 credit hours of tuition directly out of their startup account fund, or out of a departmental funds.

4) The PI may petition the Dean of the Graduate School for an exception to TBP policy. TBP exception petitions are appropriate for issues beyond the student's control, such as loss of a semester due to a personal illness or illness of a family member. The fact that the student has exhausted their allotment of TBP is not sufficient to merit a waiver of TBP policy.

To be eligible for a TBP exception, a student must be in good standing in their program, and this status must be documented in the student's Graduate Tracking. For example, an advanced student who has not formed a supervisory committee, or has not passed the departmental milestones such as the qualifying exam is ineligible for a TBP exception. TBP petitions in these cases will be denied.

Before filing a petition the Dean of the Graduate School, the PI should explore all options 1-3 above. The petition request should include a discussion regarding why the PI cannot charge the tuition to the same grant or account that is supporting the student stipend, or a different University account. The petition should demonstrate the feasibility of the student completing their degree within the request for TBP extension. Petitions lacking documentation regarding these issues will be returned to the petitioner unreviewed.

5) The Dean of the Graduate School reserves the right to explore alternate paths to paying the student tuition in difficult cases with particular merit. This may include a collaborative solution involving cost sharing among the various stakeholders in the discussion. The emphasis behind this type of agreement is providing a mechanism to enable speedy degree completion. Multi-semester or ongoing TBP exceptions for the same student are generally appropriate only under unusual circumstances.