

Proposed Program Guidelines – Implementation: AY25

Tuition Benefit Program

Tuition Benefit Program Guidelines

The Tuition Benefit Program (TBP) is a University of Utah tuition support program for graduate students, participation limited to graduate students who are serving the institution’s research and education missions (research-based master’s and PhD degree-seeking students). TBP consists of **waived tuition benefits**, or WTB (the waiving of tuition charges), and **sponsored tuition benefits**, or STB (billing resident tuition costs to a specific funding source). For both WTB and STB, the difference between resident and nonresident tuition (the **nonresident waiver**) is waived and not charged to any college or department funding source.

The framework of the Tuition Benefit Program as a merit-based tuition waiver is allowable through State of Utah Legislative Code [53B-8-101](#) and [53B-8-102](#).

Tuition Benefit Program Definitions

Benefit – For the purposes of the Tuition Benefit Program, benefit is defined as tuition coverage and, depending on eligibility, subsidized health insurance coverage. Benefits associated with TBP are not related to those administered by Human Resources for full-time, benefitted University faculty and staff.

Waived Tuition Benefits (WTB) – the reduction of resident tuition and mandatory fees – up to 12 graduate credits fall/spring, and up to 6 graduate credits summer; a maximum of 30 graduate credits per academic year – by the University, which represents reduced tuition revenue. Each participating college will be annually allocated a set number of tuition waivers, to be distributed among participating colleges at the discretion of the dean.

Sponsored Tuition Benefits (STB) – the reduction of resident tuition and mandatory fees – up to 12 graduate credits fall/spring, up to 6 graduate credits summer – through the billing of resident tuition and mandatory fees to a sponsoring funding source; funding sources are predominantly research grants, but may also include faculty startup funds, donor funds, college returned F&A, department discretionary funds, etc. Tuition benefits should be charged to external funding sources, such as research grants, first before utilizing waived tuition benefits (WTB), when at all possible.

Graduate Subsidized Health Insurance Plan (GSHIP) – TBP-supported students working in assistantships (RA, TA) may be eligible for subsidized health insurance (medical, dental, and vision), with premiums subsidized 100% by the institution (grants benefits budgets for research assistants, state instructional benefits pool for teaching assistants).

Academic Merit – Tuition Benefits are merit-based and require participating students to remain in academic good standing (participating students cannot be on academic probation) and to maintain or exceed a cumulative grade point average of 3.000, keeping in compliance with the Utah Board of Higher Education’s definition of merit as “students who are performing above the average at the institution,” ([R513: 5.1.1](#)). Colleges may have additional requirements for tuition benefit eligibility, such as making satisfactory academic progress towards degree milestones.

Nonresident Waiver – the difference between nonresident tuition and resident tuition, waived by the University for each TBP student participant, regardless of their tuition support being Waived Tuition Benefits (WTB) or Sponsored Tuition Benefits (STB).

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Required Student Support – financial support provided by the academic program or faculty advisor/PI, which includes assistantships, traineeships, and fellowships; while support must meet a minimum threshold for each semester, colleges and departments are encouraged to provide student support at a competitive rate for their respective discipline.

- **Research Assistantship (RA, 9314)** – TBP-supported student employment that is in service of the University’s research mission; wages must meet the minimum student support for the semester(s) of TBP support.
- **Teaching assistantship (TA, 9416)** – TBP-supported student employment that is in service of the University’s teaching mission; wages must meet the minimum student support for the semester(s) of TBP support.
- **Graduate Fellowship (GF)** – TBP-supported student who is the recipient of a prestigious campus fellowship or an approved nationally-competitive external fellowship; fellowship support must meet the minimum support for the semester(s) of TBP support.
- **Graduate Traineeship (TR)** – TBP-supported student is engaged in a research training program where student support is non-payroll and paid in monthly stipend payments (via Accounts Payable); traineeship stipends must meet the minimum student support for the semester(s) of TBP support.

For graduate students working assistantship roles, but are not supported by the Tuition Benefit Program, they may be classified as Graduate Students-Non TBP (job code 1632). This code can be used regardless of the assistantship being research- or teaching-focused.

Required Student Support

Tuition benefit-participating students must be financially supported by their academic program or faculty advisor/PI with an assistantship, traineeship, or fellowship. Eligibility for benefits requires the students being supported at a minimum threshold for each semester of support, which is as follows:

Required minimum support, AY25.

Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Summer Semester
\$10,000	\$10,000	\$6,670

Annualized required minimum support, AY25.

9-month (Fall/Spring)	12-month (Fall/Spring/Summer)
\$20,000	\$26,670

Note: minimum support is meant to be a starting point, not a maximum. Colleges and programs are encouraged to provide assistantship wages, fellowships, and traineeship stipends that are competitive for their individual disciplines above this minimum support requirement.

Anticipated minimum support, multi-year projection.

Academic Year	100% TBP Minimum Support (Fall/Spring Total)
AY25	\$20,000
AY26	\$20,800
AY27	\$21,500 (Pending)
AY28	\$23,000 (Pending)
AY29	\$24,500 (Pending)
AY30	\$26,000 (Pending)

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Anticipated minimum support projections will be reviewed and updated annually, taking into consideration inflation and cost of living increases.

Support is prorated based on the pay-period of each semester. Additionally, support will only count for a TBP-supported semester when provided during the semester pay periods in the proper form.

	Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Summer Semester
Semester Pay Periods	9	9	6
Support Date Range	August 16 thru December 31	January 1 thru May 15	May 16 thru August 15
Assistantships Payments	Via payroll, wages must be earned in support range for the given semester of TBP support, though final paycheck may be after semester support date range has ended.		
Fellowship Payments	Via Scholarship Administration (scholarship portal of the Office of Scholarships & Financial Aid) – fellowships must be entered for the specific semester of TBP support.		
Traineeship Stipends Payments	Via Accounts Payable in monthly increments with payments executed during the support date range for the given semester of TBP support.		

Students supported on assistantships should not be required to work more than 0.50 FTE (20 hours/week) for a tuition benefit, and their total University of Utah FTE cannot exceed 0.74 (29 hours/week), should the TBP-participating student hold multiple jobs on campus (including hourly research or tutoring positions, as well as jobs with the University of Utah Hospital & Clinics). Full-time benefitted University faculty and staff are not eligible for participation in the Tuition Benefit Program.

Graduate Student Health Insurance (GSHIP)

Subsidized health insurance (medical, dental, vision) is available to TBP-supported students working in assistantship capacities (payment via payroll). Premiums are 100% subsidized by the University – research assistant premiums charged to relevant benefits lines, teaching assistant premiums charged to central state-funded benefits pool.

Should students be supported by fellowships, traineeships, or not supported by TBP at all, departments have the option to directly enroll students in the same health insurance plan, paying the premium directly. Students can self-enroll and self-pay through the insurance provider, as well as enroll in coverage for dependents (spouse/domestic partner, children).

TBP Support Type	GSHIP-Eligible	Department-Paid Option	Notes
Assistantship	Yes	Yes, if not covered by GSHIP	Student's minimum support must be 100% assistantship, not mixed with fellowship or traineeship
Fellowship	No	Yes	
Traineeship	No	Yes	
Not supported	No	Yes	

[Premiums to be included, once available for AY25]

Student Expectations

The responsibilities and expectations of students participating in the Tuition Benefit Program are as follows:

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- Be in academic good standing and maintain a cumulative 3.000 GPA, as well as any other requirements as determined by academic colleges
- Meet all program milestones as prescribed by their program
- Enroll full-time, as defined by the Office of the Registrar – tuition benefits will cover up to 30 graduate credits each academic year (maximum of 12 credits fall, 12 credits spring, and 6 credits summer)
- Approve their TBP agreement in CIS each semester of tuition benefit support
- Not exceed a University of Utah FTE of 0.74, which includes all positions TBP-related and otherwise

College Expectations

The responsibilities and expectations of colleges participating in the Tuition benefit Program, management of which is at the discretion of the dean or their designee, are as follows:

- Allocate the college's allotment of Waived Tuition Benefit (WTB) waivers among participating graduate programs within the college, track usage by participating academic programs, and reallocate as necessary
- Coordinate waiver needs between academic programs and advocate for any necessary increases in the annual budget cycle
- Determine college guidelines for utilizing returned F&A for research assistantship benefits, providing guidance to programs and PIs for covering sponsored tuition benefits (STB) when grants don't allow tuition coverage or grants tuition budgets have been exhausted, such as when appropriate to charge research assistant tuition to returned F&A
- Colleges have the flexibility to determine student eligibility for tuition benefits beyond the Graduate School's requirement of maintaining a 3.000 cumulative GPA, such as making satisfactory academic progress towards degree milestones; it is also the college's responsible to track academic probation
- Colleges may establish tuition benefit caps for supported students, if they choose; the Graduate School recommends 2 academic years of tuition benefits for master's students and 5 academic years for doctoral students, academic year including fall, spring, and summer semesters
- Colleges may cover credits beyond TBP semester credit maximums (12 credits fall, 12 credits spring, and 6 credits summer) at the resident rate via the Scholarship Administration system
- The management of tuition benefit operational tasks, including timely entry and processing of student benefits, is the responsibility of each college, which is commonly delegated to the program level
- Those appointed for entry and processing of student tuition benefits are responsible for vetting eligibility for subsidized health insurance (GSHIP) and coordinating with eligible students to determine those who choose to opt in
- Colleges and/or appointed program-level personnel are responsible for regularly reviewing tuition benefit reports and troubleshooting errors, which may include addressing student employee record errors, enrollment or GPA discrepancies, and student support concerns
- Colleges and programs are encouraged to utilize annual funding agreements to outline anticipated student support and benefits (such as tuition and insurance benefits), which may take the form of annual statements, assistantship contracts, or fellowship offer letters
- Any petitions for exception to Tuition Benefit Program policies should be addressed by colleges or appointed program personnel on a student's behalf; petitions submitted by students will be returned to the student's college unreviewed

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College & Program Support

Colleges & programs with questions or concerns should reach out to the Graduate School for support. Please contact LoGan Gowers (Tuition Benefit Program Administrator) or Matthew Plooster (Assistant Dean) at tuitionbenefit@gradschool.utah.edu or 801-581-5542.

Relevant Policies

Utah Code [53B-8-102](#) (6) – *Within the limits established in Title 53B, Chapter 8, Tuition Waiver and Scholarships, each institution within the state system of higher education may, regardless of its policy on obtaining resident student status, waive nonresident tuition either in whole or in part, but not other fees.*

Utah Code [53B-8-101](#) (4) – *A president of an institution of higher education may waive all or part of the difference between resident and nonresident tuition for:*

- (a) Meritorious graduate students; or*
- (b) Nonresident summer school students.*