Tuition Benefit Program Guidelines

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***Note to students: In order to qualify for tuition benefit, your academic department must be a participant in the tuition benefit program, and the department must have tuition benefit funding available to support your participation. Please check with your academic department if you are unsure about their participation and to confirm funding capacity. 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 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 – Research Focus (GR), (job code 9330, Exempt):** A graduate student doing research or research-related work, who is not paid from a 5000 fund, as well as students doing field work and clinical work. If a student wishes to work as a GR outside his/her home department, prior approval must be granted by the Dean of The Graduate School.

- **Graduate Assistant – Teaching Focus (GT), (job code 9417, Exempt):** This category is appropriate only for incoming international students with no student contact (i.e. graders), and is limited to one semester, after which the student must be participating in the International Teaching Assistant Program so they can be in the TA category.

- **Graduate Fellow (GF):** A graduate student on a fellowship, whose tuition is not paid by the fellowship 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. Non-matriculated 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 students who participate in the subsidized health plan must have a benefit allotment available in the fund that they are paid from that can cover the 80% of the premium for the health plan (unless they are paid from a 1001 fund). If there is no benefit funding available in the fund that the student is paid from, please contact the Graduate School for further guidance.

** In accordance with federal payroll tax law, job assignments must be related to the student’s educational or professional objectives. Job assignments unrelated to the student’s degree program, such as administrative work, are generally not allowed in conjunction with TBP. In addition, a TA/GT stipend may not be decreased mid-semester based upon the final student enrollment in the assigned teaching course. Contact the Graduate School with any questions.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Students participating in the TBP (and/or xTBP) must be:

- full-time, matriculated graduate students in good academic standing
- maintain a minimum 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 student status definitions or requirements used elsewhere for the purpose of loan repayment, student insurance, or other reporting requirements.
- FTE cannot exceed .74. An FTE of .5 is the recommended maximum.

CREDIT HOURS COVERED PER SEMESTER:
A student enrolled in tuition benefit for both fall and Spring semesters has 24 total credit hours of tuition benefit available over the academic year. The 24 hours may be split over Fall, Spring and Summer terms. For example, a student could potentially take 9 hours in Fall semester, and 9 hours in Spring semester, leaving 6 CU’s available for summer semester.

The maximum that tbp will cover in Fall and Spring semesters is 12 credits (minimum is 9). The maximum tbp will cover in summer semester is 6 credits (minimum of 3). We want to make sure however, that if the student only has 3 left for summer, that tbp can’t end up covering 6 and putting them over their total annual allocation.

A student who is not on tuition benefit in the Fall, but is on tuition benefit the Spring, is eligible for 12 credits of tuition benefit over Spring and Summer. If they enroll in just 9 hours in Spring, they would have 3 credits available in summer.

TBP DOES NOT COVER:

- Differential tuition or specialized program fees.
- Under TBP, graduate credit hours are always charged at resident rates, regardless of the student’s residency status. However, non-resident **RAs who have exceeded 84 cumulative credit hours will receive a surcharge of the non-resident portion of their tuition.** This condition will be implemented in the semester when cumulative registration exceeds 84 credit hours as a **University of Utah graduate student.** The graduate student is responsible for paying any non-resident surcharges that are incurred due to the 84 credit hour rule. 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.

## SUMMER COURSES AND DISSERTATION TUITION

The following items apply to all graduate students, regardless of whether they are on TBP:

- **Dissertations courses and summer courses are always charge at resident rates, regardless of student residency Status.**
• Tuition for dissertation courses is charged at a reduced rate. See the Financial and Business Services (FBS) tuition tables and calculators for additional details.

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.

Fall 2020 Minimum Support Levels*:

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

* Due to covid-19, Fall 2020 rates will hold at a 0% increase over the prior academic year. Spring/Summer 2021 rates will be confirmed based upon future University Budget Guidance.

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

4. $7,950 per semester: 100% tuition benefit
5. $5,962 per semester: 75% tuition benefit
6. $3,975 per semester: 50% tuition benefit

No tuition benefit is granted to students receiving less than $3,975 for the semester for the Fall 2020 semester. 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 (9314, 9416,
9330, and 9417), 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;
- Maintenance of status of being in good standing in the graduate program, including completion of all required milestone exams and program requirements before departmental deadlines, and maintenance of a 3.0 GPA or higher (except where otherwise approved, such as a 2.0 GPA in the Law School) in the program. 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 (semester) 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).

All classifications of TBP-eligible assistantships can qualify for summer tuition benefit, provided they have a qualifying assistantship in the summer, and have at least 3 credit hours remaining for the year. A student could potentially use 9 in Fall, 9 in Spring, and 6 in summer for a total of 24.

Summer semesters do not count against the total number of TBP semesters that a student is allocated.

**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. Eligibility ultimately depends on the availability of funding at the department level. These guidelines are not meant as a guarantee of eligibility or available funding.

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 data entry 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 (tuitionbenefit@gradschool.utah.edu), 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, it is the Department/Program’s responsibility to pursue one of the following options:

1) If the student is appointed as an RA and their stipend is paid for by a research grant, the PI of the grant can pay the tuition directly from their grant funds. In this case, the department may add the student to xTBP (Extended Tuition Benefit) in order to pay the tuition directly from the grant. The Office of Sponsored Projects has posted guidelines for paying tuition from grant funds.

2) It is also allowable for the tuition to be paid by departmental funds, reimbursed overhead, or through a PI’s directly out of their startup account fund. This can be done by adding the student to xTBP and supplying an eligible chartfield for tuition payment.

3) If no other option is available, 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 allows 3 credit hours enrollment of dissertation coursework as an alternative to the standard full time graduate student status requirement (9 credit hours).