



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Operating Policy and Procedure

OP 70.29: Employee Tuition Assistance Program

DATE: December 12, 2018

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to establish an Employee Tuition Assistance Program.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in July of even-numbered years by the Assistant Vice President for Human Resources, the Managing Director of Student Business Services, and the Chief Accounting Officer with substantive revisions forwarded to the Vice President for Administration & Finance and Chief Financial Officer and the Chief of Staff and Associate Vice President for Administration.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Definitions

a. Eligible Employee

An eligible employee is one who meets all of the following criteria:

- (1) Must remain in good academic standing, including meeting the Financial Aid GPA qualifications of Satisfactory Academic Progress for continued awards per Texas Education Code 54.2001.
- (2) Must be in compliance with [OP 70.41, Employee Training and Development](#), regarding employee enrollment;
- (3) Must have employment with TTU, TTUHSC, TTUHSC El Paso, or the TTU System Administration at full-time benefits-eligible status for six (6) continuous months prior to the census date of the term, or according to payroll guidelines, for which the tuition/fee exemptions under the Employee Tuition Assistance Program are applied; and
- (4) Must be a full-time benefits-eligible employee who is defined as an employee who works for a state institution of higher education and who is normally scheduled to work a total of at least 40 hours per week in one position, as determined under the Government Code, Section 659.0411.

b. Eligible Enrollment

- (1) Eligible programs include undergraduate or graduate level programs offered by Texas Tech University, as defined in the course catalog and resulting in a degree, certification, or certificate.

- (2) Courses offered by the Texas Tech University School of Law are excluded.

c. Permitted Courses

Except as provided in section 2.d., a permitted course includes the following:

- (1) Undergraduate courses offered by Texas Tech University; and
- (2) Graduate or doctoral courses offered by Texas Tech University, excluding courses offered by the Texas Tech University School of Law.
- (3) Courses, whether undergraduate or graduate, must be eligible for formula funding.

2. **General Policy**

a. Employee Scholarship Program

The Employee Tuition Assistance Program replaces the Employee Scholarship Program, but it does not change the Employee Dependent Scholarship Program. Please refer to [OP 62.17, Payment of Scholarships, Fellowship Grants, and Awards](#), for Employee Dependent Scholarship information.

b. Employee Tuition Assistance (ETA) Program

- (1) The Employee Tuition Assistance Program exempts employees from tuition and fees, excluding program fees, special instruction fees, and off-campus field trip and travel fees, for **one course** per term up to a maximum of four semester credit hours (SCH) during any fall, spring, or summer term and up to a maximum of ten SCH for any academic year. Summer term includes all parts of term occurring between May and August.
- (2) The program will not pay Graduate Tuition charged on graduate level courses but will cover State and Designated Tuition for all course levels.
- (3) The program will **not** pay Non-Resident Tuition charges.
- (4) There is no limit on the number of terms.
- (5) Program criteria:
 - Must be an eligible employee according to the guidelines in 1.a., and
 - Must have eligible enrollment according to the guidelines in 1.b.
 - Undergraduate students:
 - First semester to receive employee tuition assistance: An employee who meets the above criteria, including the six (6) continuous month employment criteria, is eligible to receive the ETA benefit during their first semester regardless of degree plan status; and
 - Subsequent semesters: If an employee has received the ETA benefit for a previous term (regardless of changes to the program) then he/she is eligible

to receive the benefit in subsequent terms only if the employee is enrolled in an eligible program as defined in 1.b.(1) as verified by admission status prior to the census date of the term.

- Graduate students:
 - Graduate students not yet admitted to a degree, certification, or certificate program (classified as GTMP or graduate temporary) will receive the employee tuition assistance benefit for one term. If the employee is not enrolled in an eligible program as defined in 1.b.(1) by the second enrolled term (regardless of changes to the program), the employee will not qualify for the ETA benefit.

c. Benefits for Enrollment at TTU

Student Business Services manages this process.

- (1) Eligible employees taking a permitted course offered by TTU do not need to apply for the Employee Tuition Assistance Program. Student Business Services will identify eligible employees and apply the tuition/fee exemption by the 12th class day.
- (2) If registration occurs less than 7 days prior to the first day of class, the employee should notify Student Business Services of his/her employee eligibility to avoid potential cancellation. Employees should monitor their TTU email for cancellation messages and take appropriate action accordingly.
- (3) An eligible employee must have enrolled for the current term no later than the census date of the term (12th class day for fall or spring terms and the 4th class day during a summer part of term) in order to receive ETA benefits. Any employee who registers after this date will not be eligible to receive the benefit for that term.
- (4) Elect to Pay for Services – If an eligible employee meets the enrollment criteria and wants to use any of the services for which the fee has been exempted, such as athletic events or the student recreation center, the employee will need to submit an *Elect to Pay Form*. The fees associated with the elected service will become the employee's responsibility to pay upon such election. The *Elect to Pay Form* and payment must be provided to Student Business Services.

d. Benefits for Eligible Employees whose Primary Worksite is Located Outside of Lubbock County and are Enrolled at an Institution Other than TTU

The employee's department manages this process.

Eligible employees whose primary worksite is located outside of Lubbock County may attend a Texas public four-year university or an accredited Texas public community college. If a Texas public institution of higher education is not available in the area of the employee's primary worksite, the employee may attend any accredited four-year institution. Eligible employees will receive a \$300 scholarship during any fall, spring, or summer term. Summer term includes all parts of term occurring between May and August. There is no limit on the number of terms.

Eligible employees taking a permitted course offered under this section are responsible for the timely payment of all tuition and fees.

e. Reimbursement Process

- (1) Reimbursement will not exceed the state educational institution rate in effect at the time of enrollment.
 - (2) Employees should seek approval from their supervisor and department prior to enrolling in the Tuition Reimbursement Program.
 - (3) The employee's supervisor is responsible for completing an *Employee One-Time Payment System* (EOPS) request. Proof of course completion should be used as justification for the reimbursement.
 - (4) Reimbursements for dropped or failed classes will be classified as non-qualifying and collection by Texas Tech may result.
 - (5) Reimbursements will be reduced or repayment required for any financial assistance or scholarship awards received by the participant.
- f. Qualified tuition reduction pursuant to Internal Revenue Code § 117(d) for undergraduate level courses is nontaxable. Tuition reduction/exemptions for graduate level courses and other payments or reimbursements may be made to eligible participants during the plan year for all or part of the cost of attending qualified educational courses up to an annual amount not to exceed the amount defined by the Internal Revenue Service as excludable under a § 127 qualified plan. Students may refer to Internal Revenue Code § 127 for additional information.

3. **Right to Change Policy**

TTU reserves the right to interpret, change, modify, amend, or rescind any policy, in whole or in part, at any time without the consent of employees.