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POLICY TITLE USC Tuition Assistance Policy
SCOPE OF POLICY USC System
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RESPONSIBLE OFFICER Vice President for Human Resources
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE Division of Human Resources

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PURPOSE

This document sets forth the policy regarding tuition assistance for faculty and staff in full-time equivalent (FTE), research grant, and time-limited positions to afford them the opportunity to further their education and their opportunity for advancement within the University of South Carolina per the State of SC Tuition Assistance Guidelines.

DEFINITIONS

Faculty: University personnel who are engaged in research, instruction both inside and outside the classroom, service and/or administration. Faculty can be further classified as having tenure track, professional-track, or honorific appointments.

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE): A position authorized by the General Assembly, which is expressed as a numerical value as a percentage of time in hours and of funds.

Research Grant Position (RGP): A type of non-FTE position that is funded by federal grants, public charity grants, private foundation grants, research grants, medical school practice plans, individual private gifts, externally generated revenue for service or testing activities, and grant-generated revenue, or a combination of these funding sources. RGP employees are not covered employees.

Time-Limited Position (TL): A full- or part-time non-FTE position hired with time-limited project funding approved or authorized by the appropriate State authority. TL employees are not covered employees.

POLICY STATEMENT

A. Faculty and staff are eligible for tuition assistance regardless of protected classes as outlined in university policies [CR 1.00 Policy Against Discrimination Harassment & Sexual Misconduct](#) and [CR 2.00 Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination](#).

B. Eligibility

To be eligible to receive tuition assistance, faculty and staff must:

1. be employed for at least 30 hours per week in an FTE, research grant or time-limited position,
2. have successfully completed six months of employment based on the employee's USC hire date in the HR/Payroll system (previous state service at USC or another state agency does not qualify as time toward the minimum six-month employment period), and
3. have been admitted to the University of South Carolina through the appropriate admissions process.
 - a. Faculty who have received notice of non-reappointment are not eligible to participate in the Tuition Assistance Program for the academic term(s) following notification of non- reappointment.
 - b. For purposes of this policy, ROTC faculty who are employed by the United States armed services, are assigned to the university on military Permanent Change of Duty Station Orders, and are considered faculty, having affiliate status and teaching accredited courses to students on the university campus, are eligible for tuition assistance.

C. Program Provisions

1. Eligible faculty and staff may take up to four (4) three-credit-hour courses (four hours in the case of a lab course) per academic year or the equivalent at no charge, on a space-available basis, not to exceed sixteen credit hours in an academic year. Participants taking additional courses will pay the regular tuition rate in effect at the time of enrollment.

2. The regular application fee will be waived; however, the Tuition Assistance Program does not pay for other expenses incurred or required by the course such as textbooks, field trips, laboratory fees, technology fees, etc. Special fees for admission in some graduate areas will not be waived.
3. Faculty and staff must be admitted through the appropriate admissions process and complete an application for the Tuition Assistance Program.
4. Participants may enroll in a course for academic credit, may audit a course, or may select the pass-fail option. NOTE: University regulations may prohibit the use of individual option pass-fail graded courses toward a degree program. Faculty and staff are encouraged to consult the appropriate graduate or undergraduate bulletin for other regulations which may apply.
5. Class Scheduling
 - a. Whenever possible, faculty and staff are asked to enroll in classes during hours which do not conflict with other university obligations; however, when an approved class cannot be scheduled during off hours, the department chair or director may elect to adjust the work schedule. The unit may deny participation in the Tuition Assistance Program if the scheduled time of the course would interfere with the academic or business needs of the department.
 - b. When an approved class cannot be scheduled during non-work hours and it is not feasible to adjust work schedules, participants who earn annual leave may be allowed to take annual leave for the purpose of attending class. Authorized leave without pay for up to 10 days may also be used to attend class. Both annual leave and authorized leave without pay must be approved in advance by the department chair or director.
6. An enrolled faculty or staff member who resigns, is dismissed, or otherwise leaves the university will be allowed to continue in the course tuition free; however, he or she will not be permitted to enroll in additional courses under this program.
7. This benefit/award may be taxable. Faculty and staff who participate should contact their tax preparer for guidance on this issue.

PROCEDURES

Procedures, forms, and general guidance related to this policy can be found on the USC Division of Human Resources website at <http://hr.sc.edu/>.

RELATED UNIVERSITY, STATE AND FEDERAL POLICIES

[SC Code of Laws Section 59-111-15](#)

[SC Code of Laws Section 59-112-60](#)

[State of SC Tuition Assistance Guidelines](#)

[CR 1.00 Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment & Sexual Misconduct](#)

[CR 2.00 Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination](#)

HISTORY OF REVISIONS

| DATE OF REVISION | REASON FOR REVISION |
|-------------------------|--|
| July 01, 1995 | New Policy Approval |
| August 2013 | Substantive Revision |
| July 31, 2019 | Updated to new format |
| December 13, 2019 | Portion of this policy pertaining to faculty and staff has been placed into the new HR 1.68 policy |
| June 17, 2024 | Updated to include RGP and TL positions as eligible and to standardize eligibility for faculty and staff. Added definitions and links to related policies. |