

Employee Tuition Assistance Program Guidelines

A. Purpose

To encourage and support The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) faculty and staff to continue their education in order to update and/or improve their skills and acquire new knowledge to keep pace with changes in their job functions, and for professional growth and advancement.

B. Application Process

Employees must complete an electronic application each semester by navigating to [myUTRGV](#), ePAF icon and selecting “click here” for Tuition Assistance. The dates listed under application period have been established for each semester in advance to facilitate the application process. Application period dates are reviewed and approved each academic year to ensure alignment with UTRGV tuition deadlines. The Employee Tuition Assistance Program will not process and/or reimburse scholarship awards for credit courses taken at UTRGV or an institution other than UTRGV unless the application has been approved in advance during the application period dates established for the semester the credit course is taken. The Office of Human Resources will send a reminder by email, through university announcements, and will post on the HR website the application dates before the deadline. The tuition assistance application must be submitted by the dates published for each semester. Complete applications and supporting documentation including transcripts, **supervisor approval, mandated compliance trainings, current performance appraisal on file with the Office of Human Resources or Office of the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, Student Success, and P-16 Integration** must be submitted and/or completed by the application period deadline. It is the employee’s responsibility to ensure that the application is complete, including supervisor’s approval, as incomplete applications will not be considered and will be ineligible to receive tuition assistance. The Nepotism Form must be completed and submitted electronically.

B.1. Application Period

Summer Mini & Summer Module I	Monday, March 30, 2020 – Friday, April 10, 2020
Summer I, Summer Module II & Summer III	Monday, April 27, 2020 – Friday, May 08, 2020
Summer II	Monday, June 08, 2020 – Friday, June 19, 2020
Fall & Fall Module I	Monday, July 27, 2020 – August 07, 2020
Fall Module II	Monday, September 21, 2020 – Friday, October 02, 2020
Spring & Spring Module I	Monday, November 30, 2020 – Friday, December 11, 2020
Spring Module II	Monday, February 15, 2021 – Friday, February 26, 2021
Summer Mini & Summer Module I	Monday, March 29, 2021 – Friday, April 09, 2021
Summer I & Summer III	Monday, April 26, 2021 – Friday, May 07, 2021
Summer II & Summer Module II	Monday, June 07, 2021 – Friday, June 18, 2021

1. This policy applies to all UTRGV full-time benefits eligible employees who have satisfactorily completed twelve months of consecutive full-time employment by the first day of the course start date for the semester stated in the electronic tuition assistance application. This policy also applies to faculty in a full-time benefits eligible position who have completed one year of academic service by the first day of the credit course start date and who have been reappointed. Please reference [ADM 06-401 Academic Titles](#) for definition of faculty appointments and titles. This program does not apply to positions that require student status as a condition of employment.
2. Employees may apply for tuition assistance for up to nine credit hours per academic fiscal year. Credit hours are to be used within a fiscal year/academic year. Credit hours not used within the fiscal/academic year cannot roll over to the next year. Credit hours are not cumulative or retroactive among fiscal/academic years.

3. Employees applying for courses with an institution other than UTRGV must submit an electronic tuition assistance application during the application period for the semester the credit course will be taken. The application must be submitted during the application period date that is prior to the course start date, if the semester start date does not match UTRGV semester start date. Employees who will be taking courses at an institution other than UTRGV, will not be eligible to receive tuition assistance if we offer a similar [Graduate](#) or [Undergraduate Degree Program](#) at our institution. Courses will also be limited to those which are critical for completion of the employee's pre-approved professional goals. Employees must submit legible copies of their most recent transcript to support their application. Transcripts must be submitted to employee.tuition@utrgv.edu by the application period deadline. The approved scholarship will be processed through a reimbursement on completion of the approved credit course for the semester with submission of grade reports, legible copies of an unofficial transcript and statement of charges. Reimbursement is limited to the cost of a three-credit course at UTRGV or the other institution, whichever amount is less. Only amounts being spent out of pocket, excluding grants and financial aid, will be considered for reimbursement.
4. Employees taking undergraduate courses must maintain a G.P.A. of at least 2.0. Employees taking graduate courses must maintain a G.P.A. of at least 3.0. If the employee is an incoming student with no previous higher education record, the GPA will be reviewed once the semester is completed. Employees who do not have an academic record with UTRGV and who will be taking a credit hour course with UTRGV for the first time are required to submit legible copies of their most recent transcript to support their application. Transcripts must be submitted to employee.tuition@utrgv.edu by the application period deadline.
5. Staff employees must have a current Performance Appraisal on file with the Office of Human Resources indicating the employee is meeting their job expectations (in a scale of 1-5 rating a minimum of 3 is needed). Faculty employees must have a current Performance Appraisal on file with the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs indicating the employee is meeting their job expectations. Employees must have a Performance Appraisal on file by the application period deadline. All employees must be in compliance with all mandated training by the application period deadline.
6. After approval, the Office of Human Resources will notify the Financial Aid Office, who will process payment for courses taken with UTRGV. Tuition assistance will only cover for tuition and mandatory fees of up to three credit hours per semester and up to nine credit hours per fiscal year for courses taken with UTRGV or an institution other than UTRGV.
7. It is the responsibility of the employee to notify the Office of Human Resources of any changes to the class listed on the application and to submit an electronic Request for Course Substitution form to the Office of Human Resources. The Request for Course Substitution form must be submitted to the Office of Human Resources within five business days from the date of the change in course occurs. Submission of the form after the five-day period will not be considered. Course substitutions may be considered only within the level for which they were originally funded. Such substitution approvals are not automatic. Any authorized changes are the responsibility of the employee.
8. Employees must sign a statement agreeing to repay all funds if they do not complete or pass the course with a minimum course grade of "C" for undergraduate and "B" for graduate courses. Repayment will be accomplished through a reversal of the scholarship. The employee will be responsible for making the payment to their student account. If employment is terminated prior to completing the course, the funds will be deducted from the employee's final paycheck.
 - a.) As part of the temporary grading structure due to COVID-19 crisis, employees who choose to elect a "Pass" as their final grade will be considered eligible for tuition assistance the following semester. Similarly, those who elect to receive a "Fail" as their final grade will need to repay all funds awarded for the semester through a reversal of the scholarship.
9. Employees who completely withdraw from all classes need to notify the Office of Human Resources so that the funds may be repaid through a scholarship reversal. Employees who withdraw or drop their class will not be eligible to apply for tuition assistance for the following semester. Employees who end their course with an incomplete must complete any course work within the fiscal year of when the assistance was given or pay back the funds through a scholarship reversal.
10. The Office of Human Resources will review grades and legible copies of transcripts at the end of each semester for courses listed on the application and take appropriate action for those employees who withdrew, have an incomplete grade or did not pass the course with a minimum grade of "C" for undergraduate courses and "B" for graduate courses. For those employees who are going to obtain their doctorate degree, the dissertation course will be paid only when the employee gets a "Pass" grade.

11. The Tuition Assistance Account will have a specific budgeted amount per fiscal year. All funds available per semester will be distributed evenly among employees who meet all program eligibility requirements and who apply during the application period dates approved for the fiscal year. Approved scholarship awards are not to exceed nine credit hours in the fiscal year. Scholarship award amounts are determined based on the UTRGV tuition and fees table; funds are not approved based on the actual value of the credit hour course. Applications will not be kept on a waiting list during the year. Applicants must apply each semester.
12. Per IRS Publication 15-B, tuition awarded in excess of the allowable IRS educational assistance limit of \$5,250 per calendar year, will be subject to federal income tax withholding, Social Security taxes, Medicare taxes and W-2 reporting. The applicable tax deductions will be processed and collected on the employee's next available payroll cycle.
 - a.) Keep in mind, it is the employee's responsibility to monitor how much tuition assistance they have received throughout the calendar year. Once the tax limit of \$5250 has been reached, then it will be up to the employee to decide whether to continue applying to receive tuition assistance for the remainder of the calendar year.
13. There is no appeal process for tuition assistance by UTRGV. All decisions are final.