

## 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 website](#), clicking on the HR Portal icon, and selecting “Employee Tuition Assistance Program tile on the homepage. The dates listed under the 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 training**, and **current performance appraisal on file** with the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic 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 the 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

Fall & Fall Module I	Monday, July 22nd, 2024 – Friday, August 2nd, 2024
Fall Module II	Monday, September 16th, 2024 – Friday, September 27th, 2024
Spring & Spring Module I	Monday, December 2nd, 2024 – Friday, December 13th, 2024
Spring Module II	Monday, February 3rd, 2025 – Friday, February 14th, 2025
Summer Mini	Monday, April 14th, 2025 – Friday, April 25th, 2025
Summer Module I	Monday, March 31st, 2025 – Friday, April 11th, 2025
Summer I & Summer III	Monday, May 5th, 2025 – Friday, May 16th, 2025
Summer Module II	Tuesday, May 26th, 2025 – Friday, June 6th, 2025
Summer II	Monday, June 16th, 2025 – Friday, June 27th, 2025

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 the definition of faculty appointments and titles. This program does not apply to positions that require student status as a condition of employment.
2. Applicants to ETAP must be already enrolled and admitted into the academic program to be eligible for funds. Also, the Office of Human Resources does not manage or control admittance into the programs or can make changes to decisions made by UTRGV colleges or any other institution regarding admittance and/or enrollment.

3. 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. Once the nine-credit hour limit has been reached, employees will be eligible to reapply to ETAP at the beginning of the next fiscal year.
4. 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. ETAP guidelines refer to a program equal/or similar to an existing one at UTRGV and it is not based on in person/or online modality or student preference, but rather availability of the academic program. The tuition reimbursement approval will be limited to the courses that are related to 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](mailto: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 the submission of grade reports, legible copies of an unofficial transcript, and a 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.
5. 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](mailto:employee.tuition@utrgv.edu) by the application period deadline.
6. 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.
7. After approval, the Office of Human Resources will notify the Scholarships Office, who will process awards for courses taken at UTRGV. Tuition assistance will only cover 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.
8. 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 a 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. Failure to notify the Office of Human Resources of such change and the submission of a Course Substitution Form will result in ineligibility for tuition assistance the following semester.
9. 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 paying back the funds and 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 and/or the employee's vacation settlement payout.
10. Employees who completely withdraw from all classes or drop a course that was listed on their ETAP application 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 classes 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.

11. 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.
12. 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. **NOTICE: It is a federal financial aid policy not to award students in excess of their need or overall cost of attendance (COA). Students who have received aid (including institutional, state, federal, and private sources) in excess of their need or COA will have any UTRGV institutional scholarship(s) or federal student loans reduced or canceled. To learn more on how scholarships affect financial aid, visit <https://www.utrgv.edu/scholarships/resources/effects-on-financial-aid/index.htm>**
13. 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, that 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 to continue applying to receive tuition assistance for the remainder of the calendar year.
14. There is no appeal process for tuition assistance by UTRGV. All decisions are final.