

JACKSONVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY

Manual of Policies and Procedures

**POLICY NUMBER:** I:03:02

**DATE:** April 1989

**REVISION/REVIEW DATES:** Mar 1993, May 1997, Oct 2002, Nov 2008, Aug 2011, Mar

2012, Oct 2013, Dec 2014, Aug 2017, Nov. 2018, June 2019, August 2019, January 2020, January 2021

**SUBJECT: Tuition Assistance Program Policy**

**APPROVED: Dr. Don C. Killingsworth, Jr., President**

**PURPOSE**

The Purpose of this Policy is to establish guidelines for the administration of Jacksonville State University's (JSU) Tuition Assistance Program, which is designed as an educational benefit to enhance the total benefits package afforded to JSU employees, JSU Service Retirees, and ROTC employees and their eligible dependents. This Policy serves as a strategic tool to recruit and retain outstanding employees, while enabling JSU to foster the professional growth and development of its eligible employees.

**POLICY**

Jacksonville State University offers tuition assistance as part of the fringe benefit package for regular full-time employees (faculty and staff), and ROTC employees who have been employed for at least one year. This Policy allows eligible participants and their dependents the opportunity to further their education by attending classes at JSU. JSU reserves the right to cease providing tuition assistance at any time or to otherwise revise this policy.

<b><u>DEFINITIONS</u></b>	
<b>Eligibility Date:</b>	Date after one calendar year of continuous full-time employment
<b>Eligible Dependent:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Spouse<sup>1</sup>; and/or</li><li>• Unmarried, unemancipated children/foster-children/stepchildren, up to age 26</li></ul>
<b>Eligible Employee:</b>	A full-time, benefit eligible employee with at least one (1) year of full-time service
<b>Service Retiree:</b>	JSU retirees receiving benefits from the Teacher's Retirement System
<b>Program Participant:</b>	An employee or dependent established as eligible (as defined above) and is receiving tuition assistance

<sup>1</sup> The definition of spouse is dependent on current state law to align with eligibility for other benefits (e.g., PEEHIP).

**Proof of Dependent Eligibility:**

Spouse	Marriage Certificate
Unmarried, Unemancipated Child, under age 26	Birth Certificate
Unmarried, Unemancipated Step Child	Birth Certificate and Marriage Certificate
Unmarried, Unemancipated Foster Child	Documentation from appropriate Foster Care Agency/Authority

**Employee / Service Retiree Eligibility:**

- All regular full-time employees who have successfully completed one (1) year of full-time service are eligible. Participation is contingent upon supervisory approval and verification of eligibility status.
- Jacksonville State University retirees (Service Retirees) receiving benefits from the Teachers' Retirement System
- Temporary, adjunct, and part-time employees are **not** eligible for tuition assistance

**Dependent Eligibility:**

- Eligible dependents of JSU employees (as defined above), Service Retirees, and ROTC employees are eligible
- Eligible children of deceased employees, who died while in service to JSU and who held a full-time regular position, or who died while receiving retirement benefits or disability benefits, may receive tuition assistance until age 26.

**Eligibility Limitations:** Dependents become ineligible for tuition assistance if they:

- 1) cease to be dependents
- 2) when for any dependent other than a spouse, the person reaches age 26 prior to the beginning of the semester

**Eligibility Dates:** Employees become eligible for Tuition Assistance after one calendar year of continuous full-time employment.

- An employee must be in an eligible employment status at the University on the **first** day of class (Fall, Spring, or Summer semester) in order to be eligible for tuition assistance.
- Eligibility of dependent status is established on the **first** day of class
  - If a dependent loses dependent status prior to the first day of class, he/she will not receive tuition assistance even if previously approved;
  - If a dependent or employee becomes ineligible after the first day of class, the student will become ineligible for tuition assistance in future terms, even if previously approved and awarded.

- If an employee or dependent withdraws from a course, tuition assistance will only be adjusted if the charges for the course are reduced.
- Employees are responsible for notifying the Department of Human Resources (HR) regarding any information that would affect eligibility for this educational benefit.
  - If it is later determined that the employee was not eligible, the educational benefit will be recalled and the appropriate charges will be billed to the program participant's student account.

**GPA Eligibility Requirements:**

Eligible Program Participants without an established Institutional GPA will receive tuition assistance for the 1<sup>st</sup> applied/eligible academic year. If a student entering the university has a GPA earned from previous attendance (including dual enrollment and police academy), the established Institutional GPA will be used to determine the eligibility for tuition assistance.

After the first year, eligibility is based on cumulative institutional GPA. Employees and dependents will receive tuition assistance based on the following minimum GPA:

- Undergraduate                      Cumulative Institutional GPA of 2.0
- Graduate                              Cumulative Institutional GPA of 3.0
- Doctoral                              Cumulative Institutional GPA of 3.0

The determination date for GPA will be established annually, after completion of the summer term. If the GPA drops below the minimum requirements, the employee or dependent will not be eligible for tuition assistance for the upcoming academic year.

**Application Requirements for Tuition Assistance:** An application for tuition assistance is made for an academic year and must be submitted for each future academic year. To apply for tuition assistance:

- Program Participants must complete the electronic [Tuition Assistance Form](#) located in MyJSU/Employee Tab/Human Resources.
- The electronic form must be submitted **no later than the first day of class** for the first semester/sub-semester tuition assistance is being requested.
- The electronic form must be routed (to a JSU email) and signed by the dependent (if request is for a dependent) or by your supervisor (if the request is for the employee).
- Students approved for Tuition Assistance must email to notify [scholarships@jsu.edu](mailto:scholarships@jsu.edu) if:
  1. registered for classes outside their student classification – e.g. Graduate Student enrolled in an Undergraduate course, or
  2. changes to the class schedule is made after the application of tuition assistance to the student account.

Pilot terms, such as Winter Term, will be included in the applicable terms for Tuition Assistance. Any eligible employee or dependent that has been approved to receive Tuition Assistance for the current academic year is eligible to receive Tuition Assistance for the pilot term. A separate application is not required for this term. Tuition Assistance will be applied as a tuition exemption/waiver, rather than a scholarship, for this term only.

**Process:**

- 1) The Registrar's Office will determine the GPA and verify academic record prior to forwarding the Form to the Department of Human Resources (HR).
  - An Incomplete (I) is not associated with a grade and has no effect on a student's GPA. However, for the purposes of this Policy, at the time of the GPA verification if a student has an Incomplete (I), that Incomplete (I) will be calculated as an F.
    - o For example, a student has three A's and one Incomplete. The GPA will be calculated as 3.0, not as a 4.0.
- 2) HR is responsible for verifying employment records prior to forwarding the form to the Financial Aid Office.
- 3) The Financial Aid Office will apply the tuition assistance to the student's account.

There will be no retroactive tuition assistance.

**Amount of Tuition Assistance** 100% of tuition is covered for the allowed credit hours listed below for employees and dependents.

Employees:

Level	Tuition (credit hours)	Fees
Undergraduate:	Up to 15 credit hours per semester; including DL tuition	General University Fee
Graduate:	Up to 9 credit hours per semester	General University Fee
Doctoral:	Up to 9 doctoral hours per semester	General University Fee

\*Employees are responsible for any course or program fees, and, if desired, membership fees to the Recreation and Fitness Center.

Eligible Dependents:

Level	Allowed hours	Fees
Dual Enrollment:	Up to 16 credit hours per semester; including DL tuition	Not covered by tuition assistance
Undergraduate:	Up to 16 credit hours per semester; including DL tuition	Not covered by tuition assistance
Graduate:	Up to 12 credit hours per semester	Not covered by tuition assistance
Doctoral:	Up to 9 doctoral hours per semester	Not covered by tuition assistance

**NOTE:** Tuition assistance for graduate courses may be considered taxable income by the IRS; JSU will follow IRS guidelines regarding taxability.

**Awarding Tuition Assistance and Other Scholarships:** Tuition assistance is only in the form of tuition reduction and will not be paid as cash. Tuition assistance will be applied to the student's account before scholarships from other institutional funds. Students receiving institutional merit aid in addition to tuition assistance may apply the institutional merit aid to cover, up to and including, the following charges: General University fees, housing, meal plan and course required materials from the bookstore (note: no refunds will be disbursed for any

unused institution merit aid). Students who receive scholarships from a non-university funded source may receive a refund for any excess funds available from the non-university funded source.

**Employee Class Attendance:** The University will allow employees to take only one course during work hours, but the employee's supervisor approval is required. An employee taking a course during working hours must make up that time within the workweek; those hours may be charged to annual leave, accrued compensatory leave, or a supervisor may adjust the employee's established work schedule, as long as this does not conflict with departmental operations. (See Class Attendance Policy 1:03:01 for details).

**Auditing:** Tuition assistance does not apply to auditing classes.

**Limitations Regarding Faculty Enrollment in Doctorate of Nursing Program (“DNP”):**

Please be advised that the School of Health Professions and Wellness (“SHWP”) has implemented a policy addendum which only permits one SHWP faculty member per cycle to enroll in the DNP. The purpose of this addendum is to protect the integrity of the DNP program by minimizing ethical issues arising from numerous faculty enrolling in the DNP at the same time and to preserve a line of demarcation between students and faculty.

Please contact the Associate Dean/ Chief Nursing Administrator for further information about the DNP selection process. The SHPW also encourages nursing faculty who are interested in pursuing their terminal degree to consider other programs at the University or DNP programs at other institutions.

**RESPONSIBILITY**

This policy is the responsibility of the Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration.

**EVALUATION**

This policy will be evaluated biennially by the Department of Human Resources.