

**Tuition Assistance Program Policy**

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<th>Mission Statement &amp; Purpose</th>
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<td>As part of its mission statement the University System of Georgia is committed to “the recruitment, hiring, and retention of the best possible faculty, staff and administration.” The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia is committed to creating a more educated Georgia. Both of these commitments extend internally, as well as, externally. As part of its desire to meet its employees evolving needs, the University System of Georgia (USG) has established an educational assistance program, the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). The purpose of TAP is to foster the professional growth and development of its eligible employees.</td>
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Section 8.2.17, Career Development, and Section 8.2.19, Tuition Assistance Program, of The Board of Regents Policy Manual contain the system-wide policy guidelines for this program.

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<th>Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) Registration</th>
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<td>Each “teaching institution” will establish its TAP employee registration period. This period will begin a minimum of three (3) days immediately prior to the first day of classes to enroll in TAP available classes. The specific dates for the employee registration period at each “teaching institution” are listed at <a href="http://www.usg.edu/hr/benefits/tuition_assistance_program">http://www.usg.edu/hr/benefits/tuition_assistance_program</a>. TAP enrollment is granted on a space-available basis.</td>
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<tr>
<th>University System of Georgia (USG) Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) Registration Form</th>
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<td>There is a single University System of Georgia TAP registration form. The TAP registration form is located at <a href="http://www.usg.edu/hr/benefits/tuition_assistance_program">http://www.usg.edu/hr/benefits/tuition_assistance_program</a>.</td>
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<th>Work Schedule Arrangements</th>
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<td>To the extent possible, no employee should take a course(s) that would require him/her to be absent from work during regularly scheduled work hours. If attendance in an approved TAP course requires that an employee be absent from his/her assigned workstation during normal work hours, various accommodations may be possible, depending upon the needs of the unit/department and of the employee. The supervisor must certify that the employee’s participation in TAP will not adversely affect departmental services, or, result in undue hardship for other employees. Alternate work arrangements will only be granted at the discretion of the immediate supervisor. Supervisors are encouraged to make a reasonable effort to find an appropriate work schedule accommodation.</td>
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<th>Tax Implications for Participants</th>
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<td>The federal government currently allows up to $5,250 annually, in employer-provided educational assistance benefits, to be “tax free” to TAP participants. This applies to both undergraduate and graduate-level courses. An employee must generally pay taxes on employer-provided educational assistance benefits in excess of $5,250. This amount will be included in your wages (Box 1 of your Form W-2). A tax professional should be consulted for further information concerning taxable tuition.</td>
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<th>Ineligible Programs</th>
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<td>Employees may not enroll in certain programs or courses of study under the TAP policy.</td>
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<td>Those ineligible programs, or courses of study, include academic courses in the following professional schools: dental, law, medical, pharmacy, veterinary, or executive total cost programs. Other ineligible programs, or courses of study, include: workshops, seminars, continuing education courses, management development programs, special</td>
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examinations for admissions to degree programs, or private consultant refresher courses to take examinations such as C.P.A. certification, admissions examinations, and related types of programs or classes. Support for these types of programs may be provided by departmental policies.

### Appeals

An employee may not appeal any institutional decision regarding the TAP program to the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. Each USG institution will utilize its internal review process to review TAP application denials.

### University System of Georgia TAP Coordinators

The name, title, address, e-mail address, telephone number, and FAX number for each institutional TAP Coordinator may be found at [http://www.usg.edu/hr/benefits/tuition_assistance program/](http://www.usg.edu/hr/benefits/tuition_assistance_program/).

### TAP Program Regulations

#### Eligibility

The tuition assistance program is available to full time benefits-eligible employees of the USG who have successfully completed at least six (6) months of employment in a benefits-eligible position, as of the date of the TAP application deadline for the desired academic semester.

#### Process

- An employee will be required to go through the regular student admissions process, prior to applying for TAP; and
- An employee must complete a TAP application for each semester in attendance.

Due to the current shortage of nursing faculty in the state of Georgia, the Tuition Assistance Program is available to Part-Time Nursing Faculty members seeking a graduate degree in Nursing. Any part-time nursing faculty member taking advantage of this program shall be required to work full time within the University System at least two (2) years following receipt of the graduate degree in Nursing (or Education, if such would allow one to teach Nursing at the University level).

Participation in the Tuition Assistance Program for Nursing Faculty shall be available to part-time nursing faculty who have successfully completed at least six (6) months of employment, as of the date of the Tuition Assistance Program application deadline for the desired academic semester.

To ensure effective and smooth progression of nursing faculty recently hired by a USG nursing program and enrolled in a graduate level nursing program within the USG, the board will waive the requirement for 6 months previous employment in the USG for nursing faculty seeking to use the Tuition Assistance Program or Nursing Tuition Assistance Program to take graduate level nursing courses within the USG. This waiver will apply only for nursing faculty hired prior to October 1, 2012, to ensure students can enroll in classes with TAP support for Spring Semester (January 2013). The employment requirement will be in effect for accessing the TAP after enrollment January 2013.

#### Process for Part-Time Nursing Faculty

- Part time nursing faculty not currently enrolled in a graduate level nursing education program must apply for and be admitted into chosen program of study (i.e. MSN, DNS, DNP, EdD) at USG institution of choice. Coverage for pre-requisites will be considered on a case by case basis.
Complete the Part-Time Nursing Faculty TAP application and obtain the appropriate institution level signatures in accordance with posted TAP deadlines.

Submit Part-Time Nursing TAP Application to USG Nursing TAP Coordinator at fax number 404-962-3094 no later than the deadline date for each semester (Fall July 15, Spring November 15, Summer April 15) for final approval.

Upon approval, The USG Nursing TAP Coordinator will submit to Teaching Institution TAP Coordinator, no later than 8 business days after posted TAP deadline date, part time faculty have been approved to enter into the TAP, or of any other changes to individual eligibility status for beneficiaries of the nursing TAP.

The Institutional TAP coordinator will submit the names of approved TAP Nursing participants along with other approved TAP participants for tuition waivers to be applied.

In accordance with existing TAP policy, nursing programs educating Nursing TAP beneficiaries will submit grades to the USG Nursing TAP coordinator. The USG Nursing TAP coordinator will then submit this information to appropriate leadership with the nursing program employing the part time nursing faculty.

TAP Applications must be completed every semester for which part time nursing faculty would like to take classes and access the benefit of the Nursing TAP.

**Maximum Credits**

An employee may seek approval to enroll in up to nine (9) academic semester credit hours for each of the three designated semester periods: Fall Semester, Spring Semester, and Summer Semester.

**TAP Application Deadlines**

The following University System of Georgia TAP application deadlines will apply to all University System of Georgia institutions: (If any of these dates fall on a holiday or on a weekend, the application deadline will be the last business day prior to the dates identified.)

- Fall Semester – July 15th
- Spring Semester – November 15th
- Summer Semester – April 15th

**Grade Requirements**

- An employee must receive a grade of “C”, or better, in each approved TAP course. The employee must furnish a copy of his/her grade(s) to the TAP Coordinator of the “home institution”.
- An employee who receives a grade of “D”, or below, in an approved TAP course will be ineligible to participate in the program for one semester. In an instance such as this, the TAP participant will not be personally responsible for repayment/reimbursement this course.
- An employee, who receives an “Incomplete” in an approved TAP course, will have until the end of the following semester to complete the coursework and submit his/her final course grade to the TAP Coordinator of the “home institution”. An employee must do this to continue participating in the TAP program the next academic semester.

**Other Restrictions and/or Conditions**

- TAP is a supplemental educational assistance employee program. An employee who is eligible for Pell Grants must apply his/her Pell Grant monies toward tuition and fees before receiving a TAP waiver.
- If an employee withdraws from an approved TAP course prior to its completion, the employee will be ineligible to participate in TAP for one semester.
- Eligibility for TAP participation does not guarantee admission into all University System of Georgia degree programs: * An employee must follow the policies and procedures of the “teaching institution” in which he/she enrolls to be formally accepted as a TAP participant for limited-slot enrollment programs. Upon
receiving approval to participate in a limited-slot enrollment program from the “teaching institution”, the course(s) should be listed on the TAP application.

- Participation in the TAP program does not guarantee continued employment with the University System of Georgia.

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<th>TAP Program Procedures</th>
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- **Employee**
  - Completes and signs the TAP application (available on line at www.usg.edu/employment/benefits/tuition/).
  - Submits the TAP application to his/her immediate supervisor for review.

- **Immediate Supervisor**
  - Promptly reviews the TAP application and advises the employee if his/her request is approved or denied. Immediate Supervisor & Employee
  - If an approved TAP course(s) is scheduled to meet during an employee’s regularly scheduled work hours, the immediate supervisor will advise the employee if his/her work hours must be rescheduled; or, if the employee’s class hours must be reported as annual leave (if available).

- **Immediate Supervisor**
  - Signs the approved TAP application and forwards the original document to the TAP Coordinator of the employee’s home institution by semester deadlines: * Fall Semester – July 15th * Spring Semester – November 15th * Summer Semester – April 15th

- **Immediate Supervisor & Employee**
  - Each retains a copy of the approved TAP application for departmental and personnel files.

- **TAP Coordinator of the Home Institution**
  - Verifies employee eligibility and grants “home institution” approval. Notifies the TAP Coordinator of the “teaching institution” within ten (10) business days of the application deadline.

- **TAP Coordinator of the Teaching Institution**
  - If the TAP participant enrolls in a limited-slot academic class at a “teaching institution”, the TAP Coordinator of the “teaching institution” will advise the TAP Coordinator of the “home institution” if the employee will be accepted as a class member.

- **Employee**
  - Registers for TAP course(s) during the designated employee registration period of the “teaching institution”. (Please see www.usg.edu/employment/benefits/tuition/.)

- **Employee & Immediate Supervisor**
  - If a desired course(s) is filled before the employee registration period, the employee may receive approval from his/her immediate supervisor to enroll in an alternate course(s). The employee will be required to notify his/her “home institution” TAP Coordinator in writing or by e-mail of this decision, and, the employee will be required to copy his/her immediate supervisor of the change.

- **Employee & TAP Coordinator (Home Institution)**
  - The employee must submit a copy of his/her final grade to the TAP Coordinator of the “home institution” to continue participation in the TAP program.

*The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia reserves the right to change this program, with or without notice.*
TAP Program Definitions

- **Full Time Employee**
  - A full time employee is an employee who has a 1.0 FTE (full time equivalent) work commitment.

- **Home Institution**
  - The location where the employee conducts the major portion of his/her work and/or research is considered the “home institution”. The “home institution” must be located within the State of Georgia.
  - **Exceptions:**
    - The home institution for an out-of-state employee is the employing institution located within the State of Georgia.

- **Limited-Slot Enrollment Program**
  - A limited-slot enrollment program is a degree program for which there are a limited number of spaces allowed in the program, and, for which there may be additional criteria required (such as work experience in a related field).

- **Student Fees**
  - TAP participants are identified as faculty or staff, and, their status as a student is secondary in all considerations, including student fee waivers.
  - The following fees are waived by all USG institutions for TAP attendees: tuition, student late registration fee, student technology fee, student health insurance fee, student activity fee, and student athletic/recreation fee. **TAP attendees, whose student health fee, student activity fee, and athletic fee are waived, are ineligible for the services sponsored by these fees unless the fees are paid separately.**
  - Other student fees and charges, as defined by the “teaching institution”, are not waived for TAP attendees. Such student fees must be paid as required by the course or institution (e.g., transcript, graduation, exam and testing fees, and lab fees).

- **Teaching Institution**
  - The “teaching institution” is the University System of Georgia institution at which a TAP participant has met the admissions requirements and is approved for enrollment in an academic credit course(s).

- **Tuition Assistance**
  - Tuition assistance is the waiver of tuition and the waiver of certain fees (Please see Student Fees above). Tuition assistance requires an approved TAP application and space availability within the course(s) and/or degree program of the institution.