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Tuition Assistance Policy

Responsible Office: Human Resources

Originally Issued:

Revised: February 1, 2010

Policy Statement

As part of its mission statement Georgia Health Sciences University is committed to "the recruitment, hiring, and retention of the best possible faculty, staff and administration." Georgia Health Sciences University 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, GHSU has established an educational assistance program, the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). This program is part of the University System of Georgia Tuition Assistance Program.

Reason for Policy

The purpose of TAP is to foster the professional growth and development of its eligible employees.

Entities Affected By This Policy

All units of Georgia Health Sciences University are covered by this policy .

Who Should Read This Policy

All employees of Georgia Health Sciences University should be aware of this policy.

Contacts

| Contact | Phone | e-mail/URL |
|-------------------------|--------------|--|
| HR Training & Education | 706-721-4054 | TAP@georgiahealth.edu |
| | | |

Printable Version of This Policy

<http://www.georgiahealth.edu/policies/documents/TAPPolicy02012011.pdf>

Related Documents

http://www.usg.edu/hr/benefits/tuition_assistance_program/tap

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. The home institution for a University System Office employee is the institution at which he/she is admitted as a student.

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 GHSU for TAP attendees: tuition, student late registration fee, student technology fee, student health 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 "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.

Overview

The Board of Regents of the University System and Georgia Health Sciences University are committed to helping its full time employees pursue professional growth and development (reference BOR Policy Section 802.20). The Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) is designed to promote the professional growth and development of full time employees of Georgia Health Sciences University. The Tuition Assistance Program is the waiver of tuition and fees for employees enrolled in courses on Georgia Health Sciences University campus and at other USG institutions. The following student fees are waived by all USG institutions: tuition, student technology fee, student health fee, student activity fee, student athletic fee/recreation fee, application fee, late application fee and student parking or transportation fee. Employees who are simultaneously taking courses that are not covered under the Tuition Assistance Program policy will be responsible for paying fees that are normally assessed for those courses. Employees whose health, student activity, parking and athletic fees are waived are ineligible to receive the services sponsored by these fees. The TAP is offered subject to the availability of funds and space in the course. This policy does not apply when an employee is required to attend certain educational programs or when the completion of certain educational programs is mandatory for an employee to retain their current position.

Work Schedule Arrangements

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.

Tax Implications for Participants

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. This "tax free" exemption currently applies through 2012. 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.

Ineligible Programs

Employees may not enroll in certain programs or courses of study under the TAP policy.

Those ineligible programs, or courses of study, include academic courses in the following professional schools: dental, law, medical, pharmacy, veterinary, or executive/premiere or comparable graduate school programs. Other ineligible programs, or courses of study, include: workshops, seminars, continuing education courses, management development programs, special 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.

TAP Program Regulations

Eligibility

The tuition assistance program is available to full time benefits-eligible employees of GHSU 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. 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).

The utilization of this program by part-time nursing faculty shall end in 2015, unless such utilization is extended by further action of the Board.

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 in a benefits-eligible position, as of the date of the Tuition Assistance Program 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. All part-time nursing faculty completing TAP applications will be required to submit their TAP application directly to their individual supervisor for approval. Once the application has been signed by the supervisor, the TAP applicant is responsible for forwarding their application directly to:

**University System of Georgia Special Projects Coordinator
Research and Policy Analysis/Center for Health Workforce Planning and Analysis
Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia
Office 6007 – 6th Floor
270 Washington Street S.W.
Atlanta, GA 30334
404-657-4130**

Once the Special Projects Coordinator has verified and approved the application received, the application will then be forwarded back to the home institution for verification of eligibility status.

Please note: The TAP application process is different for part-time nursing faculty. The application process for full-time, benefits-eligible employees will remain the same.

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 as amended effective January of 2011.

TAP Application Deadlines

The following Georgia Health Sciences University TAP application deadlines will apply to all: (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 1-15th
Spring Semester November 1-15th
Summer Semester April 1-15th

Distance Learning and Web-Based Courses

TAP participants may enroll in distance learning and web-based courses offered by Georgia Health Sciences University. If the tuition for these courses is greater than the System-approved normal tuition amount, GHSU may elect to waive only that portion of the tuition that does not exceed the System-approved normal tuition amount. An employee will be responsible for paying the remainder of the tuition cost.

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 final semester grade(s) to the TAP Coordinator of the "home institution" within ten business days after the close of the semester. Failure to provide a final semester grade report may result in any prior TAP approval for the following semester being voided.

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 any Georgia Health Sciences University 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 Georgia Health Sciences University.

Georgia Health Sciences University reserves the right to change this program, with or without notice.

Process/Procedures

- 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.

Responsibilities

The responsibilities each party has in connection with *Abbreviated Policy Title*, are:

| Responsibility | Required Actions |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Employee | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completes and signs the TAP application (available on line at http://www.georgiahealth.edu/hr/training/documents/tap_app_fillable.pdf). 2. Submits the TAP application to his/her immediate supervisor for review. |
| Part-Time Nursing Faculty | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completes and signs the TAP application (available on line at http://www.georgiahealth.edu/hr/training/documents/Part-timeNursingFacultyApplications.pdf). 2. Submits the TAP application to his/her immediate supervisor for review. |
| Immediate Supervisor | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Reviews the TAP application and advises the employee if his/her request is approved or denied. |
| Immediate Supervisor & Employee | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. 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 | 5. 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 15th6. Signs the approved TAP application (for part-time nursing faculty member) and gives back to the employee to forward to the Special Projects Coordinator at Health Workforce Planning & Analysis with the Board of Regents (application may be faxed). |
| Immediate Supervisor & Employee | 7. Each retains a copy of the approved TAP application for departmental and personnel files. |
| TAP Coordinator of the Home Institution | 8. 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 | 9. 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 | 10. Registers for TAP course(s) during the designated employee registration period of the "teaching institution". (Please see www.usg.edu/hr/benefits/tap_dates/ .) |
| Employee & Immediate Supervisor | 11. 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) | 12. 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 (all TAP participants, both full-time and part-time). |

Forms

TAP Application http://www.georgiahealth.edu/hr/training/documents/tap_app_fillable

TAP Application for part-time Nursing Faculty members <http://www.georgiahealth.edu/hr/training/documents/Part-timeNursingFacultyApplications.pdf>

TAP Coordinators http://www.usg.edu/hr/benefits/tap_coordinators/

TAP Registration Dates http://www.usg.edu/hr/benefits/tap_dates/

Board of Regents TAP Policy http://www.usg.edu/hr/benefits/tuition_assistance_program_tap/

Appendices

None

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