PURPOSE
The Purpose of this Policy is to establish guidelines for the administration of Jacksonville State University’s 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.

DEFINITIONS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligibility Date:</th>
<th>Date after one calendar year of continuous full-time employment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eligible Dependent:</td>
<td>Spouse and/or unmarried children/step-children, up to age 26.</td>
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<td>Eligible Employee:</td>
<td>A full-time, benefit eligible employee with at least one (1) year of service</td>
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<td>Service Retiree:</td>
<td>JSU retirees receiving benefits from the Teacher’s Retirement System</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Participant:</td>
<td>An employee or dependent established as eligible (as defined above) and is receiving tuition assistance</td>
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Employee Eligibility:
• All regular full-time employees who have successfully completed one (1) year of service and have a satisfactory performance evaluation on record with the Department of Human Resources 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 retirements 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) reach 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;
  - Employees are responsible for notifying the Department of Human Resources (DHR) 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.

**Application Requirements for Tuition Assistance:** An application for tuition assistance is made for an academic year. To apply for tuition assistance, Program Participants must complete the Request for Tuition Assistance Form which must be submitted Registrar’s Office before the tuition due date as specified on the Academic Calendar.

**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.
     - 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 University Scholarship Administration Office.

(3) The University Scholarship Administration Office will apply the tuition assistance to the student’s account.

There will be no retroactive tuition assistance. After the first year, tuition assistance is based on cumulative institutional GPA.

**GPA Eligibility Requirements:** Eligible Program Participants will receive 100% tuition assistance for the 1st year. If a student entering the university has a GPA earned while in dual enrollment, the dual enrollment 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 100% 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.

**Amount of Tuition Assistance:**

- Eligible employees may receive tuition assistance for up to 12 undergraduate, 9 master’s hours or 9 doctoral hours per semester. General University fees will be waived for eligible employees as part of the tuition assistance benefit.
- Dependents of eligible employees may receive tuition assistance up to 16 undergraduate hours, 12 master’s hours, or 9 doctoral hours per semester.
- General University fees will not be waived for eligible dependents.

**Note:** Tuition assistance for graduate courses may be considered taxable income by the IRS; the university 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 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:
Eligible employees are allowed to audit one (1) course each semester free of charge.
- Dependents of employees must pay usual JSU audit fees
- Tuition assistance does not apply to auditing classes

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

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