

Purpose of Mandatory and Discretionary Tuition and Fee Waivers

Tuition and fee waivers are an agreement between the student and the university to reduce or eliminate tuition and/or fees. All Illinois public universities are authorized to award two general types of tuition and fee waivers: Mandatory Waivers and Discretionary Waivers. Mandatory waivers (e.g., Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) Scholarships) are authorized by legislation and mandate an award to eligible students who meet the specific parameters and criteria included in the statute. Discretionary waivers (e.g., faculty/staff waivers) are granted at the option of the university. Discretionary waivers include statutory waivers (e.g., Gender Equity in Intercollegiate Athletic waivers) that may be awarded to specific individuals at the discretion of the institution.

Mandatory tuition waivers are programs designed by state statute and granted to students meeting the specific parameters and criteria included in statute. The goals and purposes of these programs are described in more detail below.

Discretionary tuition waivers are programs determined by legislation or University of Illinois policy that may be awarded at the discretion of the university. Discretionary waivers are divided into four sub-categories: Student Talent/Merit Waivers, Student Need Waivers, Student Service Waivers, and Faculty/Staff Waivers. All four discretionary tuition waivers programs at the University of Illinois are used for student, faculty, and staff recruitment, diversification, enrichment, and retention by:

1. *Providing financial assistance to students with academic talent or special status.* (e.g., Academic/Other Talent, Athletic Waivers, Gender Equity in Intercollegiate Athletics, Foreign Exchange Students, Out-of-State-Students, Foreign Students, and Fellowships)
2. *Providing financial assistance to students who demonstrate financial need or hardship.* (e.g., Financial Aid Waivers and Special Program Waivers)
3. *Providing educational benefits and financial incentives that aid in student retention.* (e.g., Cooperating Professionals, Research Assistants, Teaching Assistants, Other Assistants, and Contract/Training Grants)
4. *Providing educational benefits to the employees of the university, their dependents and employees of other institutions or agencies with reciprocal agreements.* (e.g., Faculty/Administrators; Civil Service Staff: University Employees, Civil Service Staff: Inter-institutional/Related Agencies; Retired University Employees; and Children of Deceased Employees)

Names and Descriptions of Tuition Waiver Programs

The following are the names and description of the tuition waiver programs, organized by mandatory waivers and discretionary waivers. Also included are eligibility requirements and selection criteria.

Mandatory Waivers

1. Teachers Scholarships: Special Education Grants (110 ILCS 947/65.15): Provides tuition and necessary fee awards to encourage current teachers and academically talented students to pursue careers in any area of special education as a public or private elementary or secondary school teacher in Illinois. Recipients are exempt from paying tuition and fees at an eligible institution for up to four years. **Purpose:** To provide financial incentives to pursue special education teacher training. **Goals:** To increase the number of certified special education teachers. **Eligibility and Criteria:** Participants must be a United States citizen or an eligible non-citizen; an Illinois resident; agree to take courses to prepare for the teaching of handicapped children or children with learning disabilities; be an Illinois high school graduate and rank in the upper half of the graduating class, or hold a valid teaching certificate that is not in the discipline of special education; and not have received a waiver under this program in the past. Participants are required to contract with the Illinois State Scholarship Commission and teach special education for two years within the five-year period following graduation.

2. General Assembly Scholarships (105 ILCS 5/30-9, 105 ILCS 5/30-13.5): Each member of the General Assembly may grant, annually, two four-year scholarships, one for the University of Illinois, and the other for any state-supported university, to persons from his/her district. The scholarships exempt the holder from paying tuition or fees, with the exception of fees for book rental, service, laboratory, supply, union building, hospital and medical insurance, and any fees pledged for the payment of interest and principal on bonds for the operation and maintenance of buildings. **Purpose:** To extend opportunities to attend the University of Illinois or other state-supported universities. **Goals:** To promote scholarship, and provide educational incentives for students living in a legislator's district. **Eligibility and Criteria:** Students must live in the nominating legislator's district and are required to sign a waiver of confidentiality concerning scholarship information. *This program was abolished in 2012. Only persons nominated to receive or awarded such a scholarship before September 1, 2012 are entitled to the scholarship.*

3. Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) Scholarships (105 ILCS 5/30-16): Scholarships are offered to residents of Illinois whose scholastic standing enables them to enroll in ROTC programs. The scholarships exempt the holder from paying tuition or fees, with the exception of fees for book rental, service, laboratory, supply, union building, hospital and medical insurance, and any fees pledged for the payment of interest and principal on bonds for the operation and maintenance of buildings. **Purpose:** The General Assembly declared that it is essential for the national defense and for the defense of the state of Illinois that provisions be made for ROTC training among those residents of this state receiving higher education,. In order to provide officers for the US Armed Forces, scholarships should be furnished to eligible residents, in order to encourage their participation in the ROTC programs. **Goals:** To increase the participation of students in the ROTC programs. **Eligibility and Criteria:** Residents of the state of Illinois whose scholastic standing will enable them to enroll in the ROTC programs available at universities supported by the State of Illinois are eligible. Applicants are required to take an examination each year according to rules prescribed by the presidents, or designees, of participating institutions. Scholarships are awarded on a merit basis to those eligible recipients receiving the highest grades with evidence of leadership ability. Applicants also must submit to

the institution Selective Service registration compliance documentation. Waivers shall be awarded at each university on the basis of the equivalent of 10 scholarships per class, per branch of service, each academic year.

4. Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Scholarships and Fee Waiver (20 ILCS 505/8): DCFS annually selects 48 children, at least four of whom are children of veterans, for scholarship and fee waivers for four consecutive years at any university or college maintained by the State of Illinois. Selection is based on scholastic record, aptitude, and general interest in higher education. **Purpose:** To give financial assistance for college expenses to selected children under the care of the Department. **Goals:** To provide educational incentives to children under the care of DCFS with an interest and aptitude for higher education. **Eligibility and Criteria:** DCFS may select 48 students under their care, at least four of whom must be children of veterans, on the basis of scholastic record, aptitude, and interest in higher education, and who have completed four years of high school.

5. Partial Tuition Waivers for Children of University Employees (110 ILCS 305/7f, 660/5-90, 665/10-91, 670/15-90, 675/20-91, 680/25-91, 685/30-90, and 690/35-90): Public university governing boards must offer fifty percent tuition waivers for undergraduate education to the children of employees who have been employed by the granting university and/or any public university in Illinois for an aggregate of at least seven years. Participants must be under the age of 25 and qualify for admission to the university. **Purpose:** To grant partial tuition waivers to the children of employees to attend the university. **Goals:** To provide financial incentives for the children of employees to attend the university and to provide an employee benefit for the faculty and staff of state-supported universities. **Eligibility and Criteria:** The parent or guardian of the waiver recipient must have been employed by any public university for at least seven years. Children receiving the waivers must be undergraduates, under age 25 at the commencement of the academic year in which the waiver takes effect, must qualify for admission, and can only receive a maximum of four years of partial tuition waiver benefits.

6. Senior Citizen Courses Act (110 ILCS 990): Permits senior citizens, over the age of 65, to enroll in regularly scheduled credit courses at public institutions of higher education without payment of tuition. This does not include payment of fees. Limited to persons whose annual income is less than the threshold amount in the Senior Citizens and Disabled Persons Property Tax Relief and Pharmaceutical Assistance Act. **Purpose:** To provide tuition free credit courses for senior citizens that attend public institutions of higher education in Illinois. **Goals:** To provide opportunities for financially disadvantaged senior citizens to enroll in courses in higher education. **Eligibility and Criteria:** Must be age 65 or older with an annual household income below the threshold amount of the Senior Citizens and Disabled Persons Property Tax Relief and Pharmaceutical Assistance Act.

7. Honorary Scholarships (110 ILCS 305/9): Each county is entitled, annually, to one four-year honorary scholarship at the University of Illinois for children of persons who served in the Armed Forces of the United States during the periods of hostility specified in statute. Preference is given to children of such persons deceased or disabled. The waiver does not include payment of fees. This waiver only applies to students who are or will be attending the University of Illinois. **Purpose:** To provide four-year scholarships to the children of veterans of the Armed

Forces who served during a period of hostility. **Goals:** To provide an educational benefit for the children of veterans. **Eligibility and Criteria:** Each Illinois county may award one scholarship to the University of Illinois. Preference is given to the children of deceased or disabled veterans. Recipients must have attained proficiency in the courses usually taught in secondary schools, be of good moral character, be older than 15 years of age, and qualify for admission to the university.

8. Illinois Veteran Grants (110 ILCS 947/40): Veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States are entitled to grants to pay for eligible tuition and mandatory fees for undergraduate or graduate education. Benefits are limited to use at Illinois public two- and four-year institutions, and can be used for a maximum of four academic years of full-time enrollment. This program is administered by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission. **Purpose:** To provide tuition and fee grants to veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States. **Goals:** To promote educational attainment by veterans. **Eligibility and Criteria:** Veterans must have served at least one year of federal active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States, or have served in a foreign country during a time of hostilities in that country regardless of length of service. Individuals who were medically discharged for service related reasons or were discharged prior to August 11, 1967 are also eligible. Recipients must have been honorably discharged or be honorably serving. Members of the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) are not eligible for these grants. Eligible applicants must have been a resident of Illinois or a student at an Illinois public two- or four-year institution at the time of entering federal active duty service. If not currently serving federal active duty service, eligible applicants must also have returned to Illinois within six months after leaving federal active duty service, or if married to a person in continuing military service stationed outside Illinois, returned to Illinois within six months after the spouse left service or was stationed in Illinois. Recipients must satisfy the institution's minimum grade level requirements and maintain a satisfactory student loan repayment record.

9. Illinois National Guard Grants (110 ILCS 947/45): Members of the Illinois National Guard are entitled to grants to pay for eligible tuition and certain fees for undergraduate and graduate education. Benefits are limited to use at Illinois public two- and four-year institutions, and can be used for a maximum of four academic years of full-time enrollment. This program is administered by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission. **Purpose:** To provide tuition and fee grants to members of the Illinois National Guard. **Goals:** To promote educational attainment by Illinois National Guard members. **Eligibility and Criteria:** Active members of the Illinois National Guard who have completed one full year of service are eligible. Former members of the Illinois National Guard may also be eligible if they were active for at least five consecutive years and had their studies interrupted by federal active duty for at least six months. These individuals must be within 12 months of their discharge date from the Illinois National Guard to be eligible. Eligibility is also contingent on enrollment in an Illinois public two- or four-year institution. Recipients must satisfy the institution's minimum grade level requirements and maintain a satisfactory student loan repayment record.

10. MIA/POW Scholarships (105 ILCS 5/30-14.2): Dependents of an "eligible veteran or serviceperson" may be awarded a MIA/POW Scholarship consisting of the equivalent of four calendar years of full-time enrollment at an Illinois public two- or four-year institution. The scholarship covers eligible tuition and certain fees. This scholarship program is administered by

the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs. **Purpose:** To provide tuition and fee scholarships to dependents of MIA/POW veterans. **Goals:** To provide educational incentives to the dependents of MIA/POW veterans. **Eligibility and Criteria:** Any spouse, natural child, legally adopted child, or any step-child of an "eligible veteran or serviceperson" shall be awarded a MIA/POW scholarship consisting of the equivalent of four calendar years of full-time enrollment at an Illinois public two- or four-year institution. "Eligible veteran or serviceperson" is a person who was an Illinois resident at the time that he/she entered active duty and has been declared to be a prisoner of war, missing in action, dead as the result of a service-connected disability, or disabled with a 100 percent disability as the result of a service-connected cause as recognized by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs or the U.S. Department of Defense.

Discretionary Waivers

1. Faculty/Staff Waivers: Tuition and fee waivers awarded to university faculty, staff, or other employees or their dependents. This includes tuition waivers given to employees of other universities or agencies as a condition of employment or through reciprocal agreements.

Purpose: To provide educational benefits to the employees of the university, their dependents, and employees of other institutions or agencies with reciprocal agreements. **Goals:** To reward employee service and increase employee retention through free or reduced-cost educational benefits. **Eligibility and Criteria:** Must be a member of the university faculty or administrative staff or an employee covered by the State Universities Civil Service System.

1.1 Faculty/Administrators: Waivers granted to faculty and administrative staff of the university. This does not include civil service employees under the State Universities Civil Service System.

1.2 Civil Service Staff: University Employees: Tuition waivers recommended by the University Civil Service Merit Board and adopted by public university governing boards for tuition charges for their own university employees covered under the State Universities Civil Service System. These waivers are excluded from the Board of Higher Education's tuition waiver limitation.

1.3 Civil Service Staff: Inter-institutional/Related Agencies: Tuition waivers granted at the discretion of the university or through reciprocal agreements for employees of other institutions or agencies whose positions are considered equivalent to positions of the university and who are under the State Universities Civil Service System. These waivers are excluded from the Board of Higher Education's tuition waiver limitation.

1.4 Retired University Employees: Waivers granted at the discretion of the university to retired university employees.

1.5 Children of Deceased Employees: Waivers granted at the discretion of the university to dependents of deceased university employees.

2. Student Talent/Merit Waivers: Tuition and fee waivers awarded to students based on student talent in a particular field, academic merit, or special status such as minority students,

foreign exchange students, out-of-state students, or academically disadvantaged students.

Purpose: To provide financial assistance to students with academic talent or special status.

Goals: To attract academically talented students to the institution and to increase student diversity by encouraging students with special talents or standing to attend the institution.

Eligibility and Criteria: Based on academic record, other academic talent, or special status.

2.1 Academic/Other Talent: Waivers granted to students based on their enrollment and abilities in a particular academic program or activity or students belonging to underrepresented groups. This includes waivers granted to minority students, student government leaders, student members of debate teams, music or theater groups, or non-degree students participating in a special department or school program.

2.2 Athletic Waivers: Waivers granted to students who are part of an institution's intercollegiate athletic program, including athletes, trainers, and assistants. This category would include full or partial waivers for the non-resident portion of tuition for out-of-state recipients, but does not include waivers issued to achieve gender equity in intercollegiate athletics pursuant to 110 ILCS 205/9.24.

2.3 Gender Equity in Intercollegiate Athletics (110 ILCS 205/9.24): Public university governing boards may grant tuition waivers, in an amount not to exceed one percent of all tuition income, for the purpose of attaining gender equity in intercollegiate athletics. Waivers may be granted only for those sports sanctioned by the National Collegiate Athletic Association or the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics. These waivers are excluded from the Board of Higher Education's tuition waiver limitation.

2.4 Foreign Exchange Students: This category should only be used as part of an exchange program where students are enrolled in a foreign university and enroll in the Illinois university by paying tuition at the foreign university or paying the Illinois resident rate. In these cases, the difference between the foreign student tuition rate and the Illinois resident tuition rate should be included as a foreign exchange student waiver. In cases where a foreign student receives a waiver for the full tuition amount in exchange for providing a service to the university, such as a teaching or research assistant, the entire waiver should be reported as a student service waiver. Foreign exchange student waivers are excluded from the Board of Higher Education's tuition waiver limitation.

2.5 Out-of-State-Students: Waivers granted to students whose home of record is outside Illinois, but within the United States of America at the time of first admission to the university. This category includes both full tuition and fee waivers and waivers for the difference between residential tuition rates and non-residential rates. These waivers should be valued at the difference between the actual amount of tuition and fees paid by the student and the established out-of-state tuition and fee rate. Waivers to out-of-state students receiving full or partial waivers in other categories, for example athletic or talent waivers should not be reported here.

2.6 Foreign Students: Waivers granted to students whose official home of record for the purpose of determining tuition and fee charges is outside the United States of America. This category includes both full tuition and fee waivers and waivers for the difference between

residential tuition rates and non-residential rates. These waivers should be valued at the difference between the actual amount of tuition and fees paid by the student and the established tuition and fee rate for foreign students. Waivers for foreign students receiving full or partial waivers in other categories, for example athletic or talent waivers should not be reported here.

2.7 Fellowships: Waivers granted to students who also are receiving a fellowship for which no service is required.

3. Student Need Waivers: Tuition and fee waivers granted to students demonstrating financial need. **Purpose:** To provide financial assistance to students who demonstrate financial need or hardship. **Goals:** To attract academically talented students to the institutions who otherwise would be prohibited from attending due to cost. **Eligibility and Criteria:** Recipients must demonstrate financial need and/or be enrolled in special academic programs or other university activities.

3.1 Financial Aid Waivers: Tuition and fee waivers awarded by the university through the financial aid office for students demonstrating financial need.

3.2 Special Program Waivers: Tuition and fee waivers awarded to economically disadvantaged students based on enrollment or participation in special academic programs or other university activities.

4. Student Service Waivers: Tuition and fee waivers granted to students to support the university mission, goals, and objectives through participation in outside contracts; graduate or undergraduate research, teaching, or other assignments; training or grant programs; external internship programs; clinical portions of degree programs conducted at other institutions; or other student experiences. **Purpose:** To provide educational benefits and financial incentives to students. **Goals:** To provide students with valuable educational experiences. **Eligibility and Criteria:** Recipients must be enrolled in the university or under contract and, for the educational experiences and benefits, agree to perform related services.

4.1 Cooperating Professionals: Waivers granted to outside professionals who cooperate with the university or supervise clinical experiences for university students. This includes local elementary and secondary school district personnel that work with student teachers, librarians, health care professionals, industrial relations field supervisors, and social welfare supervisors.

4.2 Research Assistants: Waivers granted to graduate or undergraduate students that have a research assignment with the university for an academic term, including waivers for summer sessions.

4.3 Teaching Assistants: Waivers granted to graduate or undergraduate students that have a teaching assignment with the university for an academic term, including waivers for summer sessions.

4.4 Other Assistants: Waivers granted to graduate or undergraduate students that have an assignment, other than research or teaching, with the university for an academic term, including

summer sessions.

4.5 Contract/Training Grants: Tuition and fee waivers awarded to students as a condition for receiving funds for an outside grant program. This includes waivers for students participating in federally funded programs at the university or for tuition for required courses necessary for participation in outside internship programs. (No waiver should be recognized when student charges are paid from an outside funding source.)

Procedural Guidelines for Tuition Waiver Programs

Mandatory Waivers

Mandatory waivers involve application procedures, eligibility criteria, and selection processes that are external to the University of Illinois (the one exception is the Honorary Scholarships program, which is administered at UIUC). The scholarship area of the financial aid office retains eligibility rosters approved by the appropriate external agency as documentation that the student met the eligibility criteria for the tuition and/or fee waiver program.

Discretionary Waivers

The process for determining and allocating discretionary waivers awarded by the university is determined by the number of budgeted waivers that are available for distribution. Statewide policy established by the IBHE limits the amount of undergraduate tuition revenue that a public university may waive in discretionary waivers to three percent of the total available undergraduate tuition revenue (i.e., the total of all tuition charged and waived), excluding those waivers exempted by the IBHE. Distribution of the discretionary undergraduate waivers is at the discretion of the campus provost. There is no statewide policy limiting the amount of graduate tuition revenue that a public university may waive. However, departments are limited in the number of graduate assistantships they award by their graduate assistantship stipend budget.

Eligibility Requirements and Selection Criteria for Waiver Programs: The university defines minimum eligibility requirements for tuition waivers. However, specific selection criteria as defined by the awarding department or unit may exceed university minimums. Units that issue tuition waivers must develop specific and measurable written selection criteria and document that the student has met all requirements before awarding a tuition waiver.

Application Procedures and Selection Processes: Discretionary waiver application, selection, and notification processes are decentralized activities. The unit awarding the tuition and/or fee waiver is responsible for maintaining written documentation supporting tuition and fee waiver advertising, application, selection, notification, and where performance of duties is a condition for the receipt of a tuition waiver (e.g., graduate assistantships), a copy of the contract signed by the student.

Cut-Off Dates for Accepting Waivers: The University of Illinois will report tuition and fee waivers within a consistent State of Illinois fiscal year framework. Waivers will be reported as budgeted, granted, or expended within the particular accounting period in which the corresponding tuition and fees are recognized as revenue. The University of Illinois has

established a cut-off date of August 31 to facilitate fiscal year reporting. Adjustments made after the cut-off date will be allocated to the following fiscal year.

Record Keeping Responsibility for Waivers: Record keeping responsibility occurs within the academic or administrative unit awarding the waiver. In all of the programs mentioned above, unless otherwise directed by state statute or institutional policy, identified student records are maintained for the greater of five years from the completion of the academic year in which the waiver was awarded or the close of an audit by the State of Illinois Office of the Auditor General involving that academic year. Student records are maintained if there is pending or anticipated litigation.

Reporting Guidelines for Tuition Waiver Programs

Creating New Waiver Programs

All Illinois public universities annually provide the Illinois Board of Higher Education with a copy of its policies and procedures for administering tuition waiver programs. IBHE staff review the policies and procedures and report to the IBHE Board the results of that review. Institutions report tuition waivers using only the categories listed in the *Standard Tuition and Fee Waiver Chart of Accounts* established by the IBHE. The IBHE must approve all university requests for additional waiver reporting categories not specifically listed in the *Standard Tuition and Fee Waiver Chart of Accounts* prior to reporting. The University Office for Planning and Budgeting provides leadership for the University of Illinois when new waivers are created.

Documenting Award Processes

Ultimately, the Office of the Provost from each University of Illinois campus is responsible for documenting award processes and assuring that files are complete for recipients of tuition waivers. This responsibility includes monitoring the purpose of the tuition waiver program, descriptions of how tuition waiver programs are advertised to new and returning students, eligibility requirements for first-time and renewal awards, and selection and notification procedures.

Counting and Reporting Waivers

As stated by the Illinois Board of Higher Education, each university must identify the administrative unit responsible for the overall monitoring of their tuition waiver program. That unit shall be responsible for assuring that procedures are in place and that waivers are awarded within the requirements of the State of Illinois and the policies and procedures of the University Board of Trustees. The designated administrative unit is responsible for assuring that their university adopts written policies and procedures and implements appropriate methods of counting and reporting the value and number of waivers. This is the responsibility of the University Office for Planning and Budgeting at the University of Illinois. Additional analysis is provided by the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Office of Business and Financial Services. In addition, the university participates in all external audits conducted by the Auditor General's Office and conducts internal audits of tuition and fee waivers. The University of Illinois Board of Trustees (BOT) annually reviews data on tuition and fee waiver classifications, approvals, and allocations. Additionally, the BOT reviews institutional practices used by academic and administrative units in the selection of tuition and fee waiver recipients.

Monitoring Waivers

When waiver eligibility is established in statute or by Board policy, the administering unit shall: secure lists of waiver recipients from authorized outside agencies; where recipients are self-nominated, provide public notice of the application process and forms; independently verify eligibility; and notify recipients of awards.

Additional Resources

Additional campus-specific information, as well as the IBHE's annual report to the Illinois General Assembly on public university tuition and fee waivers, can be found at the links below:

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

<http://www.osfa.uiuc.edu/aid/scholarships/index.html>

<http://www.grad.illinois.edu/gradhandbook/chaptervii/section04>

<http://www.dmi.illinois.edu/waiverdoc/>

University of Illinois at Chicago

<http://www.uic.edu/depts/financialaid/tuitionwaivers.shtml>

<http://grad.uic.edu/cms/?pid=1000080>

University of Illinois at Springfield

<http://www.uis.edu/financialaid/>

IBHE Annual Report on Tuition and Fee Waivers

<http://www.ibhe.state.il.us/Fiscal%20Affairs/reports.htm>

Business and Financial Policies and Procedures

<http://www.obfs.uillinois.edu/bfpp/section-1-business-financial-administration/section-1-6/>