

# Tuition Remission Program

**Policy Owner** Financial Planning

**Responsible Office(s)** Financial Planning, Human Resources, Finance and Business

## Policy Statement

The purpose of tuition remission benefits is to provide financial assistance and enhance educational and developmental opportunities for Converse University employees, their spouses, and/or dependents while supporting the University in its teaching, research, and service missions. This policy explains the guiding principles, states the basic terms, and establishes the administrative authority for all tuition remission benefits. Tuition remission is a financial benefit provided by the institution and is subject to limitations and exclusions as outlined in this policy. The University reserves the right to update and amend this policy at any time.

## Purpose

To establish the guiding principles, basic terms, and administrative authority for tuition remission.

## Policy

## Definitions

### a. Eligible Employee

To be eligible for tuition remission, the Converse University employee must be a full or part-time (exempt or non-exempt) employee in good standing with benefits and have completed six (6) months of continuous employment prior to the first day of class of the term for which the tuition remission is requested. Employees who are not eligible for full benefits are not eligible for tuition remission under this policy.

### Employee Category

#### 1. Exempt Employee

An employee who meets Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) requirements to be exempt from overtime pay and occupies an executive, administrative, or professional position, as defined under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Non-instructional exempt employees receive compensation at a minimum salary that meets the requirements as set forth by the South Carolina Code and FLSA.

### Non-Exempt Employee

An employee who does not meet the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) requirements to be exempt from overtime pay and who is paid for all overtime hours worked in any workweek.

### Enrollment Status

#### 1. Traditional Undergraduate and Converse II Students

Enrollment status for traditional undergraduate and Converse II students is determined based on the following enrollment per term:

- |                      |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| • 1-5 credits        | less than half-time |
| • 6-8 credits        | half-time           |
| • 9-11 credits       | three-quarter time  |
| • 12 or more credits | full-time           |

To be eligible for tuition remission, the undergraduate student must be enrolled full-time. Traditional undergraduate students enrolled less than full-time will not be eligible for tuition remission. Converse II students are eligible to enroll less than full-time.

#### Graduate Students

- A graduate student is considered full-time in a given academic term or session when enrolled in nine credit hours or more. A graduate student is considered half-time in a given academic term or session when enrolled in less than nine and at least six credit hours. Summer sessions will be combined to determine enrollment status.

#### International Student

- An international graduate student is a graduate student who holds an F1 or J1 student visa. International students are not eligible for tuition remission.

#### Definition of a Spouse

- A spouse is defined as “a person in a legally contracted marriage recognized by the State of South Carolina to a Converse University employee, with the exception of an estranged spouse who maintains a separate domicile.”

#### Definition of a Dependent

- A dependent is defined as the son/daughter, stepson/stepdaughter, or legally adopted son/daughter of an eligible Converse University employee who is under the age of 24 and is claimed as a dependent on the employee's federal income tax return for the year(s) in which the tuition remission is requested.

Dependent students over the age of 24 are eligible for reduced tuition benefits as a Converse II student BUT are not eligible for tuition remission.

#### Student Account

- A student account is the University billing statement assigned to a student and maintained by the University's Student Billing Office.

## 4. Professional Leadership Doctoral Students

### 1. Tuition Remission and Program Structure for EdD

The EdD in Professional Leadership is designed to be taken in a specified progression over three (3) years. It would be difficult for employees, spouses, and dependents to take six (6) or more years to complete the program, which would be the result of taking only one class per semester/session. Instead, if this proposal is followed, employees will reap over a 50% discount in tuition and complete the program in three (3) years. Structure for the program is as follows:

Semester	# of Classes	# of Credit Hours	# of Credit Hour Waiver
Fall 1	2	6	3
Spring 1	2	6	3
Summer 1A	2	6	3
Summer 1B	2	6	3
Fall 2	2	6	3
Spring 2	3	9	6
Summer 2A	1	3	0
Summer 2B	2	6	3
Fall 3	2	6	3
Spring 3	1	6	6

Employees, spouses, and dependents will be responsible for the cost of 27 of the 60 degree hours under this plan (a discount of more than 50%). Employees, spouses, and dependents who persist to the final course (Capstone in Spring 3) will be rewarded by receiving the final 6-hour class as part of tuition remission. Students may not receive tuition remission for more than 33 credits in the Professional Leadership doctoral program.

The total cost of the program at \$416 per credit hour: \$24,960. Cost to employees at the current rate: \$11,232. These rates are subject to change.

## 5. Professional Enhancement Coursework (Non-degree seeking)

1. Eligible for Tuition Remission. Courses offered for academic credit are eligible for tuition remission. However, continuing education workshops and seminars that provide continuing education units (CEU) are not eligible for tuition remission.
2. Credit Hour Limitations. Eligible employees, spouses, or dependents may take up to six (6) undergraduate credits or three (3) graduate credits (1 three-credit course) per semester (Fall, Spring, Jan, and Summer) for a total of 21 credits per year (undergraduate) or twelve (12) credits per year (graduate) at 100% tuition remission. Credits taken beyond the tuition remission limit will be charged at the standard rate and will be the student's responsibility.

**Please note:** Eligible employees, spouses, or dependents may use the tuition remission benefit for **either** a degree-seeking program or professional enhancement coursework but **may not** receive the benefit for both. Tuition remission benefits will be capped based on the limits set forth above.

## 6. Effects of Drops and Withdrawals for Converse II and Graduate Students

1. Drops & Withdrawals. Students receiving tuition remission must maintain enrollment in all courses for which the benefit is paid. Students will forfeit the benefit for dropped courses. (For example, a graduate student registers for six credits at \$416 per credit hour for a total benefit of \$2,496. The student withdraws from one three-credit course during the semester. The tuition remission benefit will be reduced by \$1,248 or the cost of the three-credit course.)
2. Change in Status. In the event of a change in employment, dependency, or spousal status for the student, Converse may require an adjustment to the tuition remission benefit. The effect will be pro-rated, and the employee may be responsible for the resulting uncovered tuition balance. The recipient is responsible for the repayment of all costs incurred by such reversal.
3. Satisfactory Academic Progress. All students receiving tuition remission must meet the minimum satisfactory academic progress standards for financial aid as outlined in the University's satisfactory academic progress policy for financial aid. Students not meeting minimum satisfactory academic progress standards will forfeit the tuition remission benefit.
4. Signature on Form. Signatures on the Tuition Remission application verify that the student/employee has read, understands, and agrees to abide by the policies and procedures set forth herein.

## 7. Intent to Enroll

1. Meaning & Timing. Intent to enroll refers to the subsequent semester enrollment status of a student during the January term or summer session. A student is said to demonstrate "intent to enroll" during the summer session if the student is registered for the subsequent fall semester and demonstrate "intent to enroll" during the January term if the student is registered for the subsequent spring semester. New students demonstrate "intent to enroll" during the summer or January term if they are admitted to a degree program to start in the subsequent semester.

2. January Term. Traditional undergraduate students are expected to enroll in each January term. Traditional undergraduate students must obtain approval from the Associate Provost for Student Success to not enroll in each January term.

## 8. Responsibilities and Procedures

### a. **Description**

Tuition remission provides financial assistance to a degree-seeking traditional undergraduate, Converse II, graduate student, and professional enhancement courses for Converse University employees, their spouses and/or dependents.

### b. **Limits**

#### a. Traditional Undergraduate Students

Degree-seeking traditional undergraduate students will be eligible for the value of full-time tuition for the academic year in which the student is enrolled. Tuition remission does not cover fees (matriculation, lab, music lessons, etc.).

Please note: All other grants/scholarship aid awarded from federal, state, or institutional sources will be deducted from tuition before calculating the value of the tuition remission.

Students with scholarships from outside organizations not affiliated with the University (i.e., Ruritans, church organizations) may use outside financial aid to assist with room and board expenses (if living on campus). Tuition remission may not be used for fees, room, and board, or other expenses.

#### b. Converse II Students

Degree-seeking Converse II spouses/dependents will be eligible for the value of tuition for up to twelve (12) credits in the Fall term, twelve (12) credits in the Spring term, three (3) credit hours in the January term, and six (6) combined credits for all summer terms.

Please note: All other grants/scholarship aid awarded from federal, state, or institutional sources will be deducted from tuition before calculating the value of the tuition remission. Students with scholarships from outside organizations not affiliated with the University (e.g., Ruritans, church organizations) may use outside financial aid to assist with room and board expenses (if living on campus). Tuition remission may not be used for fees, room, and board, or other expenses.

Employees who are Converse II students will be eligible for no more than three (3) credit hours per term of enrollment.

#### c. Graduate Students

Degree-seeking graduate students will be eligible for no more than three (3) credit hours in the Fall/Spring terms, three (3) credit hours in the January term, and no more than one three (3) credit hour class per summer term. For example, if a Graduate student is enrolled in six (6) credit hours in Summer I and six (6) credit hours in Summer II, the Graduate student would be eligible for a total of six (6) credit hours of tuition remission total.

Please note: Any grant/scholarship aid awarded from federal, state, or institutional sources will be deducted from tuition before calculating the value of the tuition remission.

#### d. Enrollment Limitations

An employee/spouse/dependent may enroll in an appropriate course if there is space available and if six or more students are already enrolled in the course. One may elect to enroll in a class of fewer than seven students by paying the usual charges. Tuition-free students may not enroll in directed independent studies and internships unless the professor agrees to

waive their compensation. Employees granted enrollment in a Directed Independent Study (DIS) will be charged the cost to the University. The cost may be revised at the University's discretion. Employees must make up the time they miss from work in order to attend a class during working hours.

e. Employee Supervisor Approval

The employee must have the signature approval of their supervisor **prior** to enrolling in each course. Employees in some positions may not be allowed to take courses during regular office hours. Office schedules cannot be altered to allow employees to attend classes, and class schedules cannot be changed to allow employees to attend classes.

f. Employee Death or Total and Permanent Disability

In the event of an employee's death or total and permanent disability, the University will extend tuition remission benefits based on the following criteria:

- The employee must have been employed full-time or part-time with benefits at Converse University for the last seven (7) consecutive years immediately prior to the time of death or total disability in order to qualify their dependents.
- The dependent(s) is only eligible for a traditional undergraduate degree at Converse University.
- The dependent/parent must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) using Converse's school code (003431) by June 1st of each year for which the tuition remission is being requested.
- This benefit grants tuition only. Dependents must pay all other course fees and expenses, including reservation fees, any room and board fees, books, or other extra costs such as lab fees or directed independent study fees.
- The dependent(s) must meet eligibility requirements as established by the institution.
- The dependent(s) at the time of the death or total disability must have completed the 10th grade.
- This benefit has no cash value.
- The subsequent remarriage of a surviving spouse has no bearing on this benefit.
- This benefit does not extend beyond the dependent's age of 24 years.

## 9. Admission

### 1. Admission Timing

An employee, spouse and/or dependent must be admitted into a regular degree-seeking program prior to the start of the academic term for which tuition remission is requested and must remain a regular degree-seeking student during the award period.

### 2. Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Requirement

All employees/spouses/dependents must complete the FAFSA each academic year for which the tuition remission benefit is requested. The FAFSA must be completed by June 1st of each year for the upcoming year. Employees/spouses/dependents who do not complete the FAFSA will not be eligible for tuition remission.

Applications can be completed at <https://studentaid.gov/> and must include Converse University (school code #003431) as a recipient of the information.

Graduate students are not required to complete the FAFSA to receive tuition remission benefits.

### 3. Funding Source(s)

The source or sources used to fund tuition remission must be under the control of the University and judged by the University to be appropriate for tuition remission support.

## 10. Payment of Tuition

1. Scholarship. The payment of tuition remission is considered a scholarship that offsets all of the following costs charged to the student account during the contract period of the assistantship:
  - a. Total tuition based on the enrollment and limitations expressed above (number of credit hours waived) as per the Schedule of Tuition and Fees. Additional fees are the responsibility of the student.
2. Employee Status. Receipt of this benefit does not affect or change the at-will employment status of the employee.

## 11. Taxable Benefit

### 1. Graduate Level.

According to IRS regulations, the value of the tuition remission benefit is taxable for employees, their spouses, and dependents if the courses are at the graduate level. The value of the benefit will be reflected on the employee's W-2 form at the end of the year.

The employee may meet the conditions of qualifying work-related education and, therefore, may be able to deduct the education costs. Employees should always consult with their personal tax consultant concerning taxable income and deductions.

## 12. Automatic Termination of Benefit

1. The University in any of the following circumstances will automatically terminate the tuition remission benefit:
  - a. The employee/spouse/dependent completes the degree program
  - b. The employee/spouse/dependent voluntarily withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from the degree program
  - c. The employee is terminated, resigns, or otherwise leaves the employment of the University prior to the start of the academic term for which the tuition remission is to be applied

## 13. Administrative Authority

1. Basic Terms and General Management Procedures
2. Basic Terms

The Vice President for Finance and Business, the Director of Human Resources, and the Associate Vice President of Financial Services can establish and modify the basic terms for tuition remission benefits.

### 3. General Management Procedures

The Vice President for Finance and Business and the Associate Vice President for Financial Services has the authority to develop and maintain general management procedures for tuition remission benefits.

The Associate Vice President for Financial Services has the authority to calculate the value of the tuition remission benefit for each academic term for which the employee/ spouse/dependent qualifies.

#### 4. Local Terms and Management Procedures

An academic or administration unit of the University does not have the authority to develop local terms and management procedures for tuition remission.

## 14. Required Forms

1. Application. The Application for Dependent Tuition Remission for Traditional Undergraduates form must be completed annually by the employee, and the most recent Federal 1040 tax returns must be provided verifying that the student is claimed as a dependent by the Employee.
2. Application for Employee/Spouse/Dependent Tuition Remission for Converse II and Graduate students form must be completed for each term for which the benefit is requested, and the most recent Federal 1040 tax returns must be provided verifying that the employee and spouse have filed “married filing jointly” or “married filing separately.”

### Version History

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