

ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICE LETTER

SUBJECT: UNIVERSITY OF MAINE SYSTEM TUITION WAIVERS

GENERAL

The University of Maine System Board of Trustees has established tuition and fee waiver programs for the benefit of students attending the University. Individual universities may also have tuition waivers that are unique to their campus.

The various tuition waivers established by Board policy do not ordinarily apply to non-credit courses. These are courses that are not part of the normal curriculum and are often offered as a public service. The charges for such programs are established locally, and are not covered by tuition set by the Board of Trustees.

This letter sets guidelines for administering UMS established tuition waivers so that the total financial aid a student may receive does not exceed a student's total educational cost based on interpretation of Board Policy and Federal Regulations. Where UMS Policy and Federal Financial Aid Regulations differ, Federal Regulations will prevail.

GUIDELINES

1. UMS tuition waivers will be administered so that total financial aid does not exceed a student's total educational costs.
2. "Total financial aid" is to be defined as all federal, state and institutional aid, and educational assistance from outside sources, etc.
3. Sequence of reducing excess aid:
 1. Self-help aid, e.g., need-based loan funds or work-study funds
 2. Grants/Scholarships
 3. University Scholarships
 4. UMS Waivers
4. Exception: A University may change the sequence in reducing excess aid if requested by the student in writing and the Financial Aid Director believes the change benefits the student. For example: A student employed may feel the experience gained from employment outweighs the benefit received from obtaining University scholarship funds; thus the student may want the University scholarship reduced instead of having work-study reduced. In rare cases, a waiver may be adjusted out of sequence as long as other grants and scholarships are retained to assist the student.

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WAIVERS

UNIVERSITY ESTABLISHED

Native American Waiver and Educational Program

The University of Maine System has tuition waiver and room and board grant programs for eligible Native American students. The purpose of these programs is to encourage Native American students to participate in public higher education in Maine. The goal is to provide sustained support for all UMS Native American students who wish to pursue post-secondary study and, in particular, those who wish to obtain a certificate and/or an associate, baccalaureate, or graduate degree or some other appropriate credential that will serve them personally and professionally as they plan for the future.

Native American Waiver Program

This program covers tuition and mandatory fees. Tuition and mandatory fees will be waived for qualified students, both matriculated and non-matriculated, who are enrolled in academic, credit-bearing courses at the undergraduate, graduate, or continuing education level at the campuses of the University of Maine System. Mandatory fees are required fees charged of all students enrolled at the institution and automatically assessed at the time of registration exclusive of fees associated with contracted training or other educational activities provided by an external agency, business or organization including but not limited to travel and accommodation fees related to travel courses and other extraordinary fees such as health insurance. .

Eligibility

- A student must be a member and be included on the current tribal census of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, the Penobscot Nation, the Houlton Band of Maliseet, or the Aroostook Band of Micmac, or have at least one parent or grandparent who is included on the current tribal census of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, the Penobscot Nation, the Houlton Band of Maliseet, or the Aroostook Band of Micmac. **OR:**

A student must be a member and be included on the current tribal census of a Canadian Wabanaki Tribe or have at least one parent or grandparent who is included on the current tribal census, and have lived in Maine for at least twelve months, for purposes other than education, immediately prior to application. **OR:**

- A student must be a member and be included on a current tribal census of a federally, state or provincially recognized Native American Tribe and who have

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lived in Maine for at least twelve months, for purposes other than education, immediately prior to application. A state or provincially recognized Native American tribe is a politically distinct group with a recognized government-to-government relationship with a state or province. This is different from a heritage group recognized as a group of descendants of a historical tribal entity in a state.

- Proof of residency is required for all applicants with the exception of current tribal members and their direct biological descendants (e.g., parent or grandparent was a tribal member) of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, the Penobscot Nation, the Houlton Band of Maliseet, or the Aroostook Band of Micmac. The residency guidelines are the same as those employed for any student and can be located within the UMS Administrative Practice Letter found at: http://www.maine.edu/pdf/IV-G_002.pdf.
- Matriculating students must apply for financial aid by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and supply all required documentation to the Financial Aid Office at the campus they are attending. For the academic year and/or the fall semester, the FAFSA must be filed and the aid application completed by September 1st. For the spring semester, the FAFSA must be filed and the aid application completed by January 1st.

All students must remain eligible to register for classes and maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress as defined by federal guidelines. Degree seeking students will be evaluated based on the Satisfactory Academic Progress policy of the campus where they are matriculating. Students who are not matriculating at any campus of the University of Maine System will be evaluated using the University of Maine Satisfactory Academic Progress policy. This policy can be found at: <http://umaine.edu/stuaid/sap/>

- Students who entered the program prior to fall 2012 would be grandfathered for the receipt of the waiver portion of the benefit until graduation from their current degree program or through academic year 2017-2018, whichever occurs first. If they subsequently apply for an additional degree (either at the completion of their current degree or after 2017-2018), the new requirements will be in effect.

The total amount a student receives from the Native American Tuition Waiver Program and from all other sources of financial support for the same purpose, whether from the institution or from outside agencies, may not exceed the student's cost of attendance. The receipt of other aid may, in some rare cases, reduce or eliminate the receipt of the tuition waiver.

Native American Room and Board Grant

The Native American Room and Board Grant is a need based award for qualified native

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students living in a residence hall of the campus where they are matriculating. Students will be subsidized at the double occupancy rate for the student's residence. Charges for single, double single, or computer or telephone devices, for which there is a separate charge, will be the responsibility of the student tenant. Room and board charges will be covered only during the traditional academic year (fall and spring terms).

Eligibility

- Students must meet all eligibility requirements of the Native American Waiver and Educational Program and be certified as eligible by the Wabanaki Center at the University of Maine.
- Students must be matriculating in an undergraduate or graduate degree program within the University of Maine System, enrolled in a minimum of twelve (12) credit hours for undergraduates or nine (9) credit hours for graduate students at USM, or six (6) credits hours for graduate students at UM, and living in a residence hall of the campus where they are matriculating. Full time enrollment for graduate students working on their thesis or dissertation, and/or on a campus other than UM and USM, will be classified as full time in accordance with the policies on their campus of matriculation. Exceptions to the minimum enrolled hour requirement may be granted in cases where educational accommodations are required. Room and board charges will be covered ONLY during the time period when the student is actively enrolled.
- Students must apply for financial aid by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and supply all required documentation to the Financial Aid Office at the campus they are attending. For the academic year and/or the fall semester, the FAFSA must be filed and the aid application completed by September 1st. For the spring semester, the FAFSA must be filed and the aid application completed by January 1st.

Students must meet all of the general eligibility requirements of the Federal Title IV Financial Aid programs, including Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements.

- Students who maintain a permanent private residence, other than the parent's home, within commuting distance of the university are NOT eligible for room and board grants.
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- Students pursuing a second degree at the same level are not eligible for a room and board grant.

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- Persons employed by the University of Maine System on a half-time or greater basis and who are carried on the University employee payroll are NOT eligible for the room and board grants.

The maximum eligibility for the Room and Board Grant will not exceed the cost of the standard room and board charges, less all federal and state gift aid the student may receive for the purpose of funding education expenses, as well as other assistance specifically identified as paying for room and board charges. For the purposes of this calculation, 50% of a Federal Pell Grant will be considered. During the award process the maximum eligibility is then compared to the students remaining need and reduced if necessary so that an over award situation is not created.

The total amount a student receives from the Native American Room and Board Grant Program and from all other sources of financial support for the same purpose, whether from the institution or from outside agencies, may not exceed the student's calculated financial need. The receipt of other aid may, in some cases, reduce or eliminate the receipt of the room and board grant.

Appeals: Exceptions to any policies associated with the Native American Waiver and Educational Program will only be granted by the Native American Waiver and Educational Program Coordinator in consultation with the UMS Chief Student Affairs Officer. Appeals should be presented in the form of a letter detailing the specifics of the appeal.

Senior Citizens

For the purpose of administering this waiver, "senior citizens" are defined as Maine residents who are, or will become, 65 years of age during the semester for which they are requesting the waiver.

The Board of Trustees authorizes the waiver of tuition and Board-approved mandatory fees for senior citizens who register for undergraduate courses on a credit or audit basis at any university of the University of Maine System.

Enrollment will be subject to space availability.

USS Maine Commemorative Tuition Waiver Program

Tuition will be waived for eligible members of the *USS Maine's* crew, their spouses, and dependent children. Eligible crew members and families will be limited to the initial crew and those assigned to the ship within one year of its commissioning. Universities with over 1,000 students will be expected to carry up to two tuition waivers, and those under 1,000 students to carry up to one tuition waiver. Each waiver will be for \$2,500 or the cost of tuition, if less.

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UMS High School Waiver Program

In situations where State funding is not sufficient to cover one-half the tuition for all eligible students as outlined in the High School Aspirations Incentive Program, the University of Maine System will still waive one-half the tuition at the rates outlined above

for the first three (3) credit hours taken each semester (fall and spring only). It will be the student's responsibility to pay the remaining one-half of the tuition and any applicable fees or other course costs.

It is the prerogative of individual campuses to waive more than three (3) credit hours during the fall and spring semesters and/or to waive credit hours during the summer semester.

VETERANS

The University of Maine System will charge in-state tuition rates to all current and former members of the US Uniformed Services who were honorably discharged or are/were otherwise eligible for GI Bill benefits, regardless of whether or not they are currently receiving benefits.

Veterans Dependents

An individual who is a "covered individual" as defined in 38 U.S.C. § 3679(c) will be assessed resident tuition and fees at any campus of the University of Maine System. Additionally, recipients of Chapter 35, Dependents' Educational Assistance Program, will be charged in-state tuition rates for terms starting after the end of the spring 2015 semester. Further, once the in-state tuition rate is applied to the eligible individual, it shall remain in effect until the individual completes their academic program, even after GI Bill benefits have been exhausted, transferred, or are otherwise expired.

STATE MANDATED (ADJUSTABLE)

Veteran's Dependent Waiver

Per Maine law, tuition and mandatory fees and lab fees will be waived for eligible orphans, widows & widowers of veterans as well as spouses and children of veterans who are disabled, missing in action, etc. Initial eligibility is determined by the Veterans Affairs Office of the State of Maine. Students must be enrolled in an associate's, bachelor's or master's degree program. The tuition waiver may be reduced by an

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amount necessary to ensure that the value of this waiver, combined with all other grants and benefits received by the student, does not exceed the total cost of education. See [MRSA, Title 37-B, Section 505](#), as amended 2008, P.L. c.521 for details.

STATE MANDATED (NON-ADJUSTABLE)

High School Aspirations Incentive Program

In order to raise aspirations and help more students in Maine achieve their post-secondary degree in a timely and cost effective way, the University of Maine System participates in the High School Aspirations Incentive Program whereby the Maine Department of Education/State of Maine funds one-half of the tuition for up to 6 credits per semester (fall and spring) or 12 credits per academic year for students, attending Maine high schools*, deemed qualified by the post-secondary institution for college course enrollment. For those students deemed qualified, the University of Maine System will match the one-half tuition waiver for up to 6 credits per semester (fall and spring) or 12 credits per academic year.

To be deemed qualified, traditional high school students must have school approval, parental approval, a minimum high school grade point average (GPA) of “B” (or 3.0) or better, and junior or senior standing. An exception may be granted for students with less than a “B” average or at a lower grade level (9th and 10th graders) if the student has received a recommendation from the student’s school administration or teacher following an assessment of the student by the school’s administration. In the case of any exception, additional approval must be given by the post-secondary institution which will include a determination of the academic, social and emotional preparedness of the student for post-secondary course work.

Home schooled students are qualified for the Maine Aspirations program assuming the post-secondary institution determines that they meet all course prerequisites, are deemed academically prepared, are approved for enrollment and assuming that there is space available in the course.

All students must meet any course prerequisites and enrollment is subject to space availability.

*For the purpose of this statute, Maine high schools are those high schools approved by the Maine Department of Education for the receipt of public funds (public high schools and private high school receiving public tuition dollars from the state).

Tuition Waiver for Children of Firefighters and Law Enforcement Officers Killed in the Line of Duty

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Per Maine law, tuition will be waived for eligible students but will be limited to undergraduate degree programs and shall be limited to the earlier of not more than five years of full-time enrollment or its equivalent, or receipt of a Baccalaureate Degree. A person desiring a tuition waiver should apply to the Department of Education for determination of eligibility. [MRSA, Title 20-A, Section 12551](#), as enacted 1985, P.L. c.472.

Tuition Waiver for Persons in Foster Care, subsidized adoptive care, or minor wards of a subsidized permanency guardian upon graduating from high school or successfully completing a GED examination

Tuition will be waived for eligible Maine students who have applied for federal student financial aid. These students must be enrolled in an undergraduate or certificate program of at least one year and not been enrolled full-time for more than five years or the equivalent. A person desiring a tuition waiver should apply to the Finance Authority of Maine for determination of eligibility. No more than 28 new waivers will be awarded in each year. [MRSA, Title 20-A, Section 12573](#), as enacted 1999, P.L. c.216 and amended in 2003 and 2006.

Waiver Accounting Guidelines

1. Student tuition and fees should be recorded and reported as revenue at the full amount in the appropriate accounts.
2. The amount of the waivers should be offset against tuition by charging the account specifically provided for that purpose.

Related Documents:

[Board Policy 703 Tuition](#)

[APL Section IX-A Tuition, Room and Board, and Fee Refunds](#)

This Administrative Practice Letter has been approved by the Treasurer of the University of Maine System.