



Appendix

Tuition Exemption Benefit Supplement: Reduced Employee Rate for Officers

(Effective after July 2, 2012)

For Full-Time Officers of the University (includes Officers of Instruction, Administration, the Libraries and Research)

As a supplement to the Tuition Exemption Benefit, a reduced Employee Rate for tuition costs may be available, depending on your eligibility, for undergraduate and graduate courses you take, at Columbia University only. This employee tuition rate is available before waiting periods for Tuition Exemption are met, as well as after waiting periods for Officers taking a number of courses that exceeds the Tuition Exemption course limits.

Note that this is not a reimbursement or remission program; a portion of your tuition (35%) is simply exempted. However, you are responsible for the remaining tuition (65%) and all fees—for example course fees, textbooks and housing fees—where applicable.

To find out about the benefit available to you, read this Appendix thoroughly before you apply for the benefit. This material will help you be fully prepared.

To receive the [Tuition Exemption Benefit](#) or this Employee Rate, Officers must first be accepted and enrolled in the school they wish to attend. For more information, see the [Admissions](#) page of the main Columbia website.

Columbia University reserves the right to change or terminate the Reduced Employee Tuition Rates at any time. Please note that the Reduced Employee Tuition Rate Program does not cover courses taken outside Columbia University.

In the event that the information contained in this policy conflicts with any other published information, this policy prevails.



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Officers

Who is Eligible

Most regular, full-time, salaried Officers are eligible for this Employee Rate of 65% of tuition costs. The reduced rate is available in two instances:

- ◆ Before the two (2) year Tuition Exemption Benefit waiting period is met, the 65% Employee Rate can help cover the cost of courses outside Tuition Exemption
- ◆ After the waiting period is met, the 65% Employee Rate can help cover the cost of courses over the Tuition Exemption Benefit limit

Those officers who are ineligible include:

- ◆ Visiting Officers of Instruction or Research
- ◆ Part-Time Officers
- ◆ Officers not on Columbia's United States payroll

What's Covered

The Reduced Employee Tuition Rates Program pays 35% of the undergraduate or graduate tuition costs, at Columbia only, for Officers each term. This means the Officer is responsible for 65% of the tuition costs. Post-baccalaureate certificate programs at Columbia University are considered graduate degree programs for Tuition Exemption Benefit purposes.

The Program does not cover non-credit courses; course, lab or other school-specific fees; textbooks; housing fees; or tuition charged for auditing courses. *For more information on coverage, see [Courses Not Covered](#).*

Important Note About Summer Term

Summer Term comprises several overlapping sessions. Individual summer sessions do not count as "terms." The reduced Employee Tuition rate covers the available amount spread over the entire Summer Term, not the available amount for each session. For example, an Officer who is in a category eligible for the reduced Employee Tuition rate for one course would be able to receive the reduced Employee Tuition rate for one course during all the summer sessions.



Courses Not Covered

The following courses are not covered for any Officer by the Tuition Exemption Benefit OR by the 65% Employee Rate Program:

- ◆ Non-credit courses
- ◆ All courses at Teachers College or Barnard College
- ◆ Courses with no point/credit value
- ◆ Applied music courses (i.e., musical instrument instruction)
- ◆ Courses whose course number begins with the letter “Q” or “N,” *unless* such a course is taken to fulfill a degree requirement
- ◆ Any courses you audit
- ◆ All doctoral courses

Changes in Employment Status That May Affect Eligibility

Employment Status Change	How it Affects Eligibility
Layoff	If an Officer is laid off during a term, the reduced Employee Tuition rates for that term will not be revoked. However, the Officer will not be granted any reduced Employee Tuition rates for any subsequent term.
Involuntary Termination or Transfer to Part-Time	In general, if the Officer’s employment is involuntarily terminated, discharged, or released by Columbia University—other than for cause—during a term, or transferred to part-time status, the reduced Employee Tuition rates for that term will not be revoked. However, the Officer will not be granted reduced Employee Tuition rates for any subsequent term.
Resignation (Voluntary Termination)	If an Officer resigns, eligibility for the reduced Employee Tuition rates for that term will not be revoked. However, the Officer will not be granted any reduced Employee Tuition rates for any subsequent term.
Voluntary Change to Part-Time Appointment	If an Officer voluntarily switches from a full-time to a part-time appointment, the reduced Employee Tuition rates for that term will not be revoked. However, the Officer will not be granted any reduced Employee Tuition rates for any subsequent term.
Leaves of Absence	Officers on any paid leave of absence or on sabbatical, and Officers of Research on unpaid leave due to lapse of funding, are still considered to be full-time Officers and are eligible for the reduced Employee Tuition rates. If an Officer is on an unpaid leave (other than for lapse of funding) during a term, the reduced Employee Tuition rates for that term will not be revoked. However, the Officer will not be granted any reduced Employee Tuition rates for any



Employment Status Change	How it Affects Eligibility
	subsequent term until the Officer returns from unpaid leave.
Promotion to Officer	<p>If a support staff employee is promoted to an Officer after July 1, 2011, the new Officer will be eligible for the reduced Employee Tuition rates for courses in excess of the grandfathered Support Staff Tuition Exemption Benefit.</p> <p>Note: Those who are promoted to Officer should contact the Columbia Benefits Service Center, 212-851-7000 or hrbenefits@columbia.edu, for instructions on applying for the benefit.</p>
Flexible Work Arrangements—for Officers of Administration and the Libraries only	<p>Flextime and Telecommuting arrangements do not alter the number of hours worked and, therefore, do not affect eligibility for Tuition Exemption and the reduced Employee Tuition rates.</p> <p>The Nine-, Ten- and Eleven-Month Employment Program has implications for eligibility, as follows:</p> <p>The Eleven-Month Program maintains the same tuition benefit eligibility as other full-time, benefits-eligible Officers.</p> <p>The Ten-Month Program means an Officer is eligible for 83% of the full-time benefit.</p> <p>The Nine-Month Program means an Officer is eligible for 75% of the full-time benefit</p> <p>For the full Flexible Work Arrangements guidelines, visit the Work/Life website.</p>
Retirement	Upon an Officer’s retirement, the reduced Employee Tuition rates for that term will not be revoked. However, the retiree will not be eligible for any reduced Employee Tuition rates for any subsequent term.
Phased Retirement	Once an Officer begins Phased Retirement, he or she will be treated as an active full-time Officer for purposes of the reduced Employee Tuition Rates, until the retirement date. After retirement, he or she will be treated as described above in the Retirement section.

Next Steps

Please see [How to Apply](#) for details on how to apply for the reduced Employee Tuition Rates.



How to Apply

You must complete the application process for the reduced Employee Tuition rates **at the beginning of each term**. This means your Tuition Benefit Eligibility Form and other materials must be submitted to the appropriate office at your school *during the Change of Program Period* (see the [Academic Calendar](#) for details).

If your application is not approved, you will be responsible for any tuition for courses you keep. Columbia University does not accept responsibility for denied coverage if you are found to be ineligible for the reduced Employee Tuition rate.

Getting Started:

Applying for the Employee Tuition Rate

After you have been accepted as a student and registered for classes, apply for the reduced Employee Tuition Rate *each term* by completing the following steps:

Note: *You will need to print, complete and sign your Tuition Benefit Eligibility Form from the [CU Benefits Enrollment System](#).*

Officers: How to Apply

Every term:

1. Log in with your UNI and password to print your Tuition Benefit Eligibility Form from the [CU Benefits Enrollment System](#).
2. If you are a graduate student taking courses related to your work, complete a [Job-Related Graduate Course Certification](#) (PDF) form (also see [Tax Treatment](#)). This form must be completed by you and your supervisor signed in ink and dated by you and your supervisor. Attach the form to your Tuition Benefit Eligibility Form.
3. Submit the completed and signed Tuition Benefit Eligibility Form and, if it applies, your signed original Job-Related Graduate Course Certification form, to the Student Service Center in 205 Kent Hall (Morningside), or Registration & Financial Services @ CUMC in 1-141 Black Building (Medical Center), during the **Change of Program Period each term** (see the [Academic Calendar](#) for details).

Dropping Courses

If you do not want to continue a course, you should arrange with the appropriate School and the Registrar to drop it *by the end of the first week of classes* to avoid any possibility of financial responsibility.

Note: *Dropping all of your courses means withdrawing from the University. The University charges a \$75 fee for all withdrawals from the University, and this fee is not covered under this Tuition Exemption Benefit Program.*



Tax Treatment

Tax Disclaimer

If the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) challenges the University's interpretation of the Internal Revenue Code with regard to tuition benefits, you may be liable for income tax on the cash value of the benefits, plus any penalty and interest assessed. Please consult your tax advisor for specific IRS tax regulations.

Taxation of Undergraduate Courses (Below 4000)

Officers

As per IRS regulations, the Tuition rate Reduction amount (35% of Tuition costs) for an undergraduate course is not treated as taxable income, unless the student covered by an Officer's Tuition Exemption Benefit is taking the course as part of a graduate degree program.

Taxation of Graduate Courses (4000 & Above)

Officers

The first \$5,250 in a calendar year is exempt from taxation according to IRS regulations. Any additional Tuition rate reduction amount in a calendar year that pays for graduate-level courses is treated as taxable income, with the following exceptions:

- ◆ The benefit is not taxable if the Officer is taking graduate-level courses as part of an undergraduate degree program.
- ◆ The benefit is not taxable if the Officer takes graduate-level courses that are considered "job related," fulfilling the following two conditions established by the IRS:
 1. The course either maintains or improves skills required in your current position and/or is required by the University, or by law or regulations, to keep your current job or salary; **and**
 2. The course does not enable you to meet the minimum education requirements for your current job, and does not qualify you for a new trade or business.

Note: *Graduate courses taken as part of a doctoral program cannot be job-related. According to IRS regulations, they always qualify the student for a new trade or business.*

In the event an Officer takes a graduate course that meets the above conditions for tax exemption, the Officer must fill out and submit a [Job-Related Graduate Course Certification](#) (PDF) in order to avoid tax withholding. The completed form, signed in ink by the Officer's supervisor and submitted to the Student Service Center in 205 Kent Hall (Morningside) or Registration & Financial Services @ CUMC in 1-141 Black Building (Medical Center), ensures that no taxes related to the tuition benefit will be withheld from the Officer's paycheck. This form should be attached to and submitted with the Tuition Benefit Eligibility Form.



How Withholding Works

Income Tax Withholding for Officers

The cash equivalent of any taxable Tuition Employee reduction amount (as explained above) will be included in the Officer's income statement, on the pay stub under "Taxable Tuition." This will affect the amount of federal, state, local and FICA taxes deducted from the Officer's pay.

The taxation of the Tuition Employee reduction amount is determined on an annualized basis. The amount of taxable tuition is added to the Officer's base salary. The resulting total is taxed according to the annualized table, which is based on the Officer's income level. The University will withhold taxes based on the federal; state and New York City (if you reside in NYC) flat tax rates. The full value of the Tuition Exemption Benefit will also be subject to FICA and Medicare payroll taxes. For information about tax rates, please visit the Columbia Payroll website at:

<http://finance.columbia.edu/controller/payroll/index.html>

The University will spread the tax liability for tuition benefits over as many pay periods as possible:

- ◆ **Fall Term:** Taxes Withheld October through December
- ◆ **Spring Term:** Taxes withheld January through May
- ◆ **Summer Term:** Taxes withheld June through September

If the Tuition Benefit Eligibility Form and [Job-Related Graduate Course Certification](#) (PDF) are not submitted by the end of the Change of Program period each term, the University will withhold taxes. Officers who can prove the courses are job-related may be eligible to deduct the income from their reported taxable income on their Form 1040 filing.

Taxable Tuition is reflected on Form 1098T issued by Columbia University.

Questions

Questions about the amount of taxable tuition reported to the Payroll Office should be directed to the Tuition Exemption area of central Student Financial Services at (212) 854-6548 or tuitionexemption-students@columbia.edu.