Tuition Remission for Rice Employee Dependents: FAQ’s

Q. What policy governs the awarding of tuition benefits to Rice employees?
A. Human Resources Policy No. 430 governs the benefit and is available on the Rice website (http://bit.ly/q0IPY).

Q. Who is eligible for the benefit?
A. Eligibility begins the first semester following the faculty or staff member’s completion of three continuous years of employment in a benefits eligible position at Rice University. The three years of continuous benefits eligible service must be completed by the first day of classes to permit use of the benefit in that semester. Spouses, registered domestic partners, and children continue to be eligible as long as their spouse or parent is employed in a benefits-eligible status at the beginning of each semester and all other eligibility criteria continue to be met.

Should employment cease (or eligibility for this benefit otherwise cease) during an academic year, the benefit will continue through the end of the semester in which employment or benefits eligibility ceases, and will end immediately thereafter. Dependent children who marry as undergraduates lose eligibility for tuition remission beginning with the semester after the date of their marriage. If a divorce or revocation of domestic partner registration causes a student to lose eligibility, the student loses eligibility for tuition remission beginning with the first semester after the date of the divorce or revocation of domestic partner registration.

Q. Who qualifies as an eligible dependent under this policy?
A. “Eligible Dependent Children” means those who meet each of the following four criteria:
   1. seeking their first undergraduate degree, and
   2. under age 25 at matriculation, and
   3. one of the following:
      - the unmarried biological child of the Rice Employee/Retiree and for whom the Rice Employee/Retiree is the legally designated parent;
      - the unmarried stepchild of the Rice Employee/Retiree and who is the biological or adopted child of the Rice Employee/Retiree’s current spouse;
      - the unmarried legally adopted child of the Rice Employee/Retiree and for whom the Rice Employee/Retiree is the legally designated parent; or
      - the unmarried biological or adopted child of the Rice Employee/Retiree’s domestic partner (as currently registered under
Rice procedures) and for whom the domestic partner is the legally designated parent, and

4. a dependent of the Rice Employee/Retiree at the time the benefit is awarded and for any previous three years during the child’s life. A child is considered a dependent when at least one of the following statements is true:

- the child is claimed as the Rice Employee/Retiree’s dependent at least every other year on his/her federal income tax returns, or
- the Rice Employee/Retiree’s household provides more than 50% of the child’s financial support, or
- the child lives primarily with the Rice Employee/Retiree when he/she is not away at school.

The intent of these eligibility criteria is to provide tuition for children in close, long-term child/parent relationships with a Rice Employee/Retiree. This policy does not attempt to extend the benefit to all possible child/guardian relationships. For example, grandchildren and other children for whom the Rice Employee/Retiree is a guardian are not eligible.

Upon request, the Rice Employee/Retiree must provide Rice with proof of relationship, dependency, and/or residency, which may include providing IRS forms, high school enrollment forms or other proof of residency, and birth or marriage certificates.

Q. **How frequently are decisions about eligibility made?**

A. Decisions are made semester-by-semester. Typically, students will not be awarded tuition remission after the beginning of a semester nor will tuition remission be withdrawn before the end of a semester.

Q. **What does the Rice dependent tuition benefit have to do with the HOOTS scholarship fund or other scholarship funds at Rice?**

A. Tuition remission is a benefit to eligible Rice staff and faculty. It is administered separately from any other program at Rice. Dependents are considered for additional financial aid through Student Financial Services if they qualify. For information about HOOTS (a program which supports the children of Facilities and Engineering and Housing and Dining staff) call Sau Mei Lees at 713-348-5222 in Facilities & Engineering or Veronica Boorom at 713-348-5442 in Housing & Dining.

Q. **What is the scope of this benefit and how can it be used?**

A. The student’s admission to Rice University is not automatic. Eligible dependents must be accepted to Rice through the standard admission process. To be admitted as an undergraduate degree candidate at Rice, the prospective student must submit a formal application to the Rice University Office of Admission according to the admission calendar and must meet established deadlines. The
student must competitively meet the University's requirements for admission and pay applicable application fees.

Upon the eligible dependent’s admission to Rice or to a university with which Rice has a reciprocal agreement, the Rice Employee/Retiree must complete the Application for Dependent Tuition Remission, and return it to the Director of Benefits. Eligibility is reviewed semester-by-semester, and the Application for Dependent Tuition Remission must be submitted annually for approval and review to determine whether the benefit is taxable. Typically, students will not be awarded tuition remission after the beginning of a semester nor will tuition remission be withdrawn before the end of a semester.

Additionally, the Rice University Application for Financial Assistance must be completed and returned to Student Financial Services, and the FAFSA (Federal Application for Student Aid) must be completed online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Student Financial Services uses this information to verify dependency for purposes of eligibility for federally-funded financial aid and to assist the family with additional financing options. For questions about student financial aid to Rice University, contact Student Financial Services.

The benefit for each eligible dependent is limited to a maximum of eight semesters. In the case of transfer students, this benefit is limited to the number of semesters necessary at the time of transfer to complete the first undergraduate degree at Rice (not to exceed, and most likely, less than, eight semesters.)

Study at Rice (or any other) summer school is not covered by this benefit.

No more than two semesters of approved study abroad (fall or spring semesters only) will qualify for tuition remission for the full cost of the program’s tuition, not to exceed the amount of tuition remission for the same semester at Rice. Summer study abroad is not covered by this benefit.

**Q. Does Rice have similar benefit programs with other institutions?**

**A.** To be admitted as an undergraduate degree candidate at universities with reciprocal tuition arrangements with Rice, the prospective students must meet all admission requirements and established deadlines of the reciprocal institution. Rice may have reciprocal tuition agreements with other universities at any given time, and these arrangements may change without notice. However, should a qualifying dependent matriculate under a reciprocal tuition agreement which is terminated during the student’s undergraduate college years, the tuition scholarship will continue for up to a total of eight semesters, subject to the terms and limitations of this policy. This change may trigger a taxable event, for which the employee is responsible.

Reciprocal tuition agreements are administered by the Office of Enrollment at Rice. Participating schools reserve the right to limit the total number of students to whom they grant a tuition scholarship; therefore Rice urges students to apply as early as possible and to respond to an offer of admission as soon as possible. Students should notify the Office of Enrollment upon applying to a university with a reciprocal agreement. Upon application to a reciprocal tuition university, please
contact the Office of Enrollment so we may notify the reciprocal university of your child’s status under the agreement.

Dependents meeting all requirements of the reciprocal university can use up to eight semesters of tuition scholarship in their progress toward their first undergraduate degree at reciprocal exchange universities. For those selected for the program, for tax valuation purposes, each semester this benefit has a value equal to that semester’s tuition at the participating institution.

In order to maintain eligibility, the student must meet all requirements of the participating institution, which may be different from those of Rice University. All rules concerning admission, leaves of absence, residency and graduation requirements, and their effects on tuition remission under this program are solely those of the reciprocal universities. Students must resolve all academic and enrollment issues with the participating school directly.

For more information, please contact the Office of Enrollment at Rice.

The current admission deadline for Trinity University is February 1.

The current admission deadline for Austin College is March 1.

Q. How does the Policy No 430 apply to Trinity University and Austin College?
A. Policy No 430 only applies to the extent that it defines employee eligibility and employee dependent.

Q. Is Rice summer school included in tuition remission?
A. No. Study at Rice (or any other) summer school is not covered by this benefit.

Q. Is study abroad included in tuition remission?
A. Rice students are encouraged to enrich their academic experience through appropriate programs of study away from Rice. No more than two semesters of approved study abroad (fall or spring semesters only) will qualify for tuition remission for the full cost of the program’s tuition, not to exceed the amount of tuition remission for the same semester at Rice. Summer study abroad is not covered by this benefit.

Rice will also support study abroad for Rice dependents using the tuition benefit at reciprocal schools. The student must coordinate the study abroad with the school’s study abroad office, and if not covered by the school, the bill for the tuition may be sent to Benefits (benefits@rice.edu or MS-92) and Rice will pay the program directly for the tuition costs. The same restrictions in the paragraph above for Rice students apply.
Q. Who has more information about these benefits for Rice faculty and staff?
A. For questions on the tuition waiver for eligible students admitted to Rice, contact Benefits (benefits@rice.edu), 713-348-2363.

For questions on the tuition exchange for eligible students admitted to Trinity University or Austin College, contact Renee Piper in Enrollment, 713-348-6271.

Q. How do I apply for the dependent tuition benefit?
A. In all cases, your dependent must apply and be accepted for admission to the respective college or university.

Upon admission to Rice, the employee and/or the dependent must complete the Application for Dependent Tuition Remission, and return it to Benefits (benefits@rice.edu), 713-348-6074.

Upon applying to either Trinity University or Austin College, contact Renee Piper, 713-348-6271.

Additionally, the Rice University Application for Financial Assistance must be completed and returned to Student Financial Services and the FAFSA (Federal Application for Student Aid) must be completed online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Student Financial Services uses this information to verify federal dependency and to assist the family with additional financing options. For questions about student financial aid to Rice University, contact Heather Domeier in Student Financial Services at 713-348-8037.

Q. I am a long-time employee of the university. Am I grandfathered into the older version of the policy?
A. The definition of eligible dependents in this policy is effective August 1, 2009 and may be utilized by eligible dependents of Rice Employee/Retirees as early as the fall semester of 2009. The three-year employment vesting requirement does not apply to a Rice Employee/Retiree appointed or hired on or before July 1, 2010; for such employees, the one-year employment vesting requirement in the prior Policy 430-94 applies, instead.

Dependents of a Rice Employee/Retiree appointed or hired after July 1, 2010 are subject to all eligibility criteria and limitations under this policy.

All students matriculating in the fall of 2010 or later are limited to eight semesters of study. The ten-semester limitation in the prior Policy 430-94 will continue to apply for any students who matriculated prior to the fall of 2010.

Please note that Rice reserves the right at any time to revise and interpret this policy in the best interests of the university. This Question and Answer brochure does not take the place of Rice Human Resources Policy No.430, nor does it imply any contractual responsibility to provide any benefit. Please contact Benefits or Mary Cronin in Human Resources should you have questions about the policy.