DEPENDENT TUITION WAIVER GUIDELINES

A. **PURPOSE**: The purpose of these guidelines is to assure consistent implementation of Regent Policy 940.32, Tuition Waivers for Dependents.

B. **ELIGIBILITY**

1. Employees must be employed at least ¾ time for 120 calendar days (e.g., four months) before being eligible for a dependent tuition waiver benefit. Eligibility begins at the start of the first full academic semester or summer session that follows the 120-day waiting period. Up to two dependents may utilize the dependent tuition waiver simultaneously in an academic term. Employees who utilize the faculty and staff waiver are eligible for a single (one) dependent waiver during the same academic term. Employees must be employed at least ¾ time during the entire academic term (e.g., semester or summer session) in which a dependent utilizes the waiver in order to receive the benefit of the waiver. A dependent includes the employee’s spouse or adult dependent, as defined in the MUS Employee Benefits Plan, and financially dependent children as defined by the Internal Revenue Code who are unmarried and under age 25.

a. Temporary service at ¾ time or more in a temporary position counts toward the 120-calendar day waiting period as long as there is no break in service. Employment during an entire academic year is considered one year of service and there is no break in service as long as the employee is reemployed for the subsequent academic year.

b. No part-time employment at less than ¾ time counts toward meeting the qualifying period. However, any time employed at ¾ time or greater will count, even when it is preceded by or followed by less than ¾ time employment as long as there is no intervening break in service. Employees must be employed ¾ time or greater for the entire academic term to maintain their eligibility to use the dependent tuition waiver.

c. Authorized time in an official layoff status or on an approved leave without pay does not count toward the qualifying period but does not constitute a break in service.

d. Sabbaticals and other forms of paid leave are considered time worked for purposes of meeting the qualifying period.

e. Employees who have prior service with a unit of the university system and are later reemployed after more than a 5-day break in service must serve the entire 120 day waiting period to be eligible for the dependent tuition waiver benefit.

1. All time worked at the Office of Commissioner of Higher Education or at

 any unit of the university system at ¾ time or more shall count toward the

 qualifying period as long as there is no break in service when the

 employee accepts a new position at a different unit of the university

 system. Employment at any private institution, at any tribal college or

 the community colleges in Kalispell, Glendive and Miles City does not

 count towards meeting the qualifying period.

1. Employees must have met all of the aforementioned eligibility requirements prior to (or as of) the first day of the academic term in order to be eligible for the dependent tuition waiver benefit.

2. An employee must remain employed the entire academic term during which the tuition waiver is utilized. If an employee terminates his/her employment prior to the end of the academic term, the employee shall be required to repay the cost of the dependent tuition waiver.

3. Jointly employed spouses are each eligible for a dependent tuition waiver benefit, however in no case may the benefit be pooled. Eligible jointly employed spouses may utilize the dependent tuition waiver benefit for four children at one time but any one child may not receive more than a 50% tuition waiver under the dependent tuition waiver policy.

C. **APPLICATION/CERTIFICATION PROCESS**

1. Applications for the dependent tuition waiver benefit are to be initiated by the employee or the employee’s dependent. Applications require approvals/ signatures of the employee, the dependent utilizing the tuition waiver and the Human Resources Office. The campus Human Resources Office is responsible for certifying employee eligibility for the dependent tuition waiver benefit. Human Resources will send a copy of the eligibility certificate to the appropriate financial aid office.

 2. New certification and recertification is required for each academic term.

1. Reasonable deadlines for submitting an application for a dependent tuition

waiver may be established by each campus unit. Employees who do not submit a timely application for a dependent tuition waiver may be denied the dependent tuition waiver benefit.

1. Employees will be required to sign a statement verifying 1) that the child(ren) utilizing the tuition waiver are claimed as dependents for federal tax purposes, are unmarried and have not reached age 25 as of the first day of the semester for which the tuition waiver is granted; or 2) one of the dependents is married to the employee (their spouse) utilizing the tuition waiver.
	1. Documentation that a dependent(s) has been claimed in the tax year the benefit is used may be required for audit purposes or in cases of suspected misuse. False certification of dependent eligibility for the tuition waiver is cause for discharge and the employee shall be required to repay the cost of the tuition waiver. Employees who utilize the faculty and staff waiver are eligible for a single (one) dependent waiver during the same academic term.

D. **EDUCATION BENEFIT**

1. The dependent tuition waiver benefit is a 50% reduction in the cost of residential tuition. This benefit is not taxable. In no case may registration, course fees or any other mandatory fee be waived.

2. Dependents may utilize the dependent tuition waiver at any unit of the university system for which they have applied and been accepted as long as eligibility standards are maintained. Students who are dually enrolled at more than one unit receive a 50% reduction in the cost of residential tuition for courses taken at each unit.

3. There is no limitation on the number of credits that may be taken per semester under the tuition waiver benefit.

4. If the employer requires an employee to take a course at a university unit in order to obtain new job skills and the employee wants to utilize the dependent tuition waiver for a spouse or child, the employer is responsible for paying the full tuition for the employee, thereby preserving the option of the employee to allow their child or spouse to access the dependent tuition waiver benefit.

5. The dependent tuition waiver benefit may be used for on-line, electronic courses as long as they are for credit and are not self-supporting. The dependent tuition waiver does not apply to noncredit, continuing education, or other self-supporting courses. The dependent tuition waiver benefit may not be used to attend law school or obtain a graduate degree. Graduate level courses are excluded from the dependent tuition waiver benefit. Dependents may utilize the tuition waiver benefit to obtain only their first baccalaureate degree.

6. Students who receive other tuition waivers or scholarships awarded by the university need to disclose their eligibility for the dependent tuition waiver benefit and are only eligible to receive both benefits, or portions thereof, at the discretion of the university. Such students shall receive, at a minimum, the greater of the two benefits. Scholarships awarded by outside entities are not subject to this limitation.