

## Tuition Rebate

**Original Implementation:** January 30, 2001

**Last Revision:** October 27, 2014

Section 54.0065 of the Texas Education Code authorizes a tuition rebate of up to \$1,000 for certain undergraduates. The purpose of this program is to provide a financial incentive for students to complete their baccalaureate studies with as few courses outside the degree plan as possible. Minimizing the number of courses taken by students results in financial savings to students, parents, and the state.

To be eligible for a rebate under this program, a student must:

1. have enrolled for the first time in an institution of higher education in the fall 1997 semester or later;
2. request a rebate for coursework related to a first baccalaureate degree received from a general academic teaching institution;
3. have been a resident of Texas as set forth under rules established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and have been entitled to pay resident tuition at all times while pursuing the degree;
4. if enrolled for the first time in fall 2005 or later, graduate within four calendar years for a four-year degree program or within five calendar years for any program determined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to require more than four years to complete\*; and
5. have attempted no more than three hours in excess of the **minimum** number of semester credit hours required to complete the degree under the catalog under which the student graduated.

In addition to hours completed at SFA, hours attempted include:

- transfer credits
- course credit earned exclusively by examination (except the first nine semester credit hours are excluded)
- courses dropped after the official census date
- for-credit developmental courses
- optional internship and cooperative education courses
- repeated courses

Hours attempted exclude:

- course credit that is earned to satisfy requirements for a Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program but that is not required to complete the degree program
- course credit, other than course credit earned exclusively by examination, that is earned before graduating from high school (i.e., dual credit hours earned in high school) (effective June 17, 2011)
- required teacher education courses to the extent that they are over and above the free electives allowed in the baccalaureate degree program (for students concurrently earning a baccalaureate degree and a Texas teaching certificate)
- courses dropped for reasons that are determined by the institution to be totally beyond the control of the student

\* If enrolled for the first time in fall 2005 or later, a student may be eligible for a tuition rebate if the otherwise eligible student is awarded a baccalaureate degree but does not satisfy the time requirement solely as a result of a hardship or other good cause. Such student must follow the appeal procedures below to be considered for the rebate.

The amount of the tuition rebate is the lesser of \$1,000 or the actual amount of undergraduate tuition paid by the student to Stephen F. Austin State University. If the amount paid to Stephen F. Austin State University is less than \$1,000, the student may qualify for an increase in the amount of the rebate, not to exceed \$1,000 by providing proof of tuition paid to other Texas institutions of higher education.

The rebate shall first be applied to any outstanding balance due to Stephen F. Austin State University, including outstanding charges on the student's account, short term loans or book loans owed to the university. Then, if the student has an outstanding student loan owed to or guaranteed by the state of Texas, the university shall apply the rebate to the student loan, and then pay the student any excess amount. If a student has more than one outstanding student loan owed to or guaranteed by the state of Texas, the university shall apply the amount of the rebate to the loans as directed by the student. If the student fails to provide timely instructions on the application of the amount, the university shall apply the amount of the rebate to retire the loans with the highest interest rates first.

Students wishing to apply for tuition rebates must do so at the time they apply for baccalaureate degrees by completing the information on the back of the Graduation Application Form pertaining to the tuition rebate. Applications are available in the registrar's office.

The registrar's office will evaluate all applications and make a determination of rebate eligibility, based on number of hours attempted as posted on the student's academic record. The registrar's office will provide the controller's office with the names, addresses and social security numbers of all applicants eligible for tuition rebates. The controller's office will review the list and make a determination of rebate eligibility, based on amounts the student has paid the university for tuition. Within 60 days after graduation, the controller's office will remit rebates to eligible students and the registrar's office will mail denial notices to ineligible students. Each notice will include the reason for denial. A student may appeal a denial decision to the Fiscal Appeals Panel in accordance with Student Fiscal Appeals (6.19). Information on the appeal process is available in the registrar's office. All appeals must be filed within 60 days of the university's written notification of denial.

**Cross Reference:** Tex. Educ. Code § 54.0065; 19 Tex. Admin. Code §§ 13.80-.87; Student Fiscal Appeals (6.19)

**Responsible for Implementation:** Vice President for Finance and Administration

**Contact For Revision:** Controller, Registrar

**Forms:** Graduation Application Form (available in the Registrar's Office)

**Board Committee Assignment:** Academic and Student Affairs