

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN
STATE UNIVERSITY

Office of the General Counsel

POLICY SUMMARY FORM

Policy Name: Lumberjack Education Assistance Program

Policy Number: 12.5

Is this policy new, being reviewed/revised, or deleted? Review/Revise

Date of last revision, if applicable: 7/26/2022

Unit(s) Responsible for Policy Implementation: Vice President for Finance and Administration

Purpose of Policy (what does it do): This policy permits active, regular (100% FTE) employees of the university, their spouses, and dependents, to participate in the Lumberjack Education Assistance Program (LEAP) provided eligibility requirements are met and funding is available.

Reason for the addition, revision, or deletion (check all that apply):

- Scheduled Review Change in law Response to audit finding
 Internal Review Other, please explain: Clarify definition

Please complete the appropriate section:

Specific rationale for new policy: N/A

Specific rationale for each substantive revision: Definition clarification.

Specific rationale for deletion of policy: N/A

Additional Comments:

Reviewers:

Michaelyn Greene, Director of Treasury and Student Business Services
Judi Kruwell, Associate Vice President for Finance and Administration
Gina Oglesbee, Vice President for Finance and Administration
Damon Derrick, General Counsel

Lumberjack Education Assistance Program

Original Implementation: January 28, 2003

Last Revision: ~~July 26, 2022~~ January 30, 2023

Purpose

This policy permits active, regular (100% FTE) employees of the university, their spouses, and dependents, to participate in the Lumberjack Education Assistance Program (LEAP) provided eligibility requirements are met and funding is available.

Definitions

Eligible employee – for purposes of LEAP, an eligible employee is an active, regular (100% FTE) employee who has completed six months of continuous service for the university prior to the end of the enrolled semester.

Eligible dependent – for purposes of LEAP, a child, stepchild, or qualified dependent of an eligible employee *must meet the tests to be claimed as a “qualifying child”* ~~meeting the definition of dependent~~ under IRS regulations.

Eligible spouse – for purposes of LEAP, an individual recognized by law as a spouse or common law spouse and meets insurance eligibility requirements for a spouse set forth by the Employees Retirement System of Texas (ERS).

Third party or contract – a sponsoring organization or agency who takes responsibility for paying a student’s tuition and fee balance either in full or in part.

Outside scholarship – a scholarship provided by a private donor, foundation, business, or other sources external to Stephen F. Austin State University, SFASU Foundation, Inc., and SFASU Alumni Association.

General

Detailed program and eligibility requirements can be found on the human resources website. LEAP is designed as an employee benefit initiative and is subject to available resources.

LEAP benefits apply only to mandatory tuition and fee charges excluding statutory tuition. Statutory tuition, excessive hours tuition, 3-peat charges, and non-mandatory incidental fees are not covered by LEAP benefits.

LEAP benefits will be reduced if tuition and fees are paid by a third party or contract, or are paid by any other exemption or waiver. LEAP benefits will also be reduced by student financial aid with the exception of PELL grant, FSEOG (federal supplemental educational opportunity grant), outside scholarships, or loans.

Participation in the LEAP program requires maintaining a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 for undergraduate degree programs and a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 for graduate degree programs.

The university complies with federal and state tax regulations governing any applicable taxability, tax reporting, and/or withholding of taxes on LEAP benefits. The value of any taxable tuition and fee benefits paid by LEAP above the annual IRS eligible amount is treated as a taxable benefit to the employee.

Employees

Active, regular (100% FTE) employees become eligible for LEAP benefits when they will have completed six months of continuous service for the university before the last day of the enrolled term. If an employee retires from the university, or terminates for any reason, LEAP eligibility will end on the last day of the enrolled term.

If departmental workload permits, an employee may attend one class during normal working hours by utilizing an alternative work schedule or by using accrued compensable leave. To be eligible for an alternative work schedule, an employee must request approval from the appropriate supervisor and director/dean for the time off to attend class.

Statutory tuition related to courses eligible for LEAP will be covered by a separate employee scholarship.

Spouse/Dependents

Eligible employees may apply for LEAP benefits on behalf of their spouse/dependents when the employee becomes eligible as set forth by this policy. The LEAP benefits may be applied to undergraduate or graduate courses that are part of the overall degree plan of the spouse/dependent so long as he/she meets the definition of spouse/dependent as set forth by this policy. Documentation may be required to determine spouse/dependent eligibility.

If the eligible employee that applied for LEAP on behalf of the spouse/dependent retires from the university or terminates for any other reason, LEAP eligibility for the spouse/dependent will end on the last day of the enrolled term.

Cross Reference: LEAP Requirements Document on the Human Resources Website

Responsible for Implementation: Vice President for Finance and Administration

Contact for Revision: Vice President for Finance and Administration

Forms: LEAP Application on mySFA; Employee Scholarship Application

Board Committee Assignment: Academic and Student Affairs Committee

Revision History: July 26, 2022
April 18, 2020
April 24, 2018
April 14, 2015
April 17, 2012
April 21, 2009