



Staff and Faculty
External Tuition Remission
Program

Effective July 1, 2026

Helpful Terms

Academic Fee:	A fee directly related to a specific program of study or course that must be paid for the student to participate in the program. General administrative or technology fees do not qualify as academic fees. RISD reserves the right to determine whether a fee qualifies as an academic fee.
Academic Year:	For the external tuition remission program, RISD uses the Fiscal Year from July 1 to June 30 as the Academic Year.
Accredited School:	An institution of higher education that meets the quality standards of an external agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.
Full-time Status – Employees:	A full-time staff member is an employee whose primary position at RISD is scheduled for at least 30 hours per week and 1,560 hours per year. A full-time faculty member or librarian is a member of the Full-Time Faculty Association.
Full-time Status – Students:	Students carrying the number of credits their school requires to be considered full-time in a given term.
Maximum Academic Year Benefit:	The maximum financial benefit RISD will provide to the qualifying dependent of an eligible employee in an academic year, based on the employee’s current primary position.
Qualifying Dependents:	Children who are an employee’s legal and tax dependents as defined by the IRS for federal income tax purposes. Also referred to as “qualifying students.”
Scheduled Hours per Week:	Refers to an employee’s Scheduled Weekly Hours in Workday.
Scheduled Hours per Year:	Scheduled Weekly Hours in Workday multiplied by the number of weeks per year the employee works. For example, the Scheduled Hours per Year for an employee whose Scheduled Hours per Week in Workday is 35 hours, and who works 52 weeks per year, is 1,820.
Term:	A division of an academic year during which the university holds classes. Common term lengths include semesters (two terms per year), trimesters (three terms per year), and quarters (four terms per year).
Tuition:	Tuition and/or mandatory academic fees on an itemized invoice and verified in writing by the external higher education institution (e.g., a higher education institution other than RISD). Does not include books, other mandatory, non-academic fees, and other materials or costs related to room and board.

Program Overview

RISD's External Tuition Remission program provides financial assistance to qualified dependent students of eligible full-time staff and faculty who are enrolled full-time in a two- or four-year undergraduate degree program at an accredited institution of higher education.

Read the following FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) to learn more about your eligibility and the benefits available to you through this program. Members of collective bargaining units should refer to their contracts for additional eligibility guidelines. Feel free to contact benefits@risd.edu with any questions.

Q. [Am I eligible to participate in this program?](#)

A. You are eligible to participate if you are a full-time faculty or staff member who is actively employed at RISD at the time of your application and have completed at least three (3) consecutive years of service in a position with scheduled hours of at least 30 per week and 1,560 per year or as a member of the Full-Time Faculty Association. Part-time faculty and staff, temporary staff, and on-call staff are not eligible for external tuition remission benefits.

In addition to the consecutive years of service requirement, your current primary position must satisfy both the scheduled hours per week and scheduled hours per year requirements to be eligible for external tuition remittance benefits.

Example: An employee whose scheduled weekly hours are 30 but who only works nine (9) months per year would not be eligible for external tuition remission benefits, even if they previously satisfied the continuous years of service requirement, because their scheduled annual hours would be 1,080.

Q. [What are the dependent eligibility guidelines?](#)

A. Your student is considered a qualifying dependent when enrolled full-time in a two- or four-year undergraduate degree program at an accredited institute of higher education, and is considered your tax-dependent under the [Internal Revenue Service \(IRS\)](#) guidelines. Members of collective bargaining units should refer to their contracts for additional eligibility guidelines.

Q. [When can I apply for external tuition remission benefits for my student?](#)

A. You must satisfy the years of service requirement before the beginning of your student's school term to be eligible for external tuition remission benefits for that term. Because each school sets its own term start dates, RISD will use a two-week window before your anniversary date to determine eligibility.

Example: An employee will complete three (3) consecutive years of eligible service on August 28th. Their dependent's school term begins on August 20th; the employee may apply for benefits for this term.

Q. [What is the financial value of the benefit for which I am eligible?](#)

A. You are eligible for a maximum academic year benefit of 20% of RISD's tuition for the same academic year upon completion of at least three (3) consecutive years of service in an eligible position and 35% of RISD's tuition upon completion of at least seven (7) consecutive years of service in an eligible position. RISD will use the same two-week window for your anniversary to determine your benefit level.

Example: Your seventh consecutive year of service anniversary falls on September 10th. Your student's term begins September 1st. You will be eligible for the 35% maximum academic year benefit.

Below are the maximum academic year benefits for the 2026-2027 academic year:

Consecutive Years of Service	Benefit Eligibility	Maximum Benefit
Three (3) years	20%	\$13,292
Seven (7) years	35%	\$23,261

Q. [When does my Maximum Academic Year Benefit reset?](#)

A. External tuition remission benefits are budgeted by the academic/fiscal year beginning on July 1 and ending on June 30.

Q. [How long can my dependent benefit from the external tuition remission program?](#)

A. RISD will provide benefits for up to four (4) years for each student. Years do not need to be consecutive; however, RISD will not provide benefits for more than four (4) years or an equivalent number of terms.

Q. [Where does RISD send tuition payments?](#)

A. All tuition payments are made directly to your student's school.

Q. [My spouse and I both work at RISD. Can we both apply for benefits for our child\(ren\)?](#)

A. Only one parent may apply for external tuition remission benefits in each academic year. However, if you are eligible for different benefit levels, you may apply through the parent with the higher maximum benefit for the academic year.

Q. [Is there a limit to how many students I can apply for benefits for?](#)

A. No, there is no limit to the number of qualified dependents for whom you can apply for benefits.

Q. [What happens if my student drops from full-time to part-time status or withdraws from school during a term for which RISD paid benefits?](#)

A. If your student's enrollment status changes, you must arrange for the school to refund RISD. However, if the change in status occurs after a refund is possible, the term will count towards the student's four (4) year eligibility limit. In the case of a partial refund, RISD will deduct the unrecovered amount from a future term, should you apply again for benefits for that student.

Q. [Are my student's winter or summer session classes covered?](#)

A. Students may use tuition benefits to pay for courses taken between terms, as long as the course is required for their degree program and they are enrolled full-time in the preceding and following terms. Any amount paid for such courses will be deducted from the benefits available for the subsequent term.

Classes taken after the close of the spring term, starting before July 1, are only payable if you have not exhausted your benefits in the current academic year.

Please note that using benefits toward a between-term class does not exempt a student from the requirement to be enrolled full-time in subsequent terms. Students must maintain full-time enrollment to be eligible for external remitted tuition benefits. Contact the Benefits team at benefits@risd.edu with any questions about how a between-term class will impact your benefits eligibility.

Example 1: Your student is scheduled to take a summer class starting after July 1. The cost of that class will be deducted from your allocated benefits for the fall term.

Example 2: Your student is scheduled to take a class starting June 15; however, you have exhausted your maximum academic year benefit. The class is not eligible for benefits.

Example 3: Your student took a three (3) credit class over the winter break, allowing them to attend school part-time for the spring term. Since your student is no longer enrolled full-time, they are not eligible for benefits for the spring term.

Q. My student is committed to pursuing a degree but cannot attend school full-time due to a disability or chronic health condition. Can I still apply for tuition remission benefits for them?

A. Yes, your student may be eligible for benefits with a letter from their school's student disability services attesting to the need for part-time enrollment for medical reasons. Please note, RISD is not able to accept medical documentation to perform an independent evaluation of your student's need to attend school part-time. Additionally, the financial value of benefits paid to approved part-time students may not exceed the value of benefits paid for equivalent full-time enrollment. Please contact benefits@risd.edu for more information. Members of collective bargaining units should refer to their contracts for additional eligibility guidelines.

Q. Are external tuition remittance benefits taxable?

A. RISD's external tuition remission benefits are administered per the [Internal Revenue Service](#) (IRS). Under IRS rules, children are no longer tax dependents in the calendar year they turn 24. RISD will continue to provide external tuition remission benefits through the year in which they turn 26; however, taxes must be withheld.

Q. Do I have to re-satisfy the length of service requirements if I am rehired after a break in service or for time worked at RISD in an ineligible position?

A. Eligibility for external tuition remission benefits after a break in service follows the same guidelines as other benefits. However, if you met the length of service requirements before transferring to an ineligible position without a break in service and subsequently move back into an eligible position, you will maintain your eligibility at the benefit amount previously achieved. Only time worked in an eligible position counts towards continuous years of service to determine benefit levels, and your current primary position will always determine your maximum academic year benefit.

Q. Will external tuition remission benefits impact my student's financial aid?

External tuition remission benefits will not be reduced by sources of financial aid that require repayment (e.g., loans). Contact the Financial Aid office at the student's school for more information on impacts to your student's financial aid package or scholarship eligibility.

Q. When does my eligibility for external tuition remission benefits end?

A. Your eligibility ends when you transfer into an ineligible position or your employment with RISD ends. Additionally, you may not apply for external tuition remission benefits once you provide notice of your intention to resign from your position at RISD. If you resign from your position at RISD before the end of a semester in which your dependent received external tuition remission benefits, the amount paid will be deducted from any future benefits for which you would be eligible upon rehire.

In the event you pass away or retire from RISD while a qualified dependent is receiving external tuition remission benefits, RISD will continue to provide benefits at the same level, assuming all other eligibility criteria are satisfied.

Q. What fees or expenses are excluded from this program?

A. The following list provides examples of expenses and fees not covered under the external tuition remission program. This list is intended to be illustrative and is not all-inclusive. Contact the Benefits team at benefits@risd.edu with questions about specific fees. RISD retains the right to approve or deny payment of an expense at its discretion.

- *Non-degree earning programs*
- *Professional development*
- *Certifications or licensing programs*
- *Room, including room damage fees and furnishings*
- *Board*
- *Insurance*
- *Books or online course materials*
- *General technology fees*
- *Parking*
- *Student activity fees*
- *Transcript fees*
- *Transportation-related expenses, including those related to study-abroad programs*
- *Lab fees for broken equipment*
- *Health and counseling services*
- *Credit card transaction fees*
- *Registration fees*
- *Late fees or interest charges*
- *Facility/maintenance fees*
- *Orientation fees*
- *Tutoring or other academic support fees*
- *Commencement fees*
- *Uniforms*

Q. How do I apply for benefits under this program?

A. See the application process and requirements below.

Step 1: Collect the application materials

For each term you are requesting benefits, you must provide the following for each dependent:

- A completed **Application for Tuition Remission Benefits**
- An **itemized invoice** from the student's school outlining tuition expenses

Step 2: Submit a request for benefits in Workday

Submit your request for benefits in Workday thirty (30) days before the start of the term or as soon as possible, based on when you receive the invoice for your student's school. Attach the completed application and the invoice to your Supplier Invoice Request (SIR). Instructions for submitting your request in Workday can be found [here](#).

Please note:

- Requests submitted more than two (2) weeks after the beginning of the term or class are considered late and are subject to approval at RISD's discretion. If you anticipate submitting a late application, please contact **benefits@risd.edu**.
- Employees are responsible for paying any late fees incurred due to a late application.
- External tuition remission benefits will not be approved retroactively after the end of a term or class.

Step 2a: Set your dependent's school up as a vendor in Workday

Because RISD makes payments directly to your student's school, the school must be established as a vendor in Workday. If the school's name does not appear when you enter it in your Supplier Invoice Request, you will need to set it up as a new vendor through [PaymentWorks](#) (*instructions for setting up a new vendor start on slide 8*).

Step 3: Benefits review of application materials

The Benefits team will review your submitted application and SIR to determine if you and your student meet eligibility requirements. Approved applications will be sent to Accounts Payable for processing. If your application is denied, you will receive written verification of the reason from Benefits.

Disclaimer: The content of this program guide is informational only and is not intended to create a contract between RISD and its employees. Members of collective bargaining units should refer to their contracts for additional eligibility guidelines. In cases where discrepancies occur, the applicable RISD policy or collective bargaining agreement will prevail.