

## Doctoral Education Assistance Program

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Full-time budgeted employees at all A&M System universities, agencies and System offices may qualify for payment/reimbursement of tuition and mandatory fees. This doctoral program is designed to invest in and assist employees further their knowledge, skills, and job effectiveness by encouraging the professional and personal development of A&M System employees. This initiative began in the Spring 2022 semester for eligible employees who are pursuing approved doctoral programs at A&M System universities. Under the direction of the Chancellor, the System offices will conduct a sunset review Summer 2024 for purposes of continuation, adjustment, or termination of the program. If the program is terminated, employees in the program would be "grandfathered in" through the end of their eligibility as defined below.

### ELIGIBILITY

The following information provides guidelines for the A&M System's payment/reimbursement of tuition and mandatory fees for eligible employees pursuing approved doctoral programs at A&M System universities. This program does not cover second doctorates, a medical degree, juris doctorate, or DBA from Prairie View.

\*Eligibility: Full-time, budgeted employees at all A&M System universities, agencies, and System offices, as qualified below. Note: Texas A&M AgriLife employees who are approved to participate in the Doctoral Education Assistance Program are not eligible to concurrently receive funding from the employing department or academic department, nor waivers or exemptions.

### FACULTY

1. Must have been employed in a full-time, budgeted faculty position at an A&M System university or agency for no less than two long semesters prior to starting the program.
2. Must be employed in a full-time, budgeted faculty position at an A&M System university or agency each semester while in the program. Note: Summer eligibility for faculty is contingent on meeting this standard the previous semester and presumed full-time employment the following semester. Summer eligibility for faculty is contingent on employment during the summer months.
3. Must be admitted to a doctoral program at an A&M System university, have at least an overall performance evaluation of "Meets Expectations" on file, be in good academic standing, and making progress toward degree completion (no minimum number of hours per semester required). The employee may be enrolled in a doctoral program at any university in the A&M System, not limited to their own employer. **The doctoral program must be consistent with the faculty appointment such that completion of the degree would be recognized by SACSCOC as appropriate credentials on the reaffirmation faculty roster.**
4. Funding eligibility is limited to six consecutive years following the initial tuition and fees payment. Extenuating circumstances may be reviewed for consideration by AgriLife Human Resources.
5. No payments/reimbursements will be provided for additional courses outside the degree plan or for auxiliary activities.

### ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF (NON-FACULTY)

1. Must be employed for a minimum of 12 months in a full-time, budgeted professional staff position at an A&M System university, agency, or office.
2. Must be employed in a full-time, budgeted professional staff position at an A&M System university, agency, or office each semester while in the program. Note: Summer eligibility is contingent on employment during the summer months.
3. Must be admitted to a doctoral program at an A&M System university, have at least an overall performance evaluation of "Meets Expectations" on file, be in good academic standing, and making progress toward degree completion (no minimum number of hours per semester required). The employee may be enrolled in a doctoral program at any university in the A&M System, not limited to

their own employer. **The doctoral program must be consistent with the mission of the office in which the administrator or staff member is employed.**

4. Funding eligibility is limited to six consecutive years following the initial tuition and fees payment. Extenuating circumstances may be reviewed for consideration by Texas A&M AgriLife Human Resources.
5. No payments/reimbursements will be provided for additional courses outside the degree plan or for auxiliary activities.

## FUNDING

1. The Director or designee must certify the employee's eligibility for this program.
2. Texas A&M AgriLife Human Resources will provide a roster of eligible and enrolled employees to the provider institution in which the employee is enrolled, and the academic program being pursued.
3. All tuition and mandatory fees for courses required to complete the degree will be reimbursed to the provider institution.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

A new application must be submitted for each semester. The application deadlines for the Doctoral Education Assistance Program are:

- Spring Semester deadline – January 2
- Summer Semester deadline – May 15
- Fall semester deadline – August 1

**LINK TO APPLICATION:** <https://agrififeas.tamu.edu/documents/ag-490.pdf/>

## ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYEES

- [Employee Tuition Assistance Program](#)
- [Educational Release Time](#)
- [Educational Release Approval Form AG-489](#)
- [Fee Exemption Through Student Business Services](#)
- [Student Business Services Due Dates](#) (for Texas A&M University)

\*Under the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 132, an employee may receive tax free doctoral level education assistance from an employer as a working condition fringe benefit if the education is job related. For example, if the employee paid the tuition or fees directly, a deduction is allowed under IRC Section 162 or 167. Internal Revenue Service Education Tests:

1. Education is necessary to maintain or improve skills needed for employee's present job, and
2. Education is necessary for full-time faculty in budgeted positions who are admitted into an A&M System doctoral program that is consistent with Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) expectations for their discipline, or;
3. Education is necessary for a full-time professional staff member seeking a doctorate in their current field of work.

## QUESTIONS:

For questions or assistance, please contact Texas A&M AgriLife Human Resources at [agrififehr@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:agrififehr@ag.tamu.edu) or call 979.845.2423.