REGENT POLICY DOCUMENT REVIEW: TUITION POLICIES

REQUESTED ACTION

Adoption of Resolution X.


SUMMARY

The Board of Regents has broad statutory authority to establish tuition and fees. As part of an ongoing effort to update Regent Policy Documents, this proposal rescinds, updates, and consolidates seven Regent policies related to tuition and fees into a single Regent tuition policy.

Presenter(s)

- X

BACKGROUND

Section 36.27, “Tuition,” of the Wisconsin Statutes, provides the UW System Board of Regents broad authority to establish tuition and fees, with the statutes stating that the
board, “...may establish for different classes of students differing tuition and fees incidental to enrollment programs or use of facilities in the system....” The statutes also allow the Board to establish nonresident tuition, special rates of tuition and fees for extension and summer sessions and “such other studies or courses of instruction as the board deems advisable.” Other significant provisions in Section 36.27, Wis. Stats., include:

- Section 36.27 (2), Wis. Stats., “Nonresident Tuition Exceptions,” identifies various categories of students who are qualified for an exemption from nonresident tuition.
- Section 36.27 (3), Wis. Stats., “Tuition remissions,” identifies various reasons the Board may remit nonresident tuition, such as to recognize high academic achievement or as part of an athletic scholarship. This section also provides for full remission of fees for certain survivors who are Wisconsin residents, such as family members of first responders who have been killed in the line of duty.

**Regent Policy Documents Related to Tuition and Fees**

Section 32 of the Regent Policy Documents (RPDs) includes eight RPDs related to tuition and fees. If adopted, this proposal will rescind, update, and consolidate the provisions of the following seven policies into a single Regent tuition policy (Attachment A). RPD 32-8, “Application Fees and Waivers,” would not be consolidated into this new policy, instead remaining as a standalone policy.

**RPD 32-1, “Delegation of Authority Regarding Residence Classification.”**

The Board adopted Resolution 1727 in September 1978, delegating authority to each institution to make final decisions concerning students' residence classification. The proposed policy continues to delegate authority to chancellors to determine residency. The proposal also incorporates provisions from s. 36.27 (2m), Wis. Stats., which requires students to submit information, if requested, to support a determination about residency.

A copy of RPD 32-1 is found in Attachment B.

**RPD 32-2, “Nonresident Tuition Remission Delegated to Chancellors”**

The Board adopted Resolution 3789 in May 1987, which formally delegated authority to each UW chancellor to implement nonresident tuition remissions and authorized the vice business for business and finance to require institutions to submit reports on the administration of remission programs.

A tuition remission is a benefit that waives a certain proportion of tuition or academic fees, such as the nonresident tuition fees. Section 36.27 (3), Wis. Stats., identifies several specific tuition remissions, including: non-resident tuition remissions; remissions of academic fees for the children and spouses of certain first responders killed in the line of duty; fee
remissions for a spouse, surviving spouse, and children of certain veterans; remissions for veterans; and a $25 fee remission for funeral assistants. The proposed revisions expand the policy to recognize the chancellors’ authority for all types of tuition remissions outlined in s. 36.27 (3), Wis. Stats.

A copy of RPD 32-2 is found in Attachment C.

**RPD 32-3, “Academic Student Fee Structure” and RPD 32-4, “Tuition Structure”**

RPD 32-3 and RPD 32-4 were adopted in 1988 and 1989, respectively, and include provisions accepting reports on academic fee structures, which the Board was required to submit to the Joint Committee on Finance. These provisions were time-specific, do not meet the standards for an RPD, and would be rescinded.

In RPD 32-4, the Board also adopted the 12-18 credit plateau as a general tuition structure throughout the UW System. Under the credit plateau, students are charged one flat fee for any number of credits between 12 and 18 credits. Another provision of this RPD allows individual institutions to seek approval from the Board to adopt a per credit structure if the institution determines that such a structure would better address local circumstances. (UW-Stout is currently the only UW university with a per credit tuition model.) These provisions of RPD 32-4 have been incorporated into the proposed tuition policy, with revisions to improve clarity.

A copy of RPD 32-3 is found in Attachment D, while RPD 32-4 is found in Attachment E.

**RPD 32-5, “Tuition Policy Principles”**

The Board adopted RPD 32-5 in October 1992. RPD 32-5 presents high-level principles for setting tuition. This policy replaced the Board’s previous long-term tuition policy established in November 1990, which essentially set a goal of bringing tuition levels for undergraduate residents to the midpoint of peer institutions.

In addition to streamlining and improving clarity, the revisions remove two principles. The principle of maintaining the State’s General Purpose Revenue (GPR) funding commitment at 65% for UW initiatives would be rescinded. This principle has not been consistently honored by the State, and the Board of Regents cannot enforce such a provision. The principle of covering certain costs by pooling systemwide tuition revenue has historically been a management practice. This practice is a technical approach that does not warrant inclusion in a Board policy.

A copy of RPD 32-5 is found in Attachment F.

**RPD 32-6, “Delegation of Authority to Establish Graduate Resident Tuition Remissions”**
1997 Wisconsin Act 27 required the Board of Regents to remit nonresident tuition and fees, in whole or part, to resident and nonresident graduate students or fellows who are employed within the UW System as faculty, instructional academic staff or assistants with an appointment equal to at least 33% of a full-time equivalent position. RPD 32-6 delegates this authority to each UW chancellor, and the proposed policy would continue providing this delegated authority to chancellors.

A copy of RPD 32-6 is found in Attachment G.

**RPD 32-7, “Student Involvement in Differential Tuition Initiatives”**

RPD 32-7 was adopted in May 1999, at a time in which Wisconsin Statutes restricted the Board’s ability to raise resident undergraduate tuition rates to certain circumstances, such as the biennially approved pay plans. An exception was provided, however, for differential tuition rates approved by the Board.

Institution-wide differential tuition rates were established at several UW universities, largely to address bottleneck courses, various programmatic needs such as advising, and financial aid. With the rescission of the restrictive statutory language, these costs can be covered through increases to base tuition rates, rather than a separate institution-wide differential.

Under this proposal, RPD 32-7 would be rescinded. Institution-wide differentials would be reclassified as base tuition starting in the 2024-25 academic year. The proposal continues to allow program-specific tuition rates for high-cost and high-demand programs, though student involvement would not be required.

A copy of RPD 32-7 is found in Attachment H.

**Related Laws and Policies**

- Section 36.27, Wis. Stats., “Tuition”
- SYS 805, *Tuition and Fee Policies for Credit Instruction* (formerly F44)

**ATTACHMENTS**

A. RPD 32-xx, “Tuition Policy” (Proposed Policy)
B. RPD 32-1, “Delegation of Authority Regarding Residence Classification” (Current Policy)
C. RPD 32-2, “Nonresident Tuition Remission Delegated to Chancellors” (Current Policy)
D. RPD 32-3, “Academic Student Fee Structure” (Current Policy)
E. RPD 32-4, “Tuition Structure: 12-18 Credit Plateau” (Current Policy)
F. RPD 32-5, “Tuition Policy Principles” (Current Policy)
G. RPD 32-6, “Delegation of Authority to Establish Graduate Resident Tuition Remissions” (Current Policy)
H. RPD 32-7, “Student Involvement in Differential Tuition Initiatives” (Current Policy)
Regent Policy Document – Proposed Policy
32-xx Tuition Policy

Scope

This policy applies to all tuition rates assessed by University of Wisconsin (UW) System institutions.

Purpose

Section 36.27, Wis. Stats., grants the UW System Board of Regents the authority to set tuition rates. This policy establishes the Board’s principles and guidelines to be used in setting tuition rates. This policy also describes tuition authority delegated by the Board of Regents.

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the UW System Board of Regents to provide a system of higher education that allows all citizens to access high-quality, post-secondary education at affordable costs. As a publicly supported system of higher education, whose programs benefit individual students as well as the state of Wisconsin, the resident tuition charged by UW System institutions should reflect the shared responsibility, benefit, and needs of individual students, the UW System, and the state of Wisconsin.

Consistent with this philosophy, the Board of Regents must consider the following principles when setting undergraduate, graduate, professional, and nonresident tuition rates:

1. Tuition rates must be based on the level of resources necessary to maintain access for students, to sustain academic quality, and to achieve the UW System’s mission. When general state budget increases are not sufficient to attain these objectives, tuition increases should assist in redressing the imbalance between needs and resources.
2. Tuition and financial aid should be considered simultaneously and should balance access and ability to pay.
3. The full cost of attending UW System institutions includes tuition as well as the cost of housing, food, books and supplies, and other expenses, all of which will be taken into consideration.
4. Increases in resident tuition rates should be moderate when possible and subject to the need to maintain quality and access.
5. Nonresident students must pay a larger share of instructional costs than resident students, when the market allows, to reflect the cost of instruction without a State subsidy.

6. Graduate, professional, and nonresident tuition rates should be competitive with rates of peer institutions and be sensitive to institutional enrollment changes and objectives.

**Tuition Rates**

UW System institutions shall use a 12-18 credit plateau structure for undergraduate tuition. Tuition for undergraduate students carrying less than 12 credits or more than 18 credits will be assessed on a per credit basis. Tuition for graduate students carrying less than nine credits must be charged on a per credit basis. Institutions must obtain approval of the Board of Regents to adopt an alternative structure.

Program-specific tuition rates for undergraduate and graduate programs may be added to base tuition to support additional services and programming for students within particular high-cost or high-demand programs, subject to the approval of the Board of Regents. The ability to identify and define high-cost or high-demand programs is delegated to the UW System President.

All tuition increases shall be limited to the amount necessary to meet institutional needs and maintain educational quality.

**Resident Undergraduate:** Resident undergraduate tuition shall include separate base tuition rates for each UW campus. All undergraduate tuition rates are subject to the approval of the Board of Regents.

**Resident Graduate:** Resident graduate tuition shall include separate base tuition rates for each UW campus. Tuition rates may vary by program, subject to the approval of the Board of Regents, but shall be established on a cost-related basis within market rates.

**Nonresident:** Tuition rates for nonresident undergraduate, graduate, and professional students may vary by institution and must be established at rates higher than tuition rates for resident students, when the market allows and as approved by the Board of Regents.

**Professional:** Tuition rates for professional students may vary by program, subject to the approval of the Board of Regents, but must be established on a cost-related basis within market rates.

**Programs for Nontraditional Students:** The Board of Regents recognizes that programs tailored toward nontraditional students are often responsive to specific student or
workforce needs and need a nimble implementation process. As a result, the Board delegates the authority to set such tuition rates to the UW System President.

Residency

UW institutions must determine residency for tuition purposes in a manner consistent with s. 36.27, Wis. Stats. UW institutions may require students who have been granted nonresident tuition exemptions to submit information verifying the student's eligibility for the exemption or the student's residency status. The Board delegates to each chancellor, or their designee, the authority to make final decisions concerning the residence classification of students for tuition purposes.

Remissions

The Board delegates to chancellors the authority to remit nonresident tuition, in whole or in part:

- To nonresident students upon the basis of merit, to be shown by suitable tests, examinations or scholastic records and continued high standards of scholastic attainment; and
- To additional students who, in the judgment of the chancellor, are deserving of relief from the assessment of nonresident tuition.

Nonresident tuition and fees may be remitted, in whole or in part, as athletic scholarships, up to the maximum number allowed by the appropriate athletic conference, as recommended by the chancellor.

The Board delegates to chancellors the authority to remit nonresident tuition and fees, in whole or in part, to resident and nonresident graduate students who are fellows or who are employed within the UW System as faculty, instructional academic staff or assistants with an appointment equal to at least 33 percent of a full-time equivalent position.

Tuition and fee remissions for survivors of certain public safety employees, the surviving spouses and children of veterans, veterans, and funeral assistants must be provided as required under ss. 36.27(3m), (3n), (3p) and (3r), Wis. Stats.

Oversight, Roles, and Responsibilities

The UW System President is responsible for developing any policies or procedures necessary to implement this Regent Policy Document.

Related Regent Policies and Applicable Laws
Section 36.27, Wisconsin State Statutes

History:


Res. 3789, adopted 05/08/1987, rescinded RPD 72-12 and created RPD 87-6, subsequently renumbered RPD 32-2, “Nonresident Tuition Remission Delegated to Chancellors.”


Res. 6238, adopted 10/09/1992, replaced RPD 90-8 with RPD 92-8. Various provisions of RPD 92-8 were affirmed and/or amended by Res. 6733, adopted 08/18/1994; Res. 7176(b), adopted 05/09/1996, which also created RPD 96-3; Res. 8316, adopted 03/08/2001; and Res. 8841, adopted 05/07/2004. RPD 92-8 was subsequently renumbered RPD 32-5, “Tuition Policy Principles.” Res. 9451, adopted 04/10/2008, reaffirmed RPD 32-5.

Res. 7685, adopted 05/08/1998, created RPD 98-3, subsequently renumbered RPD 32-6, “Delegation of Authority to Establish Graduate Resident Tuition Remissions.”


Res. xxxx, adopted xx/xx/2023, rescinded RPDs 32-1, 32-2, 32-3, 32-4, 32-5, 32-6, and 32-7, and created RPD 32-xx, “Tuition Policy.”
Regent Policy Document 32-1 (*formerly 78-7*)—Current Policy Delegation of Authority Regarding Residence Classification

Pursuant to authority vested in the Board of Regents by Wis. Stats. § 36.27, authority is delegated to each chancellor or his/her designee to make final decisions concerning the residence classification of students for tuition purposes.

*History: Res. 1727 adopted 9/8/78.*
Regent Policy Document 32-2 *(formerly 87-6)*—Current Policy
Nonresident Tuition Remission Delegated to Chancellors

Authority granted in Wis. Stats. § 36.27(3), to remit nonresident tuition, is delegated to the chancellor of each institution in the System, and the Vice President for Business and Finance shall be responsible for monitoring the granting of such remissions and shall be authorized to require institutions in the System to submit such reports on the administration of § 36.27(3) as the Vice President may from time to time require.

*History: Res. 3789 adopted 5/8/87; rescinds 72-12*
Regent Policy Document 32-3 *(formerly 88-11)*—Current Policy

**Academic Student Fee Structure**

Upon recommendation of the President of the University of Wisconsin System, the Academic Student Fee Structure Policy Paper is received and approved for transmittal by the Board of Regents to the Joint Committee on Finance as directed by 1987 Wisconsin Act 27, section 3054(3g). The full document may be obtained from the University of Wisconsin System Office of Budget Planning and Development.

*History: Res. 5046 adopted 9/9/88.*
Regent Policy Document 32-4 *(formerly 89-2)* - Current Policy

Tuition Structure: 12-18 Credit Plateau

1. As a general University of Wisconsin System policy, the 12-18 credit plateau tuition structure is adopted;

2. If an institution determines that a per credit structure better addresses local circumstances, the institution would be permitted to seek approval from the Board of Regents to adopt a per credit structure;

3. The Report on Restructuring Tuition is received and approved for transmittal by the Board of Regents to the Joint Committee on Finance as directed by the Joint Committee on Finance in September, 1988 under Wis. Stats. § 13.10.

*History: Res. 5144B adopted 2/10/89.*
Regent Policy Document 32-5 (formerly 92-8) - Current Policy
Tuition Policy Principles

1. Tuition and financial aid in the University of Wisconsin System should balance educational quality, access, and ability to pay.

2. As a matter of fiscal and educational policy, the state should, at a minimum, strive to maintain its current General Purpose Revenue funding share (65%) of regular budget requests for cost-to-continue, compensation, and new initiatives, and fully fund tuition increases in state financial aid programs.

3. Nonresident students should pay a larger share of instructional costs than resident students, and at least the full cost of instruction, when the market allows. Nonresident rates should be competitive with those charged at peer institutions and sensitive to institutional nonresident enrollment changes and objectives.

4. Where general budget increases are not sufficient to maintain educational quality, supplemental tuition increases should assist in redressing the imbalance between needs and resources.

5. Tuition increases should be moderate and predictable, subject to the need to maintain quality.

6. General Purpose Revenue financial aid and graduate assistant support should increase at a rate no less than that of tuition while staying commensurate with the increased student budget needs of students attending the University of Wisconsin System. In addition, support should also reflect increases in the number of aid eligible students.

7. General tuition revenue (to cover regular budget increases under the standard 65% General Purpose Revenue and 35% fees split) should continue to be pooled system wide. Special fees may be earmarked for particular institutions and/or programs increasing those fees.

8. When considering tuition increases beyond the regular budget, evaluation of doctoral graduate tuition should consider impacts on multi-year grants and the need to self-fund waivers or remissions from base reallocation within departmental budgets.

History: Res. 6238 adopted 10/9/92; replaces 90-8; Guideline 6 re-affirmed by Res. 6733, 8/18/94; Guideline 5 and 6 revised by 96-3 (Resolution 7176(b), 5/9/96); principle 7 reaffirmed by Res. 8316, 3/8/01, amended by Res. 8841 adopted 5/7/04. Res. 9451, adopted 04/10/2008, reaffirmed RPD 32-5.
Regent Policy Document 32-6 (formerly 87-6) - Current Policy
Delegation of Authority to Establish Graduate Resident Tuition Remissions

Revise delegation of authority granted in Wis. Stats. § 36.27(3) to remit nonresident tuition to the chancellor of each institution to include resident tuition remissions for graduate assistants with appointment equal to at least 33% of a full time equivalent position.

*History: Res. 7685 adopted 5/8/98*
Regent Policy Document 32-7 (formerly 99-2) - Current Policy
Student Involvement in Differential Tuition Initiatives

Section 36.27(1), Wis. Stats., restricts the ability of the Board of Regents to set tuition rates for resident undergraduate students. An exception is provided, however, for differential tuition approved by the Board of Regents.

Differential tuition is tuition added to the base tuition level for the purpose of supplementing services and programming for students within an institution. Differential tuition can be assessed to undergraduate students, graduate students, or both. Differential tuition can be implemented in a variety of ways, including within an individual program, on an institution-wide basis, or on a systemwide basis.

The Board has full authority to establish tuition levels for all student groups and classes other than resident undergraduates. Accordingly, this policy describes the student involvement required for Board approval of institution-wide or program-specific differential tuition for resident undergraduate differential tuition. It does not apply to other tuition decisions made by the Board of Regents. It further instructs the UW System President to establish guidelines that address the magnitude of differential tuitions, financial aid components, the number of differential tuitions at a single institution, and the frequency of Board reviews.

I. Definitions

A. “Institution-wide differential tuition” means tuition added to an institution's base tuition level as established by the Board of Regents, for the purpose of supplementing services and programming within the institution beyond existing institutional activities supported by General Purpose Revenue (GPR) and Program Revenue (PR) funding, and other revenue sources.

B. “Program-specific differential tuition” means tuition added to an institution's base tuition level as established by the Board of Regents, for the purpose of supplementing academic and other student services for a specific program beyond existing program activities supported by GPR and PR funding, and other revenue sources.

II. Differential Tuition Procedures

A. Students shall be advised and consulted, directly or through their student government organizations, of all planned differential tuition initiatives before proposals are submitted to the Board of Regents.

B. Differential tuition proposals presented to the Board of Regents shall include a description of the student consultation process and outcome, as well as any official position taken by the student government organization, if one has been provided, and the results of any student
surveys, referenda, and other solicitations of student input and opinion that were undertaken. Institutions shall provide adequate time for:

1. The student government organization to review the final proposal in the case of an institution-wide proposal.
2. Affected students to review the final proposal in the case of a program specific proposal.

The Board of Regents may ask for additional student consultation before approving a differential tuition proposal.

C. Differential tuition proposals must clearly state the following information, as established by the institution in consultation with students, when presented to the Board of Regents:

1. The purposes of the proposal, including the educational objectives;
2. The timing of the proposal;
3. The specific uses to which the differential tuition funds will be put, or the process by which such uses will be determined; and
4. How and when the success of the proposal in accomplishing its purposes will be evaluated. Differential tuition proposals must describe any oversight, evaluation, or consultation process for the proposal. The format of this oversight, evaluation, or consultation process must be discussed with students before the proposal is presented to the Board of Regents for approval.
5. A mechanism for periodic review by students of expenditures from the differential tuition.

D. The Chancellor of the institution is responsible for determining whether the differential tuition will be forwarded to UW System and the President of the UW System will make the final determination whether a differential tuition proposal is submitted to the Board of Regents for approval.

E. Spending decisions related to the funds generated by an approved differential tuition are the responsibility of the Chancellor of the institution, in accordance with s. 36.09 (3) Wis. Stats, but shall be consistent with the information and procedures described in the proposal submitted to, and approved by, the Board of Regents. Any substantial change in the purposes for which the funding is expended shall be approved by the Board of Regents.

III. General Differential Tuition Procedures – UW System Guidance

A. The President of the UW System shall develop System guidelines for institutions to use in preparing differential tuition proposals. The guidelines shall address, at a minimum, the following:
1. Factors an institution should consider when determining the magnitude of a differential tuition proposal;

2. How to assure that the differential tuition is affordable for all students, including whether the proposal should include a financial aid component and, if so, the appropriate level of that component;

3. Whether the number of institution-wide and program-specific differential tuitions at a single institution should be limited;

4. The frequency of Board review of differential tuition initiatives.

B. Guidelines developed pursuant to this section shall be provided to the Board of Regents.

*History: Res. 7904 adopted 5/7/99; repealed and recreated by Res. 9755, 4/9/10*