

**Education Benefits**  
**Frequently Asked Questions**  
**Document Updated 2023-2024**

**What scholarship programs are currently offered to Puget Sound faculty and staff?**

There are several scholarship programs currently offered through Puget Sound's education benefits program and the availability under each program differs as described later in this document.

- a) Tuition Remission Scholarships at The University of Puget Sound
- b) National Tuition Exchange (TE) Scholarships
- c) Northwest Liberal Arts (NWLA) Tuition Scholarships \*
- d) Open Tuition Scholarships

\*Important Note: The NWLA scholarship is a grandfathered benefit available only to faculty and staff hired on or before July 1, 2012.

**Who is eligible for education benefits?**

Benefits for faculty and staff are available upon hire. Benefits for spouses/partners and dependent children are available to faculty and staff with five years of continuous employment with the university at the qualifying levels listed below for the full term of the benefit utilization.

Faculty and staff working at least three-quarter time can apply for scholarships for themselves, and for their spouses, partners, and/or dependent children. See below for additional information on eligibility requirements and limitations related to each scholarship program.

**What's the difference between a tuition remission program, a tuition exchange program, and a tuition scholarship program?**

- Puget Sound offers **tuition remission** scholarships, in which eligible faculty and staff, and their spouses, partners, and dependent children, may attend Puget Sound tuition free.
- **Tuition exchange** programs offer scholarships based on a balanced exchange of students between participating institutions. Tuition exchange scholarships are not guaranteed and availability is based on such factors as exchange balances, admission requirements (as is the case with remission), and in some cases competitive selection processes. There is no school-to-school transfer of money for a tuition exchange scholarship.
- **The Open Tuition Scholarship** provides scholarships to dependent children to any accredited institution of higher education, with the scholarship amount graduated based on years of service.

## **How do I decide which scholarship to apply for? Can I apply for more than one?**

Eligible faculty and staff and their spouses, partners, or dependent children, may apply for a Puget Sound tuition remission scholarship once eligibility requirements have been met. Dependent children may apply for any available scholarship program after eligibility requirements have been met and may then select one scholarship from those that are available and offered. A dependent child may only use one type of education benefit at any one time.

For information about eligibility requirements, refer to [the education benefits policy](#).

## **TUITION REMISSION SCHOLARSHIPS AT PUGET SOUND**

This program is for those who wish to take classes at Puget Sound and meet the following criteria:

**Eligible faculty and staff members** may receive a 100 percent Tuition Remission Scholarship when enrolled for credit in undergraduate or graduate courses at the University of Puget Sound.

**Spouses and domestic partners of eligible faculty and staff** may receive a 100 percent Tuition Remission Scholarship when enrolled in undergraduate or graduate courses at the University of Puget Sound. Benefits for domestic partners are taxable under IRS rules.

**Dependent children of eligible faculty and staff** may receive a 100 percent Tuition Remission Scholarship for up to 8 semesters or the attainment of their first baccalaureate degree, whichever comes first, when enrolled as full-time, degree seeking students. The scholarship does not cover non-tuition expenses.

## **Are there limits on the scholarships available through the Tuition Remission Scholarship Program at Puget Sound?**

No, under current policy there is not a limit to the number of tuition remission scholarships offered at Puget Sound for faculty and staff members and their spouses/partners or dependent children. All candidates for tuition remission scholarships are subject to standard admission requirements.

## **NATIONAL TUITION EXCHANGE (TE) SCHOLARSHIPS**

[Tuition Exchange, Inc.](#) is a non-profit association of more than 600 colleges and universities of which Puget Sound has been a member since 1954. This association enables a reciprocal scholarship program among participating institutions. The employing institution certifies eligibility and the receiving institution determines the number and criteria for award decisions. Those interested in the tuition exchange scholarship can apply at this [link](#). This is a competitive selection process and scholarships are not guaranteed.

**NORTHWEST LIBERAL ARTS (NWLA) TUITION SCHOLARSHIPS**

NWLA Tuition Scholarships provide scholarships to dependent children (of eligible faculty and staff hired before July 1, 2012) attending Lewis & Clark, Reed, Whitman, and Willamette in the amount of up to 75 percent of Puget Sound’s tuition. Eligibility requirements are more clearly defined [here](#).

**OPEN TUITION SCHOLARSHIPS**

Open Tuition Scholarships provide scholarships to dependent children to any accredited institution of higher education, with the scholarship amount graduated based on years of service. Eligibility requirements are available on the Benefits website.

**What are the scholarship amounts?**

The tuition scholarship benefit is graduated based on length of service as of July 1 of each year, as shown below:

<b><u>Years of Service as of 7/1/2023</u></b>	<b><u>Amount of Annual Scholarship</u></b>
5	\$3,800
6	\$4,600
7	\$5,400
8	\$6,100
9	\$6,900
10	\$7,700
11	\$8,400
12	\$9,200
13	\$10,000
14	\$10,700
15+	\$11,500

**Can an Open Tuition Scholarship be used at community colleges or vocational/ technical colleges?**

This scholarship program is available for use at any accredited institution of higher education in the United States when the dependent child is in a degree-seeking program and enrolled full-time.

**Can my dependent child use this benefit for an occasional course?**

To be eligible for this benefit, the dependent child must be registered as a full-time, degree-seeking student and the class must be eligible for credit toward that degree.

**Is the Open Tuition Scholarship amount listed per academic year per student, or is that a one-time lump sum amount per family?**

The scholarship amount listed is per academic year per eligible dependent child.

## **GENERAL QUESTIONS**

### **How do I apply for education benefits?**

Please complete an online application prior to the beginning of the quarter/semester in which the benefit will be used. The Application for Education Benefits form contains additional information, instructions and timelines pertaining to each specific scholarship program.

### **When should I initially apply for education benefits for my dependent child?**

To apply for education benefits for dependent children, faculty/staff parents should contact Human Resources in September of the child's senior year in high school.

### **Are the TE Exchange, NWLA Tuition Scholarship, or Open Tuition Scholarship available just for dependent children or can these scholarships also be used for faculty/staff members, spouses and partners?**

These scholarships are available only to dependent children of eligible faculty and staff. A **dependent child** is defined as one who is claimed as a dependent child on the faculty or staff member's or the faculty or staff member's partner's previous year's income tax return and who is the faculty or staff member's natural or adoptive child or the natural or adoptive child of the faculty or staff member's partner living permanently in the faculty or staff member's home. A divorced faculty or staff member's dependent children, for the purposes of education benefits, are treated as the dependents of both parents. Court-appointed legal wards and foster children are not eligible for education benefits.

### **Are dependent children only able to use these scholarship programs for undergraduate coursework?**

Yes, dependent children are eligible for a combined total of all education benefits, up to the equivalent of four years of undergraduate coursework or a first bachelor's degree, whichever comes first. Education benefits may not be used for graduate courses for dependent children.

### **How will the NWLA Tuition Scholarship and Open Tuition Scholarship impact merit- and need-based financial aid offered by other institutions?**

Colleges will take into consideration the value of the educational benefit and will offer aid consistent with federal and institution-specific policies. You will need to consult with the financial aid office of the college your dependent child plans to attend to learn about applicable aid policies, which vary from school to school.

If you or your spouse/partner/dependent child plans to attend Puget Sound, please contact Puget Sound's Student Financial Services office ([sfs@pugetsound.edu](mailto:sfs@pugetsound.edu) or 253.879.3214) for helpful information about how tuition remission benefits under this policy might be coordinated with student financial aid.

**Are education benefits taxable income?**

Undergraduate education benefits for faculty and staff, spouses and dependent children are not currently taxable income as they meet the IRS definition for "scholarship". Graduate education benefits for faculty, staff and spouses of faculty and staff, in excess of the IRS allowed amount (currently \$5,250/year) is taxable income. Undergraduate and graduate education benefits for domestic partners is taxable income. IRS tax law is subject to change at anytime.

If you have questions about any of these programs, contact [benefits@pugetsound.edu](mailto:benefits@pugetsound.edu).