



Guidelines for Requesting Approval for Variable Tuition

The following guidelines apply to graduate programs - distance or residential - and online credit bearing programs excluding undergraduate degree programs. These guidelines were developed in response to the removal by the legislature of the 40% rule governing out of state tuition rates for graduate and distance programming in Spring 2014, and the Fall 2014 and Fall 2017 Board of Trustee (BOT) variable tuition resolutions.¹ The BOT resolutions stipulated that the rate may not be lower than the in state (IS) undergraduate residential rate, or higher than the out of state (OS) undergraduate residential rate. The intent is to price graduate and distance programs for out of state students at competitive prices to successfully recruit these students.

The purpose of a variable tuition

- Variable tuition provides an audience sensitive approach to setting tuition based on a desire to attract students from a broad geographic region to increase enrollments and build financial stability for a program.
- Additional reasons to lower OS tuition for a program include attracting a broader student group to enhance the quality of a program, diversify the student body or respond to societal needs.
 - o Building diversity in the student body includes geographic, cultural, experiential, and socioeconomic diversity.
 - o Responding to societal needs includes meeting societal needs for training in the professions - particularly health and social service professions, decreasing student debt loads and increasing the numbers of highly trained individuals that remain in Vermont after receiving their degree.

Data required to support a request for a variable tuition rate

- Data to support a request must include evidence of the potential to bring new and/or different students that may not yield without a tuition adjustment. An analysis of financial viability must also be included.
 - o For a variable rate requested primarily for reasons other than enhancing revenue, a substantive argument for the benefit accrued must be included.

¹ The Board of Trustee resolutions are included on the last page of this document.

- Financial viability projections require a market analysis to set a price point that will increase student numbers sufficiently to enhance overall revenue even with the lower OS tuition.
 - o Units should seek the expertise of Professional and Continuing Education (PACE) for this analysis.

Parameters

- A variable tuition request must be for a flat per credit rate, not a percentage reduction, and be applied to all OS students in the program. Billing will be coded by student level and program.
 - o NEBHE tuition discounts will not be available for programs with a variable tuition rate.
- Minimal residency programs require a different financial aid package when students are required to be on campus vs. when they are in the distance component. A definition of a distance student must include a ceiling for any required minimum residency component (e.g., <3 weeks required on campus activity per year).
- For distance programs, only those students matriculated into the distance program are eligible for the reduced tuition.
 - o Residential students would pay at their usual IS/OS rate for any distance courses they could take; distance students would be prohibited from taking residential courses except those that ONLY the students in the program can take (this allows, for example, program practica to be in person).

Process for requesting variable tuition for a graduate program

- A proposing unit must discuss the request and its ramifications with existing programs likely to be affected by the variable tuition request. Evidence of the discussion should be presented in the document requesting variable tuition.
 - o Variable tuition is only applied to OS tuition. IBB algorithm 2 states that graduate tuition follows the student - and payment for teaching outside a student's program is by transfer fee of 85% on IS tuition; thus, there is no loss of resources to other units teaching in the program related to a reduction in OS tuition. However, related programs may see a drop in enrollment because students choose the reduced rate program.
- A complete request should come from the Dean of the Academic Unit to the Dean of the Graduate College, who will forward it to the Provost with a recommendation of approval or disapproval.

- o For distance graduate programs, the completed request should come jointly from the Dean of the Academic Unit and the Chief Professional and Continuing Education Officer (CPACEO) to the Dean of the Graduate College.
- For a distance program that is not graduate (and is not an undergraduate degree program), the request would go from the Dean of the Academic Unit(s) to the Chief Professional and Continuing Education Officer who would forward it to the Provost with a recommendation of approval or disapproval.
- A proposal template has been provided to standardize requests.
- The sequence and approvals required for a request for variable tuition for a graduate program:
 - o Graduate Program Coordinator/Director (faculty) of requesting program
 - o Chair of department if program is departmental
 - o Dean of the requesting unit
 - o CPACEO, if a distance program
 - o Dean of the Graduate College
 - Graduate College Dean will share the proposal with the Council of Deans and will respond to any concerns
 - o Provost
 - o President (the President may delegate approval authority to the Provost)
- The sequence and approval required for a request for variable tuition for a non-graduate program is the same with the exception that the Dean of the Graduate College is not involved, and that the request goes from the CPACEO directly to the Provost with a recommendation of approval or disapproval.

Review of a variable tuition

- When a reduced tuition is approved, it is expected to take a number of years to manifest an effect. Annual review of numbers (tuition and students) should occur jointly by the Program Director, Academic Dean, CPACEO (if distance), and Graduate College Dean, or their designees.
- A review of the effect of the variable tuition should coincide with the university's triennial review of the variable tuition categories established effective FY25. It should also be considered as part of the annual Low Enrollment/Low Completion review in the colleges/schools.

Board of Trustee Resolutions

October 18, 2014 – Resolution Approving Graduate Tuition Rate for 2015-16 Academic Year

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees hereby approves the establishment of variable tuition rates for graduate programs, to be competitive (on price) with other universities and to enable growth in selective graduate programs at UVM. Graduate tuition for Vermont residents (in-state) will be equal to that for Vermont resident undergraduates. Non-resident (out-of-state) graduate tuition rates will be no less than undergraduate tuition rates for Vermont residents and no greater than those for non-resident undergraduates and will be determined by the President, based on student demand and the national market for similar programs.

October 21, 2017 - Resolution Modifying Graduate Variable Tuition

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees previously approved the establishment of variable tuition rates for graduate programs, to be competitive (on price) with other universities and to enable growth in selective graduate programs at UVM; and

WHEREAS, the rate setting mechanism established the following:

- Graduate tuition for Vermont residents (in-state) will be equal to that for Vermont resident undergraduates
- Non-resident (out-of-state) graduate tuition rates will be no less than undergraduate tuition rates for Vermont residents and no greater than those for non-resident undergraduates and will be determined by the Provost, based on student demand and the national market for similar program;

BE RESOLVED, that with prior approval from the Provost, graduate programs may maintain summer tuition rates for in-state and out-of-state students equal to the prior Fall and Spring tuition rates for their program.

This resolution supersedes the resolution approved by the Board of Trustees on October 18, 2014