



# Fee Policy for Graduate Student In Absentia Registration

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| <b>Responsible Officer:</b> | AVP – Budget Analysis & Planning              |
| <b>Responsible Office:</b>  | Budget Analysis & Planning                    |
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| <b>Scope:</b>               | All graduate and professional degree students |

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## I. POLICY SUMMARY

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The Fee Policy for Graduate Student *In Absentia* Registration promotes continuous enrollment of graduate and professional degree students by providing an appropriate enrollment incentive. This Policy recognizes that these students may need to perform work away from the University but seeks to minimize the number of students who allow their registration status to lapse. As a result, this Policy strengthens the relationship between the University and its graduate students. Both the eligibility criteria and reduced fee level are

predicated on the fact that students undertaking approved coursework, training, or research outside of the designated local campus region have access to substantially fewer instructional, laboratory and library resources, advising and student services than do students who reside within the local campus region, and should therefore qualify for a meaningful fee reduction.

Effective as of the 2022 spring term, academic and professional program graduate students who find it necessary to undertake coursework or research related to their degree program outside of the designated local campus region during their tenure at the University are eligible for reductions in fees as provided below. Authority for implementation of this Policy and for granting exceptions rests with the graduate dean unless campus authority for a degree program has been delegated to a professional school dean.

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## II. DEFINITIONS

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**Advanced to Candidacy:** Students advance to doctoral candidacy by proving that they have acquired the necessary knowledge to conduct original, independent dissertation research for the doctoral degree. Once a student is advanced to candidacy there are to be no further academic – e.g., course, exam – requirements placed on the student, other than developing an acceptable dissertation proposal and dissertation.

**Graduate Academic:** See Answer 3 in Section VII. below.

**Graduate Professional:** See Answer 3 in Section VII. below.

**Local Campus Region:** This term refers to an area defined by the graduate dean, in consultation with campus constituents, beyond which students have access to substantially fewer campus resources, including instructional, laboratory and library resources, advising and student services. The region may be defined by county or by miles, but must be clearly articulated and applied equitably.

**Master's:** See Answer 3 in Section VII. below.

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## III. POLICY TEXT

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### A. Eligibility Criteria for the Reduced In Absentia Fee

All students pursuing doctoral or master's degrees in academic disciplines as well as those pursuing professional master's or doctoral degrees are eligible for the tuition and fee reduction. Students in self-supporting graduate programs are not covered by this Policy.

Students may apply for *in absentia* registration status under the following circumstances:

- Academic doctoral students must have advanced to candidacy by the time the *in absentia* status would begin.
- Master's and graduate professional students must have completed at least one year of coursework by the time the *in absentia* status would begin.

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- Special cases within the above two categories can be approved only by exception at the discretion of the appropriate graduate dean or professional school dean.
- Students who seek *in absentia* registration beyond the initial term of *in absentia* status must re-apply for each subsequent period.

Students must be enrolled full-time in regular UC units to be eligible for the reduced *in absentia* charges. The appropriate graduate dean or professional school dean is responsible for determining that the proposed *in absentia* units meet the following criteria. The approved research or coursework:

- Must be directly related to the student's degree program as evidenced by UC faculty approval.
- Must be of a nature that makes it necessary to be completed outside of the designated local campus region for at least one full academic term.
- Must involve only indirect supervision appropriate to evaluating the student's academic progress and performance (e.g., correspondence via e-mail or review of written work) from UC faculty during the *in absentia* period.
- Must involve no significant studying or in-person collaboration with UC faculty during the *in absentia* period to ensure that units do not entail direct access to the resources or learning environment of any UC campus.

The appropriate graduate dean or professional school dean (in accordance with campus delegation of authority for degree programs) may grant *in absentia* registration status for:

- Up to two years for academic doctoral students.
- Up to one year for master's and graduate professional students.
- Longer periods at the discretion of the appropriate graduate dean or professional school dean.

Students will observe the following requirements while enrolled *in absentia*:

- Be enrolled full-time at their UC campus of origin for the duration of their *in absentia* registration.
- Be enrolled in a UC academic doctoral, master's, or graduate professional program (except self-supporting) for the duration of their *in absentia* registration.

Students are eligible to apply for and receive University fellowships and research assistantships, but not teaching assistantships during the *in absentia* period.

## **B. Study or Research at Non-UC Institutions**

Students paying the reduced *in absentia* charges who enroll and pay tuition and fees at non-UC institutions will not qualify for additional University of California need-based aid. Students may fulfill all or part of their independent study requirements by enrolling in courses at a non-UC institution while registered *in absentia* at UC. In this case, however, the tuition and fee charges paid to the non-UC institution will not increase the student's eligibility for need-based aid from UC. The tuition and fees paid to non-UC institutions will also not affect the amount of *in absentia* fees owed to UC. Furthermore, students who

wish to transfer coursework from non-UC institutions toward degree requirements at the UC campus of origin must obtain approval to do so in accordance with campus policies.

Periods of qualified *in absentia* registration will fulfill academic residency requirements for degree programs. Under current *Academic Senate Regulations 610 and 688*, academic residency requires only that students be registered and enrolled full-time at the University, and does not require them to be physically present or pay a certain amount of fees or tuition. As a result, periods of approved *in absentia* research or coursework will count towards graduate degree residency requirements. The definition of academic residency is under the jurisdiction of the Academic Senate and is subject to review and revision.

### C. Reduced Fee Level

Students will be assessed the following fees while registered *in absentia*:

- 15 percent of the combined Tuition and Student Services Fee. This reflects that students *in absentia* have less access to UC resources than do other UC students, but continue to utilize some level of advising and other University resources to facilitate timely academic progress toward degree completion.
- The full health insurance fees associated with the UC campus of origin (or provide evidence of alternative insurance coverage according to customary campus practice). Students registered *in absentia* will have access to all benefits associated with their student health insurance plan.
- Campus-based fees, as determined by each campus.
- Nonresident Supplemental Tuition, if applicable. Nothing in this Policy is intended to affect the criteria for applicability of Nonresident Supplemental Tuition.
- Professional Degree Supplemental Tuition, if applicable. This would only apply to students in graduate professional programs subject to this charge]

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## IV. COMPLIANCE / RESPONSIBILITIES

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Authority for implementation of this Policy and for granting exceptions rests with the graduate dean unless campus authority for a degree program has been delegated to a professional school dean. The local campus region is defined by the graduate dean, in consultation with campus constituents.

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## V. PROCEDURES

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Not applicable.

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## VI. RELATED INFORMATION

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At their July 2009 meeting, the Regents approved student tuition and fees for graduate students registered *in absentia*. The Regents' item about this action is available at <http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/regents/regmeet/jul09/j4.pdf>.

Please note that at their November 2010 meeting, the Regents approved changing the name of the Educational Fee to “Tuition,” the name of Fees for Selected Professional School Students to “Professional Degree Supplemental Tuition,” and the name of Nonresident Tuition to “Nonresident Supplemental Tuition,” effective July 1, 2011. The Regents’ item about this action is available at <http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/regents/regmeet/nov10/j1.pdf>. The updated names are reflected in this Policy.

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## VII. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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**The following questions and answers were issued by OP to the Graduate Deans, Registrars and Financial Aid Directors on August 6, 2009:**

1. *Are students who register in absentia assessed 15 percent of Tuition and the Student Services Fee, or are they assessed the full amounts and then issued a waiver for 85 percent of Tuition and the Student Services Fee?* Students registered in absentia are assessed 15 percent of Tuition and 15 percent of the Student Services Fee. The lower charges should be treated as reductions and not as waivers. Waivers are funded and there is no funding associated with this Policy. The lower *in absentia* charges assume a reduction in campus services, much like the reduced charges charged to part-time students. (The reduction in charges is a special provision and therefore should not be reported on the Corporate Student System financial aid input file.)
2. *Which campus-based fees are assessed to students who are registered in absentia?* Each campus decides which of its campus-based fees to assess, if any, and how much. In making their decisions, campuses may want to consider how they treat other students who are off-site, such as those participating in EAP and UCDC.
3. *What is the definition of academic doctoral, graduate professional, and master’s, as referenced in the section of the policy titled: Eligibility Criteria for the Reduced In Absentia Fee?* Academic doctoral students are those working towards a doctoral degree that includes advancement to candidacy as part of the progression to the degree. All other students working towards a doctoral degree are graduate professional (e.g., M.D., D.D.S., Pharm.D., D.V.M., O.D., J.D.) All students whose degree objective is any master’s degree (e.g., M.A., M.S., M.B.A.) are master’s students.
4. *Who determines the local campus region?* The local Campus Region refers to an area defined by the graduate dean, in consultation with campus constituents, beyond which students have access to substantially fewer campus resources, including instructional, laboratory and library resources, advising and student services.
5. *What is meant by “special cases” in which the appropriate dean may approve an exception to the eligibility criteria for the reduced in absentia charges?* In rare instances, deans are permitted to grant exceptions for academic doctoral students not advanced to candidacy and for master’s and graduate professional students who have completed less than one year of coursework. Deans are expected to be very judicious in granting exceptions, since granting exceptions has fiscal ramifications: students who normally would pay full tuition and fees will bring in less revenue for the University when they pay only 15 percent of Tuition and Student Services Fee.

6. *Can students be registered in absentia during the summer?* Generally, no. Students can register *in absentia* only during a term when Tuition and the Student Services Fee are assessed. Most graduate students are not assessed Tuition and the Student Services Fee during the summer and hence cannot be registered *in absentia* during that term. However, the relatively few students who are assessed Tuition and the Student Services Fee in the summer (typically in certain professional degree programs) are eligible for *in absentia* registration.
7. *Can students registered in absentia participate in campus approved exchange programs with other institutions?* No. UC graduate students who participate in exchange programs normally pay full UC tuition and fees and receive UC credit.
8. *Can students enroll in a UC online course and still be eligible to register in absentia?* No. The *in absentia* status is reserved for coursework or research that meets the criteria described in the policy, including but not limited to the requirement that the coursework or research “[m]ust be of a nature that makes it necessary to be completed outside of the designated local campus region for at least one full academic term.” Since online courses offered by UC campuses do not meet this requirement, they are not available to students who are registered *in absentia*. A student may, however, enroll in, and pay for, an online course offered elsewhere while registered *in absentia*. In general, students are not permitted to enroll in any UC campus course other than the one required for *in absentia* registration.
9. *How will financial need be calculated for students registered in absentia?* Financial need will be calculated assuming an off-campus student budget and fulltime enrollment at the reduced fee level.
10. *Can students who are registered in absentia apply for and receive readerships or tutorships?* No. According to the policy, students registered *in absentia* “...are eligible to apply for and receive University fellowships and research assistantships, but not teaching assistantships...” Readers and tutors perform some of the same kinds of tasks required of teaching assistants. Furthermore, the nature of their work often requires them to be on campus..

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## VIII. REVISION HISTORY

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**December 17, 2021:** The policy was revised in November 2021 to permit Deans to establish “a local campus region” as a new geographical limit on In Absentia registration, rather than limiting eligibility to students outside the state, effective as of the 2022 spring term, and to fix formatting and/or typographical errors.

This Policy is also reformatted to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0

**July 1, 2012:** Technical edits - reformatted into the standard University of California policy template.

**July 30, 2009:** Presidential policy initial issuance date