



EAST TENNESSEE STATE
UNIVERSITY

**Graduate School Policy on Verification of
Graduate Students' Eligibility for Tennessee
Benefits**

Policy Name: Graduate School Policy on Verification of Graduate Students' Eligibility for Tennessee Benefits

Policy Purpose

This policy specifies ETSU's process for verifying status for students admitted to the Graduate School as required by the Tennessee Eligibility Verification for Entitlements Act (EVEA) before providing a State Benefit.

Applicability

This policy is applicable to admitted and enrolled students in the Graduate School. This policy does not apply to students who are exclusively enrolled in Quillen College of Medicine for the M.D. degree or the Gatton College of Pharmacy for the Pharm.D. degree.

Responsible Official, Office, and Interpretation

The Dean of the Graduate School and Graduate Council are responsible for the review and revision of this policy. For questions about this policy, please contact the Dean of the Graduate School. The Provost, in consultation with the Office of University Counsel, has the final authority to interpret this policy.

Defined Terms

A defined term has a specific meaning within the context of this policy.

Census Date

Fourteen (14) calendar days from the first official day of classes. Note: During summer sessions, the date is adjusted for condensed summer sessions. Census Date can be found on the [Academic Calendar](#).

Notice of Decision

A written notification from the Graduate School regarding the appeal decision.

State Benefit

Any state benefit that requires verification under EVEA before the institution may grant the benefit (e.g., in-state tuition, lottery scholarships, academic scholarships, common market, tuition assistance or waiver benefit, graduate assistantship, etc.) For the purposes of this policy, enrolling in a graduate program at ETSU is considered to be a State Benefit

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pursuant to the EVEA requirements, independent of whether the student receives any additional State Benefit such as a graduate assistantship or university funded scholarship.

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Policy

In accordance with the EVEA, Tennessee public institutions of higher education are required to verify that students seeking a State Benefit are either United States citizens, lawfully present in the United States, or that they intend to remain outside the United States for the duration of their graduate program.

The Graduate School is responsible for verifying each incoming student, even if the student was previously enrolled or graduated from ETSU as an undergraduate student or from a professional program. For the purposes of this policy, enrolling in a graduate program at ETSU is considered to be a State Benefit pursuant to the EVEA requirements, independent of whether the student receives any additional State Benefit, such as a graduate assistantship or university-funded scholarship.

1. Request for Verification.

The Graduate School communicates in writing to all incoming students how to submit the required documentation, as specified by the EVEA, to verify the student's United States citizenship, lawful presence in the US, or that they intend to remain outside the United States for the duration of their graduate program, for the purposes of qualifying for a State Benefit. Pursuant to the EVEA, ETSU cannot approve a State Benefit until a student's status has been verified.

2. Student's Responsibility.

Students must submit the required documentation to the Graduate School by the first tuition payment deadline for the applicable semester. If a student does not submit the required documentation by the Census Date of a semester, State Benefits cannot be provided for the applicable semester. A student's graduate assistantship contract or university-funded scholarship may not be processed until EVEA documentation is submitted. An applicant or student failing to complete the verification process will have their offer of admission rescinded, or if enrolled, be dismissed from their graduate program.

3. Appeals.

If a student fails to submit the required documentation to verify legal status by the deadlines indicated in this policy, the student may file one (1) appeal. The student must follow the procedures outlined in this policy for the appeal to be considered.

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4. Consideration of Appeals.

The Graduate School Dean or designee will consider an appeal that meets all the requirements of this policy. If a student files all required documentation for a written appeal and the documentation meets the EVEA verification requirements, then the Graduate School Dean or designee may: (1) if the appeal is filed and reviewed before the census date of the admitted semester, restore the offer of admission or readmit the student to their graduate program (as applicable); or (2) in consultation with the student's graduate program, offer admission or readmission to the next available starting semester. The Graduate School Dean or designee may restore university-funded scholarships. However, graduate assistant positions and enrollment in limited-capacity programs may or may not be restorable. The Graduate School Dean or designee's decision to approve or deny the appeal is final. The Graduate School will provide a Notice of Decision to the student.

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Procedures

1. Student Submission Procedure for Appeal.

The student sends an email to the Graduate School's Associate Dean for Admissions with the following:

- 1.1. Required documentation to prove the student is either a US citizen or lawfully present in the US as required by EVEA. Acceptable types of documents can be found at <https://etsu.edu/evea>;
- 1.2. An explanation as to why the documents were not submitted by the Census Date; and
- 1.3. The semesters to which the appeal is requested.

2. Review of Appeal

The Dean of the Graduate School or designee reviews the written appeal from the student if the appeal meets the requirements of this policy. The Dean of the Graduate School or designee reviews the documentation provided to: (1) verify if lawful status exists and/or existed for previous semesters as required by EVEA to grant a state benefit; and (2) determine if a retroactive benefit may be provided. The Graduate School will notify the student in writing of the decision within five (5) business days of receipt of a complete written appeal with supporting documentation.

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Applicable Forms and Websites

[Eligibility Verification](#)

Authority and Revisions

Authority: TCA § 49-8-203, et seq; T.C.A. § 4-58-101 et seq. (EVEA)

Previous Policy: N/A

The ETSU Board of Trustees is charged with policy making pursuant to TCA § 49-8-203, et seq. On March 24, 2017, the Board delegated its authority to ETSU's President to establish certain policies and procedures for educational program and other operations of the University, including this policy. The delegation of authority and required process for revision to this policy can be found on the [Policy Development and Rule Making Policy webpage](#).

To suggest a revision to this policy, please contact the responsible official indicated in this policy. Before a substantive change to the policy section may take effect, the requested changes must be: (1) approved by the responsible office; (2) reviewed by the Office of University Counsel for legal sufficiency; (3) posted for public comment; (4) approved by either Academic Council or University Council; and (5) approved by ETSU's President.

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