
Office Memo

To: NTID Faculty
From: Gerard Buckley, President of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf
Date: December 19, 2014
Subject: NTID Lecturer Support Guidelines for Terminal Degrees

This document outlines a set of guidelines for supporting NTID lecturers who wish to pursue a terminal degree. It responds to a growing need for faculty with terminal degrees who possess discipline expertise and strong skill in American Sign Language, a need that results in particular from the increasing number of veteran faculty who are retiring.

Lecturers who pursue doctoral studies supported by this fund will be able to develop the credentials and scholarship experience expected for NTID tenure-track positions, although it should be noted that neither the receipt of such support nor the completion of a terminal degree is a guarantee of a successful application for any future position at the institute for which the recipient may apply. It is not anticipated that faculty who participate in this program will receive course release, although they may be excused from other responsibilities.

Eligible applicants must request support from the chairperson and the dean annually. The chairperson and the dean retain discretion to deny support and are required to explain in writing should they feel unable to support a given application. Each award, as well as its renewal, is subject to availability of funds in the year in which the request is submitted.

Eligibility Criteria

1. Full-time continuous teaching/tutoring at RIT/NTID for at least two years prior to the initial request for support.
2. Experience working directly with NTID-supported students in classroom or tutoring situations
3. SLPI rating of Advanced
4. Overall performance evaluation ratings of 4 or better over the 2 years prior to the initial award, and for the duration of the award
5. Demonstrated interest in conducting scholarship
6. Acceptance into, and continued matriculation in, an appropriate accredited terminal degree program

Initial Process

1. An application must include:
 - a. an explanation of why the support is being requested;
 - b. a detailed breakdown of the support requested; and
 - c. a planned timeline for completion of the program.
2. Review by department chair. If department chair is not supportive, submit application for review by the college FEAD committee.
3. Review by the dean. In considering an application, the dean may consider the recommendation of the department chair and college FEAD committee, but is not bound by it.

Subsequent Process

1. Applicants who have been approved for this support are responsible for keeping expenditure records each year (12-month cycle) and for submitting them to their respective departments for reimbursement.
2. Departments will be responsible for maintaining those records and ensuring that the amount requested and approved for reimbursement does not exceed the funding support negotiated at the time the award was first authorized.

Maximum Amount of Support

The maximum amount of support provided towards tuition by NTID will be \$5,000 per academic year, for up to four (4) years and a total of \$20,000. This amount supplements the tuition allowance of \$750 per semester that RIT already provides for courses taken at another institution.

Conditions of Acceptance of Support

A lecturer who accepts support will agree in writing to the following basic conditions:

- a. Commitment to years of service – For each year the faculty member receives support, he or she agrees to remain a full-time NTID employee for an equivalent number of years after being awarded his or her terminal degree. (This condition assumes that the institute continues to employ the faculty member.) A faculty member who voluntarily elects to leave full-time employment at NTID before fulfilling his/her service obligations to the institute will be required to repay a pro-rated amount of support received.
- b. Commitment to timely degree completion – A faculty member receiving support is expected to be awarded a terminal degree no more than 24 months after completing his or her coursework. If he or she fails to be awarded the degree during that period of time, repayment of the full amount of support is required.

Tax Implications

Tax laws allow RIT/NTID to provide employees up to \$5,250 per year for graduate education with no tax consequences. Support in excess of this amount may be taxable unless it is deemed to be a “working condition fringe benefit.” This determination is based on one of two tests:

- a. The education is necessary to maintain or improve skills required by the individual in his or her current job, or
- b. The education meets the express requirements of the individual’s employer, or the law, as a condition for the retention of his or her job, employment status, or rate of compensation.

If the education expenses meet one of the two tests identified above, then they are excludable from gross income (in their entirety) as long as the education is NOT:

- a. required to meet the minimum educational requirements for the individual’s present trade or business, or
- b. part of a program or study that will qualify the individual for a new trade or business.

It appears likely that, because a terminal degree is not required in order to continue one’s employment as a lecturer, amounts in excess of \$5,250 will be taxable to the recipient. Faculty members are encouraged to take this into account when requesting support from this program in addition to RIT’s standard tuition allowance.

*revised February 17, 2020