

# Residency for Tuition Purposes

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## Purposes

A Florida “resident for tuition purposes” is a person who has, or a dependent person whose parent or legal guardian has, established and maintained legal residency in Florida for at least twelve (12) consecutive months preceding the first day of classes of the term for which Florida residency is sought.

- Residence in Florida must be a bona fide domicile rather than for the purpose of maintaining a residence incident to enrollment at an institution of higher education.
- To qualify as a Florida resident for tuition purposes, you must be a U.S. citizen, a foreign national in a nonimmigrant visa classification that grants you the legal ability to establish a bona fide domicile in the United States, a permanent resident alien, parolee, asylee, Cuban-Haitian entrant, legal alien granted indefinite stay by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, or other qualified alien as defined under federal law. Other persons not meeting the twelve-month legal residence requirements may be classified as Florida residents for tuition purposes only if they fall within one of the limited special categories authorized by the Florida Legislature pursuant to section [1009.21](#), Florida Statutes (see the *Exceptions and Qualifications* tab). All other persons are ineligible for classification as a Florida “resident for tuition purposes.”
- Living in or attending school in Florida will not, in itself, establish legal residence. Students who depend upon out-of-state parents for support are presumed to be legal residents of the same state as their parents.
- Residency for tuition purposes requires the establishment of legal ties to the state of Florida. A student must verify that the student has broken ties to other states if the student or, in the case of a dependent student, his or her parent has moved from another state.

Questions regarding residency status upon application and readmission to UWF should be directed to the [Office of Undergraduate Admissions](#) (undergraduate applicants) or the [Graduate School](#) (graduate applicants). Questions regarding a change in residency status for currently enrolled students should be directed to the [Office of the Registrar](#).

## Determination of Dependent or Independent Status

### Independent Student

Students enrolled in a graduate program (master’s, specialist, or doctoral) are considered independent for residency purposes.

### Dependent Student

A dependent student, as defined by s. [1009.21\(1\)\(a\)](#), Florida Statutes, is eligible to be claimed as a dependent under the federal income tax code by the claimant. The claimant must be a “parent” as defined by s. [1009.21\(1\)\(f\)](#), Florida Statutes, (i.e., either or both parents of the student, any guardian of a student, or any person in a parental relationship to the student). The parent must have maintained legal residence in Florida for at least the past 12 consecutive months. As defined by s. [1009.21\(1\)\(d\)](#), Florida Statutes, “legal resident” or

“resident” means a person who has maintained their residence in this state for the preceding year, has purchased a home which is occupied by the student as their residence or has established a domicile in this state pursuant to s. [222.17](#).” A copy of the claimant’s current IRS tax return is required to establish dependence.

**Graduate students wishing to claim dependent status should contact the [Graduate School](#) (new graduate students) or the [Office of the Registrar](#) (change of residency status) for required information to prove dependent status.**

## Documentation to Support Claim of Florida Residency

Per s. [1009.21\(3\)\(c\)](#), Florida Statutes, documentation is required to be submitted either by the student (independent status) or the claimant (dependent status). No single document shall be conclusive in establishing residency.

Claimant must submit two or more forms of documentation from Tier 1 or at least one document from Tier 1 and one or more from Tier 2 of the documents identified below.

Additional documentation, other than what is prescribed, may be requested in some cases. All documentation is subject to verification. Evidence of ties to another state may result in denial of Florida residency for tuition purposes.

### Tier 1 Documentation:

- Florida voter’s registration
- Florida driver’s license
- Florida state identification card
- Florida vehicle registration
- Proof of permanent home in Florida which is occupied as primary residence by the individual or by the individual’s parent if the individual is a dependent child.
- Proof of a homestead exemption in Florida.
- Official transcripts from a Florida high school for multiple years (2 or more years), if the Florida high school diploma or GED® was earned within the last 12 months.
- Proof of permanent full-time employment in Florida for at least 30 hours per week for a 12-month period.

### Tier 2 Documentation:

- Declaration of domicile in Florida.
- Florida professional or occupational license
- Florida incorporation
- Document evidencing family ties in Florida
- Proof of membership in a Florida-based charitable or professional organization
- Any other documentation that supports your request for resident status, including, but not limited to, utility bills and proof of 12 consecutive months of payments; a lease agreement and proof of 12 consecutive months of payments; or an official state, federal, or court document evidencing legal ties to Florida.

## Qualification by Exception

As permitted by s. [1009.21, F.S.](#), certain applicants who do not meet residency requirements may be classified as Florida residents for tuition purposes. UWF will require documentation in support of the following exceptions; however, the student does not have to show 12

months of residence in Florida prior to qualifying. These exceptions and qualifications categories are as follows.

- The student is a qualified beneficiary under the terms of the Florida Prepaid College Program (s. [1009.98](#), Florida Statutes.) (Minimum Requirement: a copy of Florida Prepaid Recipient card.)
- Dependent children residing continuously with a legal resident adult relative other than the parent for at least five years immediately prior to the first day of classes of the term which Florida residency is sought.
- The student is married to a person who has maintained legal residence in Florida for at least the past 12 consecutive months. Student now has established legal residence and intends to make Florida his/her permanent home. (Minimum Requirement: A copy of marriage certificate and/or other documents required to establish residency.)
- The student was previously enrolled at a Florida state postsecondary institution and classified as a Florida resident for tuition purposes and is transferring to another Florida state postsecondary institution within 12 months of the previous enrollment. (Minimum Requirement: Evidence of previous enrollment as a Florida resident: transcript or letter from the institution.)
- The student was previously enrolled at a Florida state postsecondary institution and classified as a Florida resident for tuition purposes and abandoned his/her Florida domicile less than 12 months ago and is now re-establishing Florida legal residence. (Minimum Requirement: Evidence of previous enrollment as a Florida resident: transcript or letter from the institution.)
- Active duty members of the Armed Services of the United States residing in Florida, and their spouses and dependent children, and active drilling members of the Florida National Guard. (Minimum Requirement: A copy of military orders or DD Form 2058 showing home of record.)
- Active duty members of the Armed Services of the United States, and their spouses and dependents, attending a Florida College System institution or state university within 50 miles of the military establishment where they are stationed, if such military establishment is within a county contiguous to Florida. (Minimum Requirement: A copy of military orders.)
- United States citizens living on the Isthmus of Panama, who have completed 12 consecutive months of college work at the Florida State University Panama Canal Branch, and their spouses and dependent children. (Minimum Requirement: A copy of marriage certificate and/or proof of dependency.)
- Full-time instructional and administrative personnel employed by state public schools and institutions of higher education and their spouses and dependent children. (Required: Employment verification.)
- Students from Latin America or the Caribbean who receive scholarships from the federal or state government. Any student classified pursuant to this paragraph shall attend, on a full-time basis, a Florida institution of higher education. (Minimum Requirement: Proof of scholarship and Latin America or Caribbean residency.)
- Southern Regional Education Board's Academic Common Market graduate students attending Florida's state universities. (Minimum Requirement: A certification letter from State Academic Common Market Coordinator.)
- Full-time employees of state agencies or political subdivision of the state when the student fees are paid by the state agency or political subdivision for the purpose of job-related law enforcement or corrections training. (Minimum Requirement: Employment verification/payment agreement.)
- McKnight Doctoral Fellows and Finalists who are United States citizens. (Minimum Requirement: Verification from graduate studies.)
- United States citizens living outside the United States and teaching at a Department of Defense Dependent School or in an American International School and who enroll in a graduate-level education program that leads to a Florida teaching certificate. (Minimum Requirement: Proof of enrollment in a graduate program for FL teaching certificate.)
- Active duty members of the Canadian military residing or stationed in Florida under the North American Air Defense (NORAD) agreement, and their spouses and dependent children, attending a Florida College System institution or state university within 50 miles of the military establishment where they are stationed. (Minimum Requirement: Proof of active duty membership for specified purpose.)
- Active duty members of a foreign nation's military who are serving as liaison officers and are residing or stationed in this state, and their spouses and dependent children, attending a Florida College System or state university within 50 miles of the military establishment where the foreign liaison officer is stationed. (Minimum Requirement: Proof of active duty membership for specified purpose.)
- Linkage Institute participants receiving partial or full exemptions from S. [1009.21](#), FS, based on criteria approved by the Florida Department of Education per S. [288.8175](#), FS, which establishes linkage institutes between postsecondary institutions in this state and foreign countries. See Section 7.0, Immigration and International Student Issues, for more information on Linkage Institutes.

## Alabama Differential Out-of-State Tuition

Residents of Alabama are eligible for the [Alabama Differential Tuition Plan](#), a reduced out-of-state tuition rate. For more information, new undergraduate students should contact the [Office of Undergraduate Admissions](#), new graduate students should contact the [Graduate School](#), and currently, enrolled students should contact the [Office of the Registrar](#).

Alabama residents must be U.S. citizens, permanent resident aliens, or legal aliens granted indefinite stay by INS, and meet one of the following requirements to qualify for differential tuition:

- Be an independent person, according to the Federal Income Tax Code (students enrolled in a graduate program are considered independent for residency purposes), who has established and maintained legal ties within the state of Alabama as evident by a combination of driver's license, vehicle registration, voter registration, Declaration of Domicile, etc. for the previous 12 months. If qualifying as a spouse of a legal resident of Alabama, a copy of the marriage certificate is also required.
- Be a dependent person, according to the Federal Income Tax Code, whose parent or legal guardian has established and maintained legal ties within the state of Alabama as evident by a combination of parent/guardian's most recent IRS tax return (section listing dependents) and parent/legal guardian's driver's

license, vehicle registration, voter registration, Declaration of Domicile, etc. for the previous 12 months.

- Be a member of the Armed Services of the United States, on active military duty pursuant to military orders, who is stationed within the state of Alabama or whose state of legal residence, as evident by the HOR or LES, is Alabama. If qualifying as a spouse of a qualified armed services member, a copy of the marriage certificate is also required. The most recent IRS tax return (section listing dependents) may be required for a dependent child.

## Change of Residency Status

Change of Residency or reclassification procedures apply to any student who attended UWF within the last three semesters and is requesting a change to his or her residency status. A student who has been enrolled, while classified as a “non-Florida resident for tuition purposes” and wishes to be considered for reclassification as a “Florida resident for tuition purposes,” should file with the Office of the Registrar a [Residency Reclassification form](#), with copies of supporting documentation attached. The request and documentation must be submitted no earlier than two months (60 calendar days) before the start of a semester and no later than one week (7 days) prior to the first day of classes for any given semester. Refer to the [academic calendar](#).

This request for reclassification is also required for students who are active duty or discharged members of the Armed Forces who wish to change from non-Florida or temporary Florida resident to Florida resident status.

Living in or attending school in Florida will not, in itself, establish legal residence. An individual must be able to demonstrate that his/her activities in Florida during the qualifying period are not primarily student related. Residency in Florida must be for the purpose of establishing a permanent home and not merely incidental to enrollment at an institution of higher education. A period of non-enrollment during the 12 month qualifying period may be required. In addition, university residence halls, fraternities, sororities, scholarship houses, and other UWF campus addresses are not permanent addresses for residency purposes.

The burden of proof of permanent residence lies with the student.

## Reclassification of Residency Status

Students who enter as nonresidents who intend to apply for reclassification after their first semester will be required to provide clear and convincing documentation that supports permanent legal residency in the State of Florida for at least twelve (12) consecutive months rather than temporary residency for the purpose of pursuing an education.

Reclassification of residency is highly regulated by the Legislature of the State of Florida. Almost every year, legislation is considered and/or passed that impacts the process. The Reclassification Process is individualized and document-intensive. You should be prepared to provide as much documentation as possible to justify your unique situation. The documentation that you submit must address three basic questions grouped into two parts. Part One: 1) Why did you move to the State of Florida? Part Two: 1) What are your legal ties to the State of Florida? and 2) Were you physically present in the State of Florida for the requisite twelve months?

There is not a specific document or set of documents that can be used to determine residency for tuition purposes.

## Physical Presence

Establishing physical presence is done by one of two means (must be dated at least one year prior to the first day of classes of the semester for which resident status is sought):

- A residential rental/lease agreement (e.g., rent receipts, canceled checks, or notarized statement from a landlord) or a deed/mortgage (proof of purchase of a permanent home in Florida) in the student's name and dated, which the student has resided for at least one year prior to the first day of classes, OR
- Utility and/or Cable Bills for twelve (12) consecutive months in the student's name and dated showing proof that the student has maintained residence in Florida for the preceding year. Students without a lease agreement or mortgage should provide a notarized letter explaining their living situation in Florida; i.e. living with family, friends, etc.

## Legal Ties/Basis

Documentation establishing domicile in Florida which is not temporary or merely incidental to enrollment in a Florida institution of higher education must be dated at least one year prior to the first day of classes of the semester for which resident status is sought. The following documents will be considered evidence of domicile even though no single criterion will be considered as conclusive evidence of domicile:

- [Florida driver's license or State of Florida identification card](#)
- [Florida voter's registration](#)
- [Florida vehicle registration](#)
- [Declaration of Domicile in Florida s.222.17](#) with a filing date 12 months prior to the start of classes for the term
- Proof of permanent home in Florida occupied as primary residence for 12 consecutive month prior to the student's enrollment. (Required: document such as a deed or other evidence of title to property used as primary residence, a homeowner's policy, a title insurance policy, evidence of a property tax payment on the primary residence, multiple leases reflecting a Florida address, or a lease of multiple years' duration.)
- Proof of a homestead exemption in Florida. (Required: document from the county tax collector demonstrating the application of a homestead exemption to the claimant's primary residence.)
- Proof of permanent full-time employment in Florida for at least 30 hours per week for the 12 consecutive months before classes begin (e.g., letter on company letterhead from an employer verifying permanent employment)
- Transcripts from a Florida high school for multiple years if the Florida high school diploma or GED was earned within the last 12 months
- Documents evidencing family ties in Florida
- Lease agreement and proof of twelve (12) consecutive months of payments
- Utility bills and proof of twelve (12) consecutive month of payments
- State, federal or court documents evidencing legal ties to Florida
- Benefits histories from Florida agencies or public assistance programs
- Florida professional or occupational license
- Florida incorporation
- Proof of membership in a Florida-based charitable or professional organization

- Any other documentation that supports the student's request for permanent residency status in the state

**No Contrary Evidence**

No contrary evidence establishing or maintaining residence elsewhere.