



'Compliance' Guidelines – Tuition Rewards® Copy: Avoiding 'Liability' Is Vital

To avoid making promises that create liability (for you personally; your company or IMO/NMO/FMO; or, for SAGE), SAGE needs to "fact-check" all marketing & advertising materials. As our program has an ever-changing number of colleges & participating students, the "fact-check" process helps keep your marketing up-to-date and accurate. Before publication, our contracts require that all marketing materials **must** be reviewed. Please email all PDFs (or Word documents) to: robert@sagescholars.com

Standard Disclaimer(s) for ALL copy:

- Tuition Rewards® Points represent a “**guaranteed minimum scholarship**.” Accumulated points can be redeemed for discounts on **undergraduate** tuition at **participating** 4-year **private** colleges & universities. Points **must** be submitted at time of application for the freshman year. Participating colleges reserve the right to include Tuition Rewards® as part of any financial aid package. Tuition Rewards® are remitted solely as a reduction to the participating college's full tuition bill -- **NOT** awarded in cash.
- [if space permits:] Tuition Rewards® Points are limited to a maximum **per student** of up to one year's tuition*, spread evenly over 4 years, or as contractually agreed. **set at time of application [The maximum reward varies by college. Some of early member colleges are still “capped” at \$13,811. SAGE hopes to upgrade these agreements.]*

1. Points, Not Dollars

Tuition Rewards® Points are similar to frequent flyer miles. **NEVER list a dollar amount for Tuition Rewards earned** – it's **points**! Each point is guaranteed to be valued at **\$1.00** in undergraduate tuition discounts at participating 4-year private colleges & universities.

Points, not Dollars: Neither you nor we ever want to receive calls from account-holders or employees announcing, "My child is going to one of your colleges. Where is my check?"

Key Words: Points, undergraduate, participating, 4-year, private

2. Copy Recommendations:

a. We always capitalize Tuition Rewards®.

b. "Tuition Rewards®" is a registered term. You don't need to use the register mark every time Tuition Rewards appears in your copy – but certainly use it the first time the phrase is used.

c. **NEVER use the term "CREDITS"**. Use **points**. Reasons: SAGE does NOT offer tuition credits! "Credits" is a term used by colleges to measure the "hours" value of a course toward graduation. Example: If 120 credits are required for graduation (30 credits per year), and each year of tuition has a \$30,000 list price, then each credit is valued at \$1,000. Using the word "credits" confuses your audience – and is **totally unacceptable to a State Dept. of Insurance**. **Don't Promise a \$1,000 Value for a Tuition Rewards Point (\$1.00 value)**. **NEVER use the word "CREDITS"!**

3. The Discounts Are Provided By The Colleges

Make it clear that colleges provide the discounts, not SAGE nor the financial affiliate/employer or you. **"Participating colleges have contractually agreed to accept less than full tuition"** from our students.

PROHIBITION: You are **prohibited from posting college logos** on your website or printed materials.

This is because the college has no agreement with you – only with SAGE.

4. The 3 Deadlines:

- **Enrollment of Students** – by **Aug. 31st** of the year a student begins **11th grade** (or as agreed) We recommend enrolling students ASAP to ensure that this deadline is never missed. Reason for the deadline: Our colleges contractually require time to recruit participating students.
- **Assignment of Rewards** – by **Aug. 31st** of the year the student begins **12th grade**. Individual students cannot earn additional Rewards after this date. (Account-holders continue to earn Rewards.) Rewards do not change after a student applies to a college.
- **Submission of Rewards to Colleges** – online **within 10 days of application** for the freshman year. Colleges require this; they want to create a financial aid package only once. Don't be late!

5. Unused Points:

If the student doesn't attend a member college, most of a student's points usually can be transferred back to the Sponsor (and later transferred to younger students).* The Transfer Request must be received within three years of high school graduation.

* Points that are "**student-specific**" (awarded directly to students) typically cannot be transferred. Examples: Bonus points given to a student at time of enrollment; or, for completion of an academic profile available to member colleges; or, any awarded student "birthday points".

6. Colleges May BLEND Tuition Discounts into their Normal Financial Aid Packages

Explanation: "Colleges reserve the right to use Tuition Rewards as part of, or separate from, any financial aid or scholarship package."

Our program represents a guarantee that, at 400+ participating colleges, families will receive a discount on tuition.

In creating financial aid packages, our member colleges may either "**stack**" or "**blend**" Tuition Rewards Points. With "stacking", Tuition Rewards are an addition to the normal aid "package". This happens – but considerably less than 50% of the time. More often, Tuition Rewards are "**blended**" -- incorporated -- into the student's financial aid or merit aid. (Ex.: when the aid exceeds our program guarantee).

Here are the three financial aid scenarios that are likely when students submit their Tuition Rewards Points to colleges (*Presented as background -- not necessary to include in your copy*):

- More Aid:** Thanks to Tuition Reward points, the student receives more aid than he/she otherwise would have. Wonderful! Since many families believe they won't qualify for aid, this is a big bonus!
- Same Aid \$, Less Loan:** Aid typically has 3 components – "scholarship" [synonyms: discount, grant], loan & work-study. In this scenario, our student receives the **same total amount** of aid; but, because of Tuition Rewards, the student gets more "scholarship" & less loan. Nice!
- Same Aid, No Benefit:** To woo a very desirable student, a college may decide to give such a generous aid package that "**merit aid**" to attract the student exceeds his or her Tuition Rewards Points. This is wonderful for the family! Students never lose by participating in Tuition Rewards – but often, the gain from the student's solid academic credentials exceeds the gain from participating in our program. Again, this is wonderful for the family.

Or: If the applicant demonstrates substantial financial "need" (as determined by the FAFSA and CSS Profile forms), the financial aid "grant" amount provided is likely to exceed the submitted Rewards Points (which, by contract, the college can incorporate into the financial aid package).

Don't promise that students will always receive more aid because of participation in Tuition Rewards. Sometimes, yes. Sometimes, it's the same amount of aid -- but can mean less loan. Sometimes, it's exactly the same amount of aid. The good news is that participating students never receive less aid -- and may well receive considerably more aid from our member colleges than families expect.