



Education Tax Credits

Help for taxpayers with higher education expenses

Eligibility:

An [education credit](#) helps with the cost of higher education by reducing the amount of tax owed on your tax return. If the credit reduces your tax to less than zero, you may get a refund. There are two education tax credits available (see below).

You must meet all three of the following rules to be eligible for either credit (note that there are additional rules for each credit):

- You, your dependent or a third party pays [qualified education expenses](#) for higher education.
- An eligible student must be enrolled at an [eligible educational institution](#).
- The eligible student is yourself, your spouse or a dependent you list on your tax return.

You can only choose one credit per eligible student per year. You can't claim the AOTC if you were a nonresident alien for any part of the tax year unless you elect to be treated as a resident alien for federal tax purposes. For more information about AOTC and international students, visit [American Opportunity Tax Credit](#).

Not sure if you are eligible to claim an education credit or deductions? Find out if with the easy-to-use [interactive app](#) from the IRS.

Education Tax Credit Choices:

[American Opportunity Tax Credit](#): is a credit for qualified education expenses paid for an eligible student for the first four years of higher education. You can get a maximum annual credit of \$2,500 per eligible student. The AOTC modifies the previous Hope Credit (AOTC is applicable for tax years 2009-2017, [more details here](#)).

[Lifetime Learning Credit](#): is for qualified tuition and related expenses paid for eligible students enrolled in an eligible educational institution. This credit can help pay for undergraduate, graduate and professional degree courses--including courses to acquire or improve job skills. There is no limit on the number of years you can claim the credit. It is worth up to \$2,000 per tax return.

More Information:

- [Education Credits Q&A](#)
- [Education Credits FAQs](#)
- [Tax Benefits for Education: IRS Information Center](#)
- [IRS Publication 970, Tax Benefits for Higher Education](#)

Form 1098-T:

[Form 1098-T](#) reports tuition billed and scholarships/grants issued. These forms are issued on a calendar year basis by the Bursar's Office. More information is available from the Cornell [Department of Financial Affairs](#).

Note: Cornell cannot act as a personal tax consultant. The contents of this page are for informational purposes only. All U.S. citizens and foreign national visitors to the U.S. are personally responsible for knowing the tax laws and how they pertain to him/her individually.

