

Financial Aid

Financial aid is available only for regular, full-time graduate students. Teaching assistantships, research assistantships, graduate assistantships, fellowships, and scholarships are academic awards made by individual academic departments. Several graduate assistantships unrelated to a particular area of study can be obtained by applying to administrative offices. International students are also encouraged to apply for funding to outside sponsoring agencies and/or home governments. Finally, please note that all student loan programs are administered by the Office of Financial Aid located at 27 Memorial Drive West. (Please read the section below regarding loans and work-study.)

ACADEMIC AWARDS

Requests for fellowships, scholarships, research assistantships, teaching assistantships, and graduate assistantships to begin in the fall semester must be filed with academic departments no later than January 15. (Some departments have earlier deadlines.) Generally, a special committee formed by department faculty selects the recipients of these awards based upon merit; students are not required to submit a financial statement.

In addition to their stipends, graduate students holding half-time teaching appointments generally receive tuition remission. Fellowship holders also receive a stipend and tuition award. Scholarship recipients are awarded tuition. Research assistants receive a stipend for research services, but their tuition is commonly paid directly by research projects.

TEACHING ASSISTANTS AND GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

Teaching assistant and graduate assistant (TA/GA) are technical terms used to describe specific types of Lehigh University graduate students. The duties of TAs and GAs are generally set by the departments or offices that appoint them, but certain conditions must be satisfied before a student can be classified as a teaching assistant or a graduate assistant. These include:

- Each TA/GA must be a regular full-time resident Lehigh graduate student, which normally requires registration for at least nine credit hours per semester.
- A TA/GA is a half-time position and each TA/GA provides services to Lehigh University of up to twenty hours per week. Quarter-time and eighth-time TA/GA appointments are possible for full-time resident graduate students, with stipends and tuition remission appropriately reduced.
- Each TA/GA must be paid a specific stipend, which is set for the academic year by the dean of the appropriate college after consultation with the Director of Budget.
- Qualified TAs/GAs receive tuition remission for at most ten credit hours in a regular semester. No TA/GA may register for more than ten credit hours. A student who is a TA/GA during the preceding academic year is entitled to at most three hours of thesis, research, or dissertation registration (not course credit) in the following summer without payment of tuition (except in the College of Education).
- Each TA/GA is appointed by a process which begins with a formal letter of appointment issued by the appropriate department chairperson. The appointment letter specifies standard university conditions including stipend level, time of arrival, length of service, and the requirement of satisfactory academic progress and performance of duties. Each department chairperson submits written notification of TA/GA appointments to the appropriate college dean or vice president.

The Graduate and Research Committee endorsed academic guidelines for new teaching assistants which exceed minimum admission requirements. Each TA should satisfy one of the following: have a GPA of 3.0 or better in the undergraduate major field of study; have a GPA of 3.5 in the senior year major field; rank in the 85th percentile or higher on the Graduate Record Exam or other standardized test; or have a GPA of 3.5 in at least twelve hours of graduate work in the major field. Exceptions to these guidelines shall be made only with the approval of the appropriate dean.

In addition, each teaching assistant must make normal progress toward a graduate degree. The definition of normal progress may vary among departments, but the criteria for satisfactory progress are established by the department faculty and the Graduate and Research Committee. Teaching assistants who fail to satisfy these criteria are ineligible for reappointment.

In addition to achieving the minimum TOEFL iBT scores necessary for admission, potential Teaching Assistants and Graduate Assistants whose first language is not English who will be working with Lehigh undergraduates in academic settings (classrooms, recitations, labs, office hours, etc.) must pass Lehigh University's Test of Presentation and Speaking Skills (TOPSS) prior to beginning their instructional responsibilities. At the Department's discretion, students who score in the conditional range on the TOPSS may be appointed as a TA or GA but will be required to attend English as a Second Language courses, re-take the TOPSS, and achieve a passing score within one semester.

Tuition remission for qualified TAs/GAs is authorized by the appropriate dean or vice president as part of the registration process. Each college dean or appropriate vice president will be provided tuition remission accounts against which TA/GA remissions will be charged. The accounts will be budgeted at an amount equal to the nine-hour TA/GA tuition rate times the approved number of TA/GA positions and will be included in the annual operating budget. The budgets shall not be exceeded. If additional TA/GA positions are desired on a temporary basis, the account executive must provide for the transfer of budget support to the remission account. These budgets are to be used exclusively for tuition remission for authorized TA/GA positions.

There are a limited number of summer TA/GA appointments. These TA/GAs must receive the same monthly stipend as academic year TAs/GAs and devote up to twenty hours per week to the TA/GA responsibilities. A summer TA/GA registers for a maximum of three credit hours in each summer session of appointment and receives tuition remission for that registration.

OTHER GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

Graduate students may apply directly to administrative offices for graduate assistantships unrelated to their areas of study. The availability of these assistantships is based upon the needs of the individual departments. GAs are appointed regularly by the office of the vice provost for student affairs, the dean of students office, the university counseling service, and by career services.

LOANS AND WORK-STUDY AWARDS

Graduate students may apply for Federally funded loans (Direct Unsubsidized Loan or Graduate PLUS Loan) through the Office of Financial Aid. Federal funds are awarded using the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) which can be completed on the web at www.fafsa.ed.gov. In addition to the FAFSA, Lehigh University requires a university application (Graduate Student Financial Aid Application). Applications for Federal loans cannot be processed and funds cannot be disbursed, until the FAFSA is received and reviewed.

Eligibility for student loans is based on the number of credits to be taken and the total amount of assistance received. Any change to the number of credits to be taken or the amount of aid received may affect loan eligibility. To avoid problems with your loan application, it is important that you notify the Office of Financial Aid of any changes in your enrollment or in the amount of aid received. It is the student's responsibility to notify the Office of Financial Aid of any changes.

Visit the Office of Financial Aid website for additional information: www.lehigh.edu/financialaid