FINANCING A GRADUATE EDUCATION

Scholarship and Financial Aid Information

Scholarships, Fellowships, Awards and Waivers
Please visit the Office of Graduate Studies website (http://www.unomaha.edu/graduate-studies/financing-your-degree/scholarships.php), for detailed information on deadlines, term of award, and awarded amount.

Office of Financial Support and Scholarships

Federal Student Aid
Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG), Federal Direct Stafford Loan, University Tuition Grant, state grant, certain scholarships, Federal Perkins Loan and Federal Work-Study are all forms of financial assistance for which UNO undergraduate students may be considered on the basis of financial need. In order to apply, a student should submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by April 1 prior to the academic year for which assistance is needed.

Standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress

Federal regulations require a student to maintain satisfactory academic progress in the course of study he/she is pursuing in order to receive federal financial assistance. The Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy standards are applied consistently within all institutionally-defined categories of students (undergraduate, master’s and doctoral level students) and enrollment levels (full-time and part-time), regardless of whether the student previously received financial aid.

In order to comply with these regulations, the University of Nebraska at Omaha has established the following Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy.

Satisfactory Academic Progress Requirements

Satisfactory Academic Progress standards are reviewed annually after the final posting of Spring semester grades and apply to a student’s entire academic record. Students returning to UNO following a withdrawal or dismissal will be evaluated upon receipt of the electronic Student Aid Report. To maintain eligibility you must meet the following criteria:

1. Grade Point Average (GPA) Standard You must be in “good academic standing” at UNO. For undergraduates, this is defined as having an earned UNO cumulative GPA of at least 2.00. For graduate students, this is defined as having an earned UNO cumulative GPA of at least 3.00.

2. Pace of Progression You must have successfully completed ("D" grade or higher) at least 67% of the total credit hours for which you have attempted at UNO, plus any transfer hours accepted from other schools, upon completion of the Spring semester.
   • Grades of Failing (F); No-Credit (NC); No Report (NR); Unsatisfactory (U); Incomplete (I); In Progress (IP); Audit (AU); and Withdraw (W); are considered unsuccessful completion of credit hours attempted. A grade of Failing (F) is used in calculating grade point averages.

3. Maximum Time to Degree Completion Undergraduate student must complete degree requirements within 180 attempted credit hours, Graduate students must complete degree requirements within 70 credit hours at the graduate level and Doctoral students must complete degree requirements within 125 credit hours

Attempted hours include both hours attempted at UNO and any transfer hours accepted from other schools you have attended. All credit hours for repeated courses will be included in the attempted hours calculation. Also, if the number of credit hours you still need to graduate, in addition to the number of hours you have already attempted exceeds the maximum attempted hour total above, your aid eligibility will be cancelled.

A course retaken beyond the first retake of a previously passed course cannot be included in the credit hour total when determining the total number of hours for disbursement of aid. “W” grades are not considered in this retake calculation, even though they are considered in the completion rate calculation in 2 above.

Reinstatement of Eligibility

Students who do not meet one or more of the SAP standards are no longer eligible to receive federal student aid and will be notified by email. Financial aid programs include, but are not limited to, all federal grants, loans and work-study, state grants, and most University of Nebraska at Omaha need-based grants and scholarships.

If you have incurred circumstances such as a death of a close family member, serious illness or injury to yourself, or other serious extenuating circumstances that you feel have significantly contributed to your academic situation, you may appeal the Grade Point Average Standard or Pace of Progression. Appeals will not be allowed for maximum credit hour issues or multiple retake issues.

Appeal Procedures:

1. Appeals must be typed and submitted to the UNO Office of Financial Support and Scholarships using the UNO SAP Appeal Form. The appeal should be submitted within 30 days of the SAP email notification. The appeal form is available at http://www.unomaha.edu/admissions/financial-support-and-scholarships/tools-and-resources/satisfactory-academic-progress.php.

2. The appeal must provide a full explanation of why the standards were not originally met, and what changes students have made to ensure all SAP standards will be met in future semesters. Supporting documentation may be supplied with their appeal submission.

3. No more than three appeals will be allowed per student per entire academic career at UNO.

Possible Appeal Outcomes:

1. Appeal Denied: If your appeal is denied, you will receive an email notification as to what steps they can take, if any, to regain aid eligibility.

2. SAP Probation: Financial aid eligibility is reinstated for one semester only, with the expectation that all SAP standards will be met after that semester. Upon review, if all SAP standards are not being met in this timeframe, students will then become ineligible for aid.

3. SAP Academic Plan: In cases where an appeal is approved, but it is not possible to meet all SAP standards in one semester, you will be prescribed an individualized academic plan. You will remain aid eligible as long as they continue to meet the plan. If you cease to meet the plan criteria before they meet the minimum SAP standards, you will then become ineligible for aid.

ALL APPEAL DETERMINATIONS BY THE OFFICE OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT & SCHOLARSHIPS ARE FINAL

The University of Nebraska and its campuses have promulgated various policies, regulations, statements of purpose and operation, while adhering to the principles deemed necessary for functioning as institutions of higher education. The University of Nebraska at Omaha, with the counsel and advice of students, faculty and staff, has identified and compiled what are
thought to be some of the most basic and important statements of policy especially as they relate to students.

To create greater awareness among and for convenience to students, a number of basic policies have been compiled into a Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities. While most, but not necessarily all, policies pertaining to students’ rights and responsibilities are contained herein, students are urged to become familiar with all documents pertinent to the University of Nebraska in general and to UNO in particular.

For more Information...
Office of Financial Support and Scholarships
Eppley Administration Building, Room 103
Omaha, NE, 68182
402-554-2327
financialaid.unomaha.edu (http://financialaid.unomaha.edu)

Graduate Assistant Policy
Academic Standards
The graduate assistantship is intended as an award to students who have demonstrated high academic performance and potential either at the graduate or undergraduate level.

• Graduate assistants must be students in good standing in a degree or certificate program in the Graduate College.

• Dismissal from a graduate program for any reason shall result in simultaneous dismissal from any graduate assistantship position.

• The student will not be eligible for an assistantship thereafter until fully reinstated in a graduate degree or certificate program.

Recruitment, Selection and Renewal of Graduate Assistants
Each graduate department/school or other departmental unit, as appropriate, shall establish its own procedure for graduate assistantship recruitment and selection in accordance with University policy on affirmative action/equal opportunity.

• Assistantships are not automatically renewable and are dependent upon assessment of work and classroom performance. The student is reminded that, whether or not outside work commitments are involved, graduate assistantships may not be renewed if either graduate class or assistantship duties are not carried out in a satisfactory manner.

Workload
The workload for a graduate assistant should average 20 hours per week for the duration of the appointment and shall be construed to be the equivalent of .33 FTE.

• The department/school or unit in which the graduate assistant is employed should make arrangements with its assistants regarding vacation periods.

• The Graduate Faculty considers a student who is pursuing graduate study and holding a graduate assistantship to be carrying the equivalent of a full-time workload (see course load below) and, therefore, discourages the practice of holding additional jobs which may interfere with satisfactory performance of assigned duties.

Course Load
Graduate Assistants are expected to carry a minimum of six graduate hours in each of the fall and spring semesters; graduate assistants working in the summer semester are not required to be concurrently enrolled.

• Graduate assistants may not register for more than 12 semester hours without the approval of both their supervisor and the Graduate Dean. The graduate assistantship will not pay for more than 12 semester hours in a semester.

FAQ: Graduate Assistantships
What is a Graduate Assistantship?
Graduate Assistantships are intended as awards to students who have demonstrated high academic performance and potential at the graduate level. Graduate Assistants, or “GAs,” work 20 hours each week. The duties of a GA could be teaching; instructing and supervising undergraduate level laboratories or tutorial sections; grading or otherwise evaluating performance of undergraduate students; preparing materials for laboratories or classroom presentations. GA’s must carry a minimum of six graduate hours.

Duties
Duties assigned to graduate assistants should be directly related to and in support of graduate studies in their chosen field of study. Typical examples would be one or more of the following:

1. Teaching courses or discussion sections at the undergraduate level.
2. Instructing and supervising undergraduate level laboratories or tutorial sections.
3. Grading or otherwise evaluating performance of undergraduate students.
4. Collecting and/or processing research data for faculty members.
5. Preparing materials for laboratories or classroom presentations.

In general, other duties which involve a direct knowledge and application of knowledge related to the student’s field of study would be acceptable. Graduate assistants should not be utilized solely for clerical duties.

It shall be the responsibility of each Graduate Program Committee, in consultation with the cognizant department chairperson or program director, to draw up an agreement with each graduate assistant at the time of the appointment which shall specify the stipend, duration and method of payment, the assistant’s duties, and the general conditions of employment. The agreement shall be reviewed by the graduate assistant before it is signed by him/her and the chairperson of the Graduate Program Committee. The Graduate Program Committee, upon the recommendation of the graduate assistant’s faculty supervisor and/or the department chairperson/school director or unit director, shall have the responsibility to review the assistant’s performance and to terminate the appointment for failure to discharge satisfactorily the duties specified in the agreement.

Lengths of Appointments
Assistantships may be awarded on an academic-calendar-or semester-by-semester basis.

How Do I Apply for an Assistantship?
Contact the department/school/office you are interested in for any available positions and their application procedures. Also, check with Human Resources (Student Employment), 205 Eppley Administration Bldg., they may have a list of the current open assistantships. You must be admitted to a graduate degree or certificate program to be a graduate assistant; non-degree & unclassified students are ineligible. Graduate Assistants must be in good standing in a degree or certificate program to receive or continue with an assistantship.
What Do I Receive Monetary Compensation for & When do I Get Paid?

Graduate Assistants receive compensation for performing the duties and responsibilities outlined in the assistantship agreement. Graduate Assistants average 20 hours per week. On the last working day of the month, your paycheck will be electronically deposited directly into your bank.

How Many Graduate Hours Do I Need to Take During the Fall & Spring Semesters?

Graduate Assistants are required to carry a minimum of six (6) graduate hours in the fall and spring semesters (please note that undergraduate deficiencies do not count toward this minimum requirement). You must be aware that nine (9) graduate hours is a full-time course load for graduate students and, in order to defer some student loans, you must register for nine (9) graduate hours; however, most require only ½ time course load. Please check with the Office of Financial Support and Scholarships regarding the details of your particular loan. Please note: in order to complete your degree within two years you will need to register for nine (9) graduate hours per semester. The minimum of six (6) graduate credit hours may be waived if you are in your last semester & need less than six (6) graduate credit hours to complete the requirements for graduation. The Office of Graduate Studies will review your plan of study and contact you to complete the “Student Social Security Tax Exemption Statement—Last Semester.”

The minimum of six (6) graduate credit hours also may be waived for doctoral candidates, with the approval of their adviser & the Graduate Dean, if all required courses except dissertation have been completed and the student will not be employed for more than 20 hours per week. The Office of Graduate Studies will review your plan of study and contact you to complete the “Student Social Security Tax Exemption Statement—Certification of Full-Time Graduate Status.”

What is the Maximum Number of Graduate Hours I Can Take Each Semester?

Your Assistantship will pay for a maximum of twelve (12) graduate hours a semester.

Can I Register for an Undergraduate Course and Have the Tuition Paid?

Yes, if the undergraduate course is required to fulfill a deficiency which is listed on your original plan of study and you are enrolled for a minimum of six (6) graduate hours. This can be accessed in MavLINK under the DegreeWorks link. If the undergraduate course is not listed as a deficiency in your original plan of study, your assistantship will not pay for the tuition.

How Many Graduate Hours Does a Graduate Assistant Have to Take in the Summer?

None.¹ You are allowed to take a maximum of twelve (12) graduate hours.

Will My Assistantship Pay the Tuition for Graduate Courses in the Summer?

Yes, if you were a Graduate Assistant for the preceding fall and spring semesters or are working as a graduate assistant during the summer. If you were a Graduate Assistant for the spring semester only and will be one in the upcoming fall, you will be eligible for reimbursement for your summer graduate courses. Please consult with the Office of Graduate Studies.

How Do I Pay For Classes?

Once the necessary paperwork has been submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies by your department/school/office, Cashiering/Student Accounts will be notified of your assistantship. Your account will then be credited for the classes which are covered by your assistantship. Please be sure you pay the fees and any other charges not covered by your assistantship.

Will My Assistantship Pay for Graduate Courses Taken at the Other Three University of Nebraska campuses (UNL, UNK, & UNMC)?

Yes, if the courses are required in your plan of study, a tuition voucher will be completed by the Office of Graduate Studies at the time of verifying enrollment. You will need to complete the online Intercampus Registration form available here (https://intercampus.nebraska.edu/pre_inter_campus.aspx)

What Happens if I Resign My Assistantship?

The Office of Graduate Studies will send you a prorated bill from the date you resigned your assistantship. You will be placed on stop enrollment until the bill is paid.

What Happens if I Don’t Start My Assistantship at the Beginning of the Semester?

Assistantships may be awarded on an academic-year basis, a calendar-year basis, or semester-by-semester basis. Normally these appointments start at the beginning of a semester. The department/school/office should contact the Office of Graduate Studies for prior approval if the assistantship is not starting at the beginning of a semester. If the late hiring is approved, the Office of Graduate Studies will send you a prorated bill for the graduate courses you are enrolled in; beginning with the date you started your assistantship.

May I Hold Another Job (Additional Employment) in Addition to My Assistantship?

The Graduate Faculty considers a student who is pursuing graduate study and holding a Graduate Assistantship to be carrying the equivalent of a full-time work load and therefore, discourages the practice of holding additional jobs which may interfere with satisfactory performance of assigned duties. With the approval of your graduate program committee and the Dean for Graduate Studies, an additional assignment may be accepted if professionally relevant and if your total FTE does not exceed .49.

What If I Become Sick and Miss Work or Take a Vacation?

Graduate Assistants do not earn sick or vacation hours, please consult with your department/school/office concerning their policies.

Do Graduate Assistants Work When Offices Are Open, but the University is Closed for Classes?

As a graduate assistant averages 20 hours per week they are treated like faculty depending on your assignment you may be expected to work and this must specifically be stated in their workload agreement and discussed well in advance. You should check with your department/school/office regarding their policy.

How Long May I Hold a Graduate Assistantship?

Assistantships may be awarded on an academic-year basis, a calendar-year basis, or semester by semester basis. Students working towards a master’s degree may not hold an assistantship for more than four (4) semesters: Educational Specialist students are limited to four (4) semesters beyond their master’s degree; doctoral students are limited to six (6) semesters beyond their master’s degree. These appointments exclude summer sessions. An assistantship may be extended on an individual basis upon the recommendation of the Graduate Program Committee of the department and the approval of the Dean for Graduate Studies.
Where Do I Park My Car?
You may purchase a student pass but are eligible to purchase a faculty/staff pass from Parking (http://www.unomaha.edu/business-and-finance/support-services/parking-services).