

# Financial Aid Regulations

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## Undergraduate Financial Aid

Undergraduate financial aid recipients are expected to maintain a USU GPA of at least 2.0 and complete the appropriate number of credits for the type of aid they receive. Most grants and work-study require enrollment for 12 credits, which is the federal definition of full-time enrollment. (Pell Grants are pro-rated for full-time, three-fourths-time, half-time, and less than half-time.) Loan recipients must maintain 6 credits each semester they receive a loan.

Students not passing the required amount of credits *or* not maintaining the required grade point average will be placed on financial aid probation for a minimum of one semester. Students not meeting the required minimums during the period of probation will be suspended from further aid. In exceptional circumstances, students may appeal to have the suspension lifted.

In addition to maintaining academic progress as defined above, recipients may not owe a repayment on grants previously received, or be in default of any student loan fund at USU or any other institution.

## Graduate Financial Aid

### Graduate Assistantships

Teaching, research, and other graduate assistantships are available in most of the departments of the University. A full-time assistantship is 20 hours per week. In the interest of timely degree completion, graduate students are generally employed by the University for *no more than* 20 hours per week. Employment for more than 20 hours per week must be approved by the student's advisor, degree-program department head, and the graduate dean. Graduate assistants must be full-time, matriculated students. For students employed as graduate assistants, full-time status is based on the full-time equivalent or FTE. A 0.25 to 0.374 FTE requires a student to enroll for 9 graduate-level credits; a 0.375 to 0.50 FTE requires a student to enroll for 6 graduate-level credits. Graduate assistants must maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher for those courses included on their Program of Study. However, if a Program of Study has not been submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, a cumulative GPA is computed using all of the student's coursework at USU since the prior degree. The GPA is checked by the School of Graduate Studies at the end of each semester. The cumulative GPA on the last 60 semester credits will be used to determine eligibility as a graduate assistant if the student has not yet started the graduate program. Graduate assistants may register for a maximum of 12 credits per semester. However, a research assistant whose assistantship involves his or her thesis or dissertation research may register for additional credits, as explained below.

**Teaching Assistantships/Graduate Instructors.** Graduate students may be teaching assistants or graduate instructors in departments. Teaching loads vary up to a maximum of 20 hours per week, and stipends vary depending on the department and the teaching load.

International students may be considered for teaching assistantships if they demonstrate adequate proficiency in English communication, as determined by Utah State University's Intensive English Language Institute, and have participated in the required workshop.

All teaching assistants and graduate instructors are required to participate in a training workshop sponsored by the School of Graduate Studies prior to beginning their assistantships. The workshops help students gain the techniques and skills to be effective instructors in the university environment. The workshop for international students also aids students in understanding the American university culture and in improving

communication. When a teaching assistant workshop has been successfully completed, 1 credit will be added to the student's transcript. However, this credit cannot be applied toward a graduate degree program.

**Research Assistantships.** Stipends and workloads for research assistants vary, with a maximum workload of 20 hours per week. Students conducting research that will be used for their thesis or dissertation may register for 4 research or thesis credits above the 12-credit limit.

**Federal College Work-Study Assistantships.** Graduate students may apply for work-study support by completing an online application at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>.

**Tuition Award for the Nonresident Portion of the Tuition Fee.** A nonresident student who holds a graduate assistantship and is receiving at least \$350 per month may be awarded a waiver of the nonresident portion of tuition for courses in the student's degree program. Out-of-state, noninternational graduate students who receive nonresident tuition awards must apply for Utah residency after completing 40 semester credits. It is important to note that graduate students who are seeking residency may count *any credits at the 5000 level and above* at 1.5 times the actual credit. For example, a 3-credit 5000-level class would count for 4.5 credits toward residency requirements *only (not toward graduation requirements)*. Tuition awards *cannot* be used to audit classes. Tuition awards *cannot* be used for coursework below the 5000 level, *unless* the course is on the student's Program of Study or required by the student's supervisory committee, as indicated by a letter from the committee chair.

**Resident Tuition Award for Doctoral Students.** A student who is matriculated in a doctoral degree program and is a graduate assistant or graduate fellow receiving at least \$600 per month may be awarded a resident (instate) tuition award. Full-time registration is required. If credits other than those required for the doctoral degree are needed to meet the full-time registration requirement, registration must be for Dept. 7990 (Continuing Graduate Advisement). A doctoral in-state tuition award *cannot* be used to audit classes or for coursework below the 5000 level.

**Tuition Award Application Process.** The designated departmental staff must submit an award request to the graduate dean for approval according to the deadlines outlined in the Tuition Awards Policy. The award must be used before the last day for registering or adding classes in the semester for which it was awarded (15th day of classes). The awards are available for a maximum of 12 credits per semester, with the number of eligible credits indicated on the Program of Study, which must be submitted by the end of the second semester for a master's student and the end of the third semester for a doctoral student. Audited courses do not qualify for the award. For more information, refer to the Graduate Student Tuition Awards Policy on the School of Graduate Studies website: <http://www.usu.edu/gradsch/financial/assistantships.cfm>

### **Western Regional Graduate Programs (WRGP)**

Residents of participating states may enroll in graduate programs approved as Western Regional Graduate Programs (WRGP) by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) without paying nonresident tuition. USU's WRGP degrees are the MS and PhD in Biometeorology, Toxicology, and Watershed Science; and the MS in Physics, with a specialization in Upper Atmospheric Physics. Information is available in the School of Graduate Studies or at: <http://wiche.edu/SEP/WRGP>

## **Fellowships**

Fellowship and scholarship awardees must be full-time, matriculated students enrolled in approved graduate-level coursework. Application for these, as well as for departmental fellowships and awards, is made through the departments.

## **Scholarships**

**Resident Tuition Awards** covering the resident portion of tuition are available each semester on a competitive basis through the departments. Awardees must be full-time matriculated students and must maintain a 3.0 or higher GPA.

**Seely-Hinckley Scholarships** are awarded each year to six graduate students with superior academic records. College deans nominate, for the following school year, outstanding scholars who would not be able to attend or would be delayed in attending USU without financial assistance.

## **Other Financial Assistance**

Many students who do not receive assistantships or fellowships receive financial assistance by working for departments or other campus units. Graduate students are generally not employed by the University for more than 20 hours per week. Employment beyond 20 hours per week must be approved by the student's advisor, degree-program department head, and the graduate dean.

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*Source:* General Catalog