3.0 Financial Aid Requirements

*Excerpted from the P.C. Rossin College of Engineering and Applied Science Graduate Student Handbook*

Financial aid is available for regular, full-time or part-time graduate students. Associate and non-degree graduate students are not eligible for Stafford loans or Graduate Plus Loans, but may be eligible for alternative loans which are listed on the financial aid website, [www.lehigh.edu/financialaid](http://www.lehigh.edu/financialaid). Teaching assistantships (TA’s), research assistantships (RA’s), graduate assistantships (GA’s), fellowships, and scholarships are academic awards made by the University, by individual academic departments, and by the Dean’s Office. Several graduate assistantships unrelated to a particular area of study can be obtained by applying to administrative offices. Loans and work study employment are determined by the Office of Financial Aid and must be applied for through the Financial Aid Office by completing a Lehigh University Graduation application.

3.1 Academic Awards

Continuing students who request fellowships, scholarships, RA’s and TA’s that will begin in the fall semester must file a request with their academic department no later than February 1. Generally, a special committee formed by departmental faculty makes recommendations for the recipients of these awards based on merit. Students are not required to submit a financial statement.

In addition to their stipends, graduate students holding half-time TA appointments generally receive tuition remission. Research assistants receive a stipend for research services and their tuition is commonly paid directly by research projects.

Joint appointments as teaching assistant and research assistant are permissible, subject to appropriate approvals.

3.2 Teaching Assistant Appointments

Teaching Assistant (TA) is a technical term used to describe a specific type of Lehigh University student employee. The duties of TA’s are generally set by the departments or offices that employ them, but certain conditions must be satisfied before a student can be classified as a TA. These include:

1. Each TA must be a regular full-time resident Lehigh graduate student. This status normally requires registration for at least nine credit hours per semester.

2. A TA is a half-time position, and each TA provides services to Lehigh University of up to 20 hours per week. Quarter-time TA appointments are possible for full-time resident graduate students. Stipends and tuition remission are appropriately reduced for these positions.

3. Each TA is paid a specific stipend which is set for the academic year by the University.

4. Qualified TA’s receive tuition remission for nine credit hours in a regular semester. No TA may register for more than ten credit hours. A student who is a TA during the entire preceding academic year is also entitled to a maximum of three credit hours of thesis, research, or dissertation, but not course credit, registration in the following summer. If you believe you are eligible for this please contact the college financial coordinator at 610-758-4804 to get approval.
5). Each TA is appointed by a process that begins with a formal letter of appointment issued by the appropriate Departmental 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 Departmental Chairperson submits written notification of TA appointments to the Dean.

6). Tuition remission for qualified TA’s is authorized by the Dean as part of the registration process.

7). The Dean is provided with tuition remission accounts against which TA remissions are charged. The accounts are budgeted at an amount equal to the standard TA tuition rate multiplied by the approved number of TA positions included in the annual operating budget. The budgets shall not be exceeded. If additional TA positions are desired on a temporary basis, the account executive must provide for the transfer of budget support to the remission account. The budgets are to be used exclusively for tuition remission for authorized TA positions.

3.3 Summer Appointments

There are a limited number of summer TA/GA appointments. These TA/GA employees must receive the same monthly stipend as academic year TA’s/GA’s and provide services of up to 20 hours per week to the University. A summer TA/GA registers for a maximum of three credit hours in each summer session of employment and receives tuition remission for that registration, providing their offer letter states such. These positions are appointed by the University Summer Sessions office.

3.4 Teaching Assistant Requirements

The Graduate and Research Committee endorse academic guidelines for new Teaching Assistants that exceed minimum admission requirements. Each TA should satisfy one of the following:

1). A GPA of 3.0 or better in the undergraduate major field of study

2). A GPA of 3.5 in the senior year major field of study

3). Rank in the 85th percentile or higher on the GRE or other standardized test

4). A GPA of 3.5 in at least 12 hours of graduate work in the major field.

Exceptions to these guidelines shall be made only with the approval of the Associate 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 departmental faculty and by the University Graduate and Research Committee. Teaching assistants who fail to satisfy these criteria are ineligible for reappointment.

All Teaching Assistants whose native language is other than English are required to take the SPEAK (Speaking Proficiency English Assessment Kit) test when they arrive on campus. A score of 230 must be attained in order to work in instructional settings. If a student receives a score in the range 200-229 on the SPEAK that student may serve as a TA if he/she is concurrently enrolled in the appropriate ESL coursework until such time as the student gets a score of 230 or greater. Passing a course does not make the student eligible for a teaching assistantship; a score of 230 or higher must still be obtained or
the student must continue in ESL coursework for speaking proficiency. If the score is less than 200 on the SPEAK test the student is not eligible for a TA position.

SPEAK tests are individually administered by the ESL Program staff in alternate weeks during the fall and spring, and by appointment during the summer. Contact the ESL Program (32 Coxe Hall, 758-6099, inesl@lehigh.edu) for details and information concerning the SPEAK.

3.5 Graduate Assistant Requirements
Graduate students may be appointed to graduate assistantships unrelated to their areas of study on recommendation of the Chairperson of the department concerned. GA’s are normally expected to devote half-time to the service of the University and half-time to graduate work. Appointment is for one year and tuition fees are remitted.

In special cases, graduate students may be employed on one-third time under which arrangement two-thirds of the student’s time is devoted to graduate work and one-third to service to the University. Tuition fees are not waived for any graduate assistant devoting less than one-half time service to the University.

The availability of these assistantships is based on the needs of individual departments or offices. GA’s are employed regularly by the Office of Student Affairs, the Dean of Students Office, the University Counseling Service, Career Services, and the Athletic Department.

3.6 Research Assistants/Project Assistants
Graduate students employed on research projects are designated as either research assistants or project assistants and are not eligible for university benefits. Appointment is offered by the principal investigator or project director in consultation with the Chairperson of the department in charge of the student’s curriculum, and is reviewed by the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. Research assistants are candidates for graduate degrees, devoting full time to a program of graduate work (which may include teaching, research, and other academic activity as well as courses), and are appointed to receive compensation for participating in a research program by which they meet requirements for the degrees sought. Compensation consists of a stipend, and/or tuition fees covered directly from the research project.

Graduate project assistants are appointed by research project directors, in each case in consultation with the Chairperson of the department of the student’s curriculum, and upon review by the Contract and Grant Specialists in the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. Graduate project assistants provide services to research projects for research work that does not fulfill degree requirements.

3.7 Scholarships and Fellowships
Scholarships and fellowships are offered to graduate students who demonstrate superior qualifications and performance. There are three types of awards: (1) scholarships that consist of credit hour awards to be applied towards tuition; (2) College and University fellowships that provide both stipend and credit hour awards for tuition; and (3) fellowships that have been designated by a donor for students in a particular engineering discipline. Not all disciplines have these awards. They also consist of a stipend plus credit hour awards for tuition.

In general, credit hour awards consist of nine credit hours per semester. Students who are on maintenance of candidacy status will be awarded the appropriate number of credit hours.
Each year the Dean’s Office receives an allocation of tuition credit hours for scholarships. These hours are in turn distributed to the individual departments to use at their own discretion. University fellowships are most often used to recruit outstanding new graduate students rather than to support continuing graduate students. These fellowships are distributed by a University Committee. Fellowships outlined in (3) above are awarded by the individual departments.

3.8 Office of Financial Aid

Students may apply for Stafford loans thru the Office of Financial Aid, 218 W. Packer Ave., (www.lehigh.edu/financialaid) 610-758-3181. These funds are awarded using the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), together with the Lehigh University Financial Aid application and a copy of the most recent (2011) IRS 1040 and W-2’s. The Office of Financial Aid is also required to obtain information on all previous federal student loan borrowing from any other college(s) attended, as well as an indication that there are no prior defaults on educational loans or refund due the government for overpayment of federal aid. To do this, Lehigh will depend on the information that will be displayed on the Student Aid Report (SAR), which will be obtained from the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) after you file the FAFSA. This is a federal requirement.

There is only limited availability of Work-Study for Graduate students. Literature on federal student aid programs is available from the Office of Financial Aid. Particulars on the Federal Stafford Loan (with and without the interest subsidy) are also available from the Department of Education at studentloans.gov. A listing of student “rights and responsibilities” is printed in the section on undergraduate financial aid in the course catalog.

If you are classified as an associate graduate student, which is non-degree classification, you will not be entitled to borrow at the graduate student loan level. You may, however, be eligible to borrow as a fifth year undergraduate on a prorated basis. If you have associate graduate student status, an Office of Financial Aid Loan Coordinator will advise you on your borrowing limits.

A brief summary of loan and work-study options is provided in the table 4 (next page). Additional literature and forms are available from the Office of Financial Aid.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Aid</th>
<th>Need Based</th>
<th>Forms Needed</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal Stafford Loans</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>FAFSA, University Financial Aid Application</td>
<td>These are loans made to students attending at least half-time (minimum of 6 credits per term with the exception of summer terms and the minimum is 3 credits.) Another exception to this rule is when a student has been certified full time by their department. A graduate student can borrow up to $20,500 a year. One can receive the maximum yearly Stafford Loan amount over two semesters or after the completion of 18 credit hours. Although these are the loan maximums, a student cannot borrow more than the cost of education minus any other financial aid received.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Plus Loans</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All documentation for the Stafford loan as students must have used Stafford Eligibility before applying for this loan</td>
<td>Graduates and professional degree students are eligible to borrow under the PLUS Loan Program up to their cost of attendance minus other financial assistance received. This includes any other loans or financial assistance awarded by the department of study. Applicants for these loans are required to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). They also must have applied for their annual loan maximum eligibility under the Federal Subsidized and Unsubsidized Stafford Loan Program before applying for a Graduate/Professional PLUS loan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative loans</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>University Financial Aid Application</td>
<td>These loans are applied for and approved by lenders. Loans are credit based. After approval of the loan it is certified by the Financial Aid Office. Student may borrow up to the cost of attendance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal College Work-Study (FWS)</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>FAFSA, University Financial Aid Application, Student IRS tax form, all schedules and W-2’s</td>
<td>These awards are first offered to undergraduates, and are available to graduate students only if funds are available. Job listings and pay scale information are Available on the financial aid website, <a href="http://www.lehigh.edu/financialaid">www.lehigh.edu/financialaid</a>.</td>
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</tbody>
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*Table 4 Financial aid available to engineering graduate students*