

Guide to Understanding
Graduate
Financial Aid 
2011-2012

UMassAmherst

FINANCIAL AID SERVICES
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

FINANCIAL AID SERVICES UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Dear UMass Amherst Graduate Student,

UMass Amherst Graduate Financial Aid Services is committed to working with students to provide the best possible financial resources available. We want to ensure that a UMass Amherst graduate education is affordable.

We created this guide to help you understand the components of your financial aid package as well as the options available for financing your education at UMass Amherst. Refer to our website at www.umass.edu/umfa for additional financial aid information.

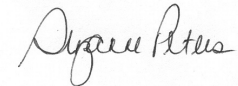
What is the best way for you to pay for a UMass Amherst education? The first step should include reading this guide and understanding your options. Then take a careful look at your household budget and determine what funds are available to cover educational costs.

When planning how to finance your education, it is important to plan your expenses for the entire academic year, and know this expense will continue until you complete your program. Included in this guide is information about paying your university bill and other graduate resources available on campus.

Graduate Financial Aid Services can assist you with any questions you may have regarding your financial aid award and financing options available. Graduate Financial Aid Services can be reached at (413) 577-0555.

We look forward to working with you!

Sincerely,



Suzanne Peters
Director of Financial Aid Services

GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING GRADUATE FINANCIAL AID

GRADUATE FINANCIAL AID OFFICE UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Obtaining a graduate education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst is intellectually, professionally, and personally rewarding. Affording your education requires careful and thorough planning. Regardless of your income or eligibility for need-based financial aid, there are programs available to assist you in funding your education.

HOW TO APPLY

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the only application used to apply for financial aid for the academic year (fall and spring terms) at UMass Amherst. The information on the FAFSA is used to determine your eligibility for Federal Direct Loans, the only form of financial aid available through the Graduate Financial Aid Office.

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) should be completed online at www.fafsa.gov. Be certain to list UMass Amherst on your application by indicating our school code: 002221.

Access to your online application requires a Personal Identification Number (PIN). If you have started or completed a FAFSA previously and not received a PIN or are unable to locate this number, please go online to www.pin.ed.gov. The FAFSA is available after January 1st for the upcoming academic year. Once you complete your FAFSA, please be diligent about attending to any requests for additional information that may be required by the Graduate Financial Aid Office. Requests and communications may be sent through email or postal mail and can also be viewed on your SPIRE "To-Do" list (www.spire.umass.edu).

If you are applying for summer financial aid there is an additional form available at www.umass.edu/umfa/forms/1112forms/ that must be filed with the Graduate Financial Aid Office at 243 Whitmore Administration Building.

ELIGIBILITY FOR FINANCIAL AID

You must file a FAFSA every academic year you want to apply for aid. The information provided on the FAFSA is used by the federal processor to determine an expected family contribution (EFC). This is an estimate of the amount of money you could reasonably contribute toward college costs. The EFC is the initial indicator for loans you are eligible for. In addition, financial aid applicants must meet the following key criteria to receive most types of financial aid:

- Be admitted into a degree-granting program.
- Be a United States citizen, permanent resident, or eligible noncitizen as defined by the federal government.
- Be enrolled in at least 6 credits.
- Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress toward your educational goals.
- Additional eligibility requirements may apply.

At UMass Amherst, students applying for financial aid are considered for all programs for which they are eligible, including federal, state, and institutional programs. There are two types of financial aid: need-based and non-need based financial aid. Your award package may include both types.

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP)

The U.S. Department of Education requires that students receiving federal financial aid meet the university academic progress standards ensuring sufficient progress toward a degree or certificate program of study. To meet the university's academic status standards, students must maintain a minimum grade point average of 2.0.

RECEIVING FINANCIAL AID

The awarding of financial aid will begin at the end of June for all students who have completed a FAFSA and have responded to all requests for additional information. If your application is complete, you will be awarded federal loans up to the estimated Cost of Attendance (COA) or your annual limit and be notified with a financial aid award letter that will be mailed to your permanent address. UMass Amherst determines your COA, which includes billed and non-billed expenses related to your graduate education. Billed expenses are those that are charged through the Bursar's Office and include tuition, curriculum fee, health fee, service fee, graduate senate tax, etc. Non-billed expenses include the cost of items such as books, supplies, off-campus room and board, personal expenses (clothing, laundry, recreation), and transportation needs. Please keep in mind that the COA is based on the assumption that you will be taking at least 6 credits per semester (audit credits do not count toward the enrollment requirement). If you will be registered for Continuous Enrollment/Program Fee it is your responsibility to contact our office as your loan eligibility will be affected.

The information provided on your FAFSA is used by the federal processor to calculate an Expected Family Contribution (EFC). Consideration is given to your income (and your spouse's income, if married), assets, number of dependents, and the number of family members enrolled in college. Your EFC is provided on your FAFSA summary or Student Aid Report (SAR).

Costs for the academic year are based on estimated information. Final fees will be set by the Board of Trustees in June. Therefore these estimates are subject to change. Please visit the Bursar's website at www.umass.edu/bursar for up-to-date 2011-12 tuition, fees and other charges.

THE FORMULA USED TO DETERMINE YOUR FINANCIAL AID "NEED" IS:

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{COST OF ATTENDANCE (COA)} \\ \text{less} \\ \text{EXPECTED FAMILY CONTRIBUTION (EFC)} \\ \hline \text{equals} \\ \text{ELIGIBILITY FOR FINANCIAL AID} \end{array}$$

Estimated Cost of Attendance for 2011-2012

(assumes off campus housing and 6 credits enrollment each semester)

	In-State	Out-of-State	Regional
Tuition*	\$1,320	\$4,968	\$2,312
Fees*	\$6,429	\$9,219	\$6,429
Room and Board	\$9,900	\$9,900	\$9,900
Books and Supplies	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Travel and Miscellaneous	\$1,400	\$1,400	\$1,400
Total Cost of Attendance	\$20,049	\$26,487	\$21,041

*Graduate Programs through Continuing and Professional Education (CPE) are charged on a per-credit basis. Credit cost ranges from \$353 to \$900 per credit.

FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID

THE FEDERAL DIRECT SUBSIDIZED AND UNSUBSIDIZED LOAN programs are the primary sources of financial aid for many graduate students and require at least half-time enrollment. Annual loan awards are based on the cost of attendance and individual eligibility, with a maximum annual limit of \$20,500. If a loan is subsidized, the borrower is not responsible for the interest that accrues during the time the borrower is enrolled at least half-time and during grace periods and deferments. Students qualify for subsidized loans based on financial need, which is determined by the information reported on their FAFSA and the COA for their academic program. If a loan is unsubsidized, interest accrues from the date the loan is disbursed and may be paid during times of enrollment or capitalized (added to the principal) at a specified time.

FEDERAL DIRECT GRADUATE PLUS LOANS may be available to students enrolled at least half-time in a graduate degree program. Grad PLUS borrowers may borrow up to the COA for the period of enrollment, minus other estimated financial assistance received for that period. Grad PLUS Loans are subject to credit review; however, a Grad PLUS applicant who has an adverse credit history may be able to obtain the loan with an endorser who does not have an adverse credit history. To apply for a Graduate PLUS Loan, a student must first maximize his or her Federal Direct subsidized and unsubsidized loan eligibility. The Pre-Application for Graduate PLUS Loans is available on line at:
www.umass.edu/umfa/forms/1112forms/.

A MASTER PROMISSORY NOTE (MPN) is required from all first-time borrowers of Federal Direct Loans. This is a legal document in which you promise to pay back the loans with interest. Your signed MPN is valid for any Federal Direct Loan awarded within 10 years. During subsequent years, Financial Aid Services will notify you of your loan eligibility and the loans will automatically credit to your Bursar account unless you request otherwise.

A DIRECT LOAN ENTRANCE COUNSELING FORM is required from all first-time borrowers of Federal Direct Loans. This document informs you of your rights and responsibilities as a Federal Direct loan borrower.

ANNUAL MAXIMUM FEDERAL DIRECT LOAN LIMITS: You may borrow up to \$20,500 (or up to the cost of attendance minus other financial resources [grants, scholarship, waivers], whichever is less) in a combination of subsidized and unsubsidized loans. The subsidized portion is not to exceed \$8,500 per year.

Please be aware that there is an aggregate borrowing limit of \$138,500, with an aggregate subsidized loan maximum of \$65,500. Aggregate borrowing limits include unpaid undergraduate loans.

DEBT MANAGEMENT

A college education is the best investment you can make for your future but it can be a costly one without a careful borrowing plan. Student loans are an excellent resource to pay for educational costs, but the amount of debt incurred should be considered carefully.

Taking out student loans to pay for college has long-term financial implications. Like any other debt, a student loan is a serious financial obligation that must be repaid with interest when you leave school. Failure to repay your student loans may affect your credit rating and your ability to borrow for other purposes.

It is important to plan for the entire cost of your education and consider how much you need to borrow to meet that cost while keeping your debt at a manageable level. Be sure you understand your rights and responsibilities under each loan program before you accept any student loan.

The following chart gives examples of monthly payments for specific loan amounts. You can use this chart to estimate how much your monthly payments will be when you leave the university. If you need more information on debt management, contact UMass Amherst, Financial Aid Services, or the U.S. Department of Education website:

www.ed.gov.

ALTERNATIVE FINANCIAL AID RESOURCES

An alternative loan is a loan that is from a source outside of the federal government and is to be used for education expenses. Alternative loans (also called private educational loans) may be available when the federal loans are insufficient to cover the student's COA. These loans are non-need based, unsubsidized funds provided by lenders for educational purposes. For additional information about alternative loan options, please visit our website:

www.umass.edu/umfa/aidtypes/gradloans/.

RIGHTS:

You have the right to:

- A “grace period” before your repayment begins. The grace period starts when you leave school or drop below half-time status.
- Loan deferments, forbearance and to know the conditions under which your loans can be cancelled and/or repaid by the Department of Education.
- An explanation of default and its consequences.
- A loan repayment schedule, an explanation of refinancing and consolidation options, and your option to prepay your loan at any time without penalty.
- Know the amount of your total debt (principal and interest), what your interest rate is, and the total interest charges on your loan.
- Know where to send your payments, and where to write if you have questions about your loan.
- When your first payment is due, and the number, frequency, and amount of all payments.
- What fees you should expect during the repayment period.
- You have a right to privacy. All records and information that you submitted are confidential and subject to legal requirements concerning disclosure of such information.
- You have the right to request a review of your financial aid eligibility (appeal based on extenuating circumstances).
- You have the right to know specific consumer information such as campus crime statistics and athletic information.
- If you withdraw from the university after the term begins, you should be informed about the refund policies for both university charges and financial aid. Contact Graduate Financial Aid.
- You have the right to request a reduction or cancellation of your student loan. Remember that a loan is a debt that must be repaid; Borrow only what you need.

Example of Direct Loan Repayment Plans at 6.8 Percent Interest

REPAYMENT PLAN OPTIONS

LOAN DEBT AT REPAYMENT	STANDARD (10 Years) Loans are repaid in the shortest time with the least interest.		EXTENDED Fixed or Graduated (up to 25 years) Must have more than \$30,000 in loans to be eligible.		GRADUATED (up to 10 years) Payments start low and increase every two years.		INCOME CONTINGENT Income=\$25,000 single (up to 25 years) Payment is calculated on yearly AGI, family size and total loan debt.		INCOME BASED = \$25,000 single (up to 25 years) Payment is calculated on yearly AGI, family size.	
	Monthly Payment	Total Repaid	Monthly Payment	Total Repaid	Monthly Payment	Total Repaid	Monthly Payment	Total Repaid**	Monthly Payment	Total Repaid**
\$25,000	\$288	\$34,524	Not Available		\$198	\$36,389	\$186	\$45,922	\$110	\$45,014
35,000	\$403	\$48,334	\$243	\$72,879	\$277	\$50,944	\$236	\$64,800	\$110	\$69,800
50,000	\$575	\$69,048	\$347	\$104,112	\$395	\$72,778	\$236	\$110,528	\$110	\$114,528
70,000	\$805	\$96,667	\$486	\$145,755	\$553	\$101,889	\$236	\$141,206	\$110	\$145,206
90,000	\$1,036	\$124,286	\$625	\$187,398	\$711	\$131,000	\$236	\$155,356	\$110	\$116,356
120,000	\$1,381	\$165,715	\$832	\$249,867	\$948	\$174,667	\$236	\$187,553	\$110	\$189,753
138,000	1,588	\$190,573	\$958	\$287,346	\$1,090	\$200,867	\$236	\$187,553	\$110	\$189,753

To get more information on these plans and to calculate your estimated repayment go to www.direct.ed.gov.

**Estimated

RESPONSIBILITIES:

You must notify the lender if you:

- Graduate, withdraw from school, or drop below half-time status.
- Transfer to another institution.
- Change your name, address, or social security number.
- Have a change of address while you are in school. You must also notify the University of the change.
- Have a change that affects your ability to repay the loan or your eligibility for deferment or cancellation.
- You must repay the loan according to the repayment schedule your lender will give you.
- Your loan money can only be used for tuition and other related education expenses.
- Before you leave school you must complete an exit interview, which may be conducted on-line at nslds.gov, in person or mailed to you for completion.
- You are required to inform Financial Aid Services of any outside sources of aid that do not appear on your award letter. Some examples include: nonworking fellowships, scholarships, tuition waivers, and veteran's or rehabilitation benefits.
- You are responsible for completing all requests for information. Some examples include: federal tax returns, verification forms, loan entrance counseling, loan promissory notes, and loan exit counseling.
- You must notify our office if you would like to reduce or cancel your loan amount.
- You are responsible for maintaining satisfactory status on student loans. Students who default or owe refunds on federal grants are not eligible for any financial aid.
- You must inform the Graduate Registrar's Office and your lender of any changes to your name, address or phone number.

PAYING YOUR UNIVERSITY BILL

Notification of all tuition bills are sent to your OIT email account.

QuikPAY is the electronic system for all students to view, print and/or make their payment online. To access QuikPAY go to your Student Center in SPIRE and select "View/Pay Bill." For more information about QuikPAY and tuition charges, please visit the Bursar's website at

www.umass.edu/bursar.

We encourage you to log on to your SPIRE account at <http://spire.umass.edu> for up-to-date information on your university bill. If additional information is required, please call the Bursar's Office at (413) 545-2368 or email them at:

bursar@admin.umass.edu.

EXCESS REFUNDS

If the amount of financial aid and other credits on your university bill exceed the tuition, fees, and other charges, and you do not have a previous balance, you may receive an excess (refund). To ensure timely processing of your refund:

- Register for your classes early.
- If you are receiving a Graduate Appointment make sure your contract and all payroll paperwork is complete and submitted to the Graduate Assistantship Office.
- If you have not completed your Direct Loan Master Promissory Note (MPN) go to www.studentloans.gov to complete it. Download and complete your Direct Loan Entrance Counseling form at: umass.edu/umfa/forms/1112forms/. You can fax the complete Entrance Counseling form to (413) 545-1700 or submit to Financial Aid Services.
- If you are a Program Fee/Continuous Enrollment Fee student, update your enrollment status (half time or full-time) with the Graduate Records Office. Be sure that your Graduate Program Director sends a memo to the Registrar's Office confirming that you are considered enrolled at least half-time.
- Sign up for Excess Express, a service offered by the Bursar's Office to speed excess check refunds to students. With this service, funds will be electronically deposited into the USA checking or savings account of the student's choice.

To enroll, log in to your SPIRE account and go to the 'Finances' panel.

APPEALS

You may request a review of your eligibility by completing an appeal form. Some of the more common appeal requests include: special circumstances relating to family income, or family size due to death or divorce; and budget increases for off-campus living expenses or computer purchases. You can download an appeal form at

www.umass.edu/umfa/forms.

ADJUSTMENTS TO FINANCIAL AID

Federal regulations stipulate that your total financial aid award including all sources (federal, state, university or outside) may not exceed the estimated Cost of Attendance (COA). Financial Aid Services will adjust or reduce your award if you receive scholarships, non-working fellowships, loans, or university waivers that will cause your total financial aid to exceed your COA. Other reasons for adjustments may include:

- Requests initiated by you to reduce the amount of loan(s) awarded. You may initiate a request by completing the reverse side of your award letter and returning it to Financial Aid Services or by calling our office at (413) 577-0555. Student initiated reductions can only be made until the last day of classes
- Enrollment Status: Financial aid awards are initially based on 6 credits per term. If your enrollment differs, please notify Graduate Financial Aid Services before the semester begins. Adjustments to financial aid occur after the Add/Drop period each term. Your loan eligibility may be cancelled if you enroll in less than 6 credits or are on Program Fee/Continuous Enrollment Fee.
- Residency: If your residency changes during the academic year (e.g., out-of-state residency to in-state residency), your financial aid may be adjusted.
- Verification: The university and the U.S. Department of Education select financial aid applicants for a process called verification. If your application is selected, you will be required to supply our office with your 2010 Federal tax return and a 2011-2012 Graduate Verification Worksheet. If any discrepancies are found between the information on the FAFSA and other documents, your awards may be adjusted.
- Loan Default or Loan Aggregate Limits: If you are in default on a federal loan or have reached your aggregate loan limit, your award may be cancelled or adjusted.
- When awarding your Direct Loan(s) we assume that you may receive a Graduate Appointment. If you do not receive a Graduate Appointment, please contact the Graduate Financial Aid Office, since this may increase your loan eligibility. This information does not apply to students in the PMBA program.
- If you receive any other waiver or outside scholarships, your loan eligibility may be affected.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS ELIGIBILITY

PROGRAM FEE STUDENTS / CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT FEE

Graduate students who are not enrolled for any course credits but who are candidates for a degree must pay a program fee for each term to be considered for continuous registration until the degree is formally awarded. Program Fee students may be eligible for a Federal Direct Student Loan if the research work on their degree requirements is classified as equivalent to at least half-time (6 credits per term). Students on Program Fee/Continuous Enrollment Fee do not qualify for

Federal Work Study. If you are on program fee and would like to borrow a Direct Loan, you must update your enrollment status each semester with the Graduate Records Office by providing them with a letter from your Program Director. It is your responsibility to notify the Graduate Financial Aid Office as your loan eligibility will be affected. Financial Aid eligibility is directly related to your billed expenses. Your enrollment status will be verified online by the Financial Aid and Bursar's Offices after the add/drop period has ended.

NON-DEGREE STUDENTS

Graduate non-degree students enrolled at least half-time (6 credits per term) may be eligible for a Federal Direct Loan for up to \$6,250 per semester under the following conditions: the student applied for admission to a graduate degree program and will be considered for admission at a later date and the coursework is verified by a Graduate Program Director as preparatory/prerequisite in nature before admission to a degree program. A memo from the Graduate Program Director to the Graduate Financial Aid Office is required every semester to verify this information before a non-degree student may be awarded federal loans. A non-degree memo template is available on our website at www.umass.edu/umfa/aidtypes/ndprogramfee/. Please note that after 12 consecutive months (two semesters) of non-degree status you must be enrolled in a degree-granting program to receive federal loans. Students are only eligible to receive federal loans as a non-degree student once during a lifetime.

OTHER GRADUATE RESOURCES:

GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP OFFICE (GAO)

Located in 517 Goodell Building. The GAO posts assistantship opportunities and processes graduate appointments and associated waivers. This office does not assign or determine who gets assistantships. GAO can be reached at (413) 545-5287. Please visit the GAO website at: www.umass.edu/gradschool/assistantship.

GRADUATE STUDENT GRANT SERVICES (GSGS)

LOCATED IN 517 GOODELL BUILDING. This service helps students at the graduate level apply for grants and fellowships from funding sources outside the university. GSGS can be reached at (413) 545-5279 or via email: gsgs@ora.umass.edu.

GRADUATE SCHOOL FELLOWSHIPS

A limited number of competitive Graduate School Fellowships are awarded to graduate students on a university-wide basis. These fellowships provide tuition, curriculum fee, and health fee waivers. They are intended to encourage and assist superior students in pursuing graduate studies and in completing the requirements for graduate degrees in the minimum time possible. Graduate School fellowships are awarded for one year and may be renewed upon departmental nomination and Fellowship Committee recommendation. A recipient of a Graduate School Fellowship must be enrolled as a full-time student. Consideration for a fellowship can be indicated on the Graduate School's application form. Completed applications should be submitted to the Graduate School faculty for review before January 15 for the following September. Awards are announced by April 1. Please note that a nonworking fellowship will affect your loan eligibility.

THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION (OGSRR)

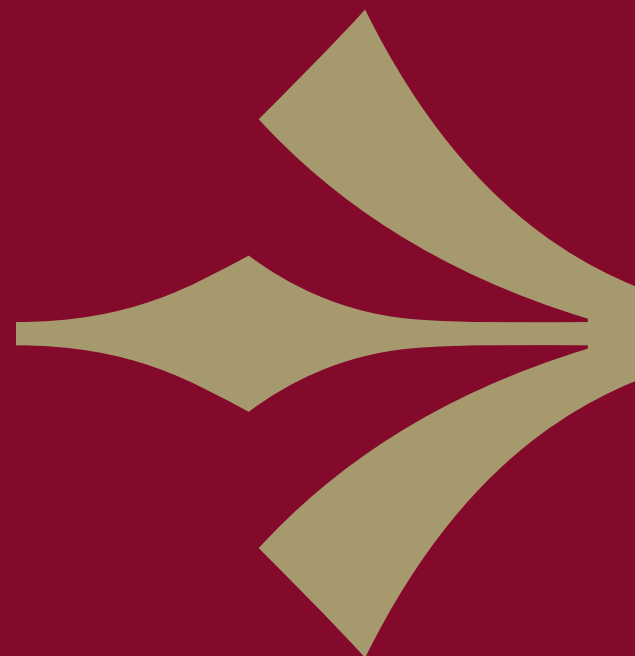
OGSRR aims to increase the diversity of the Graduate School student body by supporting the recruitment and retention of graduate students with academic quality and potential from under-represented groups. In order to be considered for OGSRR support, students must first be nominated by their departments. Priority is given to incoming students except in the case of dissertation assistantships. Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide a complete admissions file by January 15, for fall enrollment. Students who wish to be considered for the Opportunity Scholar Fellows Program are urged to submit GRE scores even if not required to do so by the graduate program.

The Office of Graduate Student Recruitment and Retention (OGSRR)

526 Goodell Building

Phone: (413) 545-5284

Email: ogsrr@grad.umass.edu



UMassAmherst

FINANCIAL AID SERVICES ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

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