

Dear Graduate Students,

As you can imagine, incoming graduate students often ask about graduate funding. The first thing we recommend is to start with the academic department as they are the primary funding source. Next, we direct students to the [Graduate College \(GC\) funding website](#) that lists several institutional opportunities. In addition, we are providing a funding considerations overview below. The information is sorted by type of funding: Departmental Funding, Graduate College Funding, and Specialized Funding. We also provided tips and strategies to assist your scholarship search.

**DEPARTMENTAL SUPPORT:** Consult with your department for information on *Teaching Assistantships* (TAs), *Research Assistantships* (RAs) and *Graduate Assistantships* (GAs). Additionally, there are faculty research grant funded *Traineeships* and *Fellowships* that may directly relate to your research advisor's work or to your academic interests.

- Assistantships: these can be half-time, 20 hours of work per week (referred to as 0.50 FTE). They include a stipend, health insurance, and tuition. Assistantships at less than .50 FTE include a stipend, health insurance, out-of-state tuition, and 50% of in-state tuition: <http://grad.arizona.edu/financial-resources/ua-resources/employment/GA>. Academic departments award assistantships and other field-specific fellowships and traineeships. Please visit the website of the department you are interested in and contact the Graduate Coordinator or Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) for more information.
- Conversations with DGS/Graduate Coordinator: students should always have a conversation about funding with their department's Director of Graduate Studies (the DGS who answers all academic/curricular questions) and the Graduate Coordinator (who provides managerial/administrative support, including all forms, guidelines, etc.). Once you are established, you might check to see if your faculty advisor has any suggestions. Note, departmental funding prioritizes PhD students. Tip: establishing a productive, collegial relationship with the Graduate Coordinator is extremely helpful.

**GRADUATE COLLEGE SUPPORT:** funding for incoming students should supplement the academic department's offer. New graduate students might be eligible for the Graduate Access Fellowship (GAF) <https://grad.arizona.edu/funding/opportunities/graduate-access-fellowship-or-tuition-scholarship-awards>. Each department is allotted a small number of GAFs. Departments may nominate students for a GAF, or students can self-nominate and apply for a GAF directly. A departmental letter of support must be submitted as part of the student's GAF application. The letter should address how the department is supporting/funding the student (or not). Follow the instructions, and awards depend upon availability.

- Graduate Center Initiatives  
<https://grad.arizona.edu/gci/funding>
- The AFAT Scholarship is accessed through a UA scholarship portal called [Scholarship Universe](#). Awards can pay up to \$3,000, depending upon availability of funds.
- The Graduate Center is a one-stop resource for all graduate students that lists funding sources [here](#).
- Dr. Shelley Hawthorne-Smith works for the [Office of Fellowships and Community Engagement](#) (OFCE). They specialize in national and external funding resources. The OFCE's funding related information can be found here, [Funding 101](#). In addition to funding support services, Shelley also publishes the excellent **GradFunding Newsletter**, be sure to subscribe [here](#).

**SPECIALIZED FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:** examples include the Multicultural Alumni Clubs who raise scholarship funds for undergraduate and graduate students. These include the [University of Arizona Hispanic Alumni Club](#) (UAHA); the [American Indian Alumni Club](#) (AIA); the [University of Arizona Black Alumni Club](#) (UABA) and the [Asian American Faculty, Staff & Alumni Club](#) (AFSAA).

**ACADEMIC PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES:** many discipline-related professional associations student membership. If you cannot afford the fee, contact them for a possible waiver. Membership benefits includes receiving online journals, awareness of the major disciplinary conversations in your field, and information on local, regional, national and sometimes international conferences. There might be scholarship opportunities, as well as travel grants to attend and maybe present at conferences. Many associations seek to diversify and encourage the participation of diverse students.

**TIPS AND STRATEGIES:** there is a lot to say about funding (caveats, unique opportunities, etc.) and it is NOT easy to be fully comprehensive in this letter. The search for funding takes time and planning, and in academia it is a life-long task. Graduate students must be diligent, focused and patient as they learn “how” funding works. Our advice is to:

- Submit the FAFSA annually - the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#) is required for *need-based* funding opportunities. Other donors also like to see a FAFSA on file as it shows independence and a desire to seek funding on your own. Additionally, if you have a financial emergency while in graduate school, a FAFSA allows you to access funds more quickly. FAFSA funding is to help with the expenses associated with your schooling. Financial Aid calls this your COA – the cost of attendance.
- Keep a record or spreadsheet and document all the funding opportunities you are eligible for: name, contact, application due date, supplemental material if required, response, etc.
- Create a timeline/funding plan that sets aside time each month for you to work on funding opportunities: scholarship applications, travel applications, funding proposals, training grants, etc.
- Create a basic Funding Portfolio: keep on hand an updated CV/resume, a personal statement that you can revise to fit the funding opportunity, and a basic letter of reference from a favorite faculty and/or mentor. This way if an opportunity rises unexpectedly, you can promptly apply.
- Check Funding Websites Regularly: when you encounter a useful, reputable and free funding website, (on or off campus) be sure to bookmark it. Since new awards are posted year-round, you should check these sites regularly.
- It’s not Personal: over time, you will encounter additional opportunities related to your discipline, academic interests and other attributes. Keep track of them and apply as often as you are eligible. If you are not selected and are still eligible the following year, ask how you can improve your application and apply again!

We hope this information proves helpful as you prepare to launch an effective scholarship search.

Best wishes for a productive and rewarding academic journey,

The Graduate Initiatives Team  
Graduate College, Graduate Center  
University of Arizona