Quick Start Guide for Graduate Students

CHECKLIST

- Initiate your University-assigned email address.
- Update personal information under One Stop Quick Links.
- Make a budget that lists your income and expenses for the year.
- Fill out the 2014–2015 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- Check your financial aid status under the One Stop Quick Links.
- Report any scholarships you receive to One Stop Student Services or on your electronic Financial Aid Award Notice.
- Set up direct deposit under One Stop Quick Links.

Dates & Deadlines
Stay updated on important academic dates and deadlines for term start/end dates, cancel/add deadlines, and billing due dates by checking the 2014–15 academic calendar at onestop.umn.edu/calendars.

University Email
All official correspondence from the University, including billing notices, is sent to your University-assigned email account. Email can be accessed by going to mail.umn.edu or the email link at the top of onestop.umn.edu.

Grades & Transcripts
The University does not mail grades or give grades over the phone. You may view your grades online by term on the Grades Quick Link. You can also print an unofficial transcript online. Official transcripts may be ordered online, in person, by mail, or by fax.

Public Information
Some personal information is available to anyone who requests it, including your name, address, email address, phone number, dates of enrollment and enrollment status, college and class, major, adviser, academic awards and honors received, and degrees earned. To prevent the release of any or all of the above, go to the Personal Information Quick Link. The link is also where you can keep your school contact information.

Money Management
Get a smart start on the money management web pages at onestop.umn.edu/finances/manage_money.

You'll find tips on:
- saving money on books and other educational costs
- creating a personal spending plan
- borrowing only what you can repay
- using credit wisely
- understanding your credit score

Cost of Attendance Budgets
The University establishes standard student budgets that estimate cost of attendance (COA) for awarding financial aid funds. The budgets are useful guides that reflect typical living expenses in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. You’ll find them at onestop.umn.edu/finances/costs_and_tuition/cost_of_attendance.

Graduate Assistantships, Fellowships, and Traineeships
If you need information on how to obtain one of these financial aid forms or have questions on how it will impact the rest of your aid, go to http://onestop.umn.edu/finances/financial_aid/grants_and_waivers/special_for/graduate_students.html

Non-University Funding
You must report any financial assistance you receive. When you respond to your eFAAN, you’ll be asked to list any outside scholarships, fellowships, and assistantships you have received or plan to receive. If outside awards are received after your eFAAN has been completed, you are responsible for contacting One Stop Student Services to report them as financial aid.

Work-Study
Work-study is a federal financial aid program designed to help you meet educational costs through part-time employment with a work-study eligible employer. The two primary benefits to students are that (1) up to 70 percent of their work-study salary is subsidized, an incentive for employers to hire work-study applicants and (2) work-study earnings are not included as income in the following year’s financial aid need calculation, protecting the student’s future grant eligibility.

Once you accept a work-study award, you can find instructions at www.umn.edu/ohr/studentemployment/index.html on how to view and apply for current student job openings online.

Students receive a paycheck every two weeks for the hours they work. Unlike other types of financial aid, work-study funds do not disburse to the student account.

Graduate and professional school students are awarded work-study upon request if they have need-based eligibility and will be enrolled at least half time.

Loan Options
Your federal loan options (Ford Federal Direct Unsubsidized and Graduate PLUS loans) will be listed on your eFAAN. You will be automatically awarded the best possible combination of federal and University loans at the maximum amounts. In general, we recommend that you accept your loans in the order they are offered (from top to bottom on the eFAAN), because we award the loans with the best terms first.

To request accommodations while visiting a One Stop Student Services Center, or to request this flyer in an alternative format, please call the One Stop Disability Resource Center liaison at 612-625-9578.
Each loan offer contains an online description and a link to a loan comparison chart. Private educational loans are also available from various lenders. For more information, go to onestop.umn.edu finances/financial_aid/loans/private/index.html.

Borrowing Decisions
We encourage you to borrow only what you need. Once you have determined your estimated expenses for the school year and subtracted any scholarships, assistantships, fellowships, or other resources such as savings, earnings from work, or assistance from family, the difference is likely to be the amount you will need to borrow in a student loan.

The loan amounts offered to you on the eFAAN will be the maximum amount you are eligible to borrow. We recommend that you reduce the amount of your loan, if possible, or decline it entirely, if you are able to meet expenses with other funds. You may reapply for certain types of loans during the school year, if you later decide that you do need to borrow additional funds.

Billing and Payment
A notice that the fall 2014 online bill is available will be sent to your University-assigned email on August 30, 2014. To avoid paying any installment billing charges or late fees, payment in full must be received by the first due date of September 13, 2014.

If you pay the minimum amount due, you will be set up on the installment plan. A $35 installment/rebilling fee is charged each semester. You may receive up to two more online bills for tuition installment, bookstore, or past due charges that may occur during the semester.

You have the option of paying your bill online with an electronic check from a personal checking or savings account, or with Visa, MasterCard, DISCOVER, or American Express credit cards. Credit card payment is available only as an online service. Payers who choose the credit card option will be charged a one-time, non-refundable service fee per transaction that is 2.75 percent of the payment amount by a third-party vendor.

U Bookstore Charges
If you want your books and other bookstore charges to be billed on your fall 2014 statement, use your Ucard to charge your books at the Bookstore. If you want to use your financial aid to automatically pay for bookstore charges, you must check “yes” on the Payment Authorizations section of your online Financial Aid Award Notice (eFAAN). Otherwise, you will be billed for bookstore charges.

Six basic steps take you from applying for financial aid to disbursement of your awards. You can use the One Stop Quick Link, Financial Aid Status, to track where you are in the process. This and other self-service options are found at onestop.umn.edu.

1. Apply for financial aid—Every student, regardless of family financial status, should complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online at fisfaa.ed.gov after January 1 each year. Everyone qualifies for some financial aid: federally-subsidized work-study, and/or loans. After analysis by the federal processor, your information is sent to the University where it is reviewed for completeness and accuracy. Most international students will not qualify for federal aid. Please review the federal eligibility criteria (http://studentaid.ed.gov/eligibility) to see if it would be beneficial to complete a FAFSA.

2. Complete additional requirements—If your record is missing information, or if you are selected for detailed file review called verification, all requested documents must be submitted before your financial aid will be awarded. If documentation is missing, you will receive an email or mailed request for documentation, such as proof of citizenship status, Selective Service registration, or loan default status.

3. Financial aid under review—Your FAFSA results will remain at step 3 until tuition and fees are approved and cost of attendance for the new year is finalized in mid-July. Once the review process is completed, you will be offered financial aid awards that are as favorable as possible for your eligibility.

4. Complete the eFAAN—You will receive an email linking you to Financial Aid Status, a secured website with the electronic Financial Aid Award Notice (eFAAN), the formal offer of financial aid from the University of Minnesota. You are encouraged to review and accept, reduce, or decline the awards online in the eFAAN as soon as possible.

5. Complete loan documents—You must complete a promissory note for any loans you have accepted. Promissory notes are completed online. Ford Federal Direct Unsubsidized and Graduate PLUS Loans require you to complete an online master promissory note (MPN) only once since it is good for one or more loans, for up to 10 academic years of consecutive enrollment. If you’re a first-time borrower, you may also need to complete entrance counseling or truth-in-lending documents after accepting your loan(s) and before receiving loan funds.

6. Disbursement of funds—Disbursement is the process by which financial aid funds are transferred into your account after promissory notes have been processed, entrance counseling completed, and you have registered. Graduate students must be enrolled half time to receive their aid. You can go to: http://onestop.umn.edu/registration/guidelines/credit_load/enrollment_certification.html to determine half time enrollment for your specific graduate program. Some awards require full-time enrollment. Financial aid automatically pays tuition, fees, and on-campus room and board charges. Because it is safer and faster, you must use direct deposit to receive your disbursements for amounts over and above the charges in your student account. You can sign up online in Step 6 or at the direct deposit Quick Link on onestop.umn.edu.