**Graduate School Terms**

**Advisor**: Sometimes referred to as a major professor, advisors are faculty members who mentor graduate students through the graduate school process. The advisor/advisee relationship is probably the most important relationship a student will have in graduate school.

**Dissertation**: A document that presents a doctoral student's research. A dissertation must be judged by an examination committee to include original, independent, and significant contributions to the student's field.

**Doctoral or PhD degree**: An advanced degree designed to provide extensive expertise in a specialized field, often leading to careers as a professor or researcher. Students are required to generate new knowledge by conducting independent research. Depending on the program and whether or not a student completes a master's degree first, the PhD may generally take four to six years to complete.

**FAFSA**: The first step in funding graduate school is to complete the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/index.htm). You cannot apply for, or receive, any financial aid from any institution of higher education without completing this form. Don't wait to be accepted to a graduate program; complete the FAFSA early, while submitting your applications. Financial aid packages are awarded at the same time as acceptance letters. If you wait to apply you'll lose your opportunity for aid. The U.S. Department of Education runs a variety of student financial assistance programs, including grants, and loans. Your eligibility for aid is determined by the information that you provide in the FAFSA. The graduate program and university will also use your FAFSA to determine your eligibility for scholarships, grants, and institutional aid. Learn more about the FAFSA and apply: <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/index.htm>

**Funding**: Financial support provided by academic institutions, government agencies, philanthropic foundations, and other organizations that help students pay for graduate study. Examples of funding include teaching assistantships, research assistantships, and fellowships.

**Sources:**

* American Association of University Women (AAUW) Educational Foundation

<https://www.aauw.org/resources/programs/fellowships-grants/>

* American Council of Learned Societies (Humanities Research)

<https://www.acls.org/Fellowship-and-Grant-Programs/Competitions-and-Deadlines>

* American Indian Graduate Center Fellowship for Native American Graduate Students

<https://www.aigcs.org/scholarships-fellowships/graduate-students/>

* College Answer: The Planning for College Destination

<https://www.salliemae.com/college-planning/>

* Fellowship programs administered by the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education and Oak Ridge Associated Universities

<https://orise.orau.gov/internships-fellowships/index.html>

* FinAid! The SmartStudent Guide to Financial Aid

<https://www.finaid.org/>

* Fulbright Fellowships

<https://us.fulbrightonline.org/fulbright-us-student-program>

* GrantsNet

<https://www.sciencemag.org/careers/where-search-funding>

* National Association of Fellowships Advisors Scholarships Listing

<https://www.nafadvisors.org/>

* The National Academies Fellowships Office

<https://www.nationalacademies.org/opportunities>

* National Science Foundation (NSF) Funding

<https://www.nsf.gov/funding/>

* Peterson's Scholarship Search

<https://www.petersons.com/scholarship-search.aspx>

**Graduate School**: A central office that oversees graduate education and provides services to its programs and students.

**GMAT**: (Graduate Management Admission Test) may be appropriate for any individual interested in studying business administration or management.

**GRE**: (Graduate Record Examinations) is often required for admission to graduate programs. The GRE has a general test component, which is most often required for graduate admission, as well as several **GRE Subject Tests** that focus on a specific field of study.

**Interdisciplinary**: Refers to programs or projects that span more than one graduate program, or crosses disciplines.

**LSAT**: (Law School Admission Test)

**Master's degree**: A master's degree is designed to give students advanced knowledge of a specialized field. The program typically entails coursework and exams. Programs may require a written thesis, a final project or comprehensive exam, or an internship. Some "terminal master's" degrees, such as the Master of Fine Arts (MFA), are considered the highest degree obtainable in that field - there is not a PhD. Most master's students earn their degree in one to three years.

**MCAT**:(Medical College Admission Test)

**Professional degree**: A degree designed to prepare a student for a particular profession. Students receiving a professional degree are often required to pass licensing exams in the state they want to work. Examples of professional degrees include medical degrees (MD), veterinary medical degrees (DVM), or law degrees (JD).

**Research Assistant**: A graduate student who usually receives health benefits, tuition remission, and a stipend (i.e., a paycheck) in exchange for working as a researcher in a professor's research program. Often, the professor a student works for is also his/her advisor. Research assistants are usually selected by a professor or group of collaborating professors.

**Stipend**: A paycheck or payment, usually received in exchange for working as a teaching or research assistant. Fellowships, which may not require work in return for an award, also offer stipends.

**Teaching Assistant**: A graduate student who usually receives health benefits, tuition remission, and a stipend (i.e., a paycheck) in exchange for assisting a professor with a class. Sometimes teaching assistants do not "assist" a professor, but are in charge of their own class. Teaching assistants are usually selected by a student's academic department or college.

**Thesis**: A document that presents a master's or doctoral student's research. At the doctoral level, the thesis is often referred to as a dissertation. At the master's level, a thesis may be optional in some programs.

**Types of Financial Aid**

**Assistantships**: similar to internships or work-study programs awarded during your undergraduate years. However, assistantships require students to usually work as assistant teachers (TA), research assistants (RA), assistants to professors, or perform other duties on campus. The amount awarded through assistantships varies based on faculty/institution grants or state or federal aid. Research positions are paid through grants and teaching positions are paid through the institution. The research and teaching positions acquired are in your field of study or department. TA's usually teach introductory-level courses and RA's assist faculty in conducting laboratory work. Every school and department has their own regulations and requirements for TA's and RA's. Contact your department for more information.

**Fellowships**: Similar to scholarships, fellowships can be based on: merit, need, the institution’s or faculty’s grant. These financial awards provide money (often called a stipend) for living and educational expenses. In general, fellowships allow students to pursue graduate study full-time. Recipients do not have to repay fellowships and often do not have to work in return for the award. Fellowships are granted to graduate and post-grad students. Fellowships are awarded by private organizations, institutions, or through the government. Fellowships vary in the amount being awarded and can be used either towards research or education. Students can be given a 1- to 4-year stipend with or without a tuition waiver. Some schools allow you to directly apply for fellowships offered through the schools. However, some schools only award fellowships to students who have been recommended by a faculty member.

**Grants**: Gifts that you do not need to repay. There are several different types of grants available to students. Students may receive grants from the government or through private sources of funding. Usually government grants are given to students with need, such as having a low household income. However, government grants require students to maintain a specific GPA throughout their academic career in order to continue to receive aid. Private grants usually come in the form of scholarships and have their own guidelines. The amount being offered varies for each individual based on different criteria. In graduate school, grants can be used towards, travel, research, experiments, or projects.

**Loans**: Money that is awarded to a student based on need. Unlike a grant or scholarship, loans must be repaid to the institution that it is received from (government, school, bank, or private organization). There are several types of loans that are available. The different loans vary in the amount you can borrow, in their requirements, interest rates, and repayment plans. Individuals who are not eligible for government loans may receive loans through private organizations. Private companies have their own qualifications, interest rates, and repayment plans. Many banks offer private student loans specifically for college students. However, private companies are believed to have higher interest rates and stricter guidelines.

**Types of Loans:**

**Consolidated Loans:**

Consolidated loans offer students the opportunity to combine all the different federal loans received into one big loan with one monthly payment. The advantage of a consolidated loan is that you can take longer to repay your loan and have lower monthly payments. The Federal Perkins and Stafford Loans are eligible for consolidation. To get a consolidated loan, you need to contact the appropriate department of the lender for an application. You can apply for a consolidated loan during your grace period or once you begin repayment. The interest on a consolidated loan never exceeds 8.25% and is a fixed rate. Because there are limited scholarships, fellowships, grants, and assistantships, all students are encouraged to apply for a loan. Loans can help pay for school, living expenses, textbooks, and other day to day things. Loans can limit the amount of stress involved in finding ways to pay for school.

**Federal Perkins Loan:**

*Eligibility:*

* be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen
* have a high school diploma or GED certification
* not be in default on any other student loans
* be enrolled at least half time in an accredited degree program
* Undergraduate or Graduate students

*Facts:*

* Provided by your school, which receives the funds through the government.
* It’s a subsidized loan, in which the government pays the interest while you are in school.
* There are no fees.
* The interest rate is 5%.
* Undergraduate students are awarded up to $4,000 yearly and graduate students are awarded up to $6,000 yearly.
* The amount awarded is based on financial need, other aid received, and available funds at the school.
* Each school is provided with a certain amount of money to award yearly and, thus, funds can be insufficient. It is recommended that you submit your FAFSA as early as possible to receive that amount of funds necessary.
* The school will pay you directly through a check or credit your account. You will receive 2 payments per year.
* You will have 10 years to repay your loan based on the amount received.

**Private Loans:**

Undergraduate, graduate, and professional students have the option to take out loans through private sources of funding, such as a bank. You do not need to submit the FAFSA for a private loan but you do have to apply through the private organization. Different types of loans are provided based on your level of education. However, private loans are more expensive than government loans. Only turn to private loans if necessary.

**Stafford Loan:**

*Eligibility:*

* be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen
* have a high school diploma or GED certification
* not be in default on any other student loans
* be enrolled at least half time in an accredited degree program
* Undergraduate, Graduate, or Professional student

*Facts:*

* Provided directly by the government (Federal Direct Student Loan Program (FDSLP)) or through banks, credit unions, or savings and loan associations (Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP)).
* Option to choose a subsidized or unsubsidized loan.
* Subsidized loans are based on financial need. The interest is paid by the government during your time in school, for the first six months after you leave school, and, if you qualify, to have your payments deferred.
* In an unsubsidized loan, you must pay the interest from the time you are awarded the loan but you can have the payments deferred until after graduation, which lets you accumulate and capitalize the interest (adding the interest amount to your loan balance). All students are eligible for an unsubsidized loan regardless of financial need.
* Some students have the option to combine unsubsidized and subsidized loans.
* The amount awarded is based on your class standing and dependency status.
* There is a 4% fee, which is deducted from the amount of money awarded.
* Loans will be distributed by your school in two installments and remaining funds can be either set aside or given to you in a form of a check.
* You must repay your loan starting 6 months after you finish school or if you drop below half-time. You will have 10-30 years to repay the loan based on the amount and plan received.

**Scholarships**:

Scholarships are awards given to students based on academic excellence/merit, talent and/or need. Additionally, students may receive scholarships based on other factors, such as ethnic background or field of study. Scholarships vary in their amounts and the number of years given aid. For example, they can be awarded a onetime payment or receive aid annually for a specified number of years. Like a grant, students do not need to pay back the money awarded in a scholarship.

Scholarships can be awarded through your school or through private sources. Private scholarships are offered through organizations or companies. Some organizations make students compete for awards through performance or essay writing, whereas some look for students that fit specific requirements and standards. You can search for private scholarships on the internet, through online scholarship search engines (e.g.[FastWeb](http://www.fastweb.com/)) or by contacting your sSchool.

*#POLARPARDISE  #SKILLSFORLIFE  #WeGotThis #PolarCareersRocks  #OrangeDoor2ndFloor*

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