The most common source of support is a teaching assistantship. To provide a stipend for living expenses. Assistantships and fellowships also provide eligibility for an excellent health insurance program, an extremely valuable benefit that provides single or family coverage that is more comprehensive than individuals can usually purchase on their own. Additionally, assistantships and fellowships provide a stipend for living expenses.

Teaching Assistantships

The most common source of support is a teaching assistantship. To receive a teaching assistantship, candidates for admission must meet the following requirements:

- evidence (usually from the undergraduate transcript) of an appropriate background in the relevant subject matter of the course(s) to which appointment is being considered;
- evidence (usually from letters of recommendation or verbal communication) of the candidate’s potential as a teaching assistant;
- an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or above (on a 4.0 scale); and
- for students whose native language is not English, evidence of competence in spoken English through the SPEAK test that is administered by UW–Madison. International applicants should note that a TA appointment is not normally possible during the first year of graduate study.

Current students who apply for their first teaching assistantship are also subject to the above criteria, as well as their performance as a graduate student. Reappointment as a teaching assistant depends upon satisfactory progress as a graduate student, satisfactory performance as a teaching assistant, and completing the Equity/Diversity TA Training.

Teaching assistants may be eligible for UW–Madison teaching awards (https://grad.wisc.edu/taawards/), including the Early Excellence in Teaching Award, Exceptional Service Award, Innovation in Teaching Award, Capstone PhD Teaching Award, and the College of Letters & Science Teaching Fellow Award.

Research Assistantships

Research assistantships are made possible by grants awarded to faculty for particular research programs. Recipients are selected by the individual professor concerned, and the student’s interests and experience must match the needs of the funding project. Availability of research assistantships varies.

Advanced Opportunity Fellowships

Advanced Opportunity Fellowships (AOF) are granted to the UW–Madison Graduate School by the State of Wisconsin and are combined with other graduate education funds to support the recruitment and retention of highly qualified underrepresented students in UW–Madison graduate programs. Fellowships are competitive and merit-based. AOF funding is intended to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of the graduate student population, as well as to support economically disadvantaged and first-generation college students. AOF fellowships are paid through the Graduate School by the College of Letters & Science’s Community of Graduate Research Scholars (http://ls.wisc.edu/current-students/graduate-students/cgrs/) (CGRS) program.

External Fellowships

Fellowships from professional societies and outside agencies provide another important source of aid for which students may apply either before or after commencing graduate work at UW–Madison. If necessary, external fellowships can often be supplemented with university funds up to prevailing university fellowship rates.

All qualified students who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents are urged to apply to the National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP). Students apply directly to NSF; the closing date is usually in early November. Please check the NSF (http://www.nsf.gov/) website for the application instructions and deadline.