Graduate Student Financial Assistance

Teaching Assistantships

The principal form of financial aid available to graduate students in economics is a teaching assistantship. A number of such assistantships are available to entering graduate students with promising academic records. Teaching Assistants are classified as Academic Student Employees, subject to contractual union policies.

Beginning teaching assistants receive a stipend and an exemption from most of their tuition costs per quarter. Students holding a graduate appointment are covered on the Graduate Appointee Health Insurance Plan and have the option of insuring their spouse and/or children for half of the cost. First-year teaching assistants are responsible for quiz and discussion sections of the introductory undergraduate classes in economics. More advanced students teach their own introductory and some intermediate classes and receive a larger stipend.

While the time devoted to teaching may slow an individual student’s progress towards the degree, comments from teaching assistants emphasize the positive aspects of teaching. These include review of basic principles, the necessity to develop and explain one’s own ideas, and the advantages of having an established record when applying for teaching positions. Both the University and the Department offer workshops in training graduate assistants in effective teaching methods. In addition, the Department offers a course designed specifically for graduate assistants interested in teaching. This course, Teaching Introductory Economics, examines the problems encountered in preparing and presenting courses in introductory economics.

The Department tries to support as many continuing doctoral students as possible. The primary criterion for awarding teaching assistantships for continuing students is satisfactory performance in the program and satisfactory teaching evaluations.

Other departments such as Math, Statistics, and the Business School regularly hire teaching assistants from the Department of Economics. Please contact these departments directly for information about position openings.

Fellowships and Other Awards for Students

Entering students may be eligible for some of these awards. All applicants to our program are automatically considered; no additional forms are needed.

The Buechel Fellowship

The Buechel Fellowship was established in 1999 and is funded by the Henry Buechel Memorial Endowment. The fellowship was established by the bequest of his widow, Aurelia C. Buechel. Professor Buechel joined the faculty of the University of Washington in 1942 and was honored among both students and colleagues as one of the most inspiring educators on campus. The fellowship is awarded to economics graduate students who are at the beginning of the dissertation process. Other selection criteria include financial need and an outstanding teaching and academic record.

The Grover and Creta Ensley Fellowship

The Ensley Fellowship in Economic Policy provides financial support to graduate students who have shown outstanding potential in the field of public policy. The fellowship is a gift from Dr. and Mrs. Ensley. Grover Ensley received his Bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Washington in 1937, his M.B.A. in 1938, and his Ph.D. from New York University in 1947. He applied his education to public policy, serving for many years as the Chairman of the Joint Budget Committee of the U.S. Congress. He created the fellowship in 1988 to enable other scholars to study economics at a graduate level.

The James K. Hall Fellowship

The fellowship honors James K. Hall, a member of the faculty from 1930 to 1962. Professor Hall, an internationally recognized authority on public finance and taxation, helped to design the tax systems of several countries as well as that of the state of Washington.
The Steven Langton Award

The Langton Award for Distinguished Undergraduate Teaching is given annually to a graduate teaching assistant who shows exceptional talent and dedication as an undergraduate teacher. The prize is made possible by a gift from Steven Langton, Business Manager of Potlatch Timber. The Langton Award is made on the basis of student evaluations as well as recommendations from teaching assistants and faculty.

The Preston Scholarship

The Howard H. Preston Scholarship was established in 1995 by a bequest from Mrs. Bettie James. Howard Preston was an economist and a long-standing member of the economics faculty. As Dean of the School of Business, he was instrumental in helping to establish the Department of Economics as a separate entity in the College of Arts and Sciences in 1948. Mrs. James' husband also received his Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Washington in 1949.

Storer Award

This annual award is provided for a graduate student with a special interest in labor economics. This award is in honor of Rachel Storer, who studied in the department many years ago. Rachel Storer was a long time civil servant for the U.S. Department of Labor.

The James O. York Fellowship

Friends of James O. York established the York Fellowship in 1988 at his retirement to serve as a continuing tribute to his achievements in the real estate and retail industries. Mr. York received his B.A. and M.A. degrees in economics from the University of Washington and enjoyed a distinguished career in real estate and retail industries. He was one of the first to develop and apply analytical tools for real estate market analysis.

Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology

The University of Washington’s Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology accepts annual departmental nominations for its graduate research assistantship awards. The major criteria for selection are academic excellence and an interest in demography. The successful nominee will be expected to take the core sequence of courses in demography and ecology that is offered in the Department of Sociology. They should also plan on writing a dissertation that includes a demographic perspective.

Other Types of Funding Available

Research Assistantships

Research Assistants are classified as Academic Student Employees (ASEs), subject to contractual union policies. Faculty members who have research grants select Research Assistants to assist them in research. The faculty may select ASEs from students that they have a prior mentoring or supervisory relationship. In those instances where a prior relationship does not exist, the faculty member will post an opening and select a candidate.

Paid Internship Positions

Paid Internship Positions with local business and government agencies are available year-round. Although the Department occasionally receives and posts information about internships, students are responsible for researching, applying for, and securing internship appointments.

Paper Grading

Paper grading assignments can be arranged with the Department’s Administrator.

The UW Office of Student Financial Aid

The University’s Office of Student Financial Aid administers federal, state and institutional financial aid programs, including long-term loans and work opportunities. Work-study positions are available throughout the campus and offer competitive wages. Loan support (including emergency loans) is available in limited amounts through this office as well. The Department of Economics does not offer loan support.
For information on non-work study student jobs, both on and off campus, you may contact the Center for Career Services.

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