

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

Funding Opportunities for Graduate Students

The Graduate School offers awards, assistantships, and fellowships to qualified graduate students. All awards require faculty nominations. Continuing and newly admitted students can request either a faculty member or the department head to nominate them for the Graduate School awards. The student must be admitted to the Graduate School before a request for an assistantship or fellowship will be considered by the department or the Graduate School.

In selecting individuals for any assistantship or fellowship and in the administration of appointments, New Mexico State University does not discriminate on grounds of age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, retaliation, serious medical condition, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, spousal affiliation, or veteran status. The University limits the number of years a student may be supported on funds from the state of New Mexico. Departments may place additional limitations on the years of support. For detailed information, application process and deadlines please consult <https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/future-students/How To Apply>. A student should check **Graduate Assistant Employment Guidelines of the Graduate School**.

Assistantships

Graduate assistantships, including teaching and research, offered by New Mexico State University are awarded primarily by the students' academic department. Employment guidelines may be found at: Graduate Assistant Employment Guidelines of the Graduate School (https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/ga-and-union/grad-assistant-forms/Guidelines_on_Employment_of_Graduate_Assistants%20Jan%202023.pdf)

Students with assistantships must maintain full-time status by enrolling in and successfully completing 9 credit hours each semester. Students must also maintain a 3.0 grade-point-average. Courses taken for audit do not count in the minimum graduate assistant course load requirement. Graduate assistants should take no more than 15 course credits per semester. During their first semester at NMSU, if course deficiencies are identified, the student can register for 3 undergraduate credits and a minimum of 6 graded graduate credits to be eligible for a graduate assistantship. The graduate assistantship duties typically require students to work 20 hours per week (full-time, fall and spring).

Teaching Assistantships

A student seeking appointment as a teaching assistant will be required to demonstrate proficiency in communication skills necessary for satisfactory service in the classroom. All graduate students awarded an assistantship must complete the online mandatory orientation offered by the Graduate School. Departments may require students to complete workshops or orientations to qualify for assistantships.

Eligibility for teaching assistantships includes:

- Acceptance by and subsequent registration in the Graduate School and academic department
- Classification as a "regular" graduate student

- All international students seeking a teaching assistantship must demonstrate proficiency in English and competency in Pedagogy.

Teaching Assistantships for International Students

All international students seeking a teaching assistantship must demonstrate proficiency in English and competency in pedagogy. Prior to their first semester as a teaching assistantship, international students must undergo the NMSU International Teaching Assistant screening (ITAS) administered by the NMSU English Department on behalf of the Graduate School. International graduate students wishing to hold a teaching assistantship should check with their department to determine when they should arrive on campus to meet the screening requirement. The ITAS can be waived for international students who hold a degree from an accredited university in the United States, or a country where English is the official language of instruction. Departments also have the discretion to allow waivers for special circumstances.

The ITAS requires that a teaching assistant candidate deliver a short, ten-minute teaching demonstration of an introductory undergraduate level course in a topic relevant to their area of studies. The demonstration is observed by English Department faculty and an actual undergraduate student. Based on the results of the screening, the English Department observers present a report of findings to the department head where the graduate student will be a teaching assistant. Students who pass the screening exam are immediately eligible for assignment to a teaching assistantship.

Students who do not pass the screening exam must enroll in and satisfactorily complete **COMM 485, "International Teaching Assistant Development"** course before being eligible for a teaching assistantship. International students who don't pass the screening exam may be eligible to serve as graders for their academic departments. The academic departments must receive approval from the Graduate School to hire these students.

Assistantships for Provisional Graduate Students

Graduate students accepted on a provisional basis cannot serve as teaching assistants. However, they can serve as research assistants. Eligibility includes:

- Acceptance by and subsequent registration in the Graduate School and academic department
- Classification as a "provisional" graduate student
- Enrolling in and successfully complete 9 graded credits with a minimum of 3.0 GPA.
- Funded on research projects of the faculty of NMSU

Provisional students can also be hired as graders for one semester. The department must hire the student as a Graduate other at the time of completing the hiring path, so that the student be allowed to work as a grader.

Diversity Graduate Assistantships

The diversity awards are awarded thru the nominations process and allocated to departments on a competitive basis to help increase the diversity and quality of the student body. Departments will commit matching funds to support these awards for the student. The diversity award can be used to recruit domestic students. Please note that the award is for an academic year. Departments will need to commit funds to the selected student for at least one additional semester or preferably a year. The selected student must be admitted to the department prior to being nominated for the diversity award.

Fellowships

The Graduate School maintains a Fellowship and Grant Information webpage (<https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/scholarships-and-tuition/internal-funding-and-financial-aid.html>) providing a database of grants, fellowships and assistantships for graduate students. The university offers a number of fellowships available to both new and continuing students.

Graduate Assistant Tuition Fellowships

As an opportunity for departments to recruit and nominate outstanding graduate students to their programs, the Graduate School awards tuition fellowships to graduate assistants. Master's degree students will receive up to two years of support and doctoral degree students will receive up to three years of support. In order for students to qualify for a second and third year of support, they must maintain their status as graduate assistants for the duration of the tuition fellowship period. These awards are for students receiving 10 hour or 20 hour graduate assistantships. Students must be enrolled in and successfully complete 9 graded credits with a minimum of 3.0 GPA. The tuition fellowships are paid for fall or spring semesters only and do not include fees.

McNair Graduate Assistantships

The Graduate School wishes to support and recognize the success of the McNair program by offering several McNair Graduate Assistantships for one academic year with a match of one year from a department. Students must be nominated by the department for this award.

Merit-Based Enhancement Fellowships for Current Graduate Assistants

To help departments reward outstanding graduate assistants, the Graduate School offers Merit-Based Enhancement Fellowships to graduate assistants who are engaged in the teaching or research mission of New Mexico State University. The amount of the award is \$4,000 for an academic year. Nominations must come from faculty.

Outstanding Graduate Assistantship Award

We also offer Outstanding Graduate Assistant awards of \$6,250 to recognize the contributions of eight (8) graduate assistants to the teaching and research mission of New Mexico State University. The awards allow faculty to show appreciation for the excellent work of graduate assistants. Current graduate assistants must be nominated by their faculty to be considered for the awards.

State of New Mexico Department of Higher Education (NMHED) Graduate Scholarship Programs

The purpose of the NMHED fellowships/assistantships is to "increase graduate enrollment in the state's public universities of students from groups underrepresented in graduate education" (Title 5 Post-Secondary Education, 5.7.15 NM Administrative Code). Underrepresented groups include women, minorities, the visually handicapped, the physically disabled and other groups that have are underrepresented in their field of study. Applicants must be U.S. citizens or permanent U.S. residents. Priority is given to New Mexico students from those groups with the most severe under-representation and students with the greatest financial need" (5.7.15.NMAC).

NMHED fellowships carry stipends of \$7,200 per annum and matched with half-time (10 hours per week) teaching assistantship provided by the student's department for a total award of \$15,800.

Eligibility:

- Fellowships are available for two years for master's students and four years for doctoral students.
- One of the NMHED fellowships is, when possible, designated for a McNair Scholar.
- Departments are required to: a) use their graduate assistantship budget to bring the amount of the award up to the current salary of a graduate assistant that is working 20 hours per week, and b) provide a 20-hour graduate assistantship to the student while they receive the NM Higher Education Department award.
- Eligible according to a standard needs analysis or financial aid officer's professional judgement.

For the student to establish financial need, students must complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form available online in the Financial Aid and Scholarship Services Office. This form is not to be returned to the Graduate School. The results will be sent to the student and the Financial Aid and Scholarship Services Office. **Students must have a complete file and have been approved for financial aid to be considered for this fellowship.** Preference will be given to those students that have a current FAFSA form on file at the NMSU Financial Aid office.

Click here (<https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/Current%20Students/Graduate%20Forms.html>) for the nomination process details.

Graduate Assistants Salaries and Tax Withholding Guidelines

Internal Revenue Service tax withholding guidelines require graduate students employed through NMSU to maintain at least 6 credits of course work during the fall and spring semesters and 3 credits of course work for summer sessions to be eligible for the student FICA tax exemption. Student employees who do not meet this requirement during any given pay period will be subject to Social Security taxes and Medicare taxes. Salaries for the three salary levels of graduate can be found here. (<https://hr.nmsu.edu/general-resources/toolkits1/grad-assistant.html>)

Level I (G1) - Applies to regularly enrolled students pursuing a master's degree. This level is also for a first year student seeking a doctoral degree who does not currently hold a master's degree. Once the doctoral student becomes a second year student and passes their qualifying exam, they can obtain support as a Level II (G2) student.

Level II (G2) - Applies to students pursuing the Education Specialist or Doctoral degree who have passed the qualifying exam or who have a master's degree in the same or cognate field and the recommendation of the head of their major department.

Level III (G3) - Applies to a doctoral student who has passed the comprehensive examination and has advanced to candidacy.

Graduate assistants employed at least ten hours per week will be given in-state tuition during the first 12 months of tenure if the Graduate School approves of the hiring process prior to census date (stated by the University Student Records Office as the third Friday of the semester each spring and fall semester).

If New Mexico resident status has not been established by the time of any reappointment, the graduate assistant may be subject to non-resident tuition rates.

Applications for state residency may be obtained in the University Student Records Office located in the Educational Services building.

Social Security Numbers in Student Records

As required by law, social security numbers are collected from prospective and current students who

1. Plan to seek employment on campus or
2. Wish to receive financial aid.
3. In addition, the university is mandated by federal tax regulations to provide tuition and fee payment information to the student and the Internal Revenue Service, so that applicable educational tax credits may be computed. The social security number will be necessary to submit this tax reporting. The social security number is a confidential record and is maintained as such by the university in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

In order to be employed by New Mexico State University all students must have obtained a social security number within eight weeks of being hired or risk losing their assistantship.

When an official social security number is issued to an international student, it is the student's responsibility to inform Human Resources or the University Student Records Office as soon as possible.

Hourly Work

Eligibility for student payroll requires that a graduate student

1. Be admitted to the Graduate School as well as to a department,
2. Maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0, and
3. Be enrolled for at least 9 graded credits.
4. A student may not work more than 20 hours per week during the academic year. Students looking for current job postings should check with Student Success Center, Career Services, Hardman and Jacobs Undergraduate Learning Center 128 or visit <https://ssc.nmsu.edu/services/career-development.html>.

Students not classified as residents of New Mexico but working at an hourly rate are not eligible to receive in-state tuition.

Contact Information

For more information, contact:

Graduate School, MSC 3-GS
 New Mexico State University
 PO Box 30001
 Las Cruces, NM 88003-8001
 Phone: (575) 646-5746
<http://gradschool.nmsu.edu/> (<http://gradschool.nmsu.edu>)