

Financial Aid for Students in the Environmental Policy Design Program (v. 2-19-14)

3.0 Financial Aid

This document is extracted from the “EPD Handbook” which provides a detailed overview of the program.

Financial aid is available in the form of teaching assistantships (TA), research assistantships (RA), graduate assistantships (GA), fellowships, and scholarships. Fellowships, TAs, and RAs may only be held by full-time students. A comprehensive resource for financial aid in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) can be found on CAS’S [Financial Aid Web Page](#). An exhaustive list of organizations that provide fellowship support can be found at Lehigh’s [Office of Fellowship Advising](#).

3.1 Teaching Assistantships

The EPD Program offers half-time teaching assistantships (TAs). The College of Arts and Sciences pays the tuition for a TA up to nine credits per semester. In some circumstances, the College of Arts and Sciences will also pay for 3 credits of thesis hours (ES-490) during the summer session. The TA also receives a monthly stipend for the 9-month academic year (late August to late May). In some cases, a TA position may be split between two students during the academic year. Under these circumstances, a student would have TA support for only one semester, during which the student would receive up to 9 credits of tuition and 4.5 months of stipend. The Graduate Student Handbook states that a half-time TA should provide 20 hours per week of service to the University. A more extensive discussion of the [Terms and Conditions of Employment for TAs](#) can be found on the CAS web site.

3.1.1 Responsibilities of a TA. Responsibilities for a TA vary depending on the course or courses they are assigned, and may include grading homework sets and exams, setting up and teaching labs, and running field trips. TA duties are assigned and evaluated by faculty member of record for a particular course. At a very minimum, a TAs needs to do the following:

- Do all of the assigned reading for the course(s)
- Attend all lectures or events assigned to the class (e.g. lecture series)
- Complete all of the problem sets and/or generate sample answers for essay questions assigned to the class
- Maintain regular office hours and be willing to interact with students face-to-face or via e-mail to answer their questions or explain concepts
- Do all of the required grading and record scores
- Take and record attendance
- If a class uses Course Site, the TA may be required to maintain it

Note that teaching is a highly personalized endeavor and each faculty member will likely have their own methods and techniques (even for the same course). It is your responsibility to adjust

to these differences and be aware of exactly what is expected of you by each faculty member. Be sure to communicate frequently with the instructor (a regular meeting time(s) each week can be advantageous). If an instructor has developed a separate handbook or guide for their classes, be sure to follow it carefully. If you haven't taken the course previously as a student, be aware that you will need to invest more time and effort into getting things done correctly—be sure to ask plenty of questions. What seems obvious to the instructor may not be obvious to you, especially if you have never taken the course you are TAing!

A TA position can be demanding work, but it can also be satisfying if you do a good job. Overall, the students in the course are appreciative of your efforts, as are the faculty you assist. It can be challenging to balance the time required for your TA responsibilities, coursework, and thesis research, but it is a rewarding and important role that should be taken seriously.

3.1.2 Competency in Spoken English. Note that the University requires that a foreign student whose native language is not English must pass a test of spoken English before serving as a TA. A non-native speaker can be a TA at Lehigh if they score 230 or higher on the Lehigh speaking exam. If the student passes the test with a score between 200 and 230, they can be a TA while concurrently taking an ESL class. A score of less than 200 prohibits TA support. The ESL (English as a Second Language) Department offers several courses for foreign applicants. It is advised that such courses are completed in the summer prior to the beginning of the student's first semester in residence.

3.1.2 Teaching Evaluations. Teaching can be an effective way to sharpen one's communication skills and continued feedback is the key to improving. Even if the TA doesn't plan to be a teacher, communication and teaching are valuable life skills. The TA is advised to solicit feedback from students early in the semester to avoid potential issues or problems from festering. At the end of the semester, the TA will be given a standardized student evaluation form which is to be administered to the class. These standardized evaluations are the outcome of a graduate student senate and graduate research committee initiative. The results of the student evaluations will be available to the EPD Director and should be shared with the TA. Faculty instructors will also evaluate a TA's performance at the conclusion of each course and place a brief evaluation letter in the student's file. It is strongly recommended that the faculty member and TA discuss the evaluation to provide an opportunity for more direct and interactive feedback.

3.2 Research Assistantships

A faculty member will sometimes receive a grant to perform specific research. This grant may include funding for a graduate research assistant to help with the project. A Research Assistant (RA) position may pay a monthly stipend and/or tuition (in a similar way as was described for TAs above). The chief difference lies in the responsibilities, which for an RA involves various tasks related to a particular research project assigned and evaluated by a principal investigator (usually one's advisor). The responsibility associated with an RA is not to be underestimated. Grants obtained by faculty that support RAs have specific requirements that must be completed in a timely manner. Often, research work assigned to an RA will support his/her thesis work, but this need not always be the case.

3.3 Fellowship Programs

3.31 Community Fellows Program. The Community Fellows Program is designed to support partnerships between Lehigh University, the EPD Program, and regional agencies that are active in community and economic development. The program is ideal for students who are interested in rigorous academic training combined with meaningful, community-based work experience in non-profit agencies.

A Community Fellow will work for a participating agency for fifteen hours per week while taking classes toward a M.A. in EPD. Fellows receive academic credit for their agency work, allowing them to earn their M.A. degree in one full year of work and classes. Fellows focus on completing projects identified and designed by the agencies. One of the goals of all of the projects is to give a greater voice to ordinary citizens.

Fellows are financially responsible for nine credits of graduate school tuition (of the thirty credits required for a MA degree), payable in three installments. Payment for three credits are due in the fall, three in the spring and three in the summer. All other tuition costs are paid by Lehigh University and the partner agency. Depending upon various factors, the division and amount of financial resources may vary between academic years so be sure to contact the Community Fellows Program to learn about possible changes.

Applicants to the EPD Program should submit a letter indicating their interest in the Community Fellows Program with their regular graduate school application. There is no direct application to the Community Fellows Program. Students who are admitted to the EPD M.A. Program can then be matched to an agency, **contingent on availability and mutual interests**. Please see the [Community Fellows](#) web site for more information.

3.32 McNair Scholars. Several graduate funding awards are available to McNair eligible students. If you are, a first-generation college student with financial need, or a member of a group that is traditionally underrepresented in graduate education you may apply these awards. McNair Scholars automatically qualify to apply. The College of Arts and Sciences also offers a \$75 graduate application fee waiver to all McNair scholars.

Each year the college will offer one Dean's Fellowship to a student from this group. This fellowship provides full tuition and a stipend of approximately \$19,000 for the year. It is renewable for a second year contingent upon satisfactory performance in the program. The college will also have one or more tuition only scholarships available for McNair eligible students. Please see the [McNair Scholars](#) web site for more information.

3.33 The Pyramid Foundation Graduate Fellowship. The EPD program has endowed funding for the Pyramid Fellowship provided by Michael J. Cohen (class of '58). These funds are awarded to an EPD student studying in the interdisciplinary STEPS Program in the College of Arts and Sciences. Funds have traditionally been used to support a student(s) involved in a summer research project, typically related to their M.A. thesis. The fellowship pays for a summer stipend as well as for research materials and/or expenses. The EPD Program typically issues a request for proposals (RFP) during the spring semester of each year.

3.34 Dale S. Strohl '58 Awards for Research Excellence in Humanities and Social Sciences.

These awards are made to students who engage in thesis research under the supervision of a faculty member. The fellowship pays for a summer stipend as well as for research materials and/or expenses. Please see the [Strohl Grants web site](#) for more information.

3.4 Scholarships

Scholarships consist of tuition credits only (no stipend is included). The EPD Program has a limited number of scholarships to award annually. Awards are typically based upon merit and need. An application for a scholarship should be made by contacting the EPD Director.

3.41 Presidential Scholarships. Lehigh undergraduate who achieve and maintain a 3.75 GPA by their junior year can apply for and receive a Presidential Scholarship. The application is submitted to and approved by the Registrar's Office. The award covers tuition for a 5th year of study at Lehigh and only and can be used to fulfill requirements of the EPD Program.

3.42. 50/50 Scholarships. Another scholarship available to students in the EPD Program is the "50/50 Scholarship". As the name implies, this scholarship pays for 50% of the cost of tuition for each semester that you are enrolled in the program. This scholarship is only awarded to **NEW** students entering the EPD program. It is specifically designed to attract students who have **NOT** previously attended Lehigh, thus is usually offered during the recruitment period. The scholarship can continue for the duration of the degree program as long as progress toward the degree is maintained and a minimum GPA is achieved. These scholarships are based on merit and are designed to help attract the best students to our program. This scholarship may not be combined with any other form of financial aid such as a TA, RA, or GA.

3.43. Thesis Scholarships. The Environmental Policy Design M.A. can be difficult to complete within a 12-month time frame, especially when a thesis is attempted. Students who are making progress in the program, and who are in good standing, may apply for a scholarship to be used to register for 1-credit hour of thesis (ES-490) during their terminal semester. This allows a student to retain full-time status in the program while completing the thesis (Lehigh requires that you be registered for the semester prior to graduation). Requests for thesis scholarships should be made to the EPD Program Director prior to the start of the student's terminal semester.

3.5 Graduate Assistantships (GAs)

Various College (e.g. Dean's office, Athletics) and University (e.g. Greek Affairs, Residential Life) departments and organizations (LEO) offer Graduate Assistant (GA) positions. These are generally well advertised. The awards involve work that is not strictly research related, and can cover a wide range of teaching, supervisory, consulting, or service work.

3.6 Other Resources & Opportunities

3.61. Travel Grants. EPD students are encouraged to attend national or regional meetings as a form of professional development, especially to present their scholarship. The EPD Program has funds available to support this activity. Proposals (with an accompanying budget) should be

submitted well in advance of the conference date to the EPD Program Director. Funds will be awarded according to merit and availability.

3.62. Tuition Reduction for Education. Students who are teachers in K-12 and Community Colleges can be offered the College of Education Rate to take courses in the EPD Program. The students must supply a letter from their School District each year to be given this rate. The rate is applied after the 10th day of class each year. Award letters come from the CAS after the confirmation letter from school district is received.

3.63 Other Paid Opportunities. Faculty members occasionally have short-term projects for which they can pay students an hourly wage. Sometimes these jobs are widely advertised, and sometimes they are not. It may be a good idea for students to let the faculty members know that they are interested in such work if it becomes available. There are also loan programs with specially discounted interest rates for full-time students. Such loans usually do not require any payment of interest or principal until sometime after graduation as long as full-time registration is maintained. Loans terms entirely determined by the student and the lender. Contact the Financial Aid Office for more information.

3.7 Outside Employment.

Students receiving academic-year financial aid through a TA, RA, or GA must receive the EPD Program's permission before considering other simultaneous outside employment. The final approval for TAs, RA, or GAs to work beyond their normal 20 hours per week rests with the CAS Dean. The Dean will grant permission under the following guidelines:

- a. A student must have completed all course work for the degree
- b. There can be no conflicts with the student's TA, RA, or GA assignment
- c. The student must be making satisfactory progress towards their degree.

3.8 Withdrawal of Financial Aid

When a student receives an offer of financial aid, it must be noted carefully that continuation of aid is contingent on two factors: availability of funding and the student's performance. Owing to factors beyond the Program's control, there can be no guarantees that continuing aid will be available. It is rare that aid would have to be cut off for this reason, and the College and the Program make every effort to see that it doesn't happen. Nevertheless, students should be aware that it is possible.

Student performance, however, is very much under their control. The EPD Program is likely to withdraw an aid package if a student fails to maintain a 3.0 grade average, fails to perform TA, RA, or GA duties adequately, or otherwise shows a lack of commitment to his or her own professional development. These factors, and lack of satisfactory progress toward the degree, are the chief evaluation criteria when the Program considers awarding and/or continuing financial aid. Recognize that the Program's expectation of student performance is quite high, and students cannot afford a single weak semester.