Chapter 3. Financial Aid and Resources

Scholarships

CUA offers full tuition year scholarships for a small number of graduate students. Some are awarded from the School of Arts and Sciences (Thomas Verner Moore scholarships, awarded for 3 years), and others are awarded in a campus-wide competition (Board of Trustees Scholarships, awarded for 4 years, which also come with a stipend). These scholarships are awarded based largely on GRE scores. The Dr. and Mrs. Harold D. Crowley Memorial Scholarship in Clinical Psychology is awarded to one or more students who show particular promise. All of these scholarships carry an honor with them, and can be added to your vitae.

Teaching Assistantships

The Department of Psychology has established priorities for use of the TAs. The first priority is for teaching a section of General Psychology (201). The student has full responsibility for teaching this course. We have usually had five or six sections each semester for the past few years.

The second priority for TAs is for assisting in teaching statistics (graduate and undergraduate), research methods (graduate and undergraduate) and several undergraduate courses with labs (e.g., Sensation and Perception, Cognitive and Behavior Therapy, Cognitive Psychology, and Lifespan Development). In these courses the TA often leads lab sections, presents some lectures, holds office hours, and grades papers and exams. An equal priority is Clinical Assessment II, where the TA leads the intellectual assessment lab.

The third priority for TAs is for some graduate courses (e.g., Projectives) and for grading in some undergraduate elective courses with large enrollments.

The School of Arts and Sciences provides the Department of Psychology a budget for teaching assistantships (TAs) each year. The number of TA awards varies from year to year. Teaching assistantships pay a stipend; the stipends are higher for those who teach their own section of General Psychology than for students who are assisting professors. The stipends are paired with a full-tuition scholarship for each semester that the student is a “full” TA. Stipends are taxable income, but the tuition scholarships are not taxable income.

A “full” TA is expected to work 10-12 hours a week, although the amount of time may vary, particularly when a student is teaching his or her own section of Psychology 201 or leading lab sections (which may take more hours, particularly the first time). Some years the department also has had paid summer school sections of General Psychology or occasionally other undergraduate courses.

Forms to apply for a departmental Teaching Assistantship are distributed to students in the prior spring semester. Faculty members request TA support for their courses and indicate preferences for the students they would like to assist them. The Financial Aid Committee of the Psychology Department makes the decisions regarding TA assignments.
Research Assistantships

Faculty who have research grants hire students with these funds. If a faculty member has a grant from an outside agency that pays “indirect” costs to the university (overhead), and the student is awarded a certain level of stipend, the university waives the tuition of the student.

Work/Study, Admissions Assistants, and Loans

The Financial Aid Office also awards work/study money to undergraduate and graduate students. To be eligible for work/study funds, you must have completed the FAFSA financial disclosure statement. See http://admissions.cua.edu/graduate/finaid/index.html. The Department of Psychology sometimes is awarded one or more work-study graduate positions. Additionally, students who are given a work/study award can earn their money by working for another office, staff, or faculty member who has requested a work/study position.

One of the major tasks of a departmental assistant position is to assist the clinical faculty in admissions, and generally the department also has funding for a second admissions assistant, or two admissions assistants if there is no graduate work-study position.

CUA participates in federal loan programs. The FAFSA is required. For more information, see the Financial Aid Office website above.

Scholarships and Awards from Outside Agencies

The American Psychological Association (APA) website has links to awards given to psychology students, including research awards, the Minority Fellowship program, and travel awards: http://www.apa.org/education/grad/funding.aspx. Scholarships and awards from the student group of APA, APAGS, is also listed on that website.

Note that more detailed information on research funding can be found in Chapter 15 of this handbook (“Research Funding”).

After You Have Graduated: Educational Loan Repayment Programs

The National Health Care Service Corps has a loan repayment program (in other words, they will pay a good proportion of your student loans) in exchange for working in rural or underserved areas. See http://nhsc.hrsa.gov/loanrepayment.

In addition, the National Institutes of Health has a loan repayment program for individuals doing clinical research. See http://www.lrp.nih.gov/index.aspx