



Mead Witter School of Music

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Graduate Funding in the School of Music

Graduate students in the School of Music are primarily supported by tuition waiver-granting appointments in the form of an assistantship or fellowship. Graduate students may also receive small scholarships in lieu of a full graduate appointment.

Eligibility

If your application is submitted by December 1, you will automatically be eligible for all of the funding appointments described on the next page. Recipients of graduate appointments must enroll full-time and maintain satisfactory progress in their degree program, including a cumulative GPA of 3.25.

Timeline

As part of the initial application, there is no additional process to apply for graduate funding. After admission to the School of Music, you will receive an invitation to apply for various TA vacancies. While initial funding offers are made in March, positions often open up throughout the spring.

Benefits

All graduate appointments provide eligibility for health insurance and a tuition waiver for the duration of the guarantee. If you are offered a graduate appointment, your offer letter will contain detailed information regarding the rights and responsibilities associated with your position. Multi-year funding guarantees are possible based on the availability of the funds and the desires of the student's area.

Last revised: September 3, 2025

Teaching Assistantships

Teaching Assistants manage discussion sections, small courses, or studio lessons. They receive an office/studio space in the music building where they meet with students and assist faculty in administrative tasks. Teaching Assistants have a weekly workload corresponding to FTE.

- FTE: 33.4% or 50%
Stipend: \$19,470 or \$29,150
- Full tuition waiver, including summer
 - Segregated Fees (~\$1,600) not covered

Musicology & Theory

Awarded to candidates in all areas. Theory TAs must be proficient in classroom piano.

Piano & Voice

Awarded to Piano and Voice candidates who teach studio lessons, provide accompanying support, and assist with the opera and choirs.

Conducting

Awarded to candidates in Choral, Orchestral, and Wind Conducting.

Band

Awarded to candidates in Brass, Conducting, Music Education, Percussion, and Woodwinds who serve in all areas of the band program.

Miscellaneous

Various assistantships throughout the School of Music based on available funds and faculty needs, for example:

- Studio leadership
- Chamber music (quartet, quintet)
- Special topics courses

Fellowships

Fellowships are awarded to outstanding applicants who strengthen our program with their musical talents and academic excellence. Although fellows have no work obligations, they are expected to demonstrate leadership through active participation in ensembles.

- FTE: 100%
Stipend: \$29,150
- Full tuition waiver, not including summer
 - Segregated Fees covered

Paul J. Collins Fellowship

Awarded to the best performers of the audition season. Each area of study nominates their best candidates, and decisions are made by a special committee of faculty.

Graduate School Fellowship

Awarded to outstanding candidates from all areas. Each area of study nominates their best candidates, and decisions are made by a committee of faculty.

Lorna Wendt Choral Fellowship

Awarded by the Choral faculty to one outstanding candidate for the Choral Conducting degree.

Margaret Winston Voice Fellowship

Awarded by the Voice faculty to one outstanding candidate for the Vocal Performance degree.

Leland A. Coon Musicology Fellowship

Awarded by the Musicology faculty to one outstanding candidate for the Musicology degree.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are my chances of receiving funding for my degree?

Funding is very competitive and depends primarily on your ranking within the area of study. Normally, we admit over 100 students and are able to offer about 20-30 funded positions. This number varies depending upon T.A. vacancies and fellowship resources in a given year. To see the most recent distribution of appointments, check out the "Admission Statistics" on our website: music.wisc.edu/graduate-admissions

Which positions will be available in Fall 2026?

Most of the appointments described above will be available to a certain extent, although the specific number of opportunities depends greatly on variable factors (such as enrollment trends, faculty grants, and the stock market) and the rotation of current graduate students out of existing appointments.

How can I increase my chances of being offered a funding appointment?

Start a relationship with your preferred faculty member(s). Send an email to introduce yourself and explain your interest in UW-Madison. Set up a meeting and/or sample lesson and inquire about funding opportunities in the area. In your "Statement of Purpose," express your desire for funding and describe your qualifications. Most importantly, have a stellar application and, if applicable, play an excellent audition.

When will I hear about funding?

If you are selected for the first round of offers, you will receive your offer no later than **March 25**. If you are not selected for the first round, you may still receive an offer at any time throughout the spring. Our ability to make secondary offers depends upon how many students accept our first offers. Like other schools, students who are offered funding in the first round will have until April 15 to accept our offer (**20 days**). This is a very dynamic process, and positions often open up at the last minute. Rest assured that we will contact you the moment we are able to offer you anything!

If I am offered funding, am I guaranteed funding in the future?

Many funding appointments come with multi-year guarantees. You may be offered a multi-year guarantee composed of varying appointments with different stipends and duties. Some students are offered 1-year appointments with no guarantee of future funding, depending on the needs and resources of each area of study. In all cases, your offer letter will clearly state the number of years guaranteed.

If I am NOT offered funding as an incoming student, will I be eligible next year?

Yes, while the opportunities are extremely competitive, all current students are eligible for funding as long as they remain enrolled in graduate-level courses and are in good academic standing. Each spring, continuing students are invited to apply for available TA positions throughout the department. In addition, students are always able to apply for external Teaching Assistantships in other UW-Madison departments.

What about student loans and other financial aid?

The School of Music does not process student loans or financial aid. We only offer teaching assistantships and fellowships, as well as small scholarships (\$1,000 – \$5,000) applied as a credit to your tuition account. To receive major financial aid or student loans, you will need to complete the FAFSA process through the federal government. We are not involved in this process, and we make our decisions independently of any other aid you may receive.