



# Financing Your Dreams

How You Can Afford Graduate School

2025-2026





# Funding Your Future

Graduate school is a worthwhile investment in your future. Need some financial help? Here are some sources you can turn to for financial assistance.

## TAX CREDITS

You may qualify for the Lifetime Learning Credit when filing your taxes. You can claim up to \$2,000 per student every tax year by filling out IRS Form 8863 using the information from the 1098-T IRS form Southern sends you. For more information, contact your tax adviser or consult the IRS booklet Tax Benefits for Education (available in PDF format at [irs.gov](https://irs.gov)).

## EMPLOYEE PROGRAMS

Many employers have programs set up to help their employees obtain a graduate education. If you're not sure if your employer provides educational benefits, check with your human resources department.

## GRADUATE ASSISTANT POSITION

If you're interested in working your way through grad school, you may want to inquire about the graduate assistant positions available in the Schools of Business and Social Work as well as Education, Psychology, and Counseling.

The School of Nursing hires qualified graduate students as clinical instructors, teaching assistants, and pre-nursing advisers.





# Loans for Learning

You may be eligible for up to \$20,500 in financial aid from the government through a Federal Direct Loan. In addition, GradPLUS and many private loans are available.

## DIRECT UNSUBSIDIZED LOANS

Direct Unsubsidized Loans, which are not based on financial need, can help you meet the cost of graduate education. Although repayment will not begin until after graduation, interest will be charged from the time the loan is disbursed. Before applying for these loans, you will need to fill out a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at [studentaid.gov/fafsa](https://studentaid.gov/fafsa). (Southern's school code is 003518).

## GradPLUS LOANS

These are low interest, federally backed student loans that are guaranteed by the federal government. These loans are similar to private student loans, but with the benefit of having fixed interest rates. Before applying for GradPLUS loans at [studentaid.gov/plus](https://studentaid.gov/plus), be sure to complete the FAFSA.

## PRIVATE LOANS

Personal loans are available from lending institutions nationwide. For advice on what loans may be right for you, talk with Southern's graduate finance counselor at 1.800.SOUTHERN or 423.236.2535.



## PUBLIC SERVICE LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM

Graduates who plan to enter a public service or a nonprofit field (excluding religion or evangelism) may qualify to have a portion of their loans forgiven. (This resources is available ONLY after graduation.) The federal student aid website states:

"In 2007, Congress created the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program to encourage individuals to enter and continue to work full-time in public service jobs. Under this program, borrowers may qualify for forgiveness of the remaining balance due on their eligible federal student loans after they have made 120 payments on those loans under certain repayment plans while employed full time by certain public service employers."

For detailed qualifying information, please visit [studentaid.gov](https://studentaid.gov).



# Your Budget

Graduate school tuition for 2025-2026 is \$795 per credit hour for a master’s and \$995 per credit hour for a doctorate. A \$65 general fee will be charged per semester. Tuition for the BS-DNP program will be charged at the master’s or doctoral rate based on the course level:

- 500-level and 600-level courses = master’s tuition
- 700-level and 800-level courses = doctoral tuition

## MONTHLY PAYMENT

Southern's monthly payment plan allows you to spread out the cost of tuition over the academic year and pay it in installments. Up to 12 interest-free payments are offered as an additional benefit to students.

### Cost of Living

Whether you'll be relocating to Chattanooga or just staying in the area temporarily, you may find that Southern's location will help you save on your overall costs while in graduate school. That's because Chattanooga's cost of living is below the national average. To figure out how much you'd save on living expenses while in the Chattanooga area, visit [bestplaces.net](https://bestplaces.net).

### Quick Look at Tuition

Following is the typical estimated cost for a semester (or summer) with a full-time load of 9 hours.

	Master's	Doctorate
Tuition	\$7,155	\$8,955
General Fee	65	65
Books and supplies	500	500
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<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,720</b>	<b>\$9,520</b>

## ONLINE ACCOUNTS AND PAYMENTS

Students can log onto their Southern account ([access.southern.edu](https://access.southern.edu)) and find the Financial & Fin Aid Info link under the My Access tab. From this link, you'll find links to the Financial Aid Offer Letter, Campus Card Charges, Account Summary, Make a Payment, and Financial Aid by Year or Term.

# Reasons to Attend Grad School

- **Career Change**

A graduate degree is a great way to pursue a new career. You may choose a field related to your undergrad studies, or one that sets you on a brand new path.

- **Marketability**

Expanding your training and skills with an advanced degree gives you a competitive edge and helps position you for professional advancement.

- **Income Boost**

Studies show that people with advanced degrees generally earn more than people with bachelor's degrees. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, professionals with a master's degree earn \$15,000-20,000 more per year than those with a bachelor's degree.



Power for Mind & Soul

**Graduate Finance Counselor:** 423.236.2535

**Email:** [gradfinance@southern.edu](mailto:gradfinance@southern.edu)

**Graduate Studies:** 423.236.2695

**Toll-Free number:** 1.800.SOUTHERN

**Website:** [southern.edu/graduatestudies](http://southern.edu/graduatestudies)

**Email:** [graduatestudies@southern.edu](mailto:graduatestudies@southern.edu)



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# IF YOU ARE READY

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to achieve your professional and personal goals at a Christ-centered private university, Southern can assist you in finding a way to fit the cost of a graduate education into your budget.

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# WE'D LIKE TO HELP

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and do our best to keep tuition as low as possible for all of our students, rather than increasing the rates and then offering scholarships to just a few.

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# GIVE US A CALL TODAY

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to find out how you can get started on a graduate degree—one of the most fulfilling steps you can take on the path to lifelong learning.