



Harvard University  
Graduate School of Design

# Financial Aid Handbook

2016-2017

International Students



# Financial Aid Handbook for International Students 2016-2017

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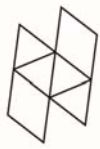
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## Introduction

This information has been designed to cover issues that pertain to international students, even those who have not been awarded financial assistance. This handbook should be used in conjunction with the GSD websites, [gsd.harvard.edu](http://gsd.harvard.edu), [422.gsd.harvard.edu](http://422.gsd.harvard.edu) and the GSD Student Guide (distributed at registration).

The Financial Aid Office, as well as Admissions, Registrar, Career Services and Career Discovery are all part of Student Services located in Gund Hall, Room 422. The Financial Aid Office staff includes Keith Gnoza, Director, Ellen Tang, Assistant Director, and Tessalina Halpern, Financial Aid Assistant. Questions about financial aid can be directed to the Financial Aid Office at 617.495.5455 (phone) or by email at [financial\\_aid@gsd.harvard.edu](mailto:financial_aid@gsd.harvard.edu). Office hours are Monday through Friday, 10am to 5pm. Students with questions or issues may meet with someone from the Financial Aid Office on a walk-in basis by visiting the front desk in Room 422. Appointments may also be scheduled by phone or email.

## The Academic Year Budget/Term Bill

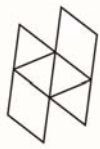
Each year, a standardized list of expenses is compiled to make up the student budget for the 9-month academic year (September to May). A student’s total Financial Aid cannot exceed the amount of the budget. The budget categories and amounts are listed below as well as in the online financial aid system. The entries with an asterisk(\*) will appear on the first Term Bill each semester. Expenses such as *Personal* or *Room and Board* will not appear on the Term Bill and are handled by the student directly. The exception to this rule is Harvard affiliated housing charges which may appear on the Term Bill.

Tuition*	47,240
Health Insurance*	2,630
Activity Fee*	150
Health Service Fee*	1,088
Room and Board	14,280
Books and Supplies	2,856
Personal	3,730
Computer (optional)	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$71,974</b>

The academic year budget for the **DDes program** is also **\$71,974**.

## Term Bill

Harvard University uses e-billing statements for tuition and school related charges. Students can view and pay their term bill online by using a HarvardKey (a secure way to access secure Harvard systems). Information, along with instructions for obtaining a HarvardKey, will be mailed to admitted students in the spring. The student bill website is [sfs.harvard.edu](http://sfs.harvard.edu)



The billing statement for the approaching fall semester should include the following:

### **Charges/Expenses**

- Tuition, health insurances, health and activity fees
- Housing/Meal Plans (if Harvard affiliated). See section below.
- Library fines, missed health appointment fees, printing and plotting charges
- Refunds

### **Credits/Payments**

- Payments, including your tuition deposit
- Anticipated aid (if applicable)
- Reversed fees or fines

Term Bill expenses are charged according to enrollment. If a student is attending for a full year, charges will be split between the fall and spring semesters. Financial aid is disbursed in semester increments, unless otherwise noted. Until loans and/or grants are disbursed to the bill, the anticipated award amount will be listed. If you have applied for a loan, the anticipated loan amount will be listed, and cannot be disbursed until awards have been accepted, promissory notes and other loan requirements (if applicable) are completed. All aid will be deposited in the student's term bill account. The GSD reserves the right to make adjustments to a student's Term Bill charges if inaccuracies relating to a student's actual enrollment situation are discovered.

### **Anticipated Aid Credits vs Actual Disbursed Aid Credits**

Financial aid credits are divided equally between the fall and spring semesters. For most students, aid credits will be applied to the e-bill in two equal amounts, once in the fall and once in the spring.

An anticipated financial aid credit is a credit that is expected to post to your e-bill at a future date. Anticipated financial aid credits can be thought of as an "advance" of your financial aid funds before they are disbursed and posted on your e-bill. Anticipated aid reports are sent to Student Accounts on a regular basis and before each e-bill is generated.

An actual financial aid disbursement is a credit that has already been disbursed and posted to your e-bill. In the case of a loan, this means you have e-signed all of your promissory notes and the lender has electronically transferred the funds to your account.

Refunds: Students who have a credit on their bill may request a refund from the Financial Aid Office. Refunds from the Term Bill require direct deposit, so students should be sure to sign up for direct deposit through the term bill site if a refund is requested or expected. Once the student receives a refund, they should evaluate to see if the refund amount was correct, based on payments, charges and any aid disbursements. Students are responsible to repay any amount incorrectly refunded to them.

### **Harvard Affiliated Housing/Rent Charges on Term Bill**

Most students who live in Harvard Real Estate Housing will have their rent charged as a monthly expense on their Term Bill. Those students are expected to pay their rent/their bill as it posts each month. Students who do not keep up with their monthly rent payments may be denied lease renewal options in the future.

### **The Monthly Payment Plan**

This option allows you to pay your balance due over the four months of the semester with the first payment due by the start of the semester. If you decide to use this plan, there will be an application fee per semester (currently \$35) and the amount will be added as a charge on your Term Bill. Prior semester balances will not be incorporated into the payment plan and must be paid immediately. Aid is subtracted from the balance before the payments are calculated. If you wish to sign up for the plan,



call the Student Accounts Office at 617.495.2739. Once a student signs up for the payment plan, they will be automatically enrolled each subsequent semester, so be sure to cancel the plan if not needed for future semester. Students who show a pattern of late payments may be denied access to the payment plan in the future.

### Term Bill Payment

Any amount due must be paid. If your amount due is \$0, you do not need to do anything. If you are awarded Financial Aid, it will be subtracted from semester charges when factoring the amount due. Students whose aid does not cover their bill will have to pay the balance due before they can be cleared for registration. Once a student has enrolled, they are expected to resolve any future charges.

### GSD Awards

Any admitted applicant who is eligible for and has applied for financial aid will be notified of their awards at the time of their notification of admission to the GSD. Current students who have reapplied for Financial Aid will be notified of their award in May. Descriptions of possible awards are listed below. All Harvard grant awards are subject to change in the event of any outside awards. The GSD reserves the right to make any adjustments to a student's aid if we discover discrepant financial information or inaccuracies relating to a student's actual enrollment situation. Late applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Students in the MDE program are not eligible for grant aid.

### GSD Grant

Grants do not need to be repaid. Awards may be based on need and/or merit. Merit factors are determined by the admissions committee, while financial need is determined by the Financial Aid Office based on the financial aid application. Because both need and merit are taken into account, there may be some students who do not receive any grant, even though they have financial need. Students who are awarded grant for their first year should expect to receive a similar grant in futures years, depending on consistent financial and satisfactory academic performance. Students who are awarded need-based grant need to reapply each year. Grant amounts are based on tuition, and may be adjusted to reflect any change in enrollment status/course load. For example, ***students who have a half-year at the end of their program will receive half their normal yearly grant because they are paying half the tuition of a full year.***

### Restricted Scholarships

The Harvard University Committee on General Scholarships administers various grants and traveling fellowships that are available for students from across the university. Some of these are available for international students. A complete listing of these awards and their requirements can be found at [scholarship.harvard.edu](http://scholarship.harvard.edu). Generally, decisions are not made until early April for the following fall semester. Since there is a lot of competition for these awards, many students will not be awarded even if they meet the qualifications. Students will be notified on how to apply for these awards each February for the following fall semester. An award from this type of fund is not guaranteed to be automatically renewed each year, so any recipient should be aware of that when planning for the future. Questions should be directed to the Financial Aid Office.

### Alternative Loans

Alternative loans, sometimes referred to as private loans, are not awarded as part of the original aid package, but are initiated by the student in the event that the award package does not provide enough funds to cover the academic budget. Many of the alternative loans from private lenders require a co-signer to apply with the student borrower. A list of such loans can be found at [sfs.harvard.edu/loans](http://sfs.harvard.edu/loans). With a co-signer, students may borrow up to the difference between their academic year budget and any other financial aid. However, the Harvard University Credit Union Graduate Student Loan is an option that does not require a co-signer.



## Harvard University Employee Credit Union Loan

Harvard University Employee Credit Union offers an education loan for students without a co-signer. Students can borrow up to a maximum yearly amount of \$12,000. For more details such as loan interest rates and fees, along with the application process, please visit the Financial Aid Office's webpage on [422.gsd.harvard.edu](http://422.gsd.harvard.edu). Interested students can notify the Financial Aid Office of their intent to borrow a private loan. Application instructions will be provided at a later date. Some students may not have access to this loan option due to government restrictions based on home country (see link listed above).

## Outside Awards/Sponsors

An outside award is any grant, scholarship or loan not funded by Harvard University or the GSD. Students are required to notify the Financial Aid Office as soon as possible about any expected award from an outside source, since all awards must be monitored. All outside awards are added to a student's financial aid package. If a student receives an outside award that covers the full academic budget, any GSD grant aid previously awarded will be reduced or cancelled. Please be sure to notify the Financial Aid Office as early as possible to avoid adjustments in aid during the year. For those students who are receiving outside awards, it is very important for the GSD to know if the money will be coming to the GSD directly, or if it is being paid to the student. We try to include outside awards as part of the anticipated aid, so it is important for us to have accurate information.

Almost everyone wants to know where to look for sources of outside scholarships, but there is no quick answer and there are no guaranteed sources for grants. Here are a few suggestions for searching for scholarships:

- Check the Financial Aid Office's webpage for outside award suggestions at [gsd.harvard.edu/outsidescholarships](http://gsd.harvard.edu/outsidescholarships).
- Agencies in your home country or your government may offer funding options for students in the US.
- Search the Internet, using keywords of discipline, family origin, nationality, gender, race or area of expertise.
- Before going through the application process, be sure to check deadlines and requirements thoroughly to avoid wasted effort. If their webpage seems out of date, contact the sponsor to see if the scholarship is still being offered.

Be careful of any scholarships that ask for money as part of the process. Some websites are good for gathering scholarship ideas into one website, but may ask many questions that can be used in marketing for other companies. Thorough searching on the web can produce many of the same results, but may take more time. Use your own judgment.

## Sponsors

Some students are fortunate enough to find an organization, such as their government or a private agency that will sponsor their education. Sponsors generally contact the student first, sometimes before the student is admitted to a school for the upcoming year. Please contact the Financial Aid Office to alert them if you will be receiving that kind of support. The Financial Aid Office will coordinate with Harvard's Sponsored Billing Office to prepare official bill statements for the sponsor. Depending on the amount and/or terms of sponsor coverage, a student may have their GSD aid reduced or cancelled in order to stay within the academic budget and sponsor guidelines.

## Loan Debt

The amount of debt you will incur to attend the GSD should be carefully considered. Loans must be repaid. Current credit card debt as well as undergraduate loans should also be taken into consideration. When deciding to attend the GSD, students should consider the amount of debt they will incur. Once your aid has been finalized, and you have considered the amount of



alternative loans you will need during your first year, you can multiply that amount by the number of years in your program. If you use an alternative loan, your lender may provide you with payment estimates.

## **Financial Awareness for Cost of Program**

All students are expected to consider how they will pay for their program, taking into account the total cost from enrollment to graduation, financial aid offered, and the amount they will have to pay out-of-pocket. International students especially should keep in mind currency exchange fluctuations. Grant and loan amounts, as well as policies will probably remain consistent throughout one's program, so a student's financial situation the first year should be indicative of their out-of-pocket costs for any future years of their program.

## **When Aid Does Not Cover the Budget**

Financial Aid awards are based on both the student's need and our resources. In most cases, the awards are not enough to cover the total cost of attendance. Students should consider the following options to help cover their costs:

- Use family assets such as savings, investments or family assistance.
- Consider using the Monthly Payment Plan.
- Research outside award options.
- Consider working during school to help pay expenses.
- Consider borrowing an alternative loan.

## **Changes in Enrollment**

Commencement, withdrawal, decreasing/increasing number of credits, and taking a leave of absence are all situations that would cause a change in enrollment. All students who are expecting or planning a change in standard enrollment must get permission from the Registrar, and should contact the Financial Aid Office (if they are receiving financial aid, this includes any loans and grants). Aid is based on tuition charges and enrollment status, so failure to notify both the Registrar and the Financial Aid Office may result in disproportionate awards. A change in enrollment may also affect the start of education loan repayment. Be sure you know the effects of your change before finalizing any related plans. The school's enrollment policy and relevant information can be found at [422.gsd.harvard.edu](http://422.gsd.harvard.edu).

## **The Final Semester for MArch I and MArch I AP Program Degree Candidates**

For either of these programs, students end their time at the GSD with a fall semester (instead of a full school year). During that final semester, students will complete studio or thesis requirements, dependent upon program requirements. There is a choice for those students to either complete the requirements in one semester or "split" the requirements of that final semester over a period of one full year (fall and spring). Questions about credits/courses should be directed to the GSD Registrar's Office. Both the academic year budget and available financial aid will vary depending on the student's choice (see below). Aid related questions should be directed to the Financial Aid Office. Please review the following descriptions.

### **One Semester Only**

For one semester only, the budget is generally half the amount of a full year, depending on course load choices. Tuition is charged at the full semester rate. If a student is receiving a grant, the grant amount will be half of the regular amount for that final year because tuition is half of a full 9 month academic year.



### **Split-semester Option**

Students can request to split their final semester over two semesters. Students who choose this option must receive approval from the GSD Registrar in March prior to the final semester. If approval is granted, and the aid requirements are still being met, students are still eligible for aid. For the split-semester option, only half of one year's tuition is charged, but all of the other costs for a full year are included in the budget. As with the one semester only option, any grant a student is receiving will be half of the normal amount the student receives for a full year. The policy for international students may vary slightly because of visa requirements; those students should speak with the Registrar about the financial ramifications of splitting. If students are at the GSD longer than fall semester only option, it is more expensive even though the tuition charge is the same. Students who choose to split will be charged a maintenance fee of \$1,000 in that spring semester.

## **The Final Semester for MDes (non-AP) Program Degree Candidates**

Students in their second year of MDes (non-AP) end their time at the GSD with a fall semester (instead of a full school year). During that final semester, there is a choice to either complete the requirements in one semester, or to extend and stay an extra semester. Questions about credits/courses should be directed to the GSD Registrar's Office. Both the academic year budget and available financial aid will vary depending on the student's choice (see below). Aid related questions should be directed to the Financial Aid Office. Please review the following descriptions.

### **One Semester Only**

For those who choose the one-semester-only option, the budget is generally half the amount of a full year, depending on course load choices. Tuition is charged at the full semester rate. If a student is receiving grant, the grant amount will be half of the regular amount for that final year because tuition is half of a full 9 month academic year.

### **Extended Option**

MDes students in their final semester can extend and stay on an extra semester. With that option, students will register for 8 units, and will be charged an additional one quarter tuition amount for that semester. Students in this option will have half-time status. Additional grant will not be available for students who choose that option. Students who choose this option must receive approval from the GSD Registrar in March prior to the second year. This extended option is more expensive, so students should carefully consider the financial implications.

## **Part-time Status**

When a student's enrollment falls below half-time (8 units), financial aid is no longer available. In addition, loan grace periods or repayment periods may begin at that point. Generally, the GSD does not allow students to enroll as less-than-half time.

## **Additional Responsibilities**

With regard to financial aid, any student withdrawing, taking a leave of absence, or graduating should consider the following information:

- The student should fully understand how leave would affect both the degree requirements and their aid.
- Make sure you have notified the Registrar regarding necessary approval. For graduating students, you will be contacted by your department to verify your degree requirements.
- Whether or not you are leaving temporarily or permanently, you need to complete a Loan Borrower's Exit Interview *if you have borrowed* education loans during your attendance. This informational session will help you understand your rights and responsibilities for repayment and related topics. After your enrollment has changed and you have notified the Registrar, an on-line Exit Interview Session will be available.
- Be aware of repayment information for any alternative loans that you may have borrowed (if applicable).
- Update the GSD with any changes to your address through GROPIUS at [gropius.gsd.harvard.edu](http://gropius.gsd.harvard.edu).





- Resolve any balances or credits on your term bill.
- For your leave of absence, be aware of when the financial aid application is due for the semester in which you will be returning.

## **What to Expect in Future Years**

### **Changes in the Cost of Education**

It is safe to assume that the yearly academic budget will increase slightly each year due to a variety of factors. Tuition is determined annually by the GSD, but must be approved by the Harvard Corporation. Health Insurance and Health Service Fees are evaluated each year based on related costs and services, and the rates are set by University Health Services. Other budget items such as living expenses and supplies are usually increased by a small percentage each year to keep up with normal living increases.

### **Financial Aid in Future Years**

The GSD is committed to maintaining our grant aid. Although students need to re-apply for aid each year, aid will remain consistent during their enrollment as long as the student's financial need remains consistent. Factors that may affect a student's grant include but are not limited to a change in enrollment status, changes in finances due to marriage or inheritance, decreases in course load or change in program, as well as grants from other sources. Alternative private loans options may change from year to year.

## **Information Security**

With identity theft on the rise, all individuals should be careful to protect their personal identification information. In many cases it is the linking of several personal identifiers that leads to the ability for someone to steal your identity, such as your name AND your date of birth.

Some of the key pieces of information that you should protect:

- Social Security Number
- Harvard University identification number and HarvardKey
- Driver's license number
- Picture identifications, such as driver's license, Harvard ID cards, passports
- Date of birth
- Mother's maiden name
- Credit Card/Bank account numbers

Here are some suggestions of "Do's and Don'ts" that may help you protect yourself:

- Never respond to an unsolicited email which asks you to update your personal information.
- If you need to email someone at the GSD, please just include your name *without* another identifier such as your Harvard ID number. In most cases, your information can be identified by your name.
- In a safe place (not your wallet or purse), keep a list of your credit cards, bank debit cards and other identification, along with phone numbers you would use to report a lost or stolen card. In the event that your wallet or purse is stolen, you have the information available to quickly report such incidences.
- Don't leave your computer unattended while you are logged in. Set up a login password and activate the option to request a password after your computer has been inactive for a period of time.



- Shred or destroy, rather than discard, any materials with your name and other identifiers.
- Avoid answering credit or billing questions from unsolicited calls.
- Avoid emailing personal information, or attachments that contain personal information.
- Review your credit card statements for any suspicious activity regularly.
- Review the GSD Computer Resources manual for related protection information.
- Review Harvard's statement on Information Security and Privacy at [security.harvard.edu](http://security.harvard.edu).

## **Miscellaneous Information**

### **Aid Application Procedures and Requirements**

Students who are awarded need-based grant need to reapply each year to be considered. Applications and instructions will be distributed to students during the spring semester for currently enrolled students. The financial aid application deadline for continuing students is in April. Students who apply after the deadline may still be considered for aid. However, depending on when an application is received, the amount of aid awarded may be affected.

### **Supporting Documentation**

The Financial Aid Office reserves the right to request supporting documentation such as Parent's International Tax Forms to verify financial information submitted on the application. All supporting documentation must be translated into English and all currency amounts will need to be converted to US dollars.

### **Eligibility Requirements**

In order to be eligible for, and to maintain aid, you must:

- Maintain satisfactory grades.
- Satisfy academic degree requirements.
- Attend at least half-time.
- Not have withdrawn from at least 50% of credits attempted and must have completed requirements for graduation within 150% of the normal time allotted for students in the same program.
- Promptly provide required aid-related documentation.
- Participate in Loan Borrower Entrance and Exit Interview sessions (if applicable).

In the event that a student is making unsatisfactory progress, but is allowed to continue taking classes, that student's grant eligibility will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Students with questions about the specifics of this policy can contact the Financial Aid Office.

### **Student Financial Aid and Taxes**

The Financial Aid Office staff is not qualified to provide thorough advice relating to taxes and tax form procedures. Any questions should be presented to a tax professional. Please review Harvard's International Office website for international student tax information at [io.harvard.edu](http://io.harvard.edu).



## **Websites and Telephone Numbers**

### **GSD Contacts**

Financial Aid Office	617.495.5455
Registrar	617.496.1237
Student Services/Admissions Office	617.495.5453
Student Services	617.496.9946

### **Harvard University**

Student Billing/ Monthly Payment Plan Information	617.495.2739
Student Health Insurance	617.495.2008

## **Federal Consumer Information**

As a lender of federal aid, Harvard is required to provide certain information to **all** students on a yearly basis. That information is explained in the GSD Student Handbook, the GSD webpages [gsd.harvard.edu](http://gsd.harvard.edu), [422.gsd.harvard.edu](http://422.gsd.harvard.edu), the Harvard University webpage [www.harvard.edu](http://www.harvard.edu) and this Financial Aid Handbook (also available on the GSD webpage. Another source of consumer related information is at [hupd.harvard.edu](http://hupd.harvard.edu) (The Harvard University Police).

Please contact the Office of Student Services if there is information you are unable to locate.