

# Financial Aid

2025-2026

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*Contact a Financial Aid Officer for more information on external scholarship resources.*

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## Basics of Financing the DNP Program

The Office of Financial Aid provides workshops, financial literacy programs, as well as one on one meetings with students to maximize creative borrowing and help with a loan repayment strategy after graduation. DNP online students have the opportunity to meet with our Financial Aid Officers to inquire about loan funding, rates, and logistics of planning for the next two years of online instruction.

Wake Forest School of Medicine adheres to a Cost of Attendance that will likely vary during each of your two years in DNP school. You will receive an award notification from our office each June that details Cost of Attendance, your suggested budget, and your loan/ scholarship offer for the year. It is important to note that personal resources should be used whenever possible to delay borrowing. Even small contributions out of pocket can make a tremendous difference in accruing interest on federal loans. Always delay borrowing as long as possible.

Most DNP students already have a budget that works for them however make sure to take our suggested budget into consideration when planning your time in this program. Reduce consumer debt as much as possible before matriculation so you are not using borrowed funds to pay old debt.

## Scholarship Resources

The links below provide information on external funding opportunities. Click each one to find funding amounts and application deadline

[American Association of Colleges of Nursing:](#) Scholarships awarded to graduate nursing students.

[Eunice M. Smith Scholarship:](#) This scholarship program supports registered nurses pursuing additional baccalaureate, master's, or doctoral level education on a part-time basis.

[Judy Knox Scholarship:](#) This scholarship is offered to graduates from diploma nursing programs that are pursuing additional education in nursing.

[Mary Lewis Wyche Fellowship:](#) This fellowship is offered to registered nurses seeking their masters or doctorate in nursing practice or administration on a full-time basis.

[Nurses' Educational Funds, Inc.:](#) Awards scholarships to graduate degree nursing students who are members of a national professional nursing association.

[NCNA Triad Region Scholarship:](#) Scholarships are available to NCNA members who live or work in the Triad Region who have chosen to further their professional career by pursuing education at the baccalaureate, masters or doctoral level.

[NCNA Southwest Region Scholarship:](#) Scholarships are available to NCNA members who live or work in the Southwest Region who have chosen to further their professional career by pursuing education at the baccalaureate or graduate level.

## Student Loans

**Federal loans** - As a graduate student, you are eligible for federal loans totaling Cost of Attendance by simply submitting a FAFSA each year. Unsubsidized Stafford and Graduate PLUS loans are available to graduate students.

An Unsubsidized Stafford loan has a lower interest rate and origination fee than the Graduate PLUS loan. Our office will ensure you maximize this loan before using the Graduate PLUS loan. For the 24-25 aid year, the Stafford loan has an interest rate of 8.08% and a 1.057% origination fee. The Graduate PLUS loan has an interest rate of 9.08% with a 4.228% origination fee.

Federal loans have fixed interest rates. Once set, each individual loan rate will never change. Interest rates are evaluated by the Department of Education each year. If they are adjusted, new loans disbursed after July 1<sup>st</sup> are affected.

Benefits of federal loans include:

- Six-month grace period before beginning repayment
- Flexible, easy to manage repayment plans
- PSLF eligibility

**Private Loans:** Private loans can be beneficial to some students; however, we encourage you to review the pros and cons before deciding between federal and private funding.

Drawbacks to private loans include the fact that they cannot be consolidated with federal loans and they are not eligible for Public Service Loan Forgiveness. Private loans could be a viable option if you become ineligible to borrow federal loans. They have the potential to offer lower interest rates for borrowers with established credit history. Private loans are good options for students who are managing cash flow, as opposed to those who are living solely on financing. If you are in a position to repay your loans quickly after graduation, this option could save you interest expense over time. Please speak with a financial aid officer for more information on federal vs. private loans.

## North Carolina FELS

NC FELS (Forgivable Education Loan for Service) is a loan forgiveness program that provides \$7,000 a year to DNP students from North Carolina in exchange for a service obligation following the completion of their training. The service obligation requires recipients to work full-time in NC for each year the loan was awarded. You may work in any geographic area of NC. If you fail to stay in NC after training, you must repay the loan at an interest rate of 7% (interest accrues from the date of disbursement). FELS eligibility requires students to be enrolled in a minimum of 6 credit hours.

\* Please note: MSN-DNP graduates must provide direct healthcare delivery to NC residents to qualify for service forgiveness.

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*For more information on  
Federal Student Loans, visit  
[www.studentaid.gov](http://www.studentaid.gov)*

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*NC FELS Applications can be  
found at [www.CFNC.org](http://www.CFNC.org)*

## Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF)

Public Service Loan Forgiveness was created by Congress to encourage individuals to enter into and continue to work full-time in public service employment. Under PSLF, borrowers may qualify for forgiveness of the remaining balance of their federal student loans after they have made 120 monthly payments while employed full-time by certain public service employers.

### Program Requirements:

**BORROW** – Have eligible loans (Direct Loans Only).

**WORK** – Maintain a full-time employment status while working for a qualifying public service organization.

**REPAY** – Make 120 qualifying payments under an eligible Repayment Plan.

For more information on PSLF:

[www.studentaid.gov](http://www.studentaid.gov)

## Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Loan Repayment Program

Loan repayment is available to Registered Nurses and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses working in a public or private eligible Critical Shortage Facility OR Nurse Faculty employed at an eligible school of nursing.

Awarded participants will receive payments totaling 60 percent of their outstanding qualifying educational loan balance incurred while pursuing an education in nursing in exchange for a two-year service commitment.

\*Qualifying participants may receive an additional 25 percent of their original loan balance for an optional third year of service.



## Financial Aid Timeline

**December 2024:** FAFSA available

**May 15, 2025:** WFSM deadline for FAFSA

**June 2025:** Financial Aid letters are emailed to students

**June 30, 2025:** Deadline to accept/decline awards, sign master promissory notes and complete entrance counseling

**August 25, 2025:** First financial aid disbursement available

**January 5, 2026:** Second disbursement available

**May 18, 2026:** Third disbursement available

**May 15, 2026:** Second year financial aid application deadline

**August 2026:** Second year, first financial aid disbursement



## Office of Financial Aid

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## Financial Aid Staff

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Please let us know how we can be of assistance!

## Important 1<sup>st</sup> Year Information

Below are tidbits to help you begin your first year of the DNP Program:

- Check your credit report! Grad Plus loans are credit based. Be aware of any credit report mistakes.
- Your 1st disbursement will be received on August 25, 2025. Your second disbursement will be in January of 2026, and your third disbursement will be in May of 2026. Budget accordingly!
- Read your Financial Aid emails and use the Financial Aid Canvas course to your advantage!
- Explore ways to save money and cut borrowing.
- Review your financial aid award letter that will be emailed to you in mid-June. Submit your acceptance within 14 days of receipt.
- Sign up for direct deposit to receive your living expense funds.

## Budgeting Information

DNP Student 12-Month Budget		DNP Student Budget		Your Monthly Estimates	
2025-2026		2025-2026			
<u>First Year</u>		Monthly Living Expenses			
Tuition/Fees	\$25,981	<u>First Year</u>			
Books/Supplies					
&Equipment	\$1,400	Lodging	\$1,800		
Lodging	\$21,600	Utilities	\$295		
Utilities	\$3,540	Food	\$480		
Food	\$5,760	Transportation	\$475		
Transportation	\$5,700	Misc.	\$192		
Misc.	\$2,304				
Health Insurance	\$5,029				
Loan Fees	\$2,420	<b>Total Monthly Budget: \$3,242</b>			
Laptop	\$1,222				
<b>Total Budget:</b>	<b>\$74,956</b>				