

Checklist for Transition from Undergraduate to Graduate Student

- **Establish financial goals for yourself**
 - Examples: Short term: pay off your credit card debt before you start graduate school; borrow the least amount necessary to graduate from school.
- **Start a financial aid information binder.** Keep a spreadsheet for each school where you apply and record standard financial aid information such as:
 - Application deadlines.
 - Required forms (e.g., FAFSA, tax returns).
 - Cost of attendance (know the amount that the school budgets for living expenses)
 - Percent of students receiving scholarship aid from the institution
 - Average annual scholarship awarded by the school
 - Average school debt for the most recent graduating class.
- **Remember – need-based funding is likely to be limited (especially grant aid).**
- **Research Outside Scholarships/Fellowships-** Keep another spreadsheet with list of private foundations to which you have applied for scholarships or loans, and the applicable requirements, contact information, deadlines, and application statuses.
- **Research the availability of Federal Work Study** and Research Assistantship positions on campus.
- **Create Spending Plans-** For each school you are accepted to, create a spending plan to see which school will cost you the most out of pocket/loan money. Answer questions like: Do I need a car? Can I live at home and save money?
- **Familiarize yourself with your credit history.** Obtain a copy of your credit report from all three major credit reporting bureaus. Review your report for any errors or negative information.
- **Plan for moving expenses to your graduate/professional school and for start-up costs.**

Many Graduate Schools don't provide financial aid to cover the cost of moving expenses. Additionally, since financial aid funds may not be available immediately at the start of the year, plan to bring enough funds to cover your startup costs. (ex: moving, security deposits, rent)
- Although increases in your cost of living can result in higher loan eligibility – **borrow only what you absolutely need.**