INSIDER'S GUIDE TO

FINANCING YOUR GRADUATE EDUCATION

Berklee

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Berklee's graduate programs aim to help you achieve your advanced creative, academic, and professional goals in the performing arts and entertainment industries. We know it's crucial to find programs that fulfill both your educational and financial needs. In this guide, we'll break down what goes into paying for a Berklee graduate program and discuss the ample resources available to help you fund your education.

"Navigating the landscape of grants, scholarships, and loans requires a deep understanding of federal regulations and institutional policy. We are the experts who ensure the process is transparent for every student. We know that completing your education is an investment in your future. Our role is to be your partner, guiding you to make informed decisions that make your dreams a reality."

–Russell Romandini, Director of Student Aid Operations

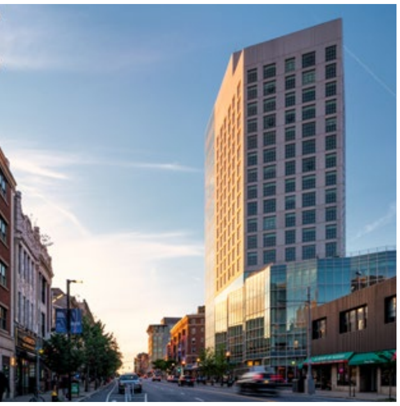
FIND YOUR PROGRAM

With more than 40 graduate programs, Berklee offers a wide range of disciplines and learning environments to help you succeed in your education and career.

- **Master of Arts**
- **Master of Music**
- **Master of Fine Arts**
- **Artist Diploma**
- **Professional Studies Certificate**
- **Graduate Performance Diploma**
- **Graduate Certificate**
- **Individual Graduate-Level Courses**

OUR CAMPUSES

Berklee offers graduate degree programs at our campuses in Boston, New York City, and Valencia, Spain, as well as through Berklee Online.



BOSTON CAMPUS

Home to a variety of rigorous graduate programs offered by Berklee College of Music and Boston Conservatory at Berklee, the **Boston campus** pulses with music and artistic energy. Located in the city's vibrant Back Bay neighborhood, our home campus offers a microcosm of the entertainment industry with top-of-the-line facilities.

NEW YORK CITY CAMPUS

Located in midtown Manhattan, just a few blocks from Broadway, Berklee NYC offers a **Master of Arts in Creative Media and Technology** with the option to choose from three specializations. The campus features newly renovated facilities and state-of-the-art technology.

VALENCIA, SPAIN CAMPUS

Pursue a **Master of Arts or Master of Music** degree while studying in the iconic City of Arts and Sciences in Valencia, Spain. With world-class facilities, such as the majestic Palau de les Arts opera house and a music technology complex that includes a scoring stage, recording studios, and labs, Berklee's Valencia campus offers everything you'll need to push your craft forward.

BERKLEE ONLINE

The college's award-winning online school, Berklee Online, offers **Master of Arts and Master of Music** degrees, **graduate certificates**, and individual **graduate-level courses**. This option allows you to study at your own pace from the location of your choice.

FINANCING YOUR PROGRAM

The exact cost for each program varies depending on location, program length, and degree type. It's important to understand the unique costs associated with each program, but first, let's review the general costs of attending a graduate program.

COST OF ATTENDANCE

The cost of attendance is the sum of your costs for the academic year and includes both direct (tuition, fees, and health insurance) and indirect (room and board, books, supplies, and personal expenses) charges.

TUITION

Tuition is the primary component of the cost of attendance and is based on charges for a full-time course load. Your tuition cost and associated charges will be adjusted if you are approved for part-time enrollment. If you do not obtain approval for part-time enrollment, you will be billed as a full-time student.

HOUSING AND FOOD

Housing and food are direct costs for students living on campus and indirect costs for students living off campus or attending Berklee Online. The estimated cost of living off campus while pursuing an on-campus program varies depending on the location of the school you attend. On-campus housing is not offered for graduate students in Boston or New York City.

BOOKS, SUPPLIES, TRAVEL, AND PERSONAL EXPENSES

The figures provided for books, supplies, and personal expenses are indirect charges for all students and are based on typical expenditures. These estimates are evaluated and updated each year, with actual costs varying from student to student.

HEALTH INSURANCE

All students studying on campus are required to be enrolled in a health insurance plan that offers comprehensive coverage. Students are automatically enrolled in and charged for the **Berklee Student Health Insurance Program (SHIP)** unless they opt out of the program and provide documentation of comparable health insurance coverage. This requirement does not apply to Berklee Online students.





ESTIMATED COSTS BY PROGRAM

To learn about the cost of attendance associated with a particular graduate program, click on any of the buttons below:

BERKLEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC

BOSTON CONSERVATORY AT BERKLEE

BERKLEE VALENCIA

BERKLEE ONLINE

BERKLEE NYC

PAYING FOR YOUR BERKLEE EDUCATION

There are many paths that lead you towards an affordable Berklee education. Many students pay for their education with a combination of student employment, scholarships, assistantships, grants, loans, and personal financial contributions. Financial aid benefits vary from program to program, so once you know which program you're applying for, you'll have a clearer idea of what financial aid is available to you.

SCHOLARSHIPS, ASSISTANTSHIPS, AND GRANTS

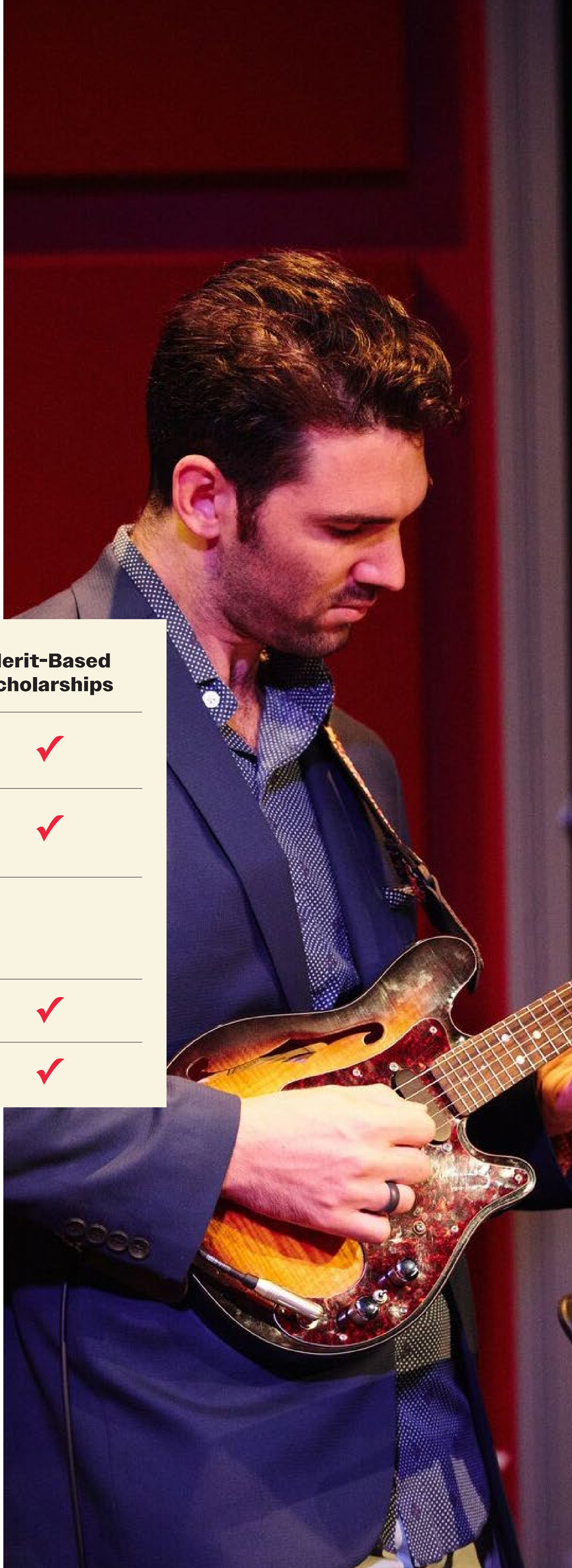
BERKLEE SCHOLARSHIPS

Institutional aid is awarded by Berklee as **merit-based scholarships** and full-tuition grants, and varies by school and program. More detailed information regarding these funding options is available on each program's webpage.

	Full-Tuition Grant	Merit-Based Scholarships
Berklee College of Music (Boston)	✓	✓
Boston Conservatory at Berklee graduate program		✓
Boston Conservatory at Berklee Artist Diploma graduate program	✓	
Berklee Valencia		✓
Berklee NYC		✓

GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

Students pursuing a master's degree on the Boston and New York campuses are able to apply for **graduate assistantships**. These paid positions are open to both domestic and international students.



OUTSIDE SCHOLARSHIPS AND BENEFITS

There are many **outside scholarship and grant opportunities** available for graduate students. We encourage all students to explore and apply for private scholarships that may be awarded locally or nationally. It is up to you to research and apply for outside scholarships.

DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR STUDENTS SEARCHING FOR OUTSIDE SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS?

"Creating a comprehensive plan to attend Berklee as a graduate student is one of the best future investments you can make. The Student Financial Services team is here to help guide you throughout the aid application process. We will help you to understand your eligibility and navigate you through the myriad of financing options that will help you put all of the cost pieces together to achieve your educational goals."

–Dyan Teehan, Director of Student Aid Awarding

OVER-AWARDING

As required by the federal government, the total of your financial aid and outside awards may not exceed your cost of attendance. You must inform Berklee of grants, scholarships, or other education benefits you receive from sources outside of Berklee, which include civic organizations, vocational rehabilitation programs, and tuition reimbursement benefits.

In most cases, receiving scholarships from an outside provider will not affect your financial aid award. However, sometimes it is necessary to adjust an award to prevent an over-award. If this happens, we will first adjust any self-help funds, such as federal and private loans, to reduce potential student debt.

DETERMINING YOUR ELIGIBILITY FOR FINANCIAL AID

There are different types of financial aid available for most Berklee graduate students, including institutional scholarships, federal financial aid, and private scholarships, grants, and loans. Domestic and international students will have different options and should submit the appropriate forms and applications for consideration.

DOMESTIC STUDENTS

All US citizens and eligible **noncitizens** are strongly encouraged to file the **FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)** to be considered for federal student aid.

Berklee's FAFSA School Code: 002126

Please note that when you enter Berklee's FAFSA code, the school name will appear as "Berklee College of Music." If you are applying for a program at Boston Conservatory at Berklee, Berklee Online, or Berklee NYC, this is still the code you will use.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

We encourage international graduate students to **explore affordability options** such as outside scholarships and grants, payment plans, and private education loans.

LOANS

When you have exhausted options for scholarships, assistantships, and grants, the next type of aid to consider is a loan. This is money that you borrow and have to pay back with interest. There are a few different types of loans to consider—Federal Direct, Graduate PLUS, and private—that each come with a unique application process and interest rate.

FEDERAL DIRECT LOANS

The Berklee Office of Student Financial Services will determine federal loan eligibility for US citizens and eligible noncitizens who file a FAFSA and all associated required documents. Eligible graduate students may borrow Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loans, subject to annual and aggregate federal loan limits. These loans are considered a form of self-help financial aid that must be paid back with interest.

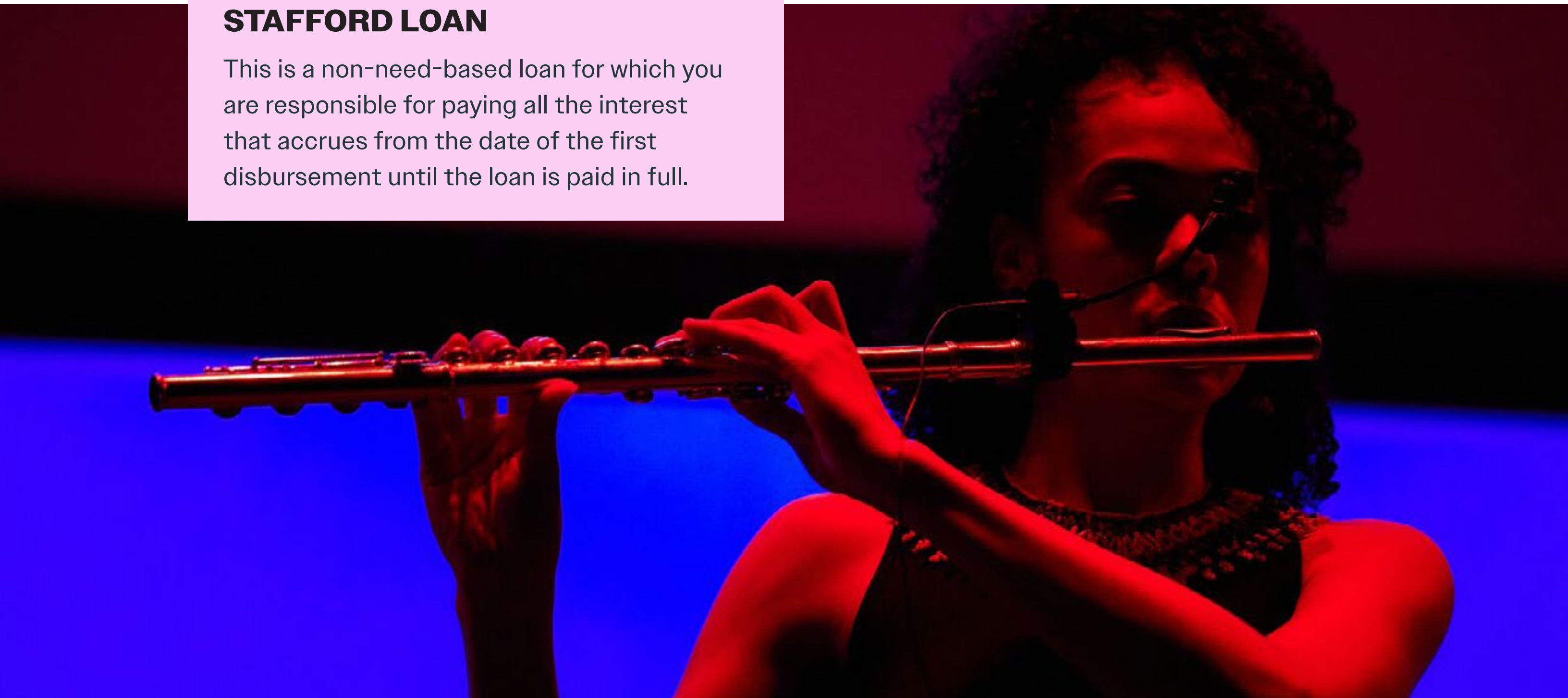
Repayment begins six months after you graduate, withdraw, or drop below half-time status. Repayment is generally made over the course of 10 years, although there are options to manage the length of repayment and monthly payment amounts.

Federal loans are available to eligible US citizens and eligible noncitizens attending at least half-time in an eligible degree program. Loan eligibility may be adjusted based on enrollment status, cost of attendance, program eligibility, and federal limits. For loans first disbursed on or after July 1, 2026, and before July 1, 2027, the fixed interest rate for Direct Unsubsidized Loans for graduate and professional students is 8.07 percent. Graduate students who have never been professional students may borrow up to $20,500 per year, with a $100,000 graduate aggregate limit, subject to eligibility.

First-time borrowers of federal loans must complete an online **Master Promissory Note (MPN) and an entrance counseling session** to be eligible for the loans.

FEDERAL DIRECT UNSUBSIDIZED STAFFORD LOAN

This is a non-need-based loan for which you are responsible for paying all the interest that accrues from the date of the first disbursement until the loan is paid in full.



GRADUATE PLUS LOAN

Beginning July 1, 2026, Direct PLUS Loans are generally no longer available to graduate and professional students who are enrolling in a new program, enrolling at a new school, or taking out a Direct Loan for the first time for the program in which they are enrolled. A limited exception may allow some continuing borrowers to continue borrowing Graduate PLUS Loans for the remainder of their program if they meet the expected time-to-credential. This means students need to complete the program within the published program length, regardless of full-time or part-time enrollment. Students who need additional financing should review federal eligibility carefully and may need to consider private education loans.

PRIVATE EDUCATION LOANS

Private education loans are available to most domestic students and some international students. Before seeking out a private loan, we encourage you to first exhaust your own funding, scholarships, and federal aid as options. We encourage students to borrow only what they need and be mindful of repayment obligations to keep debt levels to a minimum.

If you choose a private education loan, it can often help bridge the gap between the actual cost of your education and any other financial resources you may have. Alternative loans are offered by private lenders (banks/credit unions) and are credit-based with a variety of interest rates and repayment options. Berklee maintains a list of lenders that offer good customer service, interest rates, and repayment terms on **ELM Select**.

Interest rates on private loans are at least partially based on the borrower's creditworthiness, and for graduate loans, the borrower is usually the student. Students should check their credit bureaus for errors and resolve them before applying for any private loans. To increase the likelihood of approval and a lower interest rate, students may want to add a co-borrower to strengthen their loan application.

Berklee will certify a loan from any lender of your choice without penalty, and does not accept gifts from any private education loan lender.

PRIVATE LOAN CONSIDERATIONS

INTEREST RATE

The primary consideration for a private loan is the interest rate. A fixed interest rate remains the same for the life of the loan. A variable interest rate moves up or down based on market changes, which means the monthly payment will also fluctuate. These loans are based on having a strong credit history and a good credit score. Some students may be required to add a cosigner because of the length of their credit history. If you require a cosigner, some lenders offer a cosigner release option, where cosigners can be released from the loan after making a specified number (as determined by the lender) of on-time payments, and as long as the student meets credit and income criteria.

YOUR LOAN PERIOD

The loan period, or period of enrollment, is the semester(s) for which you wish to use a loan. Generally, a loan period is the first day of class through the last day of class in a given semester. If you are applying for a multiple-semester loan, you will want to use the first day of the semester through the last day of the second or third semester. **We strongly recommend using the longest loan period possible (two or three semesters) versus processing an application each semester to avoid multiple credit checks, which can decrease a borrower's credit score.** Having a loan in place for the entire year will also prevent delays in the processing of funds and, therefore, the student's ability to register and/or check in.

REPAYING YOUR LOANS

There are three common repayment options: deferred, interest-only, and immediate repayment. Keep in mind that lender repayment options may vary.

Deferred repayment
Make no payments while enrolled in school. Interest will accumulate and be added to the total amount borrowed. This is generally the most expensive repayment plan.

Interest-only repayment
Make interest payments but defer payments on the principal amount while enrolled in school. This helps keep your overall loan balance close to the original amount borrowed.

Immediate repayment
Pay both principal and interest of the loan while enrolled in school. This is generally the most cost-effective option if your monthly budget can accommodate it.

PAYMENT PLANS

Using a payment plan allows a student to divide up some or all of the balance due for the semester into monthly installments, interest-free. Berklee's Office of Student Accounts uses Nelnet to administer payment plans for fall and spring semesters. For Berklee College of Music, Boston Conservatory at Berklee, and Berklee Valencia degree students, the current enrollment fee is $45 per semester. Berklee Online degree students use a separate Nelnet payment-plan policy with a $30 enrollment fee per semester. Visit the appropriate Nelnet/payment-plan page for your school or program, or contact the Office of Student Accounts.

Office of Student Accounts
onestop@berklee.edu
+1 617-747-6777

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

The **Berklee Student Employment program** offers an opportunity for students to defray some of their expenses while also broadening professional networks and gaining valuable work experience and skills. With more than 2,000 positions ranging from a few to 20 hours of work per week, as well as additional opportunities for project-based temporary employment, student employment is a great opportunity for professional and educational growth.

Popular student employment positions include being a paid performer for concerts and projects, tutoring your peers, working on the stage crew for venues across campus, performing as a session musician, and more. Student employment is open to domestic and international students studying on the Boston and New York City campuses.

CONNECT WITH US

The next step towards becoming a Berklee graduate student is to choose your program, compile your application materials, and apply. As you complete the admissions process, continue to use this guide as a resource. And remember, the earlier you start, the more time you have to look into financial aid opportunities.

We are committed to helping our students find the most affordable path to Berklee. If you have questions about paying for your Berklee education, you can connect with one of our advisors to discuss your individual financial needs.

**The information in this guide is subject to change due to institutional and/or federal/state policy or regulatory updates made during the academic year.*

Office of Student Financial Services
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