



## **UW SYSTEM GUIDELINES ADVANCED OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM (AOP)**

**(Guidelines apply to awards granted as of the 2015-16 academic year)**

- (1) No more than 10% of the awards may be given to students entering graduate-level specials. Graduate-level specials will receive awards for no more than two semesters.
- (2) Renewal awards must be based on good standing and satisfactory academic progress as defined by the institution. Institutions should make good-faith efforts to ensure that underrepresented racial/ethnic minority students participate equitably in all available funding programs, including, for example, graduate assistantships, non-resident tuition waivers, and institutional fellowships. Underrepresented racial/ethnic minority and disadvantaged students should have multiple options for funding. To ensure the opportunity for completion of a degree, UW System institutions are expected to sustain comparable levels of financial assistance to AOP recipients who maintain good academic standing and who make satisfactory academic progress. This financial assistance may take the form of AOP funds and/or institutional and graduate assistantships, research assistantships, teaching assistantships, etc. Research has shown that campus employment at the graduate level increases retention and prepares students for faculty positions. Therefore, AOP funds can be combined with Project Assistant, Teaching Assistant, Graduate Assistant, and Research Assistant positions.
- (3) Only U.S. citizens or permanent residents are eligible for these Awards.
- (4) Awards should be limited to members of the traditionally under-represented minorities (African-American, Hispanic/Latino/a, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and statutorily defined Southeast Asian) and other non-minority disadvantaged graduate students. Preference for AOP awards should be given to qualified (based on UW System Administration and institutional guidelines) resident minority and other eligible resident disadvantaged non-minority graduate students before making awards to eligible non-resident students. Institutions should establish reasonable cut-off dates after which preference is no longer required for residents and institutions may award remaining funds to other eligible students. Institutions shall publish the cut-off dates in their AOP Guidelines. This provision does not apply to current non-resident AOP recipients.
- (5) A student can be considered disadvantaged and eligible for AOP funds if they meet any of the criteria including but not limited to one or more of the following:

1. Financial need.
  2. Comes from family that received any type of public assistance, including eligibility for school lunch program.
  3. First generation college student.
  4. Students who participated in special services for disadvantaged students programs such as Upward Bound, Trio, Talent Search, etc.
  5. Students who have not had the expectation and encouragement to pursue post-graduate education as a viable option.
- (6) Institution guidelines for awarding AOP funds, including the institutional award criteria, guidelines directing the granting of the coming year's awards, and cut-off dates must be submitted for review to the UW System Office of Student Affairs (1606 Van Hise Hall, 1220 Linden Drive, Madison, WI 53706) by February 1st of each year.
- (7) Institutions are encouraged to use their awards to increase racial/ethnic minority participation in advanced degree programs in which racial/ethnic minority students are under-represented. Institutions shall report on these efforts, the number of AOP awards and the amounts awarded for new and continuing students, by ethnic group and by graduate level (master's or doctoral candidates). This information will be collected as part of the Financial Aid CDR.
- (8) Funding is allocated to the institutions on the basis of a three-year rolling average of students of color (African-American, Hispanic/Latino/a, American Indian, and statutorily designated Southeast Asian) enrollments.

Students enrolled part-time are weighted at .35 as expressed in the following formula:

$$\begin{aligned} & \mathbf{(1.0 \times \text{Number of headcount full-time enrollments})} \\ & \qquad \qquad \qquad \mathbf{+} \\ & \mathbf{\underline{\underline{(.35 \times \text{Number of headcount part-time enrollments})}}} \\ & \mathbf{= \text{Number used to calculate an institution's percent of AOP funds}} \end{aligned}$$