

## Bethel University – Graduate School (GS)

### Indebtedness of 2025 Graduates

(Graduated between July, 2024 and June, 2025)

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Of the 260 students that graduated with Masters Degrees from GS between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025, 155 (59.6%) borrowed student loans while at Bethel. The average debt this past year was \$47,821 (down 12% from last year) and the median debt was \$42,863 (up 5%). These loans reflect the students' borrowing only at Bethel Graduate School.

Graduating in:	# of Masters Grads:	Percent Borrowing:	Average Debt	Median Debt
2024-25	260	59.6%	\$47,821	\$42,863
2023-24	249	59.8%	\$54,364	\$40,756
2022-23	267	60.7%	\$53,219	\$43,688
2021-22	292	57.9%	\$50,834	\$45,746
2020-21	281	59.8%	\$45,903	\$40,757
2019-20	314	61.8%	\$45,803	\$41,000
2018-19	330	60.3%	\$44,604	\$40,131
2017-18	373	54.4%	\$39,110	\$34,867
2016-17	397	58.4%	\$41,873	\$39,639
2015-16	317	68.5%	\$41,120	\$34,205
2014-15	269	65.8%	\$35,541	\$34,667
2013-14	230	63.5%	\$31,829	\$31,495
2012-13	166	65.7%	\$29,844	\$27,750
2011-12	241	63.9%	\$29,164	\$27,000
2010-11	251	63.7%	\$29,342	\$26,382

Female GS graduates in 2024-25 were more likely to borrow than males (60.8% compared with 56.1%) but had lower average debt (\$46,895 compared with \$50,776 for males). Fewer students of color borrowed (44.4%) than white students (63.0%) and borrowed less (\$41,615 compared with \$45,786 for white graduates).

The ninth cohort of PA graduates was highly likely to borrow (83.9%) and borrowed large amounts (average of \$94,716 for those 26 who borrowed). Other majors borrowed average amounts ranging from \$27K to \$47K.

The “rule-of-thumb” in the student loan industry is that total student borrowing should not exceed 8% - 10% of a borrower’s starting gross salary. Multiply the estimated monthly payment by 120 to see the annual starting salary required for the student loan payment to be within 10% of salary. [For example, \$400 X 120 = \$48,000]. Our average GS Masters student borrower would need a starting salary of \$65,752 (somewhat skewed by the presence of PA grads) for their student loan payment to be no more than 10% of their salary (presuming they have no other outstanding loans from previous schools). Students whose debt exceeds 10% of their starting salary will need to consolidate loans over a longer repayment period, live more frugally, defer certain plans (home ownership, marriage, etc.) or receive family help in repaying college loans.

There were 21 Ed. D graduates in 2024-25, of which 13 borrowed during their program (62%). Their average debt from this program was \$47,042.

47 GS students received certificates in 2024-25, of which 11 borrowed (23.4%). Their average debt was \$19,454.