

February 16, 2016

Graduate Funding in the College of Arts and Letters

Policies

The College guarantees funding for graduate students through the first five years of graduate study, contingent on satisfactory progress towards the degree as defined by program requirements. Depending on the graduate program, students either receive the base stipend, paid over 9 months, and may apply for additional summer funding on a competitive basis; or they receive a higher, 12-month stipend with no additional summer funding. Many students receive additional funding in the form of premium fellowships and other top-up funds.

Guaranteed Sixth-Year Postdoctoral Fellowship

Students who finish in five years (i.e. complete all requirements for the degree at least 10 days before the start of what would otherwise be their 11th semester, see below) are guaranteed a one-year postdoctoral fellowship, with a teaching load of no more than one course per semester, additional funds to support professional development (at least \$1500), and benefits as described by the Office of Human Resources at

http://hr.nd.edu/assets/185732/p1_benefit_summary_2016_121245.pdf

Students who win external fellowships at or above the base stipend amount and do not collect a stipend from the College for one or more years, *and* who finish their dissertation within five years, may be eligible for a premium sixth-year postdoctoral fellowship at a higher level of salary.

To complete all the requirements for the degree, the student must successfully defend the dissertation and submit the finished dissertation to the Graduate School.

Partial Sixth-Year Postdoc

Should a sixth-year student complete the degree requirements for the PhD after the start of the sixth year, the student may receive a post-doc for the remainder of that academic year that includes post-doc stipend support in lieu of a graduate stipend at the established sixth-year post-doc level. The annual post-doc stipend will be prorated, will begin in the month following the PhD completion, and end with the end of the current academic year. The postdoc fellow will also be eligible to receive a prorated amount of professional development funds to enhance career development. A pro-rated post-doc is not guaranteed; students should apply via their DGS and applications will be considered by the DGS in consultation with the divisional associate dean on a case-by-case basis.

Sixth-Year Funding for Academic Year 2016/2017

Students who win external fellowships at or above the base stipend amount and who did not collect a stipend from the College for one or more years during their first five years of study may apply for an additional year of funding (see the procedure below). Fellowships funded by sources within the University (NDIAS, Nanovic, etc.) do not count as external fellowships. Sixth-year funding is not guaranteed for these students, but external recognition of a student's research and progress toward degree will count strongly in the consideration of applications.

The College will not pay for more than a single additional year of funding (e.g. a student who wins an external fellowship that runs for two years may not then collect a College stipend in their sixth *and* seventh years.) Sixth-year stipends will be paid over nine months, ending in May of the sixth year.

Students who have not finished in five years and have collected a stipend from the College for five years may apply for sixth-year funding if funding is available. Sixth-year funding is not guaranteed but may be granted in exceptional cases. For some students, sixth-year funding may be offered on a semester to semester basis. Students must show evidence of sustained and satisfactory progress towards the completion of the dissertation, and a plan for completion by the end of the sixth year. The application process is explained below.

The College will monitor closely whether students who are given a sixth year of funding achieve what they say they are going to achieve. If programs regularly request and secure sixth-year funding for students who fail to finish, the success of subsequent applications may be affected.

Students in their first five years who collect a stipend while on childbirth accommodation, generally will receive funding for at least one semester in their sixth year, provided they are in good standing with their program. For more on leaves and accommodations, see below.

Students beyond the Sixth Year

Students beyond the sixth year are not eligible for stipend support.

Procedures

Applications for Sixth-Year Funding for Academic Year 2016/2017

The Director of Graduate Studies for each program should address the request to the appropriate divisional associate dean. Requests for sixth year funding are due May 1.

Requests should include:

- a letter from the student's advisor outlining the student's progress to date and likely timetable for completion (if the department conducts an annual assessment of each

graduate student, the annual assessment report can be submitted instead of a letter from the advisor).

- a work plan from the student explaining what they need to do to finish and how they will do it (1 page maximum).
- the student's c.v.
- an explanation of how the Department intends to fund the stipend.
- the length of the term of funding requested (whether it is for one or two semesters).

Ph.D. Stipend Payment Schedules

First-year students - Students entering the program will receive their first stipend payment on 8/31. Students entering the program must comply with Federal I-9 requirements and submit their social security number before receiving their first stipend payment (Those without a ssn should have applied for one to receive support.).

PhD students on academic year stipends – 9 month or academic year stipends are paid semi-monthly on the 15th and last day of the month. The 9 month stipend period begins 8/16, with the first payment disbursed on 8/31, and ends 5/15. Stipends will be entered at the department level so that all semi-monthly stipend payments are equal. Graduate students in programs with 9 month stipends will be eligible to apply for summer stipend funding if the department has funding available. Students with 9 month stipends who also receive top-up stipends will receive the top-up stipend as summer funding and will generally not be eligible to receive additional summer stipend funding. Summer stipends begin on 5/16 (paid 5/31) and end on 8/15 (paid 8/15), are paid semi-monthly, and are entered by the department as equal semi-monthly payments.

PhD students on 12 month stipends – virtually all departments have moved to 12 month PhD student stipends. Like all graduate stipends, these stipends are paid semi-monthly on the 15th and last day of each month. The annual year begins 8/16 and ends on 8/15. Technically, the graduate annual stipends will be broken down into the Academic Year and Summer, and may be further broken down into the fall and spring semesters, if appropriate. The fall semester begins 8/16 and ends 12/31. The spring semester begins 1/1 and ends 5/15. The summer session begins 5/16 and ends 8/15. Stipends will be entered at the department level so that all semi-monthly stipend payments are equal. Graduate students in programs with 12 month stipends are not eligible to apply for additional summer stipend funding. Students receiving top-up funding will also receive stipends on an annualized basis, with payments processed in such a way so that payments are equal on a semi-monthly basis. The graduate school will assist in determining proper foapal splits and distributions.

If a student on a 12 month stipend graduates in May, the stipend will end in May because a graduate stipend cannot extend beyond graduation. In some cases, a student might receive total payments that are less than the promised stipend because of the way stipend payments are averaged across 12 months. In those cases, the College will supplement the May payment so the student will have received a total stipend equal to the promised stipend.

Additional payments

Graduate students who are on stipend may not receive additional payments from the University or College for services provided that are related to their stipend duties. Students on stipend may serve as TAs, teach, provide research support, or offer other academic/administrative support which benefits the University, department, and/or individual faculty. This work should be considered part of their professional training. Graduate students are not eligible for additional payments beyond the stipend for duties that prevent continuous progress toward degree completion and that are diversions of time or energy for the purpose of earning additional compensation. Graduate students who are not on stipend may be paid for work provided, (i.e. TAing, teaching, research, etc.) at prevailing College rates.

Medical Leaves of Absence and Childbirth Accommodations

(For the Graduate School policy, see:

http://graduateschool.nd.edu/assets/139927/bulletin_2014_2015.pdf.)

The Graduate School currently offers either Childbirth Accommodation (which preserves funding, does not stop the student's clock, but extends academic eligibility by a semester) or Medical Leave of Absence (which stops funding and the academic clock). Students are limited to two (2) funded semesters of Childbirth Accommodation during their time in the program. Application for a Medical Leave of Absence or a Childbirth Accommodation should be made to the DGS with approval of the department chair and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the Graduate School.

For students on a Childbirth Accommodation (which preserves funding), the College will provide an additional semester of funding beyond the fifth year for students in good standing. This option will make it easier for students to choose the appropriate course of action.

The College is considering the creation of a funded leave policy that would provide stipend support to students on the first semester of a Medical Leave of Absence and share a draft policy for discussion as soon as it is available.

NOTE: this document supersedes any previous policy or agreement concerning graduate funding in the College of Arts and Letters. In the case of any disagreement between the policies outlined here and those in an existing graduate handbook or other previous agreement, the policies outlined here will prevail.