Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Budget Help for Grant Applications

# Students: Baseline & Stipends

## Personnel Costs: Graduate Students with Stipend Support

Memorial University's School of Graduate Studies defines a stipend as "a fixed amount of money paid in a lump sum or biweekly over a period of time. It is not for employment but to offset basic living expenses while students are completing their education."

### Institutional-Specific Rates

Check sponsor guidelines to ensure which institutional stipend rates and policies should be used for your budget. For Tri-Agency budgets, you must use rates for each institution where stipends will be offered to students associated with your project. Consult with research offices or graduate studies offices at other institutions for applicable stipend rates, as well as any other relevant policies or guidelines. The below information is based on Memorial University policies and guidelines. Note that stipend appointment guidelines should engage with Student Intellectual Property considerations where applicable.

### Using Memorial's Baseline in Grant Proposal Budgets

- 'Baseline' refers to the base amount provided by the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) towards the offer of a stipend to a graduate student, normally for studies towards a thesis (e.g. baseline cannot be used to pay students for tasks normally paid for through hourly Graduate Research Assistant wages). It can be 'topped up' further by funding from a sponsor, such as SSHRC or NSERC (see "Stipends" section, below).
- Any consideration of the use of Baseline funding in your budget as a *cash* contribution must begin with your Department Head and/or Graduate Officer. For an outline of the process for confirming baseline and securing approvals, refer to HSS's form: "Documentation of Future Departmental SGS Stipend/Baseline Commitments."
  - Note: Requests should normally be submitted well in advance (~6 weeks) of the HSS internal deadline for the relevant competition. The HSS Research Funding Tracker provides submission information, including HSS internal deadlines.
- The total baseline provided to students is governed by departmental practices/policies, program policies, and by SGS, in order to meet a certain amount of the costs of a stipend (sometimes called fellowship).. In HSS, SGS allocates a base amount per student as part of calculating departmental baseline budgets:
  - **Maximum SGS baseline totals as of April 1, 2022:**
    - **$8,000 max per MA** student, per year
    - **$14,000 max per PhD** student, per year
  - Typically, these are the totals n used as the cash contribution towards your research grant (with departmental approval). In the budget, you should ask the sponsor for the *remainder* of the funds needed to top-up the total stipend you/your department would like to offer.
  - If your department's baseline policies or agreements with SGS differ from the default above (as indicated by either SGS or your department), your cash contribution must be listed in your grant based on what your department has approved as indicated on the Baseline request form.

**Students: Baseline & Stipends**

- The HSS Dean's Office strongly encourages research funding applicants to consider effective combination of Baseline with research funding to secure higher overall funding package totals for graduate students associated with funded research projects. . Competitive minima are $20,000/yr for MA / MSC students and $35,000/yr for PhD students. Common Tri-Agency program rates are as follows:
  - o Canada Graduate Scholarship – Master's - $17,500/yr for max 12 months
  - o Canada Graduate Scholarship – Doctoral - $35,000/yr for max 36 months
  - o Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship - $50,000/yr for max 3 years
  - o SSHRC Doctoral Fellowship - $20,000/yr for max 48 months
- For further information on baseline, see Guidelines for the Awarding of SGS Baseline Fellowships and Graduate Student Support.
  - o Note 2.9 which states that departments may adjust/reduce baseline for students who receive major external scholarships including, but not limited to, Tri-Agency ones. Using the Baseline Request Form, your department head or Graduate Officer should specify what will happen with baseline funding in the event that a grant-funded student is awarded a major scholarship/fellowship.
  - o Note: SGS will *not* provide additional funding if a Masters or Doctoral student receives more than $35,000/yr (MA) or $50,000/yr (PhD) from all sources (excluding Graduate Assistantships / GRAs).

## Stipends

- According to the Tri-Agency Guide on Financial Administration (TAGFA) a stipend is: "financial support given to a recipient of a training award, or provided by a grant recipient to a trainee, to support them while they are working on their research thesis and/or gaining research experience."
- Unlike with Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) wages, vacation pay or benefits are *not* included in stipends, as stipends are not regarded as employment income.
- **Stipend work vs GRA work:** Stipend activities are *not* typically the type of work that would be performed by a GRA hired by hourly wages. There are many considerations in deciding whether to include students with stipend support or students hired as GRA employees in your grant proposal's budget and research project activities.
- Tasks and activities supported by stipends normally form part of graduate student's thesis work, internship, etc. The results of these research activities may be used towards the thesis and/or the Principal Investigator's (PI) project. However, **Intellectual Property (IP)** considerations exist:
  - o Students who receive a stipend have rights to IP for "any form of knowledge or expression created partly or wholly with one's intellect and which can be legally protected," including tasks and activities supported by a stipend from a funded research project. See Memorial's document, Intellectual Property of Graduate Students.
  - o Oppositely, resultant IP from GRA activities would belong to the PI of the grant. See HSS's Budget Help Doc Hiring Student Research Assistants: URAs and GRAs for more information.