



Chemistry Department policy on graduate student funding

Approved March 2015

1. General

- 1.1. This policy deals with all aspects of regular graduate student funding under normal circumstances.
- 1.2. Financial support for Chemistry graduate students comes from the following sources:
 - (a) Research assistantships (RAs) provided by the student's supervisor;
 - (b) Teaching assistantships (TA) (lab instructor, drop-in, etc), as an employee of the University;
 - (c) Academic Achievement Award (AAA) (funding provided by the Faculty of Graduate Studies);
 - (d) Other support such as University Fellowships, Graduate Awards, or externally funded scholarship (e.g. NSERC, CIHR).Other financial contributions in the form of awards (e.g. UVic Graduate Donor Awards) are not considered part of a student's "regular" stipend.
- 1.3. Details for each of the possible sources of funding for graduate student stipends are described in separate sections below. In general, there are several possible funding formulas which depend on factors such as the number of TA sections available to students, availability of funds from Graduate Studies, and whether the students has other support. The department sets a standard minimum stipend level each year for all students.
- 1.4. Components 1.2(a), 1.2(b), and 1.2(c) of funding are conditional based on satisfactory performance. See each section below for details. Subject to satisfactory performance, funding levels for each of these components are guaranteed for a period of two years for an MSc and four years for a PhD Beyond these periods continued funding may be available (see subsequent sections).
- 1.5. If a student withdraws or is withdrawn from graduate studies for academic program reasons (e.g. failure to maintain minimum GPA; failed PhD candidacy; exceeds maximum time limit) removal of financial support is effective upon withdrawal. Note that withdrawal from programs occurs at the end of the academic term in which withdrawal takes place.
- 1.6. Offers of admission to new graduate students will include a *general* description of graduate student stipends along with the minimum value (with explicit description of the conditions to be fulfilled to merit funding). This minimum value on the students offer letter will override any future reductions in stipend that are outside the student's control.

2. The research assistantship (RA)

- 2.1.** The RA level is determined by the department in consideration of total stipend packages, which are set in advance by the Department as described in 1.3. above. The supervisor has the option of providing additional financial support beyond the levels specified by the department, but may not provide *less* than the specified levels.
- 2.2.** Continued RA support is subject to satisfactory performance in research. Satisfactory performance is normally indicated as such on the evaluation forms completed by the supervisor each term. Other correspondence between supervisor/student, memos from the supervisory committee, can also be acceptable documentation. “Unsatisfactory” performance in a term requires a supervisory committee meeting, the outcome of which must include remedial action for the next term. If research progress continues to be unsatisfactory, the Department may recommend withdrawal from graduate studies. Removal of research support accompanies withdrawal. As described in **1.5.**, withdrawal of support occurs at the end of the academic term in which withdrawal takes place.
- 2.3** RA support is provided (subject to satisfactory performance (see 2.2), for two years for M.Sc. students and 4 years for Ph.D. students. Beyond these periods RA support *may* be provided by the at the supervisor’s discretion. Supervisors should inform their students with a minimum of one term notice of their own specific policy on funding students beyond the guaranteed period.

3. The teaching assistantship (TA)

- 3.1** The general regulations and policies concerning TA appointments are based on the CUPE 4163 agreement.
- 3.2.** Students who hold a major internal (UVic Grad Award of \$6,000 or more; UVic Fellowship) or external award (e.g. NSERC, CIHR) may receive a maximum of 2 TA appointments (196 hours) per year.
- 3.3.** A student may freely choose to teach less than the available maximum, but in this case the supervisor is not responsible for providing additional compensation to make up for the reduction in TA salary.
- 3.4.** If a student is denied a TA position under the Union priority rules because of a shortage of available TA positions, the supervisor will provide additional compensation to maintain the minimum stipend for the guaranteed periods outlined in **1.4**.
- 3.5.** Research supervisors are not required to provide additional compensation to a graduate student who fails to complete the probationary period, is terminated for cause, or is otherwise found by the University and the Union to be ineligible to continue as a TA.
- 3.6.** Students who fail to secure a TA position because they did not apply for a TA position are financially responsible for their oversight, i.e. the research supervisor is not required increase their RA to compensate for the lost TA position(s).

4. Academic Achievement Award (AAA)

- 4.1 The Department offers Academic Achievement Awards (AAA) to qualified graduate students. The funding for these awards is provided by the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS). AAA awards fall outside discussion of minimum stipends for grad students.
- 4.2 Graduate students can be nominated for an AAA if they meet the FGS requirement of a 6.5 GPA in their graduate program or (if they are in their 1st year of their graduate program) in the last 30 units of their undergraduate degree. The Graduate Adviser *may* request AAA funding for students who do not meet the FGS GPA requirements if circumstances warrant (e.g. very strong research performance).
- 4.3 Students enrolled in the MSc program may receive a maximum of two years' worth of AAA funding. Students enrolled in the PhD program may receive a maximum of four years' worth of AAA funding.
- 4.4 Students who are absent from campus for work-related reasons (e.g. co-op or MITACS placement) and whose income source is external to UVic will not be nominated for an AAA during the period of their absence. This period of absence does not count towards the total funding eligibility period described above.
- 4.5 For any student who has already received an offer letter inconsistent with this policy, the conditions in their offer letter (in particular minimum total stipend) supersede those contained in this policy.
- 4.6 Entering students who do not meet the GPA eligibility requirements to receive AAA funding will receive additional RA funding temporarily. The student's supervisor will contribute the value of the Departmental AAA award as an RA top-up (in addition to any other RA amount already being paid), subject to the student meeting satisfactory progress, for the first 12 months of the student's program *or* until AAA funding is awarded (whichever comes first). Students who remain ineligible for AAA funding after 12 months may see a decrease in their total stipend by the AAA amount. RA top-ups count towards the AAA maximums (e.g. an MSc student who receives one year worth of RA top-up funding can receive only one year worth of AAA funding).