

Planning for and Procuring External Support for Graduate Students Office of Graduate Studies at USM

Competitive Grants and Contracts

Proposals for externally funded grants and contracts often include graduate assistant stipends as part of the direct costs. If they also include payment of all or a portion of a student's tuition, this will be applied to the student's bill in the form of a tuition scholarship. If a stipend is provided, but no tuition support, or if a non-resident student is selected for a position that includes tuition (at the in-state rate), you must work closely with OGS to determine what, if any, tuition support can be provided by the institution.

Tuition Support from Employers

In most cases where this applies (school systems, for example), graduate student employees pay their tuition and are reimbursed for part or all of the tuition by their employer upon satisfactory completion of courses. In a few instances, employers agree to pay up front for employees' tuition through a third party billing process (OGS is not involved). In these cases, if the supported employee does not qualify as an in-state student, the company nevertheless is charged at the in-state tuition rate, with no differential applied.

Paid Internships

Occasionally students are able to obtain internship placements in organizations that will pay them for the work connected with the internship (for which they are receiving academic credit). In these instances, the student is paid through the organization (OGS is not involved). Unless she has a special tuition scholarship, she is responsible for the payment of her tuition.

Non-competitive, Contractual Arrangements

Some programs have recently begun to enter into contractual relationships with outside agencies in which the agency assumes payment of a graduate assistant's stipend, as well as part or all of their tuition (at the in-state rate) in return for performance of specified work. While such arrangements can be of mutual benefit to all concerned (students, graduate program, and agency) and are to be encouraged, they tend to be more complex and less flexible than internally funded assistantships. They must conform to university policies (type of work, minimum stipend, maximum hours rule, for example) but may also require specific scheduling, work during breaks, and other special conditions, incorporated in a Memorandum of Understanding. While the assistantships are managed through OGS, as others are, the funding flows through the Office of Sponsored Programs. **For all of these reasons, it is essential to have a meeting of all stakeholders early in the planning process to ensure that policies are in place, important details are worked out and agreed upon, and problems are anticipated and solved.** This meeting should include the program chair, an appropriate leader from the agency, the college dean or designee, the Dean of Graduate Studies, and the Director of OSP. Others may include the financial manager and graduate student affairs coordinator of the college, and the Coordinator of Student Services from OGS.

Please inform OGS if you are exploring such a relationship with an outside agency, so that we will be aware of it and able to help as needed.

Because of budget limitations, OGS is charged with careful distribution and monitoring of tuition waiver support, including payment of differential between in and out-of-state tuitions. For this reason, in all cases above, with the exception of tuition support (only) by employers and paid internships, programs need to work closely with OGS before promising internal tuition support.

Once a collaborative arrangement is established, it is essential to keep OGS informed of any and all matters involving changes in student stipends, such as extra pay for training, etc.

POLICY MANUAL

Summary of Institutional Support for Graduate Students

1. Salaried Positions for Graduate Students

Position	Source of Stipend	Tuition Waivers	Type of work	Managed by
Graduate Assistant	OGS	Yes	Professional growth: mostly RA	OGS
Graduate Assistant	Research Initiatives	Yes	Professional growth: RA	OGS
Graduate Assistant	College/Dept./external	Seldom	Professional growth: RA, TA, PA	OGS
Graduate Aide	Financial Aid	No	Any	OGS
Core section TA*	Provost	No	TA	OGS

* Six one-semester positions allocated each year to faculty teaching large (100+) Core sections.

2. Tuition Support for Graduate Students

Award	Type	Maximum Award	Duration	Source	Managed by
OGS/RI funded GA	TW	18	1 year (renewable)	OGS	OGS
University Waiver (Recruitment)	TW	18	2 years	OGS	OGS
Trustee Award	Tuition scholarship	Variable	Variable	OGS	OGS
NA, Vet, Employee waiver	TW	Varies	Varies	System?	System?
Milliken	Scholarship	\$3,000	2 years	Advancement	OGS
Lunder	Scholarship	\$2,500	4 years	Advancement	OGS

More about Graduate Aides (20-30 per year)

Graduate aide positions are need-based, are federally funded and are awarded to individual students by the Financial Aid Office. Graduate aides work 10 hours per week, and receive the same minimum stipend as Graduate Assistants (\$4,500/academic year). They may be asked to do any kind of work needed by the program they work for. (They are actually like work study students, but paid by salary instead of at an hourly rate.) There are no tuition waivers attached to aide positions.

Lists of eligible students are distributed by OGS to program chairs in late spring. Programs hire aides as they would work study students. The aide positions are managed by OGS. Information contact: Janet Casey (jancasey@usm.maine.edu).
Note: If a student has a 10 hour graduate assistantship and a Graduate Aide award as well, work and pay do not overlap. In other words, that student must work 10 hours/week for the assistantship, and another 10 hours/week for the aide position.