BUDGET HELP

Students: Baseline & Stipends

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Personnel Costs: Graduate Students with Stipend Support

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. 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.
- Baseline is governed by department, program policies, and by SGS, in order to meet a certain amount of the costs of a stipend for a graduate student. Typically, 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 per MA** student, per year
    - **$14,000 per PhD** student, per year
  - Typically, these are the totals you should use as the cash contribution towards your research grant. 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 policies or agreements with SGS differ from the default above (as indicated by either SGS or your department), your cash contribution must consist of the ***lowest* baseline amount** as indicated on the Baseline request form.
- In most grant proposal budgets, we recommend using baseline as a cash contribution and then asking the funding sponsor (SSHRC, NSERC, etc.) for the remainder using the value of a Tri-Agency scholarship/fellowship as the stipend value to help recruit a high quality student. This translates as:
  - **MA: Baseline $8,000 + Agency ask $9,500 = Total $17,500 stipend**
  - **PhD: Baseline $14,000 + Agency ask $6,000 = Total $20,000 stipend**
- 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 delegate 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:** 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. Some of these considerations include:
  - o Stipend activities are *not* typically the type of work that would be performed by a GRA hired by hourly wages.
  - o Tasks and activities supported by stipends normally form part of graduate student's thesis work, course 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:
    - 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.
    - 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 (6.1B) for more information.