Budget Help for Grant Applications
Students: Stipends and using Baseline
Memorial’s Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

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.

Note, stipend appointment guidelines should engage with Student Intellectual Property considerations where applicable.

The below information is based on Memorial University policies and guidelines.

General Considerations

- ‘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.

- 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.”
  - The tasks and activities supported by stipends normally form part of graduate student thesis work, course work, internship, etc. The tasks and activities do not generally include duties normally assigned to a Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) who is employed for the Principal Investigator’s research project. See HSS’s Budget Help Doc Hiring Student Research Assistants: URAs and GRAs for more information.
  - Students who receive a stipend have intellectual property rights to “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 stipend from a funded research project. See Memorial’s document, Intellectual Property of Graduate Students.

- Actual amounts for stipends are governed by both institutional as well as sponsor guidelines.
  - Individual HSS departments have different norms for graduate (baseline) and other funding.
  - For Tri-Agency budgets, TAGFA does not set amounts for stipends.
  - We recommend using the value of an appropriate level of Tri-Agency scholarship/fellowship as the stipend value to help recruit a high quality student. E.g. $17,500 for an MA student, and $20,000 for a PhD student, as based on the value of SSHRC scholarships/fellowships.
Unlike with wages, vacation pay or benefits are not included in budgets for stipend recipients as stipends are not regarded as employment income.

Using Memorial’s Baseline in Grant Proposal Budgets

- 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 “Documentation of Future Departmental SGS Stipend/Baseline Commitments” under the sub-title “Forms”:
  https://www.mun.ca/hss/faculty_staff/research_support_services/resources/documents/
  - Note: Requests should normally be submitted well in advance (6 weeks recommended) 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 allots a base amount per student as part of calculating departmental baseline budgets:
  - $6,850 per MA student and $11,742 per PhD student
  - 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.
- For further information on baseline, see Guidelines for the Awarding of SGS Baseline Fellowships and Graduate Student Support. Note point 2.9 which states that departments may adjust/reduce baseline amounts for students who receive major external scholarships including, but not limited to, Tri-Agency scholarships/fellowships. 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.
  - 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 / GAships).