



Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

G R A D U A T E S T U D E N T C O U N C I L

GSAS EXTERNAL AWARD POLICY FAQ AND FACT SHEET

The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS) instituted a policy regarding external awards as of the Fall 2014 term. The full text of this policy can be found by [clicking here](#).

The GSAS Student Council has attempted to anticipate questions that students may have concerning this policy and has obtained the following points of clarification from the Graduate School.

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Q) What is the gist of the external award policy?

A) Graduate students in the School of Arts and Sciences have the option to apply for funding sources external to the stipend awarded to them by the Graduate School upon admittance. Any external awards a student receives—as per the external award policy—can supplement GSAS living support up to **130%** of the amount offered to the student upon admittance to UVa. If the student's living support from the Graduate School and the external award combined exceeds this 130% threshold, the amount of fellowship support from GSAS will decrease. All funds from the external award will go to the student.

This policy applies only to external support awarded to fund living support. It does not apply to awards for specific research, travel, or equipment costs, or to costs of education, including tuition, fees, and health insurance.

Q) How is the current policy different from the old one?

A) Previously, there was no school-wide policy regarding external funds. In the past, when students won external awards, some departments allowed them to keep their living support awarded upon admission in full, while others withdrew living support in full, or made some other arrangement. This current policy standardizes the way external awards are administered.

Q) What happens if I get an external award, but even with that award, I will not receive 130% or more of the living support offered to me upon admission?

A) Nothing. If a doctoral student receives an external award for living expenses that is equal to or less than 30% of the initial funding offer, then the student will continue to receive the full living support awarded by the Graduate School upon admittance.

Q) If I have an external award that is greater than 130% of the fellowship stipend offered by GSAS, will I still be eligible to serve as a TA and receive wages?

A) If a student receives an external award in a year where they would normally have been expected to hold a teaching assistantship, that student is still eligible for the TA appointment. However, with mutual agreement from the DGS (Director of Graduate Studies) and the Graduate School, a student who would normally have been expected to TA may choose to be supported solely by the external award.

A student receiving an external award for living support greater than 130% of the stipend offered by GSAS has three potential options regarding TA positions:

- 1) The student may keep his/her teaching appointment for both terms, and fellowship (non-wage) support from the graduate school will be withdrawn until the student is earning 130% of the living support awarded upon admittance to the graduate school.

- 2) The student may receive living support from the Graduate School for one term, and be supported solely by the external award in the other term, when they will not be required to TA.
- 3) The student may choose to be supported solely on the external award for the entire academic year. The student would have no teaching obligations and would receive no living support from the graduate school for this year.

In all cases, the Graduate School would continue to fund the student's tuition, University fees, and health premium for the academic year, unless the external award funds some portion of these costs.

Q) Can I defer a year of support awarded upon admission if I receive an external award?

A) If a student is awarded a multi-year external fellowship that provides both sufficient living support and tuition, fees, and health premium for an entire academic year, then he/she may defer one year of the support upon admission into the sixth year of study. Otherwise, it is expected that a single year of external support will be combined with the support offered upon admission, and no deferral will be allowed.

Q) If I receive an external award that does not cover my tuition, fees, and health premium, will the graduate school continue to do so?

A) Yes, the Graduate School will continue to fund tuition, fees, and health premium regardless of external support awarded for living expenses: the reduction of fellowship support to the 130% threshold only applies to living support.

Q) I was admitted to the Graduate School before the current policy was implemented. Am I affected differently than incoming students?

A) No. All external support awarded for the 2014-2015 year and beyond are subject to the new policy. Students who received external awards before the 2014-2015 academic year are not subject to the current policy, but a student who received a multi-year award that is scheduled to continue beyond the 2014-2015 academic year may choose to defer a year of support from the Graduate school into the sixth year, as allowed under the current policy described above.

Q) Many students in my department take more than five years to graduate. What forms of financial support are available to students beyond year five?

A) A department's ability to fund its students beyond the five years guaranteed by the Graduate School is contingent on a number of factors, including student attrition, external awards, and the size of entering classes. If students anticipate needing a sixth year of study, they should discuss this as soon as possible with their DGS and seek external support for this year. For students in this position, "dissertation completion" status allows students to maintain access to their UVA email and e-

library without paying full-time enrollment tuition and fees. More information on this status is available here: <http://gsas.virginia.edu/enrolled-students/registration-procedures>

Q) Does this policy affect my salary and position as an adjunct or any other wage-earning position on campus?

A) No, the external award policy only affects the fellowship stipend awarded to students as part of their admission offer.

Q) If I am funded through my PI's grant, and receive an external award, does this policy affect my living support?

A) External awards may replace grant support from a PI. These situations will need to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the DGS and the Graduate School.

Q) After reading through this Q&A sheet, I still don't understand how the external award policy affects my specific financial situation. Whom should I contact?

A) Students should contact their DGS or the Senior Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs with any specific questions. These personnel will be able to discuss the external award policy on an individual level and make decisions regarding funding in concert with each student.