

SFU
Graduate Program in PHYSICS
PhD and thesis-based Master's Minimum Funding Policy

This program-level funding policy has been developed to accompany [GGR 1.17](#).

Effective Date: September 1, 2024

Approved by: PHYSICS Graduate Program Committee on January 11, 2024.

Approved by Graduate Studies on: January 11, 2024

The primary goal in the development of a minimum funding guarantee is equity, which the graduate program in PHYSICS defines as ensuring that all research-based graduate students have the opportunity to engage fully in graduate level research and demonstrate their competency in their academic pursuits.

Minimum funding in the PhD program and thesis-based Master's program has been established to support students who are not engaged in professional work. Students who are working professionals might not receive a minimum funding guarantee. For the purposes of this policy, a working professional is defined as an individual who has completed formal, specialized education or training in a particular area and/or has recognized competence in that area, and is employed in a job where their specialized knowledge is required. This includes, but is not limited to, professions such as teacher, counselor, consultant, accountant, management consultant, electrician, analyst, plumber, engineer or physician.

1. Students enrolled in the PhD program in Physics have a target for completing the program in 12 terms. Students in the program will be funded for a minimum of 12 terms. Students enrolled in the thesis-based Master's program in Physics have a target for completing the program in 6 terms. Students in the program will be funded for a minimum of 6 terms. For students transferring directly from a thesis-based Master's to a PhD program in Physics, the target completion time for the PhD is 15 terms from initial entry into the MSc program in Physics, and such students will be funded for a minimum of 15 terms.
2. In the case that there is a conflict between this policy and GGR 1.17, GGR 1.17 will prevail.
3. PhD Students will receive guaranteed minimum funding in the amount of \$30,090 per year for the duration of the funding period guarantee provided in 1. Students in the thesis-based Master's program in Physics will receive guaranteed minimum funding in the amount of \$27,540 per year for the term of the funding guarantee provided in 1.
4. Continued funding is contingent on maintaining a CGPA of 3.0 or higher, satisfactory progress in the program, and meeting the supervisor's reasonable expectations as detailed in the annual progress review (completed via the Graduate Progress Report).

5. All of the following count toward meeting the student's minimum guaranteed funding amount:
 - TA funding (up to 10.34 base units annually for all students except those in the first year of an MSc program, for whom TA employment should not exceed 8.34 base units during the first year)
 - Scholarship payment from supervisor's research grant
 - RA funding
 - PhD Research Scholarship¹
 - Tri-Agency awards
 - Major² external scholarships including, for example, those adjudicated by Graduate Studies
 - Major² internal scholarships adjudicated by Graduate Studies
 - Major² program-specific awards, including donor awards
6. Student funding may not be provided in equal increments over the course of the academic year, although the Department of Physics endeavours to provide equal funding throughout the academic year. Students are advised to monitor their funding each term and budget accordingly.
7. The funding year begins in Fall and ends in Summer for all students enrolled in the program. Students who begin the program in a semester other than the semester in which the funding year begins will have their funding accordingly pro-rated for the remaining portion of the academic year.
8. The time spent in non-required Co-operative Education or Internship programs will count against the total terms of guaranteed funding.
9. In order to reward scholarship success and ensure more equitable distribution of funds within the program, students will receive the following funding adjustments in addition to their guaranteed minimum funding amount if they are successful in securing major competitive scholarships and/or awards, subject to the requirements and intentions of the funder.
 - a) PhD students holding an award of value up to \$5,000 receive the full value of the award in addition to their guaranteed minimum funding from 3.
 - b) PhD students holding a single major award (defined as greater than \$5,000 in annual value, e.g. Tri-Council Scholarship, GDES, PhD Research Scholarship) receive \$5,000 additional funding beyond the minimum funding guarantee from 3.

¹ Students who receive a tuition waiver (e.g. dependent of SFU faculty or staff) will not be eligible for the PhD Research Scholarship and may have their total minimum funding amount reduced accordingly.

² For definition of "major" scholarships, see 9.

- c) PhD students holding a single major award as defined in 9b along with a second stackable award up to \$3,000 in value receive the full value of this second award in addition to their guaranteed minimum funding from 9b.
- d) PhD students holding a major award as defined in 9b plus an additional, stackable award greater than \$3,000 in value receive \$8,000 additional funding beyond the minimum funding guarantee from 3.
- e) PhD students holding additional stackable awards beyond the two major awards described in 9d receive the full value of these additional awards in addition to their guaranteed minimum funding from 9d, up to the university-mandated maximum level.
- f) MSc students holding an award of value up to \$4,000 receive the full value of the award in addition to their guaranteed minimum funding from 3.
- g) MSc students holding a single major award (defined as greater than \$4,000 in annual value, e.g. Tri-Council Scholarship, GDES) receive \$4,000 additional funding beyond the minimum funding guarantee from 3.