

Department of Physics Graduate Stipend Policy

Last updated by Department of Physics, November 2, 2023

The stipend amounts provided to Physics graduate students are set by the Department Chair, in consultation with the Graduate Program Committee and the Department. A student making satisfactory degree progress will receive a minimum stipend that is set by the Department. This is expected to be paid throughout the duration of their graduate program, though is guaranteed only for the first two years of the MSc, first four years of the PhD, and for a total of five years from the initial entry into the MSc program for students transferring directly from the MSc to the PhD. The stipend will include support from research funding, Teaching Assistantships (TAs), and certain scholarships, as described below.

Scholarship support in the form of Graduate Fellowships (GF) and/or Special Graduate Entrance Scholarships (SGES) will be determined by the Graduate Program Chair, subject to the Terms of Reference and any additional Departmental policy.

Students holding an NSERC Postgraduate Scholarship, Graduate Dean's Entrance Scholarship (GDES) or other major award (currently defined to be over \$5,000 for PhD students or \$4,000 for MSc student for the purposes of these guidelines) will receive a stipend supplement according to separate rules, subject to the requirements and intentions of the funder.

Simon Fraser University Private Awards of minor value (i.e., not qualifying as a major award) will be paid in addition to the usual student stipend.

During the guaranteed stipend period, supervisors are typically expected to fully support each graduate student with research funding and scholarships for at least one term per year. TA employment may be used to provide support towards the guaranteed minimum stipend in other terms each year. The total stipend support expected from TA employment will not exceed 10.34 base units (BU) annually for all students except those in the first year of an MSc program, for whom TA employment will not exceed 8.34 BU during the first year.

Normally a student will receive the appropriate minimum stipend, and the balance between research funding and TA support will be determined by the senior supervisor. In some circumstances, a student may receive a larger stipend, arising either from supervisor-provided additional research funding or from student-derived university income. Research funding may be used by the supervisor to increase the student's stipend up to a maximum value of the next level of guaranteed minimum support (e.g. to NSERC PGS-D / CGS-M / GDES levels for students not holding major award; to NSERC CGS-D level for students holding GDES/PGS-D award). With the approval of both the student's senior supervisor and the Department Chair, students may choose to earn extra income by TAing for additional base units beyond the initial level required by the supervisor, or from other Physics-related

employment such as an RAship at the Trottier Observatory. The Graduate Program Chair will be informed of such special arrangements.

In exceptional circumstances, and subject to Graduate Program Committee approval, the Department may increase TA support to a student beyond the maximum value, up to the full guaranteed stipend.