

Financial Support for Graduate Students Who Require an Extra Semester Due to the COVID Shutdown

CBS and the Office of Graduate Studies will provide up to \$5,500 to any graduate student (domestic or international) in a thesis-based program who was not able to make significant progress in achieving thesis objectives during the COVID shutdown in S20, and as a result now requires an “extra” semester beyond their original planned completion date. For MSc students this funding may include a 7th or 8th semester, and PhD students, a 13th or 14th semester, depending on when they were originally expected to finish. Please note that this funding is intended to support COVID-related delays only.

Who is covering the cost of this funding?

The Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies is providing 50% of the funding. The remaining 50% will be split equally between the College, Department, and Faculty Advisor.

How many extra semesters of support can be funded?

This funding is available for a maximum of one semester only.

Which students are eligible?

This funding is available to students who:

- Remained enrolled full-time in a thesis-based program in S20
- Completed semester 2-6 (MSc) or 4-12 (PhD) in S20*
- Were unable to make meaningful progress in S20 (e.g., due to lack of access to lab or other critical facilities)

**In exceptional circumstances, PhD students who completed semester 2 in S20 and who experienced longer term delays due to the shut down may be eligible (e.g., due to loss of field season).*

What level of funding can be requested?

Up to \$5,500 can be requested. However, if the student was paid in S20 from an account that received a covid salary supplement (e.g., from NSERC, CIHR or the Canadian Research Emergency Continuity Fund), the student’s relative “share” of the supplement will be used to reduce the amount on offer. Advisors are expected to use the student’s share of the supplement to help fund their extra semester. ***The ADR office will advise you if any covid supplements can be applied to the student.***

What is the application process?

As students approach the end of their program, they should assess, in consultation with their supervisor and advisory committees, their ability to complete their program requirements within the expected time frame.

If an extra semester is deemed necessary, then advisors should submit the following to the Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Studies (cbsadr@uoguelph.ca):

- i. A brief explanation (100-150 words) of how the student's progress was impeded by the COVID-19 disruption in S20 and how this affected subsequent completion of program requirements within the normal funding period. Please also indicate if the student will hold any awards during their final extra semester (funding may be adjusted accordingly).
- ii. A copy of the student's most recent Graduate Progress Report. Ideally, this report should include a statement confirming the delays experienced by the student.

What is the deadline to apply?

Requests should be submitted during the student's penultimate semester. (For example, if funding for an "extra" semester is required in F21, please submit your request before the end of S21.)

Who approves the request?

The Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Studies will review all requests. OGPS co-funding is automatic for all requests approved by the ADRGS.

How does the student get paid?

The Office of Graduate Studies will pay its share directly to the student (funds are posted to the student's account). The rest will be paid out to the student as a GRA over the course of the semester.

Note that if a student completes all program requirements (defense, submission of thesis) on or before the 30th class day, the GRA can be terminated the same day that all program requirements are met. (This is also the final day that a partial tuition rebate can be requested.) Note that GRAs do not terminate automatically, supervisors must notify their department administrative officer if they wish to terminate the GRA before the end of the semester).

Can an advisor top up the students GRA?

Absolutely. If the advisor wishes to see their student receive more than \$5,500 during their "extra" semester, they are encouraged to increase the amount of the GRA accordingly, but any amount over \$5,500 must be fully funded by the advisor.

Questions? Please email sbates@uoguelph.ca