Computer Science Graduate Student Funding

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This document provides the funding policy of the Department of Computer Science for thesis-based graduate students starting on or after August 1, 2022. Students who started at an earlier date are subject to the previous policy (revised June 2019).

1. Minimum Funding Level
   a. The minimum funding guaranteed for both Ph.D. and MSc students is $24,000. The funding is guaranteed for a period of two years for MSc and for a period of four years for PhD students. The funding is contingent on full-time registration of the students and their satisfactory progress in the program.
   b. The funding is a mixture of a Graduate Assistant Teaching (GAT), supervisor support, and scholarships. A typical funding package consists of two GATs (GAT1 and GAT2) per year, as well as a minimum of $6,212 from supervisor (See Figure 1):
      i. The GAT funding is conditional on satisfactory performance as a teaching assistant.
      ii. If students decline a GAT, their funding may be reduced accordingly.
      iii. As a part of the committed funding, the GAT fund might be replaced by an income as a sessional instructor up to two times.
      iv. Students must be available to take the employment as a GAT or sessional instructor; otherwise the amount of the GAT or sessional contract will be deducted from the annual funding offered to the student for that academic year.
      v. Students receiving funding from their supervisor’s grant must be available to fulfil their supervisor’s reasonable expectations regarding attendance and activity in the research environment.
   c. GAT funding is subject to change pending the results of collective bargaining between the GSA and Board of Governors. This will not change the total funding amounts in this policy.
   d. Competitive, program-internal International Graduate Student Recruitment Awards (IGRA) are not counted toward the minimum guaranteed funding. Only international applicants with a good record will receive IRGA.
2. Departmental Research Awards (RA)
   a. The RA is a replacement for one of the GATs. The current value of a RA is $11,000. This is equivalent of the salary of one GAT plus an incentive value that is slightly greater than $2,000 (See Figure 2).
   b. Supervisors are still required to provide the committed support whether or not their grad student receives RA. Supervisors can benefit from RA by saving one GAT from their quota. Also, grad students with RA can spend more time on their research.

3. Major Scholarships
   a. Students with scholarships with a minimum value of $17,500 (NSERC, Eyes High, etc.) are eligible to do at most one GAT per year (See Figure 3).
   b. The amount of supervisor’s support is flexible as long as the total funding (the scholarship plus 1 GAT) is greater than $26,300 for MSc students and greater than $29,000 for PhD students.
   c. To encourage both supervisors and grad students to apply for major scholarships, the GAT of students with major scholarships is not counted against their supervisors’ GAT quota.
4. **Other Scholarships**

The funding described in the items 1, 2 and 3 can be used to categorize other scholarships as shown in Figure 4.

a. Students with AGES or similar scholarships are placed in Category 2.
b. Students with AITF are placed in Category 3.
c. MITACS funding is considered a support from supervisor and it is treated similarly as supports from other grants such as NSERC DG or NSERC CRD.

5. **Self-Funding**

   a. The department does not consider admitting self-funded students to be a best practice. There is no financial commitment from the department for self-funding graduate students.
   
   b. The prospective supervisor must make a case, with a rationale, for self-funding admissions. The rationale should include, at a minimum, a) a clear justification for admitting the student; b) evidence that the student both agrees to and is able to fund themselves; c) a memo from the program that a supervisor will be available to supervise the student if admitted; d) a statement that the student will have
access to, and funding for, any equipment or resources needed to carry the research; and e) a statement from the program on future funding opportunities for the student (TA assignments, internal awards, etc.). The decision whether to permit a self-funding student is made by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

6. **Students are responsible for paying tuition and fees annually**