A policy of the Graduate Program Committee for graduate student stipends

The objectives of the policy are:

I. To ensure compliance with the policy of the Faculty for Graduate Studies
II. To ensure appropriate and fair compensation of graduate students
III. To implement a procedure to stop funding a student in case progress is not adequate.

The Policy:

1. The minimum guaranteed funding for full-time thesis based Geoscience Ph.D. and M.Sc. students is $22,000 per year for domestic students, and $24,000 per year for international students. This minimum funding is offered to PhD students for at least four years and M.Sc. students for at least two years. The difference reflects the difference in tuition fees, which were, in 2021, $3,464 and $8,081, respectively, for domestic and international students. Note that international students do receive a $3,000/y IGTA grant from the Faculty of Graduate Studies to compensate part of their higher tuition fees.

2. The sources of funding that contribute individually or collectively to this guaranteed minimum are contributions from the Department, research grants from Supervisor(s), Teaching Assistant-ships and Graduate Assistant-ships (e.g. “FGS summer funding”), Sessional Instructorships. FGS summer funding ($5,000/y) is typically available to PhD students during 2.5 years and Msc students during 1.5 years of their program and counts toward the minimum funding.

3. Graduate students are strongly encouraged to apply for external scholarships beyond the funding sources specified above. As a reward for seeking such external scholarships, when a student obtains an External Scholarship or Award, at least $2,000 from such external scholarship grant will not count towards the guaranteed minimum funding. The remainder of the scholarship contributes to the guaranteed minimum funding. (For example, if a student is guaranteed $25,000 per year and wins a scholarship that is worth $5,000, the student will still be eligible for a total minimum contribution of $23,000 from the guaranteed sources of funding specified in 4) for that year, and will in total receive $27,000).

4. Letters of admission must specify the Student’s Minimum Guaranteed Funding Amount for each year in which funding is offered.

5. Students who are fully funded by an external agency (such as the scholarship agency of a foreign government) to an amount equal to or greater than specified in 2 or 3 may be admitted to a graduate program without additional funding, with approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies.

6. The Graduate Program Committee may recommend admission of a self-funded Graduate Student to the Dean of Graduate Studies with a rationale explaining the recommendation. The decision whether to permit a self-funded student is made by the Dean of Graduate Studies. To recommend admission of a self-funded student, the Geoscience Graduate Program Director will require a brief rationale from the student, outlining the nature of the funds or income of at least the amounts and periods specified under 2, that will enable full time graduate studies. This rationale should indicate potential conflicts of interest that may arise because of the arrangements.
7. A student’s guaranteed funding is contingent on continued full-time registration in their graduate program, and “adequate progress” in the program and funding related components (e.g. Graduate Teaching Assistant-ship, Graduate Assistant-ship etc.). If the Supervisor deems the Graduate Student’s contribution or research progress to be deficient, the Supervisor must work with the Graduate Program Director to initiate a review of the Graduate Student’s research performance. The Supervisor cannot reduce or stop funding to a Graduate Student without the prior approval of the Graduate Program Director and the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

8. As part of the review process for deemed unsatisfactory research performance; the supervisor shall set up a meeting with the student, the Graduate Program Director and co-supervisor(s), if any, to set up a 6-month research plan. After 3 months, student, supervisor, co-supervisor(s) and Graduate Program Director shall convene a meeting to discuss the progress and commitment. The same parties shall meet again after 6 months. If, after 6 months, the student’s progress and commitment are still deemed insufficient, the Supervisor must write a memo outlining the review process and outcomes to the Dean of Graduate Studies requesting permission to stop funding. The final decision will be made by the Dean of Graduate Studies in consultation with the Graduate Program Director (or a designate if the Supervisor is the Graduate Program Director).

9. While reviewing student performance, the Graduate Program Director must take into consideration any extenuating circumstances that may have affected the Students Performance in the Program.

10. Students in the course-based M.Sc. programs within the Department of Geoscience normally do not receive any funding from the Program during their program. The letter of acceptance for course-based M.Sc. students must indicate this explicitly.

11. Course-based Masters Students may, however, be considered for Graduate Teaching Assistantships based on the needs of the Department and availability of funds. This is not a guaranteed source of funding.

12. Students are responsible for paying their own tuition and fees for the program and courses they are registered in.