



*Preparing People to Lead Extraordinary Lives*

**LOYOLA  
UNIVERSITY  
CHICAGO**

**Stritch School of Medicine**

## **Policy for Graduate Student Stipend Support Graduate School, LUMC August, 2007**

A cornerstone in the education of graduate students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) throughout the U.S. has been the provision of stipend support either independent of or combined with classroom or laboratory teaching. At Loyola University Medical Center the granting of a stipend for the entire period of biomedical science training for the Ph.D. degree has been defined as a Research Assistantship without an obligation for any activity that would slow degree completion. Graduate education is a hallmark of research universities, and the mission of the university is to educate individuals for areas of need in our country. The importance of STEM education to the future of this country cannot be understated; the role of doctoral biomedical scientists is absolutely necessary for the future of biomedical research through translational research and the education of physicians for the future.

For decades the annual stipend allotment at LUMC has supported approximately 25 new incoming Ph.D. candidates. Support for the stipend has been provided through the SSOM budget to Graduate School operations, and allocations to programs are for a period of 21 months from matriculation. Additionally, the granting of a stipend automatically includes a Tuition Scholarship for all 48 credit hours required for the Ph.D., including support in the later years for Dissertation Supervision. Upon termination of Graduate School support (i.e. after 21 months), funding of the stipend converts to the extramural support of the P.I in the lab of choice, and funding of the tuition continues as a cost to the Graduate School.

During first year laboratory rotations graduate students identify a laboratory of choice in their respective discipline and begin conversations with a selected faculty advisor. No administrative assignment of this relationship is made. Guidance is provided by Chairs, the Associate Dean of the Graduate School, and Graduate Program Directors regarding the number of students under advisement. Differences exist regarding the number of Ph.D. students under advisement based upon faculty rank, past performance, and extramural funding record.

An important role played by each Chairperson and Graduate Program Director is to provide input to the Graduate School regarding a possible scenario for future faculty funding. In part, this advice directs the allocation of the annual number of stipends per program. Given that incoming students will not be transferred to a grant for stipend support until 21 months of Graduate School funding have ended, this prediction must be made based upon the likelihood that the program faculty will continue to remain funded and have sufficient funds at the time of transfer and beyond. Currently (2007) the average time-to-completion for Ph.D. programs at LUMC is 6.2 years; institutional support for 21 months therefore requires a future funding period from extramural sources of approximately 4.5 years for each student taken into a laboratory.

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Emerging from these considerations are the following policies:

- Graduate Program Directors will counsel first year graduate students regarding the importance of faculty productivity and extramural research support before the students select their research rotations. In addition, Graduate Program Directors and Chairpersons will provide a list, available to all students and faculty of the program, of currently funded laboratories, the distribution of existing students in laboratories, and the number of openings available as of a certain date.
- Lists of selected research rotations and selected dissertation advisors will be shared among Graduate Program Directors, Chairs and the Associate Dean of the Graduate School so there is knowledge of the number of students being advised by each member of the graduate faculty.
- Chairpersons, Graduate Program Directors and the Senior Associate Dean for Research will together approve a student's choice of an advisor based primarily on the faculty member's record of extramural funding and the likelihood that adequate extramural support will be maintained for the duration of the training period.
- When selecting an advisor, students will be limited to:
  - A) Established faculty (5 or more years in rank as a tenure-track Assistant Professor or higher academic rank) who have evidence of extramurally derived stipend support for more than one year and a track record that indicates a strong likelihood of continued funding; and
  - B) Faculty in rank as a tenure-track Assistant Professor for less than 5 years who can support the stipend and health insurance costs from start-up funding if: 1) approved by the Dean of SSOM; and 2) the department chairperson or institute director agree in writing to support the student stipend and other costs (e.g. health care insurance) from non-operating budget accounts if extramural support is not obtained by the primary advisor. By agreeing to the latter, the department chair or institute director assumes responsibility and, therefore, the role of co-mentor until such time as the student's preceptor can support the student from extramural funds.
- If a dissertation advisor cannot support a graduate student's stipend and health insurance costs because of loss of extramural support, the costs not covered by extramural support will be paid from the following sources in the order presented:
  1. The faculty member's discretionary funds, including remaining start-up, research stimulation funds, gift funds, earnings on endowments, etc.
  2. Research Stimulation funds within the Department or Institute (if the Chair or Director agreed to co-sponsor a graduate student in a junior faculty member's laboratory).
  3. RFC-awarded Bridging and Translational Grants if approved by the Dean of SSOM and the Associate Dean of the Graduate School. RFC-awarded Pilot and New Investigator Grants can not be used to support graduate student stipends and health insurance.
  4. Funds available to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School.
  5. Funds available to the Dean of SSOM as a result of the graduate student fringe benefits charged to extramural grants. This requires Dean's approval and the availability of such funds.
- Institutional funding of graduate student stipends and associated health insurance costs after the first 21 months of training will not be allowed if extramural funds are available to support these costs. The Dean of SSOM must approve any use of institutional funds for stipend and health insurance support.