

Monday Matters: Graduate Student RA and TA stipends

Dodge, Gail <gdodge@odu.edu>

Mon 11/28/2022 8:00 AM

To: Dodge, Gail <gdodge@odu.edu>

Cc: Greene, Lesley H. <LGreene@odu.edu>; Whitfield, Tiffany L. <tlwhitfi@odu.edu>

Dear Colleagues:

President Hemphill announced at his state of the university address on September 2 that graduate assistantship stipends would be increased for most TAs, RAs, and GAs paid by state funds.

The new baseline for PhD students is \$10K per semester and for MS students is \$7.5K per semester for a 20 hour/week assistantship. This is a terrific investment in graduate education and in research more broadly. This change was made possible by vigorous advocacy from Robert Wojtowicz, Dean of the Graduate School and others including Associate Dean Lesley Greene. President Hemphill also heard from faculty in departments when he met with them over the past year about the importance of this issue. My understanding is that these stipend increases were applied to student's ODU payroll earlier in the fall.

Many faculty have asked about PhD and MS stipends for RAs paid by grants through ODURF. Lesley worked with ODURF to establish a process by which faculty could ask for an immediate increase to RAs paid by their grants. I know some grants were not able to accommodate an increase right away, but I hope that most RA stipends from grants can be increased by the spring 2023 semester. I hope you will discuss any challenges associated with making that transition with the chair of your department and that together we can find a way to make it happen.

Because ODURF is a consolidated employer with ODU, they must follow the minimum established stipend amounts set forth by ODU. For that reason, all grant proposals submitted now must have minimum GRA stipends as listed above, namely \$10K per semester for PhD students and \$7.5K per semester for MS students, for a 20-hour/week appointment. If you feel strongly that you should budget a smaller amount for your RAs you can do that by reducing the number of hours per week of the appointment. In that case students can seek additional employment from another grant or campus assistantship to achieve a 20 hour per week assignment. Of course you can pay more than the established minimum if you wish.

Summer RA stipends must be paid at the same hourly rate as during the academic year. Again, you can adjust the number of hours per week of the assistantship you offer. For example, if you offer an assistantship at 20 hours per week in summer, it will translate to a stipend of approximately \$6500. You are allowed to budget 40 hours per week in summer, but that is not required.

A separate question is what minimum stipend will allow a tuition waiver to be applied? ODU's current policy is that stipends of \$3200, \$3200, and \$2500 in Fall, Spring, and Summer are the minimums to allow a tuition waiver. That ODU policy is in the process of being modified to increase those minimum levels. We will keep you posted on that issue.

I understand that a lot is changing and that you may have more questions. Lesley is trying to arrange for a question and answer session with ODURF and the Graduate School. Please stay tuned for that announcement. In the meantime, urgent questions should be sent to Lesley who will help get answers.

Best Regards,
Gail

Upcoming Events:

- College of Sciences Holiday Party: Dec. 8, 12 – 2 pm, Big Blue Room in the Chartway Arena
- Townhall Discussion: Jan. 26, 12:30 – 1:30, location and zoom link TBA

Gail Dodge

12/12/22, 9:34 AM

Mail - Whitfield, Tiffany L. - Outlook

Dean, College of Sciences
Professor of Physics
757-683-3432
gdodge@odu.edu