

Graduate Student Guidelines: Funding, Full-Time Employment and Vacations

Last updated June 15, 2023

1. Preamble

In order to attract and retain excellent graduate students, the Yeates School of Graduate Studies (YSGS) will ensure that an internal program for support including scholarships, bursaries and assistantships (research and teaching) is maintained and that access will be made available to external sources of funding (e.g., federal and provincial scholarships). Funding practices will recognize that most full-time students require significant financial support. To facilitate student access to the various funding resources, YSGS will provide administrative support.

The financial obligations of both the student and the university will be provided when a student is accepted into a Toronto Met graduate program. However, the offer of admission will not necessarily provide a guarantee of financial support to prospective graduate students. Students will be expected to have sufficient means of financial support (e.g., support offered by Toronto Met and elsewhere) for the length of time normally required to complete the graduate program in which they intend to enroll. When an offer of admission with financial support is made, the student must agree with the terms and conditions of Toronto Met or the awarding agency. The university is not obliged to provide further financial support beyond that described in the offer of admission. An offer of funding will state the amount of funding, duration of funding, conditions for renewal (if any), terms of continued funding, and other relevant details. Students will have to agree to the terms of the admission offer and funding arrangements before their enrolment in a graduate program at the university.

Graduate students may be offered financial support, for a part of or for the full duration of their tenure in the program, in the form of scholarships, bursaries, awards, graduate student stipends, graduate assistantships, or research assistantships. In addition, graduate students will be given information about applying for graduate assistantships and research assistantships, which are administered by individual undergraduate teaching units.

The allocation of scholarships and awards will be consistent with Toronto Met's policies concerning access, equity, diversity, inclusion, and research integrity, and the criteria established by YSGS. The award of graduate student stipends, research assistantships and graduate assistantships is to be consistent with employment and graduate funding policies of granting agencies whose funds may be used to support graduate students. Terms of employment of

graduate students as research and graduate assistants will be consistent with the collective agreements between Toronto Met and its employee groups.

Scholarships and awards will be awarded on a competitive basis.

Scholarship, award and bursary decisions made by the university cannot be appealed by graduate students. Information on the decision-making process is confidential and also cannot be released.

2. Purpose of Guidelines

The Graduate Student Funding Guidelines outline the types of funding available, along with funding procedures and guidelines to be followed throughout the graduate student cycle from enrollment to graduation at Toronto Metropolitan University and identify the roles and responsibilities of those involved in processes.

3. Application of Guidelines

These guidelines apply to the funding of graduate students in all programs at the university.

4. Oversight of Guidelines

The Vice-Provost and Dean, YSGS, has the authority to review and adjust these guidelines, to adjust funding levels based on budget availability, to update funding categories as necessary, and to make other changes as deemed necessary. The Vice-Provost and Dean will consult as necessary with the University Planning Office (UPO) and the Faculty Deans.

5. YSGS Scholarships and Awards

YSGS provides Faculties with funding for graduate programs on an annual basis, based on the traditional academic year, September 1 to August 31. Funding is provided as Toronto Met Graduate Fellowships (TMGF). Programs may use up to 25% of their allocations for Toronto Met Graduate Development Awards (TMGDA). Programs with multiple intakes are also funded on the traditional academic year and must accommodate funding for students that begin in the winter or spring/summer term within the funding allocation for that academic year.

In addition to the TMGF (and TMGDA) funding allocations, YSGS has a number of awards to support graduate students.

YSGS scholarships and awards are available to full-time students only.

YSGS-provided scholarships and awards are as follows:

1. Toronto Met Graduate Fellowships (TMGF) - formerly Ryerson Graduate Fellowship (RGF)

A Toronto Met Graduate Fellowship is a merit-based non-renewable excellence scholarship for students pursuing studies in one of the university's graduate programs. The allocation of fellowships is on a competitive basis and is consistent with Toronto Met's policies concerning access, diversity, equity, inclusion and research integrity. All incoming and current eligible graduate students are automatically considered for funding by their graduate program.

Value:

- PhD: maximum \$16,000
- Master's: maximum \$12,000

Eligibility:

- Domestic student status
- Full-time enrollment
- Have a minimum of a B average in last two years of study
- PhD - up to and including the 4th year of study only
- Master's - up to 1 to 2 years, depending on the length of program

Guidelines for Recipient Selection:

- Graduate Program Councils may establish set criteria to determine award recipients and amounts, as per their Graduate Program Council Bylaws and these guidelines
- Allocation of fellowships based on academic excellence, to both newly admitted and in-progress graduate students who demonstrate excellence in their Toronto Met studies
- Make allocation decisions expeditiously, based on a comprehensively considered set of criteria

Ranking Criteria:

- As determined by the Faculty and/or graduate programs

2. Toronto Met Graduate Development Award (TMGDA) - formerly Ryerson Graduate Development Awards (R-GDA)

Faculties and graduate programs may convert up to a maximum of 25% of their TMGF to TMGDA. The TMGDA is non-renewable and provides some flexibility to graduate programs and can be used for the following only:

- Top-up of external awards such as the Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS), the Queen Elizabeth II Graduate Scholarship in Science and Technology (QEII-GSST), the Vanier Scholarship, tri-council scholarships from SSHRC, NSERC, CIHR, and CERC, and other significant external scholarships.
- Support for international students
- FEAS has access to the Toronto Met International Student Scholarship (TMISS), which allows it to use its TMGDA funding for 31 international doctoral students at a rate of \$7,000 per international student
- Graduate student travel when presenting research
- Other awards as determined by the graduate program

Value:

- TMGDA: Maximum \$6,500 per student
- TMISS: Maximum \$7,000 per international doctoral student in FEAS to a maximum of 31 students

Eligibility:

- PhD - up to and including the 4th year of study only
- Master's - up to 1 to 2 years, depending on the length of program

Ranking Criteria:

- As determined by the Faculty and/or graduate programs

3. Toronto Met Graduate Scholarship (TMGS) - formerly Ryerson Graduate Scholarship

YSGS established the Toronto Met Graduate Scholarship (TMGS) as an extension of the Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS) process, eligibility and adjudication, and *is not part of the TMGF allocations*. The TMGS is a \$15,000 non-renewable award. TMGS recipients are selected from the ranked list of OGS applicants, as per established processes. There is no separate process for application or the selection of TMGS recipients outside of this process. Students are considered for an TMGS solely based on their eligibility for the OGS. The number of TMGS is determined annually by YSGS.

For eligibility requirements, please visit [Ontario Graduate Scholarship \(OGS\)](#)

4. Toronto Met Graduate Student Travel Fund

The Toronto Met Graduate Student Travel Fund is intended to encourage graduate students to present their research at a regional, national or international conference or equivalent academic event. Funding is subject to availability and determined and administered annually by YSGS.

Value: Up to \$500 (a maximum of one award per academic year)

Eligibility:

- Registered full-time at the time of application and conference attendance
- Have good academic standing
- Be an active participant (e.g. speaker, poster presenter, member of a panel or round table) in a conference (or other academic meeting) relevant to their academic program.

Graduate students are encouraged to reach out to CUPE 3, their programs and Faculties for additional sources of travel support.

5. Toronto Met Emergency Bursary (Graduate Students)

YSGS has limited funding available for emergency situations. Funding is provided through the university Tuition Set-Aside (TSA). Students should contact their program administration when in financial need or in an emergency situation. These bursaries are available to domestic students only.

6. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Scholarships, Awards and Bursaries

The [Black Graduate Student Awards](#) are a suite of awards and bursaries established by the Yeates School of Graduate Studies to support Black students pursuing graduate studies at Toronto Met. These awards recognize excellence and/or alleviate some of the financial burden associated with graduate education.

The [Indigenous Graduate Student Awards](#) are a suite of awards and bursaries established by the Yeates School of Graduate Studies to support Indigenous students in pursuing graduate education at Toronto Met. These awards recognize excellence and/or alleviate some of the financial burden associated with graduate education.

6. Funding Rates and Calculation of YSGS Scholarships and Awards by Faculty and Program

Funding to Faculties and graduate programs is calculated on the estimated eligible FTE for the *next* fall term for the *next* academic year. Estimated eligible FTE includes only incoming and continuing domestic students that are Ministry funding-eligible. Students in cost-recovery or PMDip programs are not eligible for funding.

While YSGS attempts to maintain funding rates, this is based on the availability of budget resources.

Faculties may reallocate funding amongst their programs as necessary and inform YSGS before the submission of requisitions to YSGS before the start of the fall term each year.

7. Renewals

All Toronto Met funding sources are non-renewable. All eligible graduate students will be considered for funding annually. See section 10 below.

8. Concurrent Funding

Graduate students are not eligible to hold any combination of the following concurrent funding:

- Any Tri-Council scholarships and TMGF
- Any Tri-Council scholarships and TMGS
- Any Tri-Council scholarships and OGS or QEII-GSST
- OGS and TMGS
- QEII-GSST and TMGS

If a graduate student has been offered an TMGF or TMGS and receives an OGS, QEII-GSST or Tri-Council scholarship, they must decline their TMGF or TMGS and accept the external scholarship. This allows YSGS to reallocate funding to students who have not yet received a major scholarship.

Graduate students may receive graduate student stipend funded from a faculty member's external grant, including Tri-Council grants, and concurrently hold any scholarship.

9. Responsibilities, Requisitioning, and Payment Procedures

YSGS Responsibilities

- Establishing policy, procedures, guidelines and administrative procedures for graduate student funding at the university
- Calculation and distribution of funding allocations to Faculties
- Ensuring the guidelines as established are enforced
- Setting item type funding limits in accordance with university guidelines
- Ensuring item types are established and maintained in accordance with the scholarships and awards being offered
- Articulation of processes to Faculties and programs
- Setting of dates and deadlines
- Creation and support of requisition templates for Faculties and programs
- Review, audit and approval of funding requisitions and modifications
- Requisitioning of payments through RAMSS
- Ensuring budget limits are not exceeded
- Leading communications regarding dates, deadlines, processes
- Ensuring students are paid in a timely manner
- YSGS maintains the authority to approve or deny details on funding requisitions
- Reporting of student financial support as required

Faculty/Program Responsibilities

- Establishing a Scholarship and Awards Committee as per the Graduate Program Council Bylaws to make recommendations on funding levels for graduate students within funding allocations
- Establishing a process of weighting and criteria within the parameters of these guidelines to evaluate and rank graduate students for scholarships and awards
- Informing YSGS of any Faculty-based funding before the start of each fall term
- Completing the funding requisitions for submission to YSGS as per the communicated deadlines
- Updating and revising the funding requisitions as necessary and informing YSGS of changes
- Communicating funding decisions with graduate students

Payments to Students

Payments begin in the term that the student's funding was approved to start and are paid in three equal installments by YSGS during the first month of each academic term in September, January and May through their fees account in RAMSS after the term enrollment has been confirmed. Funding is deposited to the student's fees account first to ensure that a tax slip for income tax purposes is automatically generated.

Funding applies to the student's fees balance first. If a credit remains, students may request a refund in RAMSS, which is processed by e-transfer. Students have the option to leave any credit in their account to apply against future fees.

10. Terms and Conditions of YSGS Scholarship and Award Holders

To accept the offer of a Toronto Met University scholarship, fellowship or award, graduate students must agree to the terms and conditions as posted on the Toronto Met graduate website. Incoming students must also accept the Offer of Admission by the confirmation deadline or they will forfeit the funding offer. Please see [Terms and Conditions](#) for YSGS scholarships and awards other than TMGS. For TMGS, please refer to the [TMGS Terms and Conditions](#).

Continuous Registration

Graduate students must maintain full-time enrollment and be actively engaged in academic pursuits and attend the graduate program at Toronto Met during every month of the term in which they have received a payment. If the student withdraws, completes their program, transfers to part-time status, takes a leave of absence or fails to complete the term, they may be required to forfeit and repay all or part of their funding. Please refer to the university's [Policy 170\(b\) on Graduate Status, Enrollment and Evaluation](#).

Renewals

At the *Master's* level, funding consideration is automatic in the second year of a two year program. Funding offered would vary in duration from one term to three terms based on the expected time to completion associated with the program. At the *Doctoral* level, funding consideration is automatic from one to four years in addition to the

funding offered in the first year. Funding packages for students may vary from year to year if funding is offered.

Withdrawals

Withdrawal during a term in which students have received funding will require repayment based on the university's tuition refund policy:

- Full repayment if withdrawal occurs before the final date to withdraw and be eligible for a full refund of fees.
- 50% repayment if withdrawal occurs before the final date to withdraw and be eligible for a 50% refund of fees.
- No repayment required if withdrawal is after the 50% refund withdrawal deadline date.

Leaves of Absence

Graduate students are not eligible for Toronto Met funding during any leave of absence. All fees and all funding types will be reversed in total to the start of the affected terms.

Conversion to Part-Time Status

Part-time students are not eligible for Toronto Met funding. If a graduate student converts to part-time status, funding will be adjusted as per the schedule above.

Completions

If a graduate student completes during the term, funding will be adjusted as per the schedule above.

Appeals

Scholarship, award and bursary decisions made by the university cannot be appealed by graduate students. Information on the decision-making process is confidential and will not be released.

11. Non-YSGS Scholarships and Awards

1. Faculty-Based Scholarships and Awards

In addition to the YSGS-provided funding for scholarships and awards, Faculties at times add additional funding for their graduate programs. The criteria, weighting and decisions regarding Faculty-based funding is within the purview of the Faculties and programs only. Payment of these scholarships and awards follows the process outlined in section 9. Faculties and programs have the responsibility of adding these payments to the funding requisitions with the deadlines established by YSGS. YSGS has and will establish item types that Faculties must use in order to ensure payments to students. Any deficits from Faculty-based funding is the sole responsibility of the Faculty.

2. External Scholarships and Awards

There are separate guidelines and procedures for the administration of externally-funded awards. YSGS has the responsibility for establishing and supporting the guidelines and procedures for each of these awards, in accordance with the award requirements and guidelines. YSGS is also responsible for the administrative structure that supports external scholarships and awards. Similar to other scholarships and awards, Faculties and programs have the responsibility of adding these payments to the funding requisition with the deadlines established by YSGS. The requisitioning and payment process is the same as noted in the above sections.

Guidelines and procedures for these can be found by following the associate link to related documents:

Provincial Awards:

Ontario Graduate Scholarships (OGS)

YSGS allocates 50% of the Ministry-allocated OGSs to Faculties on an eligible FTE basis, while retaining 50% of the OGSs for the university-wide competition. Four of the total OGSs are held out of the distribution for international students, while 2 are held for indigenous students.

[Details](#)

Please see the [OGS Terms and Conditions](#).

Queen Elizabeth II Graduate Scholarships in Science and Technology (QEII-GSST)

QEII-GSSTs are allocated by YSGS to programs that qualify as engineering, science and technology programs at the same time as the TMGFs are allocated. Faculties and programs are to use their internal scholarship rankings to provide the QEII-GSST to the domestic student that is the highest ranked student that has not been awarded another external scholarship from the OGS and tri-council competitions.

[Details](#)

Please see the [QEII-GSST Terms and Conditions](#).

Ontario Graduate Fellowships (OGF)

YSGS allocates OGFs to programs that do not receive a QEII-GSST, up to the available budget limit. Faculties and programs are to use their internal scholarship rankings to provide the OGF to the domestic student that is the highest ranked student that has not been awarded another external scholarship from the OGS and tri-council competitions. Please see the [OGF Terms and Conditions](#).

Federal Awards:

Tri-Council Scholarships (NSERC, SSHRC, CIHR)

[Details](#)

Please see [Tri-Council Terms and Conditions](#).

Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships

[Details](#)

3. Endowed Scholarships and Awards

There are several scholarships and awards that are funded through endowments to the university. These awards have their own eligibility and criteria as established in consultation with the donor.

4. Graduate Student Stipends

Graduate Student Stipends (GSS) are financial support to graduate students that are paid from a faculty member's research grant. GSS are not paid employment. GSS cannot be paid through university operating funds or any other source of funds other than the faculty member's research grant. GSS are paid through Human Resources.

5. CUPE 3

A Graduate (Teaching) Assistant or GA refers to a graduate student who is employed to assist with teaching or related duties. The student has to be currently enrolled on a full-time basis in one of the university's Master's or PhD programs. This type of employment opportunity is typically offered by a department or school. Full-time graduate students can work as a TA/GA for a maximum of 10 hours per week, subject to the conditions of the contract. The rate of pay can be found on the Human Resources website in the [CUPE Local 3904 Unit 3 Collective Agreement](#). Students may be offered a GA position by their program, and/or the positions will be posted on the HR website. Terms of employment of graduate students will be consistent with the collective agreements between Ryerson and its employee groups. CUPE 3 contracts are paid through Human Resources.

6. Research Assistants

As a Research Assistant (RA), students assist principal investigators in conducting research activities not related to the student's studies. The minimum rate of pay is defined by the Granting Council (SSHRC, NSERC or CIHR) or organization/institution which is funding the principal investigator. When that institution is Toronto Metropolitan University, the minimum rate of pay is defined in the [OPSEU Collective Agreement](#),

Article 14, Section 14.06. The terms of employment of graduate students will be consistent with this collective agreement. However, the minimum recommended rate of pay for graduate students is the rate at which Graduate (Teaching) Assistants are paid, which is outlined in the CUPE 3 Collective Agreement. RAs contracts are paid through Human Resources.

7. Other Awards and Information

For a more comprehensive listing of scholarships, awards, bursaries and funding opportunities, please visit the YSGS website's [Financing Your Studies](#) information page.

12. Full-Time Graduate Student Employment

Toronto Met does not have any basis to impose limits on the number of hours full-time graduate students can work on campus with the exception of those engaged in CUPE 3 employment.

The Toronto Met CUPE 3 Collective Agreement states in Section 13.03: "If a Graduate Assistant or Teaching Assistant is offered, and willing to undertake, a Graduate/Teaching Assistant Position over the allotted 130 hours per terms, they may do so provided that they do not exceed the allotted 390 hours in any academic year (over 3 semesters.)"

Toronto Met does not monitor graduate student employment outside of the university and graduate students should not be monitored outside of connections to the university. Furthermore, graduate students cannot be unilaterally penalized for maintaining employment outside of the university. It must be stated however, that graduate students are expected to maintain satisfactory progress in their graduate programming. Students must ensure that they can balance any outside employment and full-time studies in order to maintain a clear academic standing and avoid unsatisfactory progress. It is important that expectations for satisfactory progress are clearly communicated to all graduate students.

13. Graduate Student Vacation Guidelines

The Yeates School of Graduate Studies recognizes that scheduled time-off from graduate work and vacations are important for personal health, well-being, and academic productivity. The following guidelines are offered to help graduate students take appropriate time off to recharge.

1. Time management

While it is expected that students devote a reasonable number of hours each weekday both to study and to research, it is acceptable for students to take days off. Graduate students are responsible for managing their time wisely by learning to discern between when time away from studies supports academic productivity, and when it undermines timely progression.

2. Vacation time

Full-time graduate students should be able to take up to 10 business days of vacation during the academic year (September 1 to August 31), over and above statutory holidays

and/or periods when the University is officially closed (i.e. end of December to early January) so long as the time off:

- Does not compromise the progress of a student's studies;
- Does not compromise the progress of the research; and
- Is negotiated and agreed upon by the student and his/her supervisor well in advance.

3. Student status and fees

Graduate students must maintain continuous enrolment in their program for all three terms of each academic year. Vacation time does not impact student status, funding status or graduate student stipends. Students will remain registered and must pay all fees during a vacation period.

4. Schedule negotiations

Negotiations for time off for vacations should be handled proactively and collegially. In the event a student and supervisor cannot reach an agreement, students should follow-up with their Graduate Program Director.

5. Extenuating circumstances

Under extenuating circumstances where a student requires more time off than indicated above for vacation, they should discuss with their supervisor, and review section 9 of the procedures from [Policy 170\(B\): Graduate Status, Enrollment, and Evaluation](#), to determine if a leave of absence is appropriate.

14. Additional Resources

Please visit the [YSGS website](#) for further information on funding, scholarships, awards, bursaries.