

Department of Nutrition

Policy Document

**Title: Doctoral Student Funding and
Doctoral Student Support Fund**

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Chair Signature: 



Doctoral Student Funding and Doctoral Student Support Fund

Policy Statement

It is a goal of the department that all doctoral students have their tuition, fees, and insurance fully covered, and that they receive an annual stipend aligned with NIH guidelines. The department mandates that new doctoral students be guaranteed a minimum of two years of funding in their offer letters. The faculty member mentoring the student (and providing the initial offer letter) is expected to proceed in good faith to provide funding for all years of the program of study based on available resources, and assuming the student remains in good academic standing. This is in contrast to the department's policy prior to 2011 in which mentors were required to guarantee 4-5 years of funding.

In recognition of the financial and time commitment involved with doctoral training, starting in academic year 2015, the department strongly recommends that the total number of doctoral students a single faculty member can mentor be limited to 3 for Assistant Professors, 4 for Associate Professors and 6 for Full Professors. In special circumstances, a mentor can request additional doctoral students beyond the limit. Such requests will be reviewed by the Doctoral Committee and the Department Chair.

After a doctoral student's first year, a guarantee of funding form for the next academic year will be completed with funding account numbers. Sources of funds for the student can change, but the faculty sponsor must provide an available source when this form is filed. The form will be signed by the student and their advisor/sponsor and subsequently filed with the department business office. Any sponsor that wishes to provide funding above the NIH stipend amount must have the additional funding approved by the doctoral committee. These forms must be completed no later than August 1st.

As available, some students may be placed on training grants, or receive financial awards lessening the funding responsibility for the sponsoring faculty member. Faculty sponsors should not assume outside support and cannot make admission offers to students unless they have the financial resources to sustain that student for at least two years. These resources may include training grant or other support, but such support needs to be explicitly approved by the Doctoral Committee and the Department Manager prior to release of the offer letter.

When students are funded by support allocated by the University or the Department (e.g., departmental training grant, university merit awards, Sanofi fellowships), the faculty sponsor is required to contribute 20% of stipend funding that would have supported the student, to the Doctoral Student Support Fund. Under extreme

circumstances this fee may be waived for untenured faculty without startup funds at the discretion of the Department Chair. Examples of how this may be accomplished are included in the Roles and Responsibilities section.

The use of the Doctoral Student Support Funds will be based on a recommendation by the Department Doctoral Committee, with final review and approval provided by the Department Chair. The process will be transparent to allow for full accountability of the funds. The Doctoral Student Support Funds request form is attached as an Appendix and includes the criteria used to allocate the funds. Requests should be submitted to the Department Manager at least 6 weeks prior to the date they are required.

If a request is made by a mentor who has not contributed to the fund in the past 5 years, that mentor will be expected to repay the fund at a future date. The repayment will take place in the same manner as other contributors have added to the fund and would be planned out over an appropriate time frame that may span months or even years. Examples of how this might be accomplished are included in the Roles and Responsibilities section.

The fund will initially be endowed with \$7,000. In addition to funds generated through the Support Fund, it will also be supplemented by departmental revenue generating activities.

Audience

Any faculty member who sponsors, or is considering sponsoring a doctoral student.

Purpose

This policy provides information and guidance for all faculty members regarding financial sponsorship of candidate and enrolled doctoral students.

The Doctoral Student Support Fund is designed to:

- Reduce student funding risk and uncertainty
- Support outstanding students with unique circumstances
- Exemplify the Department's commitment to student success

The fund will be used to provide initial funding for outstanding students in need and to create a safety net for students whose funding becomes uncertain.

Roles and Responsibilities

Doctoral Program Committee

- Serves as the coordination center for faculty considering sponsoring a doctoral student and prospective students.
- Ensures faculty sponsors understand the financial obligations regarding students.
- In conjunction with the Student Services Manager and faculty sponsors, coordinates student scholarship nominations and assignments to training grants.
- Monitors the number of tuition remissions available to the Department as reported by the Student Services Manager.
- Reviews faculty requests to pay students beyond the amount stipulated in their offer letter (normally the NIH stipend level).
- Reviews requests for the use of Doctoral Student Support Funds and issues recommendations to the Department Chair and the Vice-Chair for Academic Affairs.

Chair

- Reviews recommendations from the Doctoral Committee for use of the Doctoral Student Support Fund and provides the final decision regarding the use of the funds.
- Works with the Doctoral Committee and the Student Services Manager to promptly communicate with the Graduate School if additional TRs are needed.

Faculty Sponsors

- Ensure funding sources are available to cover a stipend, tuition, and health insurance premiums for any students (fees are normally covered, but not mandatory) they are considering sponsoring. Actual costs will be provided by the Student Services Manager, but a fully funded student (in-state or with tuition remission) will cost approximately \$37,000 - \$40,000 per year. Faculty sponsors should be aware that in-state status is not guaranteed and availability of tuition remissions (TRs) may decline in parallel with increases in doctoral students. TRs should be viewed as a luxury rather than a guarantee.
- Consult with the Doctoral Program Committee if you considering offering financial sponsorship below the NIH doctoral stipend level (minimum is set by the Graduate School).

- Draft an offer letter to candidates using the Department's template (see addendum) and forward to the Department Manager for review. All offer letters will be forwarded to candidates by the Student Services Manager after being reviewed.
- If a sponsored student is eventually funded by a university or departmental award (e.g., training grant, Sanofi Fellowship, or other internal financial award), the faculty sponsor coordinates with the Business Manager to transfer 20% of the cost they would have paid into the Doctoral Student Support Fund.
- Notify the Doctoral Program Committee in writing (email) of any plans to pay a student above the NIH stipend, or for additional outside work (e.g. summer work).
- Fill out funding forms for second year and beyond students including account numbers to pay the stipend, tuition, insurance, etc.
- Immediate notification when the sources of student funding change.

Department Manager

- Advises the Department Chair and Doctoral Committee Program Chair regarding funding issues pertaining to students.
- Reviews offer letters to ensure compliance with Department policy and to verify the financial resources of the sponsor.
- Receives and reviews requests for the use of the Doctoral Student Support Fund and distributes them to the Department Chair, the Vice-Chair of Academic Affairs and to the Doctoral Committee.
- Oversees the Business Manager in establishing Student Support Fund accounts in pertinent fiscal ledgers.
- Works with the Business Manager and the faculty member to coordinate and approve transfer arrangements equitable to 20% of costs that will not be borne when students receive funding from university or departmental sources. These arrangements will be tailored to the faculty member's finding sources and will comply with all funding stipulations. Examples of how this could occur are below:
 1. Start-up funds allocated to the mentor could be transferred directly to the Doctoral Student Support Fund.
 2. Overhead that was earned by the faculty mentor's expenditures that would have been returned to the faculty mentor, can be transferred directly to the Doctoral Student Support Fund.
 3. Funds generated by Fixed Price Awards that have a remaining balance can be transferred from a residual trust account to the Doctoral Student Support Fund.

4. Funds from Trust accounts.

Student Services Manager

- Coordinates with the Doctoral Program Committee and verifies student eligibility with the Committee and faculty members sponsoring students.
- Reviews faculty offer letters and ensures prospective students meet all admission requirements before forwarding offer letters.
- Coordinates with the Doctoral Program Committee, Graduate School, and School of Public Health on student awards.

Related Regulations or Policies

List any applicable or related department, school or university policies.

- Graduate School Handbook
- Nutrition Tuition Remission Policy (approved 3/26/2014)
- Since funds from one type of account (or ledger) cannot be transferred into an account in another ledger, the Student Support Fund will be spread across several fiscal ledgers (i.e. state, overhead, trust, etc.).

Effective Date: August 2015

Last Reviewed: 9/17/2014

Appendix: Student Support Fund Request Template

Doctoral Student Support Fund Request Form

Student Name: _____

Faculty Sponsor _____

Year in the program: _____

Funds are requested for the following time periods:

Begin Date _____ End Date _____

Funding was originally to be provided from the following sources:

Funding will not be available from these sources for the following reasons:

Criteria for use of the Student Support Fund include:

- Student's current standing in the program
- Student's research successes to date (papers, presentations, etc.)
- Student's area of research
- Availability of funds
- Amount of funding requested

Please attach a letter of support from the faculty sponsor.

Submit form and letter of support to the Department Manager.