

CBS Financial Support for Graduate Students Who Experience Program Delays Due to COVID-19

CBS (with co-funding as outlined below) will provide \$5,500 to any graduate student (domestic or international) in a thesis-based program who was not able to make significant, expected progress in achieving thesis objectives in S20, and as a result requires an “extra” semester beyond their original planned completion date. For MSc students this funding would therefore typically support an 8th semester and for PhD students, a 14th semester¹. Half of this support (\$2,750) will be paid out as a regular GRA during the extra semester, the cost of which will be split equally between the College, Department, and Faculty Advisor. The other half will be paid by the Office of Graduate and PostDoctoral Studies. This funding is available for a maximum of one semester only.

This funding will be available to students who:

- Remained full-time in a thesis-based program in S20
- Completed semester 2-6 (MSc) or 4-12 (PhD) in S20
- Can demonstrate that they were unable to make meaningful progress in S20 (e.g., due to lack of access to lab or other critical facilities²).

Students who remain enrolled full-time in S20 should continue with their program to the best of their ability. Some students, especially those who are still relatively early in their program, may have the opportunity to make up for time lost during the pandemic in subsequent semesters. As students approach the end of their program, they should assess, in consultation with their primary advisors and advisory committees, their ability to complete their program requirements within the expected time frame. If an extra semester is deemed necessary, then a written request for funding should be submitted to the Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Studies (cbsadr@uoguelph.ca) by the end of the 10th week of the student’s last expected semester (i.e., the semester immediately prior to when the “extra” semester would begin). **For financial requests for F20, requests must be received by noon on September 23, 2020.**

Written requests should be prepared by the advisor and include:

- An explanation of how the student’s progress was impeded by the COVID-19 disruption in S20 and how this affected subsequent completion of program requirements within

¹ MSc and PhD students in CBS usually require 7 and 13 semesters, or more, respectively, to finish their program requirements, and it is standard practice in the College for faculty to support their students for this duration of study. Thus, the “extra” semester referred to herein would normally be considered to be beyond this period. However, it is acknowledged that there are differences between departments and labs with respect to the in average time to completion. Therefore, if there are students who would have completed their degree requirements within official program durations (6 semesters, MSc; 12 semesters, PhD) but are unable to do so because of the current disruption, exceptions will be considered to provide support for semester 7 and 13 for MSc and PhD programs, respectively.

² Students who were able to complete fieldwork or other research activities during S20 through a COVID Research Exemption approval would not be eligible unless additional reasons for delays can be demonstrated

the normal funding period.

- A Graduate Progress Report, signed by all members of the graduate advisory committee, with a statement indicating that progress was severely impacted by the COVID-19 disruption. To ensure that any delays are sufficiently documented and discussed, all students are STRONGLY encouraged to hold a committee meeting immediately upon return to campus following the disruption.
- Confirmation that the student is not holding a scholarship or other award valued at more than \$5,500/semester that would otherwise support them in semester 7 (MSc) or 13 (PhD) (e.g. OGS or NSERC). If an award is received and/or held that is valued at less than \$5,500 during this period, then the student can request the difference such that they receive a maximum of \$5,500 in total for the semester.
- Confirmation of which research account the student was paid from in S20*.

Payment Details: Once a request for funding has been approved, half will be paid out to the student as a GRA during the extra semester (\$2,750), and the other half will be posted by the Office of Graduate Studies (\$2,750). If a student completes all program requirements (defense, submission of thesis) on or before the 30th class day, the GRA will terminate the same day that all program requirements are met. Note that this is also the final day that a partial tuition rebate can be requested.

The GRA portion will initially be paid out by the supervisor; at the end of the semester, the College and Department share ($\$917 \times 2 = \$1,833$) will be transferred to the advisor's General Purpose Research account.

If the advisor wishes to see their student receive more than \$5,500 for the "extra" semester, they are encouraged to increase the amount of the GRA accordingly, but any amount over \$5,500 must be fully funded by the advisor.

***Important:** If students were paid from NSERC accounts that received NSERC COVID salary supplement, or if their stipend in S20 was partially reimbursed through the Canada Research Continuity Fund (which is providing salary supplements for research personnel on non-government grants), then the \$5,500 will be reduced accordingly.