

Biology Policy on Funding Shortfalls including Training Grants (NRSA, T32, and Other Training Grants) and Fellowships

Fellowships and training grants provide important professional development opportunities and funding mechanisms for graduate students being mentored by Biology faculty. However, many of these fellowships and awards do not cover the full cost of stipend, benefits, and tuition associated with graduate student support, thus creating a financial shortfall. Unfortunately, neither the Graduate School nor the Department of Biology is able to fund the entire shortfall¹. This policy has therefore been developed to provide the PIs and graduate students several options for managing these shortfalls, while still meeting University and funding agency rules.

Options for managing the shortfalls:

If the student's advisor has sufficient grant or other funding and is willing to use those funds, options 1-3 are open. If such funds are not available, options 4-6 are open. The order in which these options are listed does not indicate any departmental preference.

1. PI elects to cover the entire stipend, benefits, and tuition shortfall as a supplement, which must be from a non-federal source, such as an endowment, foundation grant or ICR.
2. PI hires the student into an RA position using grant funds.
 - a. This is allowed on federal grants provided that it is limited in duration (not defined in policy, though precedent indicates that a 1-quarter appointment would be reasonable).
 - b. This can be a 1-quarter appointment at 50% FTE, which would also provide a direct source for any tuition shortfall OR a less than 50% FTE appointment as a Research Assistant 08-50, which might not provide a direct source for any tuition shortfall.
 - c. This appointment (i.e., job duties assigned to the graduate student) cannot overlap or interfere with the *student's* training grant research activity (but must also be an appropriate use of the grant providing the support).
 - d. If there is any remaining stipend, benefits, or tuition shortfall the student's PI will be responsible for covering the shortfall from non-federal sources.
 - e. The Training Grant PI must approve additional employment on research grants to verify that the circumstances will not detract from or prolong the training program. The student should request this approval, and if it is granted, should provide a copy to the Graduate Program Chair and Graduate Program Manager.
3. The PI elects to pay a portion of his/her state salary on grants for an amount equivalent to the amount of the stipend, benefits, and tuition shortfall. These "released" or "recaptured" state salary funds are then used to support the student's stipend, benefits, and tuition shortfall. Note that the PI does not receive a reduced teaching load under this option, but is opting to pay part of his/her general research obligations from grant funds for work on those grants rather than from the state supported salary. In such cases, the PI must be careful to stay in compliance with the effort promised on that grant.

If the supervisor does not have sufficient grant funding to support options 1-3, options 4-6 are available.

4. Student applies for and receives a TA Appointment for 1 quarter for each year of the training grant. This option is designed to bring the total annual compensation to the full level associated

with the training grant appointment (including benefits) and provide a tuition waiver for 1 quarter.

- a. Since this appointment is for a full quarter it includes a tuition waiver for that quarter. This should eliminate or significantly reduce any annual tuition shortfall.
 - b. TA assignments will be made in accordance with our department's "TA Assignment Policy." A graduate student outside our department who is mentored by a PI in our department can request a TAship in our department to cover his/her shortfall--if there is a surplus of TA positions available, this student will be given priority over students not supervised by a Biology faculty member.
 - c. If there is any remaining benefits or tuition shortfall the student's PI will be responsible for covering the shortfall from non-federal sources.
 - d. The Training Grant PI must approve additional employment as a TA for 1 quarter. It is the student's responsibility to obtain such approval and provide it to the Graduate Program Committee Chair and Graduate Program Manager.
5. The student elects to forgo the additional stipend. This option is likely to result in a shortfall in benefits and tuition. The student's PI will be responsible for covering any benefits or tuition shortfall from a non-federal source.
 6. The student uses departmental award funds they have received to cover the stipend, benefits, and tuition shortfall. Award applications must be submitted during the normal awards process in fall and spring quarters. Use of award funds to supplement training grant stipend, benefits, and tuition shortfalls is permitted provided that the award fund and the donor's intent and wishes do not prohibit the use for this purpose. Note, however, that most awards are based on merit of the proposal and not financial need.

The above are the only options available for managing and covering the training grant or fellowship shortfalls through the Department of Biology.

¹ Note that the Graduate School currently provides waivers to cover the tuition, but not stipend or benefits shortfall for the individual NRSA awards and other prestigious individual awards to students (e.g. the NSF GRFP). The Graduate School does not currently provide tuition waivers for the "institutional" training grants, such as the CMBTG, DBTG, etc.

Table 1. At a glance comparison of the six options to make up stipend, benefits, and tuition shortfalls. Note that exact monetary costs to the PI and/or student and/or department (e.g. tuition, stipend, etc.) will depend on funding provided to the student (and any constraints) and current stipend and tuition levels.

Option (1-6)	Source of funds	PI coverage	Department coverage	Additional student responsibilities?	Notes / constraints
1: PI elects to cover as a shortfall	PI ICR / non-federal source	Stipend, benefits + tuition shortfall	None	None	PI must have sufficient ICR / non-federal funds.
2: PI elects to cover with an RA appointment	PI grant	Stipend, benefits + tuition shortfall	None	As specified by PI providing RAs	RA job duties cannot overlap with training grant, but must match grant aims.
3: PI elects to “buy out” part their salary on grant funds	PI grant	PI Salary (to dept).	Salary, benefits + tuition shortfall	None	Amount of salary recapture to dept. from PI will match amount of salary + tuition shortfall provided by dept.
4: Student requests and receives a TAs	Departmental teaching funds	Benefits + tuition shortfall (if present)	TAs (if available)	Teaching (generally 1 quarter)	A TAs is not guaranteed. Priority will follow UW Biology Policy.
5: Student elects to forgo the additional stipend	PI grants, ICR, or other non-federal resources	Benefits + tuition shortfall	None	None	Graduate students would receive substantially less pay than their peers.
6: Student uses award funds to cover stipend, benefits, and tuition shortfall	Graduate student awards, PI grants	Remaining stipend, benefits, and tuition shortfall (depending on award size)	Graduate student awards (if available)	None	Awards will be based on merit and depend on availability. Regular deadlines for Grad Awards apply.