

School of Education
Funding Plan for the Implementation of a Continuous Enrollment Policy for Students in Ph.D. Programs

October 2009

The School of Education is supportive of the Continuous Enrollment Policy for Students in Ph.D. programs that will be effective in Fall Term 2010. Our program and our students will benefit from the University changes that come with the new policy. An important component of the plans for this change is the identification of University sources to pay new tuition costs that arise due to the policy. This document contains a description of the School's funding plan.

Student Support

Students generally are admitted with commitments for four years of support; the support includes stipend, health insurance, and tuition grants. Following the four years of support, if the student is making satisfactory progress toward their degree, the School works with students to identify other sources of support such as GSRA or GSI positions, or internal or external fellowships, although the School is unable to guarantee such support.

Candidates in the School of Education's Ph.D. programs who were admitted prior to the fall of 2010 and who are making satisfactory academic progress but who are not otherwise supported, will be eligible for a tuition-only fellowship when they are required to register due to the Continuous Enrollment Policy and would not have registered under current practice.

The School is a partner with LSA departments in two interdisciplinary joint programs: the Joint Program in English and Education and the Combined Program in Education and Psychology. Candidates in those programs also will be eligible for tuition-only fellowships, jointly provided through the School of Education, the College of LSA, and the programs themselves following the same eligibility conditions stated above.

Enrollment changes due to a Continuous Enrollment Policy

The Continuous Enrollment Policy will require students in Ph.D. programs to register in fall and winter terms from matriculation to degree completion, unless they are on an approved leave of absence. Based on our current enrollment and registration patterns, we are estimating an increase in registration of 35-50 candidates when the new policy takes effect.

The School currently is reexamining the structure of our Ph.D. programs and the types of support provided to our students. Recently our faculty adopted changes to some of our practices that will improve the experiences of students in our programs, and more changes are being discussed. We expect to have an increased number of students completing their degrees over the next year, which will allow a better estimation of the increase in registrations that will occur beginning in Fall Term 2010.

Our funding plan has been developed in collaboration with the Rackham Graduate School, and is sufficient to fund even the higher end of the estimated range. As the School of Education continues to make important changes in our Ph.D. programs, we will work with Rackham to revise this funding plan if necessary. Any revision to the funding plan for Continuous Enrollment will continue to achieve the goal that the tuition costs associated with increased terms of registration due to the policy change will be paid by a University source.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Satisfactory progress toward the degree is assessed by the program faculty working most closely with an individual student. It will not mean the same thing for every area of study within the School, nor does satisfactory progress mean the same thing for every student in a given program. Individual circumstances affect the pace at which students can work, and graduate program faculty are best qualified to make decisions about students' progress.

Students who are not making satisfactory progress will be given written notice, and provided guidance on what needs to be accomplished in a given time period in order to return to satisfactory progress status. Generally, this assessment will be part of the annual evaluation completed by the students and their advisors. Students who do not meet the agreed-on progress milestones will not be eligible for further tuition support until they attain the agreed upon milestones and have a plan for continued progress.¹

Funding Available for Tuition Payments

The School of Education, working with the Rackham Graduate School, has identified the sources of funding necessary for the tuition-fellowship program described here.

The University uses an activity-based model to develop General Fund Budget Allocations to academic units. Due to the activity-based formulas, the increase in registrations results in an increase in the School's General Fund Budget Allocation. This funding will be budgeted for tuition fellowships.

At the effective date of the new policy, the candidacy tuition rate will be reduced in direct proportion to the expected increase in registration. This reduction results in savings in the School of Education due to the current levels of support for candidates in our Ph.D. program. These savings will continue to be directed to student support and will fund a portion of the needed tuition fellowships.

Supplementing the School's resources will be an allocation of tuition fellowships through a new Rackham financial aid program designed for this purpose.²

Process

The School of Education's Tuition Fellowship Program will be managed in the Dean's Office. As is current process, the Ph.D. program chairs and faculty will continue to award support to the students in their programs and assist students in identifying all other possible sources of support that would include stipend and health insurance in addition to tuition coverage. Programs will request tuition-only fellowships for their students when other forms of support are not available. The request should confirm that the student is making satisfactory progress, and include information regarding the student's plans for continued progress toward the degree. If the program is requesting a tuition fellowship for a student who has been given notice that he or she is not making satisfactory progress toward the degree, the dean's office will request additional information regarding the supports that will be in place to advance the student's progress, and the plan for evaluating progress made during the term of support.

¹ *In the rare case when a student has not been given adequate notice of a lack of satisfactory progress he/she may remain eligible for an additional term of tuition-only fellowship support, when he/she meets the general eligibility requirements that the School sets, in order to provide him/her the opportunity of making the necessary progress to regain satisfactory standing.*

² *Further review is still necessary to determine amount needed for a cost neutral basis for the SOE.*