



Graduate School

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

DATE: 21 November 2025

TO: School/College Deans, Department Chairs, Directors of Graduate Study,
Graduate Program Coordinators

FROM: John Zumbrunnen, Interim Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs JZ
Robert Cramer, Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration RC
William J. Karpus, Dean of the Graduate School and Vice Provost for Postdoctoral Affairs WJK

RE: FY27 Graduate Assistant Stipend Minima and Principles

The Graduate School, in consultation with the Provost and the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, sets the minimum rates for graduate assistant (GA) and fellowship titles (UW-1238). Graduate stipends serve a dual purpose of providing resources to defray students' living expenses while pursuing an advanced degree and allowing graduate programs to compete in the market with peer institutions/programs. With the fall 2025 graduate student application process for fall 2026 enrollment well underway, this memo reiterates the FY27 **MINIMUM** GA rates that were communicated in the stipend forecasting plan released March 15, 2024. This memo also outlines the principles and procedures for setting stipend rates, components of a funding offer (including the expectation that programs make multi-year funding offers to doctoral and MFA students), and the steps for submitting stipend rates to the Graduate School.

An increase in the minimum stipend does not necessarily mean an increase to every stipend. For example, if a program's current stipend is above the FY27 minimum stipend, the program stipend may not increase.

Setting Graduate Stipend Rates

Programs/departments are encouraged to set market-based stipends that meet or exceed the campus minimums for all GA titles: research assistant (RA), teaching assistant (TA), project assistant (PA), and lecturer student assistant (LSA). This enables prospective students to compare offers across institutions and strengthens UW-Madison's ability to recruit top talent.

When determining FY27 stipend rates, the following principles apply:

- **Minimum rate compliance:** Programs/departments must work with their school/college dean's office to set rates at or above the campus minimums. Stipend rates must not be reduced from the previous year.
- **RA appointments:** RAs must be paid the rate associated with their academic program of enrollment, even if appointed in a different program/department.
- **TA/PA/LSA appointments:** These appointments are paid at the rate set by the hiring program/department. For Fund FD0101-funded TA, PA, and LSA positions, the Budget Office will provide a base supplement in FY27 budget allocations to cover the increase to the minimum stipend rate.
- **Fellowships and Traineeships:** Students supported by external and internal fellowships or training grants with stipends below the program/department rates must be supplemented by the program/department or faculty advisor to meet the program rate.
- **Appointment percentage:** Stipend adjustments must be made by changing the dollar amount, not the appointment percentage. Single or combined assistantship appointments will equal 50%.

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Making Funding Offers to PhD students

Funding offers to PhD students from programs must:

- Be in writing and include information about what is within the funding package, including stipend rate, tuition and fees coverage, and health benefits eligibility
- Include a 4- or 5-year (for PhD students, 3-year for MFA students) funding commitment in writing, contingent on satisfactory academic progress, satisfactory graduate assistantship performance, and availability of funds
- Abide by the Council of Graduate Schools April 15 resolution, to which UW-Madison is a signatory.

Submitting Stipend Rates to the Graduate School

Programs/departments (with approval from their school/college) are required to determine and submit their FY27 assistantship rates to the Graduate School by **January 31, 2026**, via this [Google document](#). The actual stipend rate (dollar amount per 50% appointment) that the program/department will pay should be entered in the worksheet. For example, if the program/department plans to pay the minimum stipend, enter that dollar number. If the program/department plans to pay a stipend above the minimum, enter the total dollar amount for the 50% assistantship appointment into the worksheet.

The FY27 GA and fellowship **MINIMUM** funding rates are as follows for all new and continuing appointments and are effective for annual appointments on June 28, 2026, and for academic appointments on August 17, 2026. All active appointments in the current fiscal year must adjust stipend rates accordingly on these dates.

Teaching assistantship (per 50% appointment)

Academic: \$30,614

Lecturer Student Assistant (per 50% appointment)

Academic: \$33,574

Project assistantship (per 50% appointment)

Annual: \$37,417

Academic: \$30,614

Research assistantship (per 50% appointment)

Annual: \$37,417

Academic: \$30,614

PA grader/reader

Hourly rate: \$29.83

University Fellowship, Advanced Opportunity Fellowship, and Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowship (100% appointment)

Annual: \$37,417

Academic: \$30,614

Undergraduate Assistant (per 50% appointment)

Annual: \$26,863

Hourly: \$25.83

Policy & Resource References

Additional information about appointments, program rates, and the April 15 resolution can be found at the links below:

- [Maximum Levels of Appointments](#)
- [Concurrent Appointments](#)
- [Graduate Assistantship Appointments and Rate-Setting Process](#)
- [Assistantship Stipend Minimums and Rates by Program/Department \(Policy UW-1238\)](#)
- [Fellowship Administration Guide](#)
- [Council of Graduate Schools April 15 Resolution](#)

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Cc: Jennifer Mnookin, Chancellor
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