Continuous Enrollment Policy for Students in Ph.D. Programs

A Continuous Enrollment Policy for students in Rackham Ph.D. programs will become effective Fall Term 2010. When effective, all doctoral students will register each Fall and Winter semester until they have completed their degree, unless they are taking an official leave of absence. Spring/Summer registration is required only for students who are taking or auditing courses, taking preliminary examinations, or defending the dissertation; the same activities that require a spring/summer registration under current practice.

The College of Literature, Science, and the Arts (LSA) supports this change in enrollment policy because of the many benefits it provides to students, including keeping students engaged with faculty advisors and dissertation committees, increasing the number of doctoral degree completions, and offering year-round access to services for graduate students. Other benefits of the policy change can be found by visiting Rackham’s website:

http://www.rackham.umich.edu/current-students/policies/doctoral/phd-students/plans-for-schools-and-colleges

LSA Fellowship Program to Cover Tuition Costs

The College will create a new financial aid program to award tuition-only fellowships that will be used to cover the tuition costs at UM associated with the increased terms of registration for students in our programs—including students in Rackham Interdepartmental Programs (IDP’s) and Student Initiated Degree Programs (SIDP’s or IIDP’s)¹ where an LSA program is one of the participating units. Students in IDPs and IIDPs will be funded in proportion to their affiliation with LSA. The allocation of fellowships to each graduate program will be sufficient to provide tuition-only fellowships to candidates requiring them, since the allocation is based on the historical pattern of registration of students in each program. Programs will be responsible for awarding the tuition fellowships to candidates in a manner consistent with need and their historical practices, and for coordinating with partner units for the support of students in an IDP or IIDP.

Implementation of the Continuous Enrollment policy in LSA will not result in an increase in the historical average cost of tuition borne by students in its graduate programs. LSA has identified funds to cover tuition costs for the increased number of students who must register once the policy takes effect in the Fall semester of 2010. Most of these funds will come from savings that the College will realize due to the reduction in candidacy-rate tuition paid by the College for graduate fellowships and GSIs. These funds will be redirected to fund tuition-only fellowships for students that have achieved candidacy. Any additional funding that may be needed for tuition-only fellowships will come from other sources available to LSA and Rackham.

Tuition-only fellowships will not include a stipend and will not count toward the LSA Ten-Term Rule. Graduate programs and students are strongly encouraged to pursue all employment and fellowship opportunities that would provide students with a stipend and health insurance benefits along with tuition coverage, before determining that a student should be awarded an LSA tuition fellowship. Students should be making satisfactory progress toward degree to be eligible for a tuition-only fellowship.

Funding for the tuition-only fellowships will be held centrally by the College and managed in a manner similar to tuition support for GSIs. At the program’s direction, a candidate whose tuition is not funded by other means in a semester (e.g.

¹ Student Initiated Degree Programs (SIDP) and Individualized Interdepartmental Programs (IIDP) are two names for the same type of joint program. A student-initiated PhD program combines studies in two departments or programs that lead to a single PhD degree citation.
GSI/GSSA, GSRA, fellowship) will be awarded a tuition fellowship. Full instructions will be provided to each graduate program administration.

Methodology Used to Determine Allocations to Programs

The allocation of tuition fellowships to a program is determined by the average number of unregistered terms in the careers of its recent Ph.D. recipients. On an ongoing basis, as students achieve candidacy the program will receive an allocation of tuition fellowships equal to the average number of unregistered terms for its candidates. The allocation will be based on the Report that includes data for Ph.D. recipients from Summer 2005 through Winter 2010, the final report prior to the effective date of the new policy. Changes in historical enrollment, completion rate or time to degree may affect a program’s need for tuition-fellowships, and require consultation with the College.

The initial allocation to a program will be calculated using these historical data and the records of the program’s current candidates at the implementation of the new policy. The method used for the calculation results in the allocated fellowships that the program would have if it had received the historical average for each of its current candidates and then used one of the fellowships for each of the fall or winter terms during candidacy where that student was not registered.

Current Cohort and Initial Allocation of Tuition Fellowships

The ‘current cohort’ is the group of active students who achieved or will achieve candidacy prior to the start of the Fall Term 2010. Tuition fellowships for the current cohort must be managed separately from those achieving candidacy after the start of the Fall Term 2010. Each program will receive an allocation of tuition fellowships equal to the number of students in the current cohort multiplied by the program’s average number of unregistered terms per candidate. The number of active candidates is taken from a Rackham-generated report with an effective date of October 29, 2009. For your department, this allocation is computed as:

\[(\text{number of active candidates in the current cohort}) \times (\text{historical average of unregistered terms per candidate}) = \text{NUMBER one-term tuition fellowships}\]

The initial allotment should considerably exceed the need of the current cohort as many in this group will have already been unregistered in some terms and will require fewer than the historical average number of tuition fellowships allotted for them. The initial allotment of tuition fellowships (“grandfathered group”) is to be used only for the support of students in the current cohort – that is, those who achieved candidacy prior to the Fall Term 2010. The Dean’s Office will maintain and make available to your program the detailed accounting of the tuition fellowship awards at the student level and of the available balance. Any tuition fellowships remaining after the last of the current cohort has left the program (e.g. graduated, withdrawn or been terminated) will be returned to the College.

Continuing Allocation of Tuition Fellowships

The College will create a separate account (“non-grandfathered group”) for students achieving candidacy after the start of the Fall Term 2010. For each student who achieves candidacy after Fall Term 2010, an allocation of tuition fellowships equal to the historical average number of unregistered terms in candidacy for that program will be added to the program’s continuing balance. The Dean’s Office will maintain and make available to your program the detailed accounting of the tuition fellowship awards at the student level and of the available balance.

Students in Joint Degree Programs (IDPs and SIDPs) between LSA and another UM School or College

For joint programs between LSA and another program, the same methodology will be used as described above, but will be scaled to represent the affiliation with LSA (generally 50%).
The administration for Applied and Interdisciplinary Mathematics (AIM), Space & Planetary Physics, and SIDPs (Student-Initiated Degree Programs), the allocation will be added to the LSA department’s tuition-only fellowship account held by the LSA Dean’s Office. The department is responsible for coordinating the tuition support for those students as they do now with the other joint unit.

For the Joint Program in English & Education, Combined Program in Education & Psychology, Public Policy & Social Science, and Social Work & Social Science, Rackham will coordinate the process and will be providing more information in a memo to program directors.

**Students with Extramural Study Status**

Some of our Ph.D. students take courses or a full course of study as a student at another institution for work that is directly relevant to their Ph.D. degree work here. During the periods when they are officially a student elsewhere, they will have Extramural Study status and will not be required to register at UM. Students with Extramural Study status are not eligible for a tuition-only fellowship in the terms when they are registered elsewhere.

**Students on an Approved Leave of Absence**

Leaves of absence will be granted for medical and health-related reasons, family needs or dependent care, military service, or for personal reasons. Students on approved leaves of absence are still considered to have active status in their programs, but have suspended their work on the degree program for a temporary period of time. Students on a leave of absence will not register during the leave and so have no need for tuition-only fellowship eligibility during that time period.

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