




MEMORANDUM

To: Academic Deans
Vice and Associate Deans Responsible for Graduate Programs

From: Andy Stott, Vice Provost for Academic Programs and Dean of the Graduate School
Meredith Drake Reitan, Associate Dean 

Date: November 11, 2021

Subject: Minimum Total Stipends for USC Graduate Students

To enable USC's PhD programs to compete more effectively for the very best students and to support USC students once they enroll, the Provost has approved the following increases in the USC minimum total stipend. The current minimum has not been significantly increased since 2017, while costs for housing and other expenses have soared. We have benchmarked the proposed rate against top AAU Carnegie R1 universities that, like USC, are in major metropolitan regions, while taking account of the financial constraints on USC schools and principal investigators.

Starting AY 2022, the university's minimum total stipend will be \$32,500 with a minimum monthly rate of at least \$3,612 for programs that operate on a 9 month schedule and \$2,709 for programs operating on a 12 month schedule. Schools are expected to ensure that students are supported at the level of the university minimum total stipend or at a higher level for the duration of the package in their original offer letters. Schools are also expected to offer all incoming PhD students multi-year packages. The specific terms of a student's offer letter may be enhanced, but may not be diminished.

Total stipends may be paid in the form of fellowships, teaching assistantships, research assistantships, graduate assistant lectureships, top offs, various forms of government support, or combinations of these elements. The total must *meet or exceed* the university minimum total stipend, which is calculated as the equivalent of a 50% appointment reflecting up to 20 hours of effort per week during the academic year and, in 12-month fields, 50% effort over the summer.

TA and RA stipends for appointments at 25% and 33% (to be combined with additional funding for a total minimum stipend) are calculated at 4.5 months each for fall and spring semesters. Summer RAships are calculated as 3 months of funding. Summer TAships are compensated by the course, exactly as in fall and spring, even if the course is on a compressed schedule for summer. Descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of teaching assistants, research assistants, and graduate assistant lecturers are in *The Handbook for Teaching Assistants (TAs), Research Assistants (RAs), and Graduate Assistant Lecturers (ALs)*, which can be found at http://www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool/current_guidelines_forms.html.

Fellowships, as distinct from appointments as TAs, RAs, or ALs, allow students to focus solely on their own academic work. For this reason, fellowships cannot be divided and combined with TA or RA appointments, whether the fellowships are from USC or external funders. Total stipends for fellowships

must meet or exceed the USC minimum total stipend, and may include top offs, including those from the Graduate School for many nationally competitive fellowships.

Please get in touch with Meredith Drake Reitan at mereditd@usc.edu, if you have questions about stipends or other related issues. USC health and dental insurance policies and the USC student health center fee will continue to be part of the PhD funding package. The costs will be provided by the Student Health Office. There is no change in the way PhD tuition is handled by the university.

cc: Charles Zukoski
Mark Todd
Raquel Yarber