

Quick Facts: **Graduate Fellowships, Stipends, and GAs**

More info online at

www.finaid.msu.edu/grad.asp (general Graduate Student Information)

www.finaid.msu.edu/ga.asp (Graduate Assistantship Information)

How does a fellowship affect financial aid?

A fellowship that is given to a student to assist with academic or living costs is considered financial aid. If a student has already received federal or MSU financial aid based upon the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the fellowship must fit into the aid package, which may result in other aid being reduced or removed.

Most fellowships are granted to assist with the same costs that are covered by financial aid, such as tuition and fees, books and materials, and living expenses. Since a student may not receive assistance in excess of the budget for these costs, a fellowship may trigger a revision of the financial aid.

A fellowship granted for other expenses such as conference attendance may be accommodated by a budget increase to cover the additional costs. The student must request a budget increase from the Office of Financial Aid and supply documentation from the department listing the expenses to be incurred that match the amount of the fellowship.

How does a stipend affect federal aid?

There are two types of stipends. How a stipend affects aid depends upon the type of stipend.

Stipends given to students without requirement of work in kind are considered financial aid. These stipends are reported on a 1098-T statement at the end of the year as financial assistance. These may need to be reported on the tax return depending upon tax law.

Stipends paid to a student in return for work performed for the university are not considered financial aid. These are wages and are reported on a W-2 statement at the end of the year as income. These stipends are reported on the tax return as wages and on the next year's FAFSA. This may affect the student's financial need and award eligibility for the following aid year.

How does a graduate assistantship affect federal aid?

A graduate assistantship is employment with the university to perform some service (teaching or research) in exchange for wages and benefits.

Assistantships generally include both stipends and tuition waivers. Stipends are not considered aid (see above). Tuition waivers are considered a form of financial aid, since graduate student budgets include aid for the purpose of paying tuition. Graduate Assistants will have their federal financial aid adjusted to remove the tuition and fee component and the health insurance allotment. Aid will be offered for books and living expenses only.

A graduate student who receives an assistantship late in the processing cycle may already have a full financial aid award. The award will be reduced and the student may be required to repay some aid already received.