

## Graduate Student Stipend Policy

*Approved January 15, 2021*

*Amended February 9, 2023*

This policy will apply to graduate students that enter the Qbio and EEOB graduate programs directly, not to those that enter through the BBSP which has its own stipend requirements.

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1. Students should be supported by summer RAs to reach the level of a stable a 12-month salary if the advisor has grant funding available to do so (to at least the level of a living wage for the area-currently ~\$26 000). The graduate committees will review yearly to consider increases in minimal stipend levels based on the MIT living wage calculator, representative apartment rents, and input from graduate students.
2. During recruitment, in the offer letter to a student the prospective advisor will lay out a plan for the first three years based on current funding support and lay out the typical time commitments of TAs if those may be required to reach the level of the minimal stipend.
3. If a lab has two or more students deemed by the graduate studies committee as making adequate progress in the program that are being supported solely by the department (i.e. via summer and academic year TAs) in their lab group currently, then they cannot recruit additional students unless they have a plan for a funding structure that involves less than 50% summer TA support and yet reaches the funding minimum for all students in the following summer.
  - a. In rare circumstances, by petition to the graduate studies/admissions committee (EEOB or Qbio) exemptions may be requested while keeping the welfare of the student as the first consideration.
  - b. The requirements in this third point will be phased in by considering summer funding of students starting with the summer of 2021.
4. The department will provide bridge funding for summer RAs for students in cases where a gap in grant funding or other financial contingencies have unexpectedly been encountered to the extent possible. Additionally, the department will seek funding to top-up summer fellowships from the graduate school to the minimum stipend level.
5. The department will continue efforts to improve TA compensation at the level of the graduate school and department.

# Graduate Student Stipend Policy - February 9, 2023 Amendment

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**From:** Willett, Christopher S  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 9, 2023 4:44 PM  
**To:** Biology Graduate Students; Biology Faculty  
**Subject:** Increase in minimum stipend target for EEOB and Qbio

Hi Everyone-

We heard from Bob last month about the increases the department was able to make in the stipends for Biology TAs and we have now had the graduate studies committees for Qbio and EEOB consider changing the minimum stipend target for this year and the following year. The committees voted in favor of the following levels:

2022-2023 \$28,500  
2023-2024 \$30,000

These minimum targets are just above a constant pay rate over the 12-month period if you consider a student that is TAing for both academic semesters (\$21K and \$22K for the two years sequentially). Considering the dramatic increases in the cost of living over the last two years, the increases are coming close to matching some measures (e.g. BLS inflation adjustments), but falling behind for other measures (e.g. MIT living wage calculations). We will continue to work on stipends in coming years.

One quick reminder that under the stipend policy passed in 2021, these are minimum stipend targets and not requirements, but we hope most lab groups will be able to at least supplement student stipends to these levels. If a lab group's current grant funding budget will not be sufficient to do so, Bob has indicated that the department is willing to consider temporary support on an individual basis and faculty should contact him.

Let me know if you have any questions,

Best,

Chris

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