

Faculty policy

Integrated Funding for master's and doctoral research
training programs

*Presented to the Council of the Faculty of Medicine on April 11, 2024, for
discussion;*

Adopted by the Council of the Faculty of Medicine on May 9, 2024.

In the spring of 2022, a faculty task force was set up at the initiative of the Faculté de médecine Vice-Dean of Health Sciences and Community Partnerships and Vice-Dean of Basic Sciences, to examine the funding of graduate students. Based on a benchmarking of current practices in the U15 and in all Canadian medical schools, the working group recommended the implementation of an integrated funding policy at the Faculté de médecine of Université de Montréal (see Appendix I for a summary of the work – in French).

Integrated funding involves the use of different funding sources (scholarships and salaries) to ensure minimum funding for all students enrolled full-time during the normal period of graduate studies in a thesis-based research training program. As such, the total annual amount received by each student combines income from different sources of funding, both internal and external, and includes both scholarship amounts and income generated by research and teaching assistantships, as well as course lecturing (*charge de cours*). This is a shared responsibility involving the student, the research supervisor, the faculty, the institution and the affiliated research centers and institutes.

At the end of its work, which lasted from March 25, 2022 to March 20, 2023, the task force made the following recommendations.

Target student population

All students enrolled full-time in a graduate degree program (with full-time or writing status) leading to the writing of a thesis should benefit from minimum funding according to the rules set out below. Short programs (microprograms, specialized graduate diplomas – DESS –, advanced professional diplomas – DEPA) as well as course-based master's programs or those with directed studies (*travaux dirigés*) and/or internships are not covered by this policy, regardless of the number of credits attributed to these activities. Similarly, medical residents enrolled in a master's or doctoral program are not eligible.

Financing period

In accordance with the maximum duration of studies prescribed in articles 65 and 112 of the [Règlement pédagogique des études supérieures et postdoctorales](#) (Version: 2023-12-05), funding is provided for a maximum of 6 trimesters at the Master's level and a maximum of 15 trimesters at the doctoral level. In the case of direct entry to a doctoral program, the funding period is extended by 3 trimesters, for a total of 18 trimesters.

Arrangements in the event of parental leave, sick leave or suspension of studies

In accordance with the provisions of articles 68 and 115 of the [Règlement pédagogique des études supérieures et postdoctorales](#), a temporary interruption of studies is possible in three situations: parental leave, sick leave and suspension. In accordance with the relevant university regulations (articles 68A, 68B, 68C, 115A, 115B and 115C), the deferral or suspension of payments will be possible for the duration of the planned interruption of studies, provided it complies with the aforementioned articles.

Minimum financing thresholds

In line with the value of scholarships awarded by the Fonds de recherche du Québec, the minimum funding (threshold) granted per 3 trimesters is \$20,000 at the master's level and \$25,000 at the doctoral level. A student should always benefit from the most generous policy, if a student funding policy is in effect at the research center or affiliated institute to which he or she is attached.

Financing sources considered

The total amount awarded results from the combination of different funding sources, including external and internal scholarships, as well as research or teaching assistantships and course lecturing (charge de cours). Differential tuition fee waivers for international students, maternity scholarships, loans and bursaries from the Quebec government's financial aid program, and prizes are not included in the financial package. Similarly, all other scholarships intended to support people from under-represented groups, those in financially precarious situations or those with disabilities are excluded from the calculation. Finally, income from paid work, other than that listed above, is not taken into account (Appendix II - Glossary of funding types – in French).

Research supervisor's contribution

For students benefiting from integrated funding, the research supervisor must make an annual contribution to the student to ensure that the minimum threshold is met, for the entire duration of the eligibility period (6 trimesters at master's level, 15 trimesters at doctoral level and 18 trimesters in the case of direct entry). This contribution, in the form of a bursary, scholarship or research assistantship, may come from a grant he or she holds or from any other grant held in common.

Paid work

Students benefiting from integrated funding must devote at least 80% of their time to their training. They may therefore hold a job for a maximum of one day per week, subject to the approval of their research supervisor. Similarly, the holiday period must be determined in agreement with the research supervisor.

Training scholarships from external sources

If a student is the recipient of a scholarship external to the faculty that has not been declared in the annual financial package, he/she is obliged to accept it regardless of its value, and must notify the Scholarship Office (bourses-sf-ss@med.umontreal.ca) within two weeks of the scholarship offer. They must also request activation of the scholarship as soon as possible, in accordance with the activation schedule proposed by the organization. This procedure is particularly important for scholarships offered by the Fonds de recherche québécois and Canadian granting agencies, which may offer the possibility to activate the scholarship in different academic trimesters. In such cases, the student must request activation as soon as possible.

Faculty contribution procedure and payment schedule

Funding of \$20,000 or \$25,000, depending on the level of study, is planned with the research supervisor when the application for admission is submitted, and presented in the Faculty Study Plan. Admitted students must confirm the final financial package by completing the Initial Declaration of Funding form

no later than the beginning of the first trimester of enrolment in the program of study. The package specifies the contributions of the research supervisor, the unit, the faculty and other sources of funding. It may include a variety of sources, including scholarships, assistantships and course lecturing (*charge de cours*). Payments may be managed at the Université de Montréal, at an affiliated research center or institute, or by an outside organization.

If the financial package does not meet the required minimum threshold, the research supervisor must add a written plea, which will be assessed by the program director in collaboration with the office of the Vice-Dean concerned.

Payments from the faculty are activated in the second month of the first trimester of enrolment.

Renewal of the faculty contribution

Annual renewal of funding provided by the faculty (including departments) is not automatic. Rather, it depends on the student's good progress, the research supervisor's funding and the availability of funds in the faculty. In addition, the student must have submitted at least two scholarship applications to bodies outside the Faculty of Medicine. Letters confirming the submission of these two scholarship applications must be attached to the Annual Declaration of Funding submitted by August 15 of each year.

Trimesterial follow-up for students receiving a faculty scholarship

A verification of eligibility to maintain the faculty contribution is carried out at the beginning of each trimester. This verification takes into account enrolment status, compliance with the mandatory steps prescribed in the pedagogical regulations, successful course completion and the number of trimesters completed. Students whose cumulative grade point average is below 3.0/4.3 must submit a Success Support Plan to explain the measures put in place in conjunction with their research supervisor to ensure successful completion of their studies.

Adjustments to be made to payments in the event of an external scholarship

If the student becomes the recipient of a non-faculty scholarship during a trimester, adjustments to subsequent payments will be made for the faculty contribution, if applicable.

Annual declaration of student financing

In order to ensure proper monitoring of funding for all students in the Faculty of Medicine, and to renew, if necessary, the contribution of the faculty or research director, all students must produce the Annual Declaration of funding received during the prior academic year (September 1 to August 31) and the financial package planned for the following year. An online form must be completed by August 15 of each year and approved by the research supervisor.

Derogation clause

Exceptionally, a student and his or her research supervisor may apply to the Vice-Dean of their sector for an exemption from the Faculty of Medicine's Integrated Funding Policy. In such cases, the student must demonstrate that he or she can cover living expenses from other sources for the entire academic year.

Postponement or interruption of studies

Students receiving integrated funding must be enrolled full-time and be in either full-time or writing status. Students who have attained thesis correction status are not eligible. In the event of a definitive interruption (withdrawal) of studies, the student must reimburse monthly payments made subsequent to the date on which the withdrawal form is signed. The research supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the withdrawal form is completed within the required time and forwarded to the program administrator (TGDE). Failure to do so will result in the supervisor being solely responsible for monthly payments subsequent to the student's withdrawal.

False declaration or failure to declare an external scholarship

A false declaration of funding, such as failure to declare receipt of a scholarship from a funding agency, is punishable under article 4.8 c of the Student Disciplinary Regulations. Those found in breach of this rule may be excluded from the Integrated Funding Policy, and any overpayments will have to be reimbursed.