Cost to Support Graduate Students Academic Year 2011-12

To: BioMed Directors of Graduate Studies and Faculty Mentors
From: Elizabeth Harrington, Associate Dean for Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies
Date: 5/17/11

Dear Directors of Graduate Studies and Faculty Mentors:

Please be aware of the following costs associated with PhD training as you consider your research needs and available resources. The information below is based on BioMed Division and University policy.

This document and attached chart relate to **actual charges that will be applied to accounts.** This document is being distributed via email to Directors of Graduate Studies. It is expected that programs will, in turn, distribute to faculty trainers within their programs.

Graduate student charges depend on the category of appointment. Four categories are defined by The Graduate School based on the student’s primary duties.

**APPOINTMENT TYPES:**

- **Research Assistant (RA):** a student conducting research supported by a research grant awarded to a faculty member (includes NIH R01 and NSF).
- **Teaching Assistant (TA):** a student who is assigned responsibility for assisting in a Brown course (full time appt; hours devoted to TA not expected to exceed 20 hours per semester).
- **Trainee (TR):** a student appointed to a training grant (T32 or GAANN).
- **Fellow (F):** a student supported by an individual external fellowship or a Division supported fellowship.

**DIVISION SUPPORT/ PROGRAM BANKING:**

The **Dean’s Commitment Period** will occur during 3 semesters and the first summer within the student’s first 2 years of PhD training (The third semester of Division support will be dependent upon the student’s TA assignment {Fall/Spring}). **“Bank”** eligibility for any type of appointment is limited to this time of Dean’s Commitment Period only.
**Stipend:**
For 2011-2012 (9/1/11 – 8/31/12) the Division approved a baseline stipend for most BioMed PhD students of $27,500 per year. The Division approved a baseline stipend for BioMed PhD students in Ecology & Evolutionary Biology (EEB) and Epidemiology of $26,000 per year. Baseline stipend levels are the maximum amount of funds that will be banked and the amount up to which will be supplemented as appropriate.

**Research Assistant**
The Graduate School has clarified that RA charges apply to *all RA appointments* regardless of:
- the funding source (including start-up, GIP, any grant source, etc);
- institution to which a grant was awarded (i.e. same policy for hospital-based and MBL faculty as for campus-based faculty);
- the number of tuition units that a student has accumulated. There is no transition from tuition to “enrollment fee” for RAs.

Bank eligible funds are limited to the amount contributed by the grant (or eligible funding source) to baseline stipend, one tuition unit per semester, and fees that would otherwise be the responsibility of the Division for the appointment period. Division policy prohibits banking support from start-up funds.

If the total cost of graduate student support as an RA for the entire 2011-2012 year exceeds that which can be charged to a grant because of a financial cap, such as the NIH zero-level postdoctoral rate (the NIH Postdoc cap that is in effect as of April 2011 is $38,496), tuition takes first priority followed by health fee, health insurance premium, and stipend.

The graduate student RA charges for the entire year of 2011-2012 (whether the stipend level is $26,000 or $27,500) will be in excess of the NIH zero level postdoctoral cap. Costs that are in excess of the NIH zero-level postdoctoral cap of $38,496 will be paid by the BioMed Division. The Division will not provide relief for the increased stipend costs associated with a stipend that is over the Division approved stipend level.

**Please note that fringe benefit rates apply to RA appointments in the summer semester.** These fringe rates are automatic and are in addition to the summer semester stipend charge. The applicable rate is 8% for the period of 6/1/10 – 6/30/12. The fringe rate applied in the summer is applied to the postdoc cap level. See this site for updates on fringe rates: [http://www.brown.edu/Administration/Controllers_Office/accounting/fringe.html](http://www.brown.edu/Administration/Controllers_Office/accounting/fringe.html)

**Teaching Assistant**
Teaching Assistant appointments are charged to the training account of the Graduate Program. Students are typically assigned to TA during their second year based on the required number of semesters of teaching experience by the respective Graduate Program and in response to the teaching needs of the department, as well as, expertise of potential TA. If the TA is within the initial Dean’s commitment period, then a maximum of 3 semesters may be charged to the Division and Division fellowship support is forfeited. Only full time pre-doctoral students qualify for these appointments. International students must be evaluated for English proficiency skills and receive appropriate certification by the Center for Language Studies prior to assignment as a TA.
In order to maximize instructional resources, the Associate Dean for Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies reserves the authority to determine which semester will correspond to Division support for each TA. Every effort is made to assign the TA to a course with sufficient amount of time prior to the start of the academic year, in consultation with faculty course leaders, the Associate Deans in Biology, Directors of Graduate Studies (DGS), and graduate students to be TA.

If the Graduate Program chooses to assign a student as a TA and that student is past their Dean’s Commitment Period, the Graduate Program will be responsible for supporting that student. A Graduate Program account can be used to provide the stipend, one tuition unit, one semester of the health fee and health insurance contribution for any students who entered after August 2006.

**Trainee**

Charges applied to grants to support the Trainees are determined by the relevant Notice of Grant Award (NOGA), institutional policy, and allowable limits as specified by funding agencies.

For training grants awarded to Brown University, the BioMed Division will supplement stipend (up to the level of the Division baseline stipend), tuition, and fees as part of its institutional commitment while the student is within the first 3 years of enrollment. The mentor and/or Graduate Program are responsible for supplementing the stipends of students in >4th year, who are supported by training grants. The Graduate Program bank will be used as the default support mechanism if no account is identified at the time of appointment.

**For pre-doctoral training grants awarded to institutions other than Brown University, the BioMed Division will supplement the tuition cost only within the first 3 years. Mentors or programs are responsible for supplementing the stipend for all students supported by off-campus training grants.**

After 24 tuition units are accumulated by a student appointed as a trainee, tuition is no larger charged for Trainee appointments and the University “Enrollment Fee” applies.

Training Grants will be charged for allowable trainee health insurance premium costs. In 2011-2012, the allowable amount of health insurance is $1,450. This amount is charged to the “training related expense category” and is subject to regulations by the funding agency. Increases in allowance for training related expenses or in rules governing allowable expenses may affect this amount. Graduate Programs will be notified in advance if there is any change in regulations or allowance. If a student is appointed to a training grant and that training grant does not allow insurance to be charged, the program will be expected to contribute $1450 of allowable funds toward each student’s insurance cost.

Graduate Programs appointing students to training grants during the Dean’s commitment period may “bank” the amount of the stipend relieved to the Division by the training grant. Tuition costs up to one tuition unit per semester and the health fee may also be banked. The program may “bank” health insurance premium costs for students in their first year only.
**Fellow**

**BioMed Division Fellowship:** Entering pre-doctoral graduate students are typically appointed as Division fellows with costs fully covered by the Division. Students are expected to engage in full time studies and make satisfactory progress, justifying continued support. Directors of Graduate Studies are responsible for evaluating progress each semester and reporting on this to the Graduate Program, student, and Associate Dean for Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies.

**Annual progress reports on academic standing are required by the Dean of the Graduate School for all full time graduate students as specified in the Graduate School Handbook and website. Please note that annual progress reports are required for the duration of the student’s training at Brown.**

**Individual Student Fellowships:** Students holding external fellowships are appointed as Fellows. The fellowship may be held at the time of application to graduate school; these applicants with merit-based external awards are highly sought. All students once matriculated are encouraged and assisted in efforts to apply for external fellowships to fund a portion of their graduate training. These efforts enhance the quality and recognition of Graduate Programs, foster student career success, and alleviate financial burden to faculty mentors.

- **Stipend:**
  If the fellowship awarded provides NIH NRSA level or NSF fellowship level of tuition and stipend, the Division will supplement the stipend to reach the Division baseline stipend during the student’s first 3 years. Once the student is ≥4 years, the Graduate Program or mentor must identify an account from which the stipend supplement will be drawn.

  If the fellowship award provides stipend funding only and the student is within the Dean’s commitment period, then the Division will provide the supplement to the stipend and tuition and fees support. The Graduate Program will be allowed to bank the stipend that the fellowship provides (up to the Division’s baseline stipend in each program).

  If a fellowship award provides stipend funding only (or tuition less than one unit) and the student is in years 2-3 (**within their residency period - under 24 tuition units**), the Division will provide stipend supplement to the baseline stipend level; the mentor and/or Graduate Program will provide funding for one tuition unit per semester, health fees and $1450 for insurance.

**Stipend incentive plan:** Stipend incentives are awarded to students whose fellowship award is equal to or greater than 80% of the BioMed Division approved stipend for the Graduate Program. For 2011-2012, if the total fellowship award is equal to or greater than $20,800, for students in EEB or Epidemiology, or $22,000, for students in all other Graduate Programs, the student will receive a stipend bonus of $150/ month ($1800/ year).

  - The stipend incentive will come from the BioMed Division for students who are in years 1–3.
  - The stipend incentive will come from the Graduate Program and/or mentor for students who are in ≥4 years.
- **Tuition/ Health Fee:**
  For students who have earned <24 tuition units, tuition and health fees will be charged to an external fellowship up to the allowable rate specified in the notice of grant award. For students who have earned ≥24 tuition units, the fellowship will be charged an enrollment fee.
  
  - If the external fellowship support is provided for a student during the Dean’s commitment period, the Graduate Program may bank the tuition funds that are relieved by the fellowship, up to one tuition unit per semester and the total amount of the health fee relieved.
  
  If the external fellowship award provides stipend only (or tuition less than one unit) and the student is in years 2-3 (<24 tuition units), the Graduate Program and/or mentor must provide an account for the cost of one tuition unit per semester, the health fee, and $1,450 of health insurance.

- **Health Insurance:**
  Health insurance premium charges will be made to student external fellowships in the amounts allowable by fellowship policy up to the NRSA amount. For NRSA awards, this is currently $1,450 of the budgeted “Training Related Expense” category. Banking applies for health insurance premium support alleviated during the student’s first year only.

  If the fellowship does NOT provide for health insurance, the Graduate Program or mentor must supply an account for the cost of health insurance, $1,450.

*See attached chart re Student support*

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