



SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
AND RESEARCH

# Memo

TO: Department Heads with graduate programs,  
Graduate Coordinators

c.c. Patrick Deane, Vice-Principal (Academic)

FROM: Janice Deakin, Associate Vice-Principal and Dean,  
Graduate Studies and Research

DATE: February 12, 2009

RE: **Planned changes to Queen's Graduate Award (QGA) Funding Model**

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The purpose of this memorandum is to provide you with information about planned changes to the Queen's Graduate Award (QGA) funding model as recommended to me in a recent document, *Report from the QGA Funding Advisory Committee*. This report is attached.

In September 2008, I formed and instructed this Committee to review the distribution of QGA, which is the largest internal funding available to graduate students, and prepare a report outlining the principles for future allocations. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Committee, which was chaired by Associate Dean Brenda Brouwer and included SGPS President Jeff Welsh, the Chairs of the five SGSR divisions and Associate Dean David Rappaport.

This committee has spent the last four months gathering information and analyzing data about the practices and graduate student funding distribution at comparator universities including the G13, in addition to examining Queen's departmental funding levels and the distribution of all sources of funding to our students across each division.

As you may know, QGA totals \$9.3 million annually. The awards are considered discretionary funding for departments to construct basic funding packages. Despite Queen's nearly doubling its graduate population in the past five years and the recent changes in internal funding opportunities, the allocation of these awards has not been comprehensively reviewed in over a decade. QGA is currently distributed by division which results in an unequal allocation among similar academic programs.

Adopting the proposed changes will continue to provide departments with the opportunity to use the awards to build funding packages to attract graduate students to research intensive programs. QGA will be distributed according to three categories of graduate programs – doctoral stream, non-thesis based and career/professional programs. The funding will be provided for the duration of a student's funding eligible years at Queen's (one to two years for a Master's program and four years for PhD).

Modeling based on our current enrolment and QGA resources results in the following distribution: doctoral programs will receive \$5,500 for each student; doctoral stream master's programs will receive \$4,300 for each student; non-thesis programs will receive \$3,000 for each student and; career/professional programs will not receive QGA funds. Please see Table 2 in the attached report for the distribution by degree name.

The intent is to provide the greatest amount of funding to research intense graduate programs. These changes would take effect for the 2010-11 academic year.

I will be issuing the final directions on the new QGA funding model in early March 2009. Meanwhile, allow me to take this opportunity to encourage your feedback around two questions:

- **What are the implications of these changes on your graduate program?**
- **Are there any considerations or information that may be absent in the report?**

Please provide your feedback by February 27, 2009 to [deansgsr@queensu.ca](mailto:deansgsr@queensu.ca). I would like to thank you for your support and input in ensuring that we are able to use our limited amount of discretionary graduate student support funding to its greatest effect.

Report from the QGA Funding Advisory Committee

Submitted to the Associate Vice Principal and Dean,  
School of Graduate Studies and Research

January 2009

## **PREAMBLE**

Queen's Graduate Award (QGA) funding forms the bulk of the student support budget of the School of Graduate Studies and Research (SGSR). It is allocated to departments on a per student basis for full-time enrolled students in the first year or two years of a "non-professional"<sup>1</sup> Master's program (for 1 and 2 year programs, respectively) and in years 1 to 4 of a doctoral program. The awards are allocated to students on the recommendation of the department, which provides the department with flexibility in forming their funding packages to attract the best students and offer basic funding to those who may not have other awards.

The academic division in which the program lies determines the dollar value of the award. The Humanities receive more funding per student than the Social Sciences, and they in turn receive more funding per student than the Life Sciences, Engineering and Physical Science programs. The rationale for the current differential funding model dates back to the 1990's and is to compensate those programs that have lower amounts of available funding from other sources and in recognition of the Humanities having the lowest overall funding.

The past decade has seen changes in the external funding support of research and graduate students. There has been considerable growth in terms of graduate enrollment and the number of graduate programs offered without corresponding increases in the student support budget. Queen's has also seen the introduction of a minimum guarantee of funding for doctoral students. In consideration of the current environment, the principles upon which QGA funds have been allocated are less clear prompting a request from the Dean to review the allocation of QGA funds and prepare a report outlining the principles for future allocation.

The review committee is a sub-committee of Steering with the following membership:

- Dr. Brian Bennett (Chair, Division I)
- Dr. Susan Lord (Chair, Division II)
- Dr. Don Klinger (Associate Chair, Division II – attended in Susan's absence)
- Dr. Yan-Fei Liu (Chair, Division III)
- Dr. Eugene Zarembo (Chair, Division IV)
- Dr. Annette Burfoot (Chair, Division V)
- Mr. Jeff Welsh (President, SGPS)
- Dr. David Rappaport (Associate Dean)
- Dr. Brenda Brouwer (Associate Dean and Chair)

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<sup>1</sup> This distinction was made when the programs in Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy became Master's level programs. The decision was taken that students enrolled in the MSc(PT) and MSc(OT) would not be eligible to receive QGA funding. The basis for the decision was that the primary focus of internal funding is on doctoral stream students, consistent with the overall mission of building a high quality research-intensive institution; the PT and OT programs were thought of as "professional" programs. More recently, Master's students in nursing preparing for advanced practice in primary care were similarly considered as "professional" and therefore these students are ineligible for QGA funding.

## QUEEN'S GRADUATE AWARD (QGA) FUNDING

The QGA budget in 2007/08 was approximately \$9.3 million and is considered as general discretionary funding allowing departments to construct basic funding packages with maximum flexibility. Funding packages are intended to attract well qualified students to graduate programs in a way that promotes the overall mission of the institution (recognition for the exceptional quality of graduate students, research and scholarship by faculty members and students consistent with a research-intensive university).

Recognizing that the QGA budget is a limited resource and that the current environment of graduate studies has changed considerably in recent years, the committee was charged with providing a set of principles to guide the allocation of QGA. Committee members were provided with information about practices at other institutions regarding the allocation of non-merit based funds to their programs, the G13 report on graduate student funding, Queen's departmental graduate student funding levels, and the distribution of all sources of funding to graduate students by division. From discussion of the materials presented in the context of current QGA allocation practices and considering practices at other institutions, four main issues were specifically addressed by the committee: 1) categories of programs, 2) the funding model (2 years of Master's<sup>2</sup> and 4 years of PhD support), 3) the practice of allocating more QGA per doctoral student than per Masters student, and 4) the practice of differentially allocating QGA on the basis of the Division in which the department is a member.

### 1. CATEGORIES OF PROGRAMS

Currently there are two categories of programs: those that are QGA eligible and those that are not. The latter are often termed "professional" programs though the term has not been defined and is in fact confusing since the term is also applied to other programs that do receive QGA funding.

Programs were discussed in terms of their primary focus. It was clear that doctoral-stream programs formed one category and programs with a primary focus to prepare students for non-academic careers/professions formed another (Table 1).

**Table 1** Two categories of Masters level programs based on their primary focus and structure (thesis/non-thesis)

<i>Doctoral Stream</i>	<i>Career/Professional Stream</i>
MA programs	MSc(OT)
MSc programs (thesis based)	MSc(PT)
Thesis based programs with other degree designations.	MScN (primary health care)
	MPH
	MEng

There remained a number of programs that fall outside either of these two categories. Discussion around the research undertaken in non-thesis based programs was not particularly helpful since all graduate programs must have a research component. Discussions in division meetings about

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<sup>2</sup> 1 year for those programs designated as one year in duration

the validity of the proposed categories and how the *as yet uncategorized* programs might be grouped (into one of the two or somewhere in between) were highly charged stemming from concerns about losing funding were they to be classed as “professional” programs. The committee was challenged to focus on the primary objectives and structure of the programs in order to determine whether a program could be incorporated into Table 1 or some other framework. Information regarding the practices at other institutions was provided. Table 2 reflects the endpoint of the discussion.

**Table 2** Distinctions between Masters level program ranging from research intensive/doctoral stream to career/profession focused.

<i>Category 1 Doctoral Stream</i>	<i>Category 2</i>	<i>Category 3 Career/Professional Stream</i>
MA programs MES programs MAC programs MSc programs (thesis based) Thesis based (899) programs with other degree designations (MEd, MPL, LLM).	Non-thesis based MSc Non-thesis based programs with degree designation other than MA (MEd, MIR, MPA, MPL, LLM)	MSc(OT) MSc(PT) MScN (primary health care) MPH MEng

## 2. FUNDING MODEL

Currently QGA funds are allocated to students in QGA eligible programs throughout their funding eligible years. Some institutions have adopted models that provide central funding for one year of a 2 year Masters program as means of encouraging promotion to the doctoral level and channeling more funding to doctoral students.

Consultation with divisions indicated overall support for the current model and recommended that it be maintained. Programs that are structured to take two years to adequately prepare students for the next step should have their students supported for the same period. Some departments viewed this as a positive aspect that attracts Master’s students to Queen’s. It was also noted that changing the model could pressure departments to relax their criteria for promotion to the doctoral degree program.

## 3. THE MONETARY VALUE OF MASTER’S AND DOCTORAL QGA

Currently the allocation per doctoral student is 1.2 to 1.3 times more than the amount per Master’s student. Across the G13 institutions the factor is ~1.7 although this includes all internal sources of funding. Using the same comparator at Queen’s does not change the factor (1.25).

There was consensus in the feedback from divisions that the current ratio provides sufficient flexibility to allow departments to allocate the QGA monies as they feel serves them best. Deviation from the current practice was not considered to afford any advantage.

#### **4. DIFFERENTIAL ALLOCATION OF QGA BY DIVISION**

Currently Divisions I, III and IV receive \$3,900 per funding eligible Master's student and \$4,600 per funding eligible PhD student. Division II receives \$5,000 and \$6,200, respectively and Division V receives \$4,600 and \$5,800, respectively. Programs that are members of more than one division receive allocations in accordance with the student's enrolment (e.g. Geography MA students are in Division V and MSc students are in Division IV).

As summarized in the preamble, the current differential funding by division dates back to the late 1990's and is based on the relative availability of other funding sources. The actual dollar value was revisited in 2006 to provide transparency, but the basic premise for differential allocation of QGA funds by division was not reassessed at that time. The past several years has seen a marked increase in tri-council support for graduate students in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Availability of research assistantships in these disciplinary groups however remains low. Provincial funding in the form of Ontario Graduate Scholarships is highest for Divisions I and II; the OGS awards in Science and Technology (OGSST) contributing to the high levels in Division I. The termination of the OGSST program will certainly impact the landscape. Additional considerations include the higher material costs of conducting laboratory-based work without corresponding increases to the size of research grants resulting in less available for research assistantships. It is also acknowledged that research funding initiatives promote cross-pillar, interdisciplinary work, serving to breakdown the boundaries between major discipline divisions. In combination these changes have blurred the lines between divisions.

Present day average and median funding packages by Division are shown in Table 3. At the Masters level, Division III (Engineering) has the highest funding packages and Division II (Humanities) the lowest. At the doctoral level the highest average (mean and median) per student funding is in Division V (Social Sciences) and the lowest in Divisions III and IV (Engineering and Physical Science). In all cases the variation across departments within a division is large reflecting that departments have different resources available to fund graduate students. The overlap in the ranges of funding packages provided by the constituent departments across Divisions serves to illustrate that a department's ability to form funding packages is not coincident with membership in a given Division.

**Table 3.** Average and average median funding levels by Division. Minimum and maximum departmental averages and medians are indicated in brackets. (Data source: Office of Institutional Planning 2007-08).

Division	Master's		Doctoral	
	Average	Median	Average	Median
I – Life Science	\$ 19,027 (10,839 – 25,629)	\$ 17,870 (8,100 – 26,292)	\$ 27,110 (21,198 - 33,845)	\$ 25,378 (20,939 – 31,540)
II - Humanities	\$ 14,632 (9,538 – 24,684)	\$ 14,181 (8,120 – 25,505)	\$ 26,358 (19,608 – 30,910)	\$ 25,196 (21,408 – 30,164)
III – Engineering	\$ 22,169 (18,573 – 26,156)	\$ 22,671 (17,504 – 26,996)	\$ 26,728 (17,483 – 27,956)	\$ 24,746 (18,250 – 28,390)
IV – Physical Science	\$ 18,916 (14,584 – 23,419)	\$ 18,419 (11,432 – 22,800)	\$ 24,652 (18,870 – 29,385)	\$ 24,682 (21,460 – 29,974)
V – Social Sciences	\$ 12,426 (8,412 – 22,149)	\$ 13,057 (6,295 – 21,567)	\$ 30,336 (26,843 – 32,639)	\$ 28,647 (25,297 – 30,869)

The key aspect of allocating QGA funds is to provide base funding for a broad spectrum of students in a clear and transparent manner. It is important to recognize the uncertainty of availability of funding from different sources; the fierce competition for student scholarships and research grants and concern about the availability of teaching assistantships in the current fiscal environment. The impact is expected to be felt differently by individual departments rather than by divisional groupings.

The process for allocating QGA funds must be manageable; micromanaging at the level of individual departments is unrealistic, although a safety net to provide assistance to programs with limited access to alternate funding resources was considered essential. It is recognized that departments remain in the best position to use the QGA funds they are allocated in the best possible way to recruit excellent students and construct funding packages that contribute to the students' cost of graduate education. A funding formula that allocates discretionary funds to departments on a per (funding eligible) student basis that distinguishes only on the level (Masters and PhD – see 3 above) rather than divisional membership would accomplish this objective. A proportion of the budget could be set aside to assist those particular departments that have inadequate resources to form funding packages.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. QGA funding is intended to provide base funding for graduate students in programs that support the research mission of the institution. Different levels of QGA support may be allocated to categories of Master's programs anchored as doctoral-stream on one end (highest support) and career-focused/professional at the other (lowest support). Departments with PhD programs would receive enrolment based QGA funding for students in year 1-4.
2. QGA funding should be provided for the duration of students' funding eligibility (i.e. 1 to 2 years of a Masters' program as per program length; 4 years of the PhD program).

3. A higher level of QGA funding should be allocated per funding eligible doctoral student than per funding eligible Master's students (ratio of 1.2 in doctoral-stream programs).
4. A standard, base level of QGA funding should be allocated per funding eligible doctoral student and per funding eligible Master's student by category. Departments with limited resources to build funding packages would be eligible to receive additional QGA funds. The latter could be determined from the department's median per student funding relative to the institutional median based on data from the Office of Institutional Research and Planning.
5. The QGA model should be reviewed on a regular basis, every 3 to 5 years.

Queen's University  
 Society of Graduate and Professional Students 2008-2009 Annual Operating Budget Draft

<b>REVENUE</b>	<b>2007-2008 Budget</b>	<b>2008-2009 Budget DRAFT</b>	<b>Difference from 07/08 Budget</b>
Student Society Fee	189,480.00	186,640.00	(2,840.00)
Health & Dental Processing Fee	47,633.00	41,765.06	(5,867.94)
TD Interest	14,364.00	14,175.00	(189.00)
	<b>251,477.00</b>	<b>242,580.06</b>	<b>(8,896.94)</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Advertising	3,500.00	-	-
Amortization	4,500.00	1,125.00	(3,375.00)
Awards	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00
Campaigns	1,000.00	2,200.00	1,200.00
Communications (1)	-	12,500.00	-
Conferences	9,225.00	10,500.00	1,275.00
Council and Committees (2)	3,000.00	1,750.00	(1,250.00)
Discretionary Fund (3)	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00
Elections and Referendum	2,000.00	2,750.00	750.00
Emergency Student Fund	3,500.00	3,500.00	0.00
Grants	3,000.00	3,000.00	0.00
Honoraria (4)	14,200.00	15,900.00	1,700.00
Insurance	2,850.00	3,000.00	150.00
Internal Affairs (5)	12,000.00	9,300.00	(2,700.00)
Office and Other (6)	11,650.00	12,300.00	650.00
Professional Fees (7)	5,000.00	7,000.00	2,000.00
Social Events	28,000.00	23,000.00	(5,000.00)
Stipends (8)	48,785.00	46,264.40	(2,520.60)
Student Advisors	3,456.00	3,000.00	(456.00)
Telephone	3,000.00	2,300.00	(700.00)
Wages and Benefits (9)	66,294.00	72,976.00	6,682.00
Contingency	3,000.00	3,000.00	0.00
Other	19,500.00	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>251,460.00</b>	<b>239,365.40</b>	<b>(12,094.60)</b>
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>251,477.00</b>	<b>242,580.06</b>	<b>(8,896.94)</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>251,460.00</b>	<b>243,896.40</b>	<b>(7,563.60)</b>
<b>Surplus (Deficits)</b>	<b>17.00</b>	<b>3,214.66</b>	<b>3,197.66</b>

**Schedule 1 - Communications**

Mail Out	-	3,000.00	
Grad Guide	-	6,000.00	
Advertizing	-	3,500.00	
<b>Total</b>	-	12,500.00	-

**Schedule 2 - Council and Committees**

Council	1,250.00	1,250.00	
Committees General	-	500.00	
Other	1,750.00	-	
<b>Total</b>	3,000.00	1,750.00	(1,250.00)

**Schedule 3 - Discretionary Fund**

Charity Expense	500.00	500.00	
Council's Discretionary Fund	1,500.00	1,500.00	
<b>Total</b>	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00

**Schedule 4 - Honoraria**

Chief Returning Officer	600.00	600.00	
Commissioners	1,500.00	2,000.00	
Deputy Speaker	500.00	500.00	
Executive	8,400.00	8,400.00	
Senator	200.00	200.00	
Social Coordinators	-	3,000.00	
Speaker	1,000.00	1,000.00	
Trustee	200.00	200.00	
Other	1,800.00	-	
<b>Total</b>	14,200.00	15,900.00	1,700.00

**Schedule 5 - Internal Affairs**

Club Funding	1,300.00	0.00	
Executive Internal	800.00	1,300.00	
Promotional Material	4,500.00	5,000.00	
Speakers	4,200.00	3,000.00	
Other	1,200.00	-	
<b>Total</b>	12,000.00	9,300.00	(2,700.00)

**Schedule 6 - Office and Other**

Copiers	3,500.00	5,500.00	
General	5,000.00	5,500.00	
Professional Development	400.00	500.00	
Banking	750.00	800.00	
Other	2,000.00	-	
<b>Total</b>	11,650.00	12,300.00	650.00

**Schedule 7 - Professional Fees**

Accounting	5,000.00	5,000.00	
Legal	-	2,000.00	
<b>Total</b>	5,000.00	7,000.00	2,000.00

**Schedule 8 - Stipends**

Executive	34,668.00	34,538.40	
Commissioners	8,025.00	7,995.00	
Speaker	1,070.00	1,066.00	
Grad Guide Editor	1,070.00	1,066.00	

Committee Coordinator	<u>1,605.00</u>	<u>1,599.00</u>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>46,438.00</b>	<b>46,264.40</b>	<b>(173.60)</b>

**Schedule 9 - Wages and Benefits**

Regular Employees	47,019.00	51,096.00	
Part-time Employees	18,475.00	19,000.00	
EI & CPP Expense	-	2,880.00	
Other	<u>800.00</u>	<u>-</u>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>65,494.00</b>	<b>72,976.00</b>	<b>7,482.00</b>

	Budgeted	January	February	March	April
<b>Schedule 1 - Communications</b>					
Mail Out	\$3,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		
Grad Guide	\$6,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		
Advertising	\$3,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		
<b>Schedule 2 - Council and Committees</b>					
Council	\$1,250.00	\$32.93	\$32.93		
Committees	\$500.00	\$78.78	\$78.78		
<b>Schedule 3 - Discretionary Fund</b>					
Charity	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00		
Discretionary	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00		
<b>Schedule 4 - Honoraria</b>					
Honoraria	\$15,900.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		
<b>Schedule 5 - Internal Affairs</b>					
Club Funding	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$350.00		
Exec Internal	\$1,300.00	\$0.00	\$532.04		
Promo	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		
Speaker (Internal events)	\$3,000.00	\$350.00	\$350.00		
<b>Schedule 6 - Office and Other</b>					
Copier	\$5,500.00	\$1,937.60	\$1,973.07		
General	\$5,500.00	\$183.64	\$214.36		
Professional Development	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		
Banking	\$800.00	\$104.78	\$104.78		
<b>Schedule 7 - Professional Fees</b>					
Accounting	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		
Legal	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		
<b>Schedule 8 - Stipends</b>					
Exec	\$34,538.40	\$13,771.43	\$16,579.45		
Commiss	\$7,995.00	\$3,358.31	\$3,921.64		
Speaker	\$1,066.00	\$444.19	\$533.03		
Grad Guide	\$1,066.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		
Committee	\$1,599.00	\$260.00	\$393.24		
<b>Schedule 9 - Wages and Benefits</b>					
Regular	\$51,096.00	\$5,745.25	\$6,023.92		
Part-time	\$19,000.00	\$7,306.00	\$8,723.00		
EI & CPP	\$2,880.00	\$1,664.04	\$1,922.93		
<b>Non-schedule budget items</b>					
Amortization	\$1,125.00	\$468.75	\$562.50		
Awards	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		
Campaigns	\$2,200.00	\$828.77	\$828.77		
Conferences	\$10,500.00	\$961.29	\$1,711.29		
Elections	\$2,750.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		
Emergency Student Fund	\$3,500.00	\$850.00	\$1,450.00		
Grants	\$3,000.00	\$3,300.00	\$4,500.00		
Insurance	\$3,000.00	\$3,232.94	\$3,232.94		
Social	\$23,000.00	\$16,009.08	\$18,187.46		
Student Advisors	\$3,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		
Telephone	\$2,300.00	\$265.60	\$265.60		
Contingency	\$3,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$239,365.40</b>	<b>\$61,653.38</b>	<b>\$73,971.73</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>% of Total</b>		25.76%	30.90%	0.00%	0.00%

