Award Holder’s Guide

Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Administered Awards/Fellowships

Executive Summary

In order to maintain eligibility for GPS-administered internal awards, you must:

- Be registered full time in a thesis graduate degree program;
- Maintain a Satisfactory academic progress, as evaluated on mandatory annual Graduate Student Research Progress Tracking reports;
- Not hold full-time employment while holding an award;
- Apply annually to major agency external awards for which you are eligible;
- Promptly report any other awards received; and
- Keep your personal information updated on Minerva.

Details and additional information are provided on the subsequent pages of this document.
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General Regulations

All rules and regulations for fellowships and awards outlined in this document refer to Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) administered internal awards only, for example, GPS-administered endowed fellowships like Tomlinson Doctoral Fellowships, and Graduate Excellence Fellowships (GEFs).

To hold an award you must

- have been unconditionally admitted into the eligible graduate degree program for which internal (GPS-administered) funding was granted. Eligible graduate degree programs include all thesis programs;
- be registered full-time in an eligible graduate degree program. Thesis Additional Session, Thesis Continuing and Thesis Evaluation are considered full-time-equivalent registration statuses. Part-time and Qualifying Year students are not eligible to receive fellowship support;
- be registered in a Master’s degree, Year 1 or 2, or in a Doctoral degree, Year 1 to 6, unless explicitly stated otherwise in the terms of a specific award. The program year is the year indicated in the Minerva Unofficial Advising Transcript for each term.
- not have any holds or warnings on your student record (see Minerva Unofficial Transcript); students who have holds or warnings must present the department contact with evidence that they have made respective arrangements with the office that placed the holds on the records to solve them, prior to the department processing payment of the award;
- accept the terms and conditions of the award, as set out in this Guide, in the Offer of Award from your academic unit, and in the specific terms of the award;
- follow all rules and instructions set out by McGill University on the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies funding website;
- comply with all academic regulations of McGill University;
- maintain good academic standing, as evaluated in the mandatory annual Progress Tracking form;
- acknowledge, wherever possible, the fellowship’s funding assistance for the research;
- not hold or accept full-time employment while holding an award;
- agree to have McGill University administer the award in accordance with its policies and procedures.

In addition,

- eligibility for internal awards ends with your last day of registration in the program for which funding is received;
- awards may be cancelled if the conditions under which they are granted are violated. Reimbursement must be made for any payment received for a period for which you are not eligible to hold the award. Award cancellations will be charged on your fee account and a corresponding e-bill will be issued. You are responsible to pay the e-bill balance along with any interest charges for overdue payments;
- if eligible, you are required to apply annually for external funding offered by at least one major Canadian granting agency (e.g. NSERC, SSHRC or CIHR) and if eligible, for at least one Quebec
funding agency (FRQNT, FRQSC or FRQS). International students are also required to apply for funding to FRQ funding each year they are eligible to do so.

- you are accountable for notifying your academic unit in writing of the details of any funding or sponsorship awarded in addition to your unit funding package within two months of receiving the notice of the award(s).

1) Acceptance or Refusal of Award

By accepting the award payment, you agree to be bound by the terms outlined in this Award Holder’s Guide.

If you would like to decline your award, you must notify the academic unit making the award offer of your decision to refuse the award. This must be done in writing (e-mail is acceptable) as soon as possible. This will avoid you being required to repay monies received and will allow another student to benefit from the award. Notification by telephone is not accepted.

Your academic unit will be responsible for cancelling the award upon notification, according to the specifications in this document.

2) Payment of Award

Award/Fellowship will be paid through Banner Student Aid (BSA) and can be viewed on “Financial Aid/Awards Menu” on Minerva. You are required to

- specify direct deposit information (bank account details) in order to receive payments directly to your bank account. Only Canadian bank accounts are accepted;
- ensure that your permanent and mailing address information is current and active. Ensure end dates on address information correspond to the length of your award/fellowship;
- resolve any admissions document issues or holds that might prevent you from registering or receiving your award.

It is the responsibility of the award holder to maintain their mailing address up to date on Minerva. Outdated information may result in a delay in disbursing your award payments.

We recommend that students make financial provisions for their first month at McGill in the event of unforeseen delays in processing payments (e.g., delays in clearing conditions of admissions or submitting your required documents to activate disbursements).

For any questions, please contact the academic unit that has made the award offer.

3) Award Start Date

The disbursement schedule for your award is determined by the academic unit processing your award/fellowship according to recommendations set by GPS. Your award can only be disbursed if you are duly registered full-time in the program for which funding was awarded; please verify that you have
satisfied all the requirements for payment of your award/fellowship (see Point 3). The payment schedule can be viewed in the “Financial Aid/Awards Menu” in Minerva.

Disbursement schedule changes are considered on a case-by-case basis, and requests should be directed to the academic unit that has processed your award/fellowship.

4) Value and Duration of Award
The value and duration of the award are detailed in the terms outlined in your Offer of Award or may be found on the “Graduate and Postdoctoral Fellowships and Awards” webpage (for Endowed and Direct-funded Fellowships and Awards). The value and duration of the award may be adjusted to take into account any change in your registration status (e.g., early completion of degree, termination of program, leave of absence).

Unless explicitly stated in the terms of a specific award, your award will only be paid while you are registered full-time in a degree program (PhD or thesis Master’s).

Any changes in project, degree, program, registration, supervisor, unit and/or additional merit-based funding must be reported to the academic unit responsible for processing your award. It is the responsibility of the academic unit to determine the cancellation or adjustment of the award (value and/or duration).

5) Academic Standing
Academic standing is based on your academic progress in your program of study, and receiving satisfactory evaluations on mandatory annual Graduate Student Research Progress Tracking reports.

Unsatisfactory standing is a result of: two failed courses, two unsatisfactory Progress Tracking reports, or the combination of one failed course and one unsatisfactory Progress Tracking report, as outlined in the Failure Policy in the Graduate Studies e-calendar. Unsatisfactory standing may be grounds for the cancellation or termination of award(s).

6) Interruption of Internal Awards (Leave of Absence)
An award holder who requests a leave of absence has to complete the following steps:

Step 1 - Request leave of absence: Submit the leave of absence form and indicate that you are receiving funding. Depending on the available supporting documentation, the leave of absence will be approved or rejected. In accordance with the university’s leave of absence and vacation policy, a leave of absence will only be granted for reasons of maternity or parenting, personal or family health, professional development, required military service, and/or employment that precludes progress towards the degree.

Step 2 - Payment interruption: The academic unit that processed your payment will be responsible for interrupting internal awards and fellowships as soon as they are notified of your leave of absence and its approval. Academic units are asked to stop the award at the date when the leave of absence is approved.
You may not interrupt your award in order to take up another award or to pursue studies other than those for which you received funding.

7) Vacation Policy
Graduate students are normally entitled to vacation leave equivalent to university holidays and an additional total of fifteen (15) working days in the year. Funded students with fellowships taking additional vacation leave may have their funding reduced accordingly.

8) Reinstatements of Awards
Please contact the academic unit responsible for processing the award for arrangements to be made upon your return from an approved leave of absence. Depending on the arrangement made, you should make sure to contact your academic unit at least three weeks prior to your return to full-time status.

9) Student Eligibility
In order to remain eligible for an award/fellowship you need to be registered full-time and progressing satisfactorily and continue to meet the criteria in the General Requirements section. If you are asked to withdraw due to academic standing, you must notify your academic unit immediately, and the academic unit who processed the award will be responsible for stopping all further payments from the date of the registrar’s letter confirming the withdrawal onwards.

The final value of your award will be prorated based on the end date of the award as determined by your academic unit.

10) Change of Program of Study, Supervisor, Research Project, or Degree
You must notify the academic unit issuing your award of any planned changes to your program of study, supervisor, research project, or degree and the academic unit will evaluate your continued eligibility, based on the information provided. Academic units may contact GPS for further advice.

11) Other Sources of Income (Employment and Other Awards)
GPS expects award holders to devote the majority of their time to the expeditious completion of their degree program. As a full-time registered student, the number of hours of employment per term cannot exceed 180 hours.

You may not hold a full-time employment during any period of time in which you hold an award.

For internal funding packages granted by your academic unit/Faculty (Graduate Excellence Fellowships and Endowed/Direct-funded Fellowships and Awards), you are required to disclose all other (internal or external) funding sources or sponsorship received during the tenure of the fellowship to your academic unit contact within two months of receiving the notice of the award(s).
If you hold any external awards, it is your responsibility to also verify the Award Holder’s Guide(s) of the appropriate granting agency. Some information can be found on our website.

12) Renewal of Awards
Depending on the specifications given in the offer letter or the specifications in the award terms of endowed/direct-funded fellowships and the student’s academic standing, the academic unit processing the award will be responsible for its timely renewal.

Academic units may cancel an award if your progress in the degree program is unsatisfactory (see Point 6).

13) Termination of Awards
If you are planning to terminate your award early, you must notify your academic unit immediately.

Your registration status may change for various reasons, making you no longer eligible to hold certain awards (e.g., when completing a degree, starting another program of studies, terminating studies, when changing to part-time status, or accepting full-time employment). If you are unsure about your registration status, please contact your academic unit.

Academic units may cancel your award(s) if your progress in the degree program is unsatisfactory.

The final value of the award will be prorated based on the new end date, as determined by the academic unit which processed the award. Academic units may contact GPS for advice.

If you accept full-time employment, regardless of whether your degree has been completed or not, the award will be terminated as of the effective date of your employment contract.

If your award is terminated, you may be contacted by McGill University Student Accounts in order to repay any overpayment of an award.

14) Taxation of Awards
McGill fellowships and awards are considered as scholarship income for income tax purposes. McGill University will issue a T4A federal income tax slip and a Relevé 1 Quebec income tax slip to award holders.

If you receive a salary for work performed at the University independently of this award, it will be treated separately from your award for taxation purposes, and Payroll will issue a T4 federal income tax slip and a Relevé 1 Quebec income tax slip. Please note that salary for work is NOT considered an award.

Please note that all income is subject to assessment and verification by the income tax authorities, who can request additional information and request a change in the tax treatment of specific income. For additional information on how scholarship income is treated by tax authorities, please visit the Student Accounts website. Further questions about taxation should be directed to tax experts.