



Background Information Regarding the FSS Graduate Scholarship Adjustment Policy January 2024

1. What is the School of Graduate Studies and Faculty of Social Sciences (SGS/FSS) scholarship funding?

Internal scholarship funding for graduate students has two primary sources:

- 1) The School of Graduate Studies (SGS) receives scholarship funds from the university and distributes them to each of the six McMaster Faculties (Business, Engineering, Health Sciences, Humanities, Science, and Social Sciences). This allocation is based on the number and type of graduate students enrolled in each Faculty's graduate programs.
- 2) The Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS) also provides a smaller internal source of scholarship funding. It allocates funds to Social Science graduate programs based on the number and type of graduate students enrolled in each program.

Each program utilizes this SGS/FSS scholarship funding to support its graduate students.

2. Why adjust SGS/FSS scholarship funding when a student receives a scholarship from a source other than the SGS or the FSS, such as SSHRC, OGS, or an endowed scholarship?

The adjustment of internally provided SGS/FSS scholarship funding serves two main purposes:

- To distribute funding more equitably among all graduate students.
- To support professional activities, such as conference attendance and field study.

Under this policy, when a student secures scholarship funding from a non-SGS/FSS source (e.g., Vanier, SSHRC, OGS, or Harry Lyman Hooker Sr. Fellowship, excluding certain cases as detailed below), their SGS/FSS scholarship funding is reduced. The redirected funds contribute to enhancing support for students without external scholarships, often near or just above the funding floor.

Key points to note:

- a. The policy does not negatively impact the funding of current students, applying either the new adjustment policy or existing program-specific policies, whichever is more favorable.
- b. Adjustments are exclusive to SGS/FSS funding; no changes occur to external non-SGS/FSS awards.
- c. The adjustment never eliminates a student's entire SGS/FSS scholarship funding.
- d. The adjustment policy is progressive, with larger changes for students with greater SGS/FSS scholarship funding and/or larger external, non-SGS/FSS funding.

- e. All SGS/FSS funding freed up by external scholarship adjustments remains in the scholarship pool for supporting graduate students; none is returned to the FSS or SGS.

3. Why adopt a single, Faculty-wide adjustment policy for the Faculty of Social Sciences?

Most graduate programs in the Faculty of Social Sciences (and other Faculties) have historically applied adjustments, but practices have varied. The SGS Taskforce on Graduate Funding recommends developing and communicating a uniform policy on funding adjustments. In FSS, previous policies were not consistently articulated, leading to student unawareness of potential SGS/FSS funding adjustments with non-SGS/FSS scholarships. The new FSS policy promotes transparency and consistency.

Funding excluded from adjustment includes TA funding, single-year entrance scholarships from departments, internal excellence awards supporting diversity among graduate students, School of Graduate Studies bursaries, academic grants, travel awards, and scholarships, as well as internal scholarships and awards for funding fieldwork or similar activities.

Figure 1: Flow of Funding for Graduate Scholarships

