

## **Rules for Granting Stipends to Graduate Students**

### **1. Introduction**

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev grants stipends to some of its graduate students. For this purpose, a graduate student is defined as a thesis track master's degree student, a doctoral candidate, or a postdoctoral fellow who studies at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in one or more fields. The aim of the stipends is to allow recipients to dedicate their time to study and research. The stipends are awarded on the basis of academic achievement.

### **2. General conditions**

A. The following are entitled to receive a stipend: full-time **thesis track** master's degree students at Ben-Gurion University (including students in a fast track), PhD students, and postdoctoral fellows (according to the rules set forth by the Central Committee and detailed in Section 4C).

B. Receiving a stipend as a graduate student is conditional upon dedicating time to research as defined in Section 9.

C. The departmental stipend committee will determine and publish the departmental stipend ranking on the basis of academic criteria (as defined in Section 18) and the minimum stipend level (stipend and tuition stipend) for graduate students in accordance with the resources available to the department. The criteria must be approved by the research degree students committee of the relevant faculty.

D. The Department will undertake to grant the minimum stipend, as defined by it in Section 2C, for the duration of the student's studies, as specified in Section 4 below, provided that the student meets the required academic criteria.

E. A stipend will be awarded to students who meet the academic criteria as defined by the department. The supervisor may add from his or her budget a stipend to students whose grade point average is over 80.

### **3. Budgetary Sources**

Stipends may be financed by three possible sources:

**3.1 The University's current budget** – stipends granted by the departments

**3.2 Competitive stipends, funds, and research budgets** – Kreitman School stipends, personal research budgets, external stipends, external research budgets, research funds, and so on

**3.3 A designated fund** from the Kreitman School of Advanced Academic Studies for exceptional cases outlined in Sections 4B.1 and 4B.2

#### **4. Duration of the Stipend**

As a rule, stipends will be granted as follows:

- A. A **master's degree** student will be able to receive a stipend for 24 months, during the period that coincides with the first and second years of study. In exceptional cases and on academic grounds, subject to receiving approval for the extension of studies, the grant of a stipend from a 3.2 budgetary source only will be considered, for an additional period of up to six months with the approval of the head of the department and for another six months with the approval of the dean.
- B. A **doctoral student** can receive a stipend for up to 48 months, during the period that coincides with the first through the fourth years of study (60 months in the direct track). Beyond this period, receiving additional stipends depends on receiving approval for the extension of studies as follows: up to 12 months from the supervisor's budget only, with the approval of the head of the department. Receiving a stipend for over a year or from another budget, in multiples of six months at a time, is subject to the approval of the dean of the faculty, the dean of the Kreitman School of Advanced Academic Studies, and the rector.

The budgetary sources for stipends during the extension period are as follows:

- \* The current budget - according to Section 4.B.3
- \* A designated fund at the Kreitman School of Advanced Graduate Studies for exceptional support - according to sections 4.B.1 and 4.B.2
- \* The supervisor's budget

B.1 A student whose period of studies exceeds the abovementioned periods because he or she has served at least 100 days of military reserve duty during the course of his/her studies may apply for a 5-portion stipend for two additional months, subject to the guidelines and rules of the Kreitman School of Advanced Graduate Studies. The funding will come from a designated fund at the Kreitman School.

B.2 In exceptional cases, for serious health reasons, a student may apply for a 5-portion stipend for an additional six months, subject to the guidelines and rules of the Kreitman School for Advanced Study Studies. The funding will come from a designated fund at the Kreitman School.

B.3 In exceptional cases and for academic reasons, the award of a stipend will be considered for an additional period of up to six months, with the special approval of the dean of the faculty, from a faculty budget.

**It is hereby clarified that the total duration of the additional stipend with regard to Sections B.1 and B.3 will be 6 months at most.**

C. An academic unit may offer a postdoctoral stipend to a PhD degree holder if at most six years have elapsed from the date of receiving the degree until the beginning of his/her fellowship. The fellowship will be conducted in his or her scientific field, with full-time research activity at the University, under the supervision of a senior researcher from the University's academic staff and with the approval of the head of the department, the faculty's postdoctoral committee, and the dean of the Kreitman School.

The funding source for the postdoctoral stipend will be one of the following: external sources, the research budget of the supervising researcher, a faculty budget conditional on matching funding from the supervising researcher, or a designated fund from the Kreitman School conditional upon matching funding from the supervising researcher.

Each faculty will be able to allocate postdoctoral stipends from its own budget to outstanding postdoctoral fellows (as a percentage of the total number of doctoral stipends in the faculty).

Stipend Duration:

A **postdoctoral fellow** can receive a stipend for up to 24 months. Granting a stipend for a period of up to 12 additional months requires the approval of the dean of the relevant faculty. In cases of funding from the Kreitman School, granting the fellowship for the additional period is conditional upon the approval of the University Graduate Student Committee.

An additional extension of up to 12 months requires the approval of the rector and may only be funded from a 3.2 budgetary source.

D. A student who gave birth during the normative period of studies will continue to receive the stipend provided that she is an active student. The amount of the stipend and its sources will be identical to those prior to the birth.

E. The stipend of female master's degree student, doctoral student, or postdoctoral fellow who was absent due to a qualifying event\* will not be terminated, but the University may limit the duration of the stipend to 14 weeks.

### Qualifying Event

At least 21 days during the semester for complications of pregnancy, traveling abroad for the purpose of adoption, childbirth, adoption or receiving a child for custody or foster care.

With regard to travel abroad for the purpose of adoption, this also applies to male students.

With regard to adoption, custody, or foster care, this also applies to male students who are single parents.

For each qualifying event that takes place during the normative course of study (two years for postdoctoral fellows), the period of entitlement to a stipend will be extended for the actual absence period or 14 weeks, whichever is shorter.

The amount of the stipend for the extension period will be the average of the stipends received during the normative study period (from all budgetary sources).

A qualifying event that takes place during the extension period or during the extension of studies will not be awarded an additional extension.

As a rule, any extension of the stipend period recommended by the supervisor will be discussed by the appropriate faculty research students committee and will require the approval of the dean.

\* The minimum period for granting a stipend is **four consecutive months** (the stipend may be funded from several budget sources simultaneously for the said period).

### 5. Academic conditions for a first-year stipend as a graduate student

A. Stipends are awarded on the basis of **academic excellence**. The amount of the stipend will be determined in accordance with the resources available to the department/faculty, according to indicators of outstanding academic performance that are based on class rank, papers presented at conferences, and articles published in leading journals.

The criteria for outstanding academic performance will be determined by the departmental research students committee and approved by the faculty research students committee.

**The minimum requirement** for a first-year stipend for a graduate student is a grade point average of 80 in the studies for the previous degree. The appropriate

faculty committee for advanced degrees may prescribe additional/other conditions.

B. The sources of funding for the stipend will be determined in accordance with the stipend table in Section 18, below.

C. Granting a stipend that deviates from the above academic conditions requires the approval of the dean with the recommendation of the chairman of the appropriate faculty teaching committee for advanced degrees.

D. A student who has completed all of the master's degree courses with a grade point average of at least 80, submitted his or her thesis, and been accepted into a doctoral degree program conditionally (until he receives the final grade for his master's degree) will be able to receive a doctoral student stipend.

The grade point average of the master's degree courses and/or academic criteria determined by the department will be the basis for determining the amount of the stipend. The period during which the student receives this stipend is included in the period mentioned in section 4B.

## **6. Academic conditions for continuing to receive a stipend**

### **A.1. Study Requirements**

During his first year of studies, a graduate student should fulfill the following requirements:

- a. Comply with the study regulations of the faculty
- b. Accumulate at least 50% of his or her total degree credits with an average grade of at least 85
- c. Select a supervisor and a thesis topic during the first semester

The faculty committee for advanced degrees may prescribe additional conditions.

### **A.2. Status of Studies Report**

The name of the supervisor and the thesis topic approved by the supervisor will be reported to the faculty committee for advanced degrees by a date determined by the faculty.

Beginning from the second year of the student's studies, the supervisor will evaluate the progress of his student's thesis. The supervisor will submit an assessment of the status of the student's studies to the appropriate faculty teaching committee for advanced degrees **twice** a year, on January 31 and July 31, as a recommendation that the student continue to receive his stipend.

**B. A PhD student** will submit his **research plan** to the faculty teaching committee for advanced degrees and the Kreitman School within 12 months as a condition for continuing to receive the stipend.

As an exception, a student who has not yet taken the candidacy examination may receive a stipend for an additional semester, and within a period of 18 months at most, he must **pass the candidacy examination as a condition** for continuing to receive the stipend. Towards the end of his second year of studies, the student will submit a status report\* on his studies, approved by the supervisor, **as a condition** for receiving the stipend in the third year. At the end of the third year, the student will submit a status report,\* approved by the supervisor, **as a condition** for receiving a stipend in the fourth year.

**A doctoral student who has received an extension for the submission of the research proposal will continue to receive a stipend for the period of the extension from the same sources and in the same amount (current budget and supervisor's budget). The overall period for receiving a stipend will be subject to Section 4.B.**

**\* Status reports will be submitted on June 30 each year in three copies in accordance with the regulations for doctoral studies.**

**C. A doctoral student in the direct track** must meet all of the following requirements:

1. Accumulate 75% of the required total credits for two years with an average grade of at least 85
2. Submit a research plan by the beginning of the fifth semester of studies
3. Pass the candidacy examination by the end of this semester

The rules of doctoral students will then apply to him as detailed in Section B.

**D. At the end of each of the years in which he received a stipend, a postdoctoral fellow** will submit a research report approved by his supervisor in three copies: to

the sponsor of the stipend, to the department secretary, and to the faculty teaching committee for advanced degrees.

E. Granting a stipend that deviates from the above academic conditions requires the approval of the dean on the recommendation of the chairman of the appropriate faculty teaching committee for advanced degrees.

## **7. Stipend Structure**

The stipend is paid in a number of portions, up to 25 portions at most, with the value of each portion determined in accordance with the student's status, expressed in the stipend code:

Code 2 - for master's degree students

Code 3 - for PhD students

Code 6 - for postdoctoral fellows

The value of the various portions will be determined by the University in accordance with its resources and will be publicized at the beginning of each academic year.

## **8. Tuition scholarship**

A master's degree or PhD student may receive a tuition scholarship in accordance with the resources available to the faculty for this purpose, or from the supervisor's resources.

## **9. Attendance at the University and Employment**

A. A stipend recipient is required to devote most of his time to his studies and research. The scope of attendance will be determined by the supervisor and the department, and will take into account what is required in order to advance the research at an appropriate pace.

B. A stipend recipient is not allowed to be employed as senior academic staff or administrative and technical staff of the University.

G. A supervisor may not employ a student whom he is supervising.

## **10. Transition from track to track**

A. A **master's degree student** who began studying in a **thesis track** and received a stipend and/or a tuition scholarship and transfers to a non-thesis track at the end of two years **will be required** to return the second year's tuition scholarship as

well as the stipend of the second semester of the second year of his studies. (The department's office is responsible for reporting a student's transfer to a non-thesis track to the faculty's office of graduate studies.)

B. A graduate student who began studying in a non-thesis track and was admitted after a year at most to a thesis track may receive stipends and tuition scholarships in accordance with the conditions detailed in sections 4A and 6A above.

A student who transfers to a thesis track after more than a year may receive a stipend for a period of two years from the beginning of his studies if he meets the requirements of Section 6.A.1.

## **11. Awards**

The faculty will be able to allocate resources for awards to outstanding students according to criteria for academic excellence\* defined by the department with the following rules:

1. The student's article(s) were accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal that was ranked as a leader in its field in the previous year.
2. The student frontally presented his research at a major scientific conference in his field in the previous year.

\* Each department will determine and publicize its criteria for excellence and the list of leading journals and conferences that will grant the student recognition of outstanding academic performance.

## **12. A. Augmented scholarships**

A graduate student who received a **competitive research grant from an external source\*** for an amount equal to a value of at least 5 portions may receive, **in addition** to it, a stipend from the current budget and/or the supervisor. The total amount of support will not exceed the value of 25 stipend portions.

\* A competitive scholarship from an external source is a scholarship distributed by means of a call for applications intended for the entire population of candidates for studies/students at universities in Israel. Applications are examined by a committee that ranks the candidates in accordance with the criteria set forth in the published regulations. These are usually external stipends such as Adams, Clore, Azrieli, Lev-Zion, and stipends from the Council for Higher Education,

## **12. B. Multiple competitive stipends from internal sources**

Students may apply for a number of internal university funding sources, but if they are awarded by more than one source, they will receive support from the source that provides the higher amount.

\* A stipend or tuition scholarship from internal university sources is any stipend or tuition scholarship paid from the university's current budget and/or special project budgets and/or university funds.

### **13. Scholarship from a research budget**

A. A graduate student may receive a scholarship from a research budget only from the **thesis supervisor** for research related to his thesis work only and in accordance with the abovementioned rules.

B. A scholarship from a research budget may be granted in addition to a scholarship from the current budget, subject to a ceiling determined in accordance with the rules specified in Section 18 below.

C. A competitive scholarship from a funding source outside the university system that is set at an amount determined by that source will be paid in full regardless of the rules regarding the amount of the stipend specified in the regulations.

### **14. Absence of a stipend/scholarship recipient**

Stipend/scholarship recipients who receive a scholarship/stipend for 12 months of the year may be absent for one month of the year (without the right to accrue leave) with the prior approval of the supervisor, the head of the department, and the teaching committee for advanced degrees of the faculty.

### **15. Central Fund for Advanced Study for Scholarship Recipients**

A. **Doctoral students and postdoctoral fellows who are scholarship recipients** and whose work has been accepted for presentation at a scientific conference may receive partial or supplementary funding for **one annual trip** from the Central Fund for Advanced Study for Scholarship Recipients, in accordance with the Advanced Study Committee and taking into account the amount available to him/her in the International Fund for Scientific Cooperation (valid for PhD students only).

B. A **master's degree scholarship recipient** who is invited to present research work at a scientific conference will be able to receive funding for **one trip during the**

**course of his studies** from the Central Fund for Advanced Study for Scholarship Recipients in accordance with the decision of the Advanced Study Committee.

C. The Advanced Study Committee will also discuss study trips that are directly related to the scholarship recipient's research and may promote it, following the recommendation of the supervisor, the head of the department, and the approval of the dean. Such requests may be made regarding advanced study for postdoctoral fellows and will be discussed in accordance with the rector's instructions to the committee.

D. A student who is a scholarship recipient at the time of submission of the application and will still be a stipend recipient at the time of his trip is eligible to submit such a request.

The duration of the general scholarship will not be less than six months.

E. For the purpose of receiving funding from an advanced study fund and/or from the International Fund for Scientific Cooperation and/or research funds, the scholarship recipient must attach a confirmation of the presentation of his work at the conference, the dates of the conference, and a pro forma invoice that details the expected expenses for the conference in accordance with the request.

F. Applications for funding from the aforementioned funds must be submitted with the documents referred to in Section 4.1 to the Office of the Academic Secretary at the Samuel and Milada Ayrton University Center, Room 24, at least 30 days prior to the date of the trip.

## **16. Violation of scholarship/stipend conditions, termination of studies, and repayment of scholarship/stipend funds**

In cases of violation of the terms of the stipend/scholarship and termination of studies, whether initiated by the student or not, the stipend/scholarship will be immediately terminated.

In addition, the departmental graduate students committee will discuss the matter and recommend to the faculty graduate students committee whether the stipend money and tuition stipend must be repaid.

The decision of the faculty research students committee will be reported to the university committee that discusses the matter and it will be handled by the relevant authorities.

At the end of each academic year, the dean of the faculty will report the data on cessation of studies and the amounts of repayment demanded.

**17. Schedules**

A. Stipend applications for **new graduate students** must be submitted to the department at the following times:

- Applications for the fall semester: no later than April 30 of the previous academic year
- Applications for spring semester: no later than December 31

B. The department will inform the faculty's teaching committee for advanced degrees.

**The department will publish the stipend rankings, the minimum scope of stipends, and the academic criteria for stipends by June 1 each year, and announce to each recipient the scope of his stipend not later than June 30 each year.**

**18. A table of maximum stipends for the use of the faculty's committee for advanced degrees and post-doctoral fellows:**

Maximum Stipend Portions		Grades in the previous year, and/or grades from master's degree studies, and/or grade in the research plan exam, and/or academic criteria set by the department
From the current budget	Total from all sources**	
14	25	96-100
12	25	92-95
10	25	85-91
7	25	80-84

\*These conditions are prerequisites but do not guarantee the receipt of a stipend.

A faculty may determine a minimum ranking and/or other academic criteria instead of grades.

The decision to grant a stipend depends on the resources available to the faculty or supervisor.

In the Faculty of Health Sciences – a weighted score of the grade point average and the grade of the master's degree entrance exam.

\*\* In the case of a stipend from an external source whose value (including the University's part, if required) exceeds the maximum number of stipend portions, no additional stipends will be awarded.

### **Remarks:**

**1. In the first year of master's degree studies, the amount of the stipend will be based on the average/class rank of the bachelor's degree. In the second year, the amount of the stipend will be determined in accordance with academic criteria as defined by the department. In cases where a stipend has been approved in accordance with Section 6A1, if the student's grade is lower than 80, the stipend will be funded only from a 3.2 funding source.**

**2. The minimum number of portions will not be less than four per month and will be determined by the faculty in accordance with the resources available to it.**

### **19. Taxation of Stipends**

It is hereby clarified that a stipend is tax-exempt as long as it complies with the income tax rules on this matter. It is further clarified that the tax liability is personal and applies to the recipient of the payment.

If a stipend is paid to a student who has deceived or misled the University or acted in a manner contrary to the declaration signed by him, or if a student claims ex post facto or in contravention of the University's position and statements that he performed work or gave any compensation to the University with respect to payment of the stipend, or if an authorized court determines that he was an employee, his salary will be calculated in accordance with the student wage (according to the collective agreement regarding the employment of students), and any amount paid to him beyond the student wage will be used to cover all the payments to which he was entitled as an employee.

In addition, the student will pay any tax charged to him by law in respect of the said payment, either by way of a direct payment to the tax authorities or by means of indemnification of the University in respect of any payment charged to him.

**Addendum:**

A. A student who is studying for a prerequisite degree toward a master's degree (12) will be entitled to receive a stipend and a tuition scholarship for a period not exceeding one year, from the researcher's budget only and subject to the approval of the dean.

B. A master's degree student whose status is "taking required prerequisite courses" will be able to receive a stipend and a tuition scholarship for a period not exceeding one year, from the researcher's budget only and subject to the dean's approval.

C. A doctoral candidate (13) who is studying for a prerequisite degree in preparation for his doctoral studies may receive a stipend and a tuition scholarship for a period not exceeding one year, from the researcher's budget only.

D. A student who is studying for a degree in preparation for his doctoral studies (14) can receive a stipend from any budgetary source until he becomes a full-time student.

E. A non-degree student (5) in a thesis track (completing a thesis) may receive a stipend and tuition scholarship for a period not exceeding one year, from the researcher's budget only.