



THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

Office of the Dean
Clio Hall
Princeton University
Princeton, NJ 08544
gradschool.princeton.edu

Sarah-Jane Leslie, Dean
Class of 1943 Professor of Philosophy

April 14, 2020

Dear Graduate Students,

I hope this message finds you and yours safe and well. As I mentioned in my note this past Friday, the University continues to actively evaluate policies and programs that support you and your fellow graduate students during these challenging times. As hard as it can be to believe, we are only weeks into this crisis, and there are many questions that we will not be able to answer until we have a better picture of the long-term impacts of COVID-19 on our operations and finances.

Thank you for your patience as my staff and I, in consultation with the Graduate Student Government (GSG), continue to work closely with academic departments and administrative partners to develop solutions to meet emerging challenges as this crisis continues to unfold. I write today with several updates that address some of the questions and concerns you have raised in recent days, and I will continue to be in touch as we move forward.

Enrollment and Funding Extensions

The University's move to online courses in response to the COVID-19 pandemic should allow most graduate students to remain on track with course-based degree requirements, and [the Graduate School's communication](#) in March provided guidance for accommodating graduate students who may need flexibility in meeting normal timelines for any program requirements. We also recognize that the impact of the disruption varies considerably by graduate student, depending on the stage of their studies, the nature of their research (e.g., fieldwork, access to labs or archives, travel and data collection, etc.), as well as family/caregiving duties and other considerations.

Enrollment Extensions and Re-enrollment

- The most pressing immediate decision relates to Ph.D. students currently in the final semester of eligibility in Dissertation Completion Enrollment (DCE) status. Given the impossibility of research to continue this semester for some Ph.D. students, Ph.D. students in the final semester of DCE status may request, with the support of their adviser(s), to extend their DCE eligibility by a semester, and in exceptional cases up to two semesters, depending on the type of research they conduct.
- To operationalize such requests, we will include such students in the annual reenrollment process, which opens up tomorrow, April 15. In the reenrollment application, a student in the final year of DCE status should include a statement as to how the current crisis prevents them from completing and defending their dissertation this spring. Tomorrow Deputy Dean Cole Crittenden will issue an email with further instructions for reenrollment.

Funding Extensions

- For Ph.D. students who are eligible for reenrollment and who are currently receiving funding, we encourage you to work through your adviser(s) and DGS if you believe your research progress has been significantly impacted and delayed to warrant an extension of funding. We would expect any

student falling into this impacted group to have passed general exams prior to spring 2020 and to be conducting their dissertation research, although we also understand that there may be exceptions, depending on a student's program and individual circumstances. We are working closely with departments to find ways to extend funding for post-generals students who have experienced delays and therefore need additional time with support to complete their dissertation work. Again, we ask that you please let your adviser and your DGS know about your situation as soon as possible. As always, Dean Geoffrey Hill (humanities and social sciences) and Dean Christine Murphy (natural sciences and engineering) are available to support students and help answer further questions.

Wellness Support

These are very challenging times and we remind you that even though we cannot be physically connected, the team at the Graduate School and at Counseling & Psychological Services are here to support you.

Wellness Check-ins

- We care about the health and well-being of every member of the graduate student community and want to ensure that we stay closely connected while being physically apart. With this in mind, the Student Life team has established periodic check-ins with graduate students.
- Whether you are living on-campus or away from campus, we would like to know how you are doing and if you would like a member of the Graduate School staff to reach out to you for support or resources.
- We plan to send a weekly check-in email to every graduate student and kindly request that you take a moment to respond. It takes less than one-minute to complete this [very brief check-in form](#).

Ongoing Support

- The Graduate School Staff are always available to answer your questions and assist you in whatever ways we can. Please visit us at <https://gradschool.princeton.edu/staff>.
- There are many campus resources available to support you as well. Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) can be reached anytime at (609) 258-3141 and information about how to access virtual counseling sessions is available [here](#).
- In addition, CPS has prepared very meaningful guidance on how to take care of your mental health during this pandemic; please do take a moment to review [this document](#).

Financial Support

We continue to address financial concerns, to find solutions to ease the financial impact of changes related to COVID-19, and to evaluate current funding structures. It is too early in this crisis to fully understand the long-term impacts on our resources, but we have taken some immediate steps to meet critical needs.

Hardship Funds

- Graduate students with financial need who are suffering hardship related to COVID-19 may apply to an emergency fund administered by the Graduate School. Students who would like to be considered for this limited emergency funding, which may cover needs including but not limited to relocation/travel costs, storage fees, food insecurity, etc., should apply [here](#).
- These funds are intended for emergency costs related to COVID-19 and not intended to cover costs that would otherwise have been incurred, such as tuition and fees, computer equipment that was otherwise necessary, regular rent, etc. If you have questions related to a potential request, please reach out to Sarah Mullins (smullins@princeton.edu).

- To date, the Graduate School has funded 93% of all hardship requests received (in part or in full) and the remaining requests have been directed to other more appropriate funding resources.

Increases in Graduate Student Fellowship and Stipend Rates

- We are pleased to announce that, despite the current financial situation, graduate fellowship and stipend rates will increase in 2020-21 as follows: \$35,500 for a twelve-month fellowship, \$33,800 for a ten-month teaching assistantship (AI), and \$30,800 for a ten-month research assistantship (AR).

In closing, I am proud of the way our graduate community is navigating the unprecedented challenges of COVID-19 together. This would not be possible without the strong leadership and close partnership of the GSG and all graduate students who continue to build connections and community, to act in socially responsible ways – and who provide feedback and input as we work to support our graduate students in the days and weeks ahead.

Wishing you safety, health and resilience,

Sarah-Jane Leslie
Dean of the Graduate School