Revisions to SIPA Scholarship Process

August 4, 2016

Beginning with students entering in Spring 2017 or later, SIPA is implementing a new process for allocating scholarships.

*This change will not affect students who entered SIPA in Fall 2016 or earlier (and have been—and will continue to be—continuously enrolled).*

In the past, a scholarship-like tuition credit from SIPA was “bundled” with salary payments for Teaching Assistant (TA), Departmental Research Assistant (DRA), Program Assistant (PA), and Reader positions. This put significant pressure on the assistantship allocation process and led to concerns from students, faculty, and staff.

Responding to these concerns, the new process “unbundles” the tuition credit from the salary support for TA, DRA, PA, and Reader positions. Scholarship offers made at the time of the admission offer will be increased. It is important to emphasize that the overall level of student aid will not change. What will change are the timing of fellowship decisions, the salaries associated with different positions, and some aspects of the process for deciding who is offered financial aid. These changes will provide students with greater certainty at the time of admission about the level of fellowship support they will receive, and improve their ability to plan for financing their SIPA education.

This document explains the scholarship allocation process for: (1) students who entered in Fall 2016 or earlier (and have been enrolled continuously and full-time), and (2) students entering in Spring 2017 or later (or students who initially enrolled prior to Spring 2017, but have not been enrolled continuously and full-time, and who will be in their second year in 2018-19 or later).

1. **Students who entered in Fall 2016 or earlier**

For students in this group, there is no change in the fellowship or assistantships process.
Students who wish to be considered for second year funding must submit the assistantship application by the deadline. This includes those students who were offered a two-year award upon admission that included a second-year assistantship. An overview of the process is available on the Guide to Assistantships webpage.

For the 2016-17 and 2017-18 academic years, there is no change to the assistantship compensation packages at SIPA. They will be (amounts per semester):

Teaching Assistant (TA): $15,000 tuition credit plus $5,000 salary
Departmental Research or Program Assistant (DRA/PA): $8,100 tuition credit plus $2,400 salary
Reader: $4,700 tuition credit plus $1,300 salary

Students are selected on the basis of their ability to perform the duties of the positions, which may include teaching, research, computing support, or other tasks. Appointments may be for one or two semesters. All applicants must be in good academic standing (3.0 cumulative GPA or higher) to be eligible to apply; good academic standing does not, however, guarantee selection. Please note that in all cases, salary is potentially taxable income. Please consult the Guide to Assistantships webpage for more information.

2. Students entering in Spring 2017 or later

Beginning with students who apply to enter the two-year MIA and MPA programs in January 2017 (or students who were initially enrolled prior to January 2017, but have not been enrolled continuously and full-time and who will be in their second year in 2018-19 or later), scholarship support will no longer be bundled with salary payments for TA, DRA and PA positions in students’ second year. Instead, the total amount of scholarship support awarded at admissions will be increased. Again, it is important to note that the total level of student aid will remain unchanged. The key change is that scholarship support will be offered at the time of admission, rather than bundled with assistantship positions.

Beginning in 2018-19, assistantship salaries per semester will be as follows:
Teaching Assistant (TA): $12,000
Departmental Research or Program Assistant (DRA/PA): $6,000
Reader: $3,000

The application process for assistantships will remain the same in future years. Students who entered in Fall 2016 or earlier who take a leave of absence and do not remain continuously enrolled may still be enrolled in 2018-19 or later. Assistantship compensation for these students in 2018-19 or later will be at the new levels.