



**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
POSTGRADUATE CENTRE AND FUNDING OFFICE**

**POLICY
ON FUNDING FOR POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS (Honours, Masters and Doctoral
only)**

*This document summarizes policy concerning funds (internal and external) administered by the University of Cape Town (UCT) Postgraduate Funding Office (PGFO) for postgraduate students (Honours, Master's and Doctoral - excluding PG Diploma students), as approved by the Postgraduate Studies Funding Committee, a subcommittee of Senate. The purpose of this policy is to guide the governance of funding available for students of Honours, Master's and Doctoral degrees (from here on **the degree**) fairly, within the budgets and strategies of UCT.*

While this policy addresses postgraduate funding awards broadly, note that each individual category of award has its own set of 'regulations' (i.e. Conditions) detailed in the various calls, adverts and claims associated with the specific award.

It is the intent of UCT to support and enable eligible postgraduate students through various sources in providing funding in the form of financial assistance that will contribute either in part, or, in certain cases in whole, towards the costs of tuition and attendance at UCT. Such funding is not intended to be used for historical fee debt relief.

1. General eligibility and requirements for funding

Although each individual award indicates eligibility, UCT's general eligibility for funding includes the following:

1. To be considered for selection of an award, applicants must have applied for admission to UCT (using the on-line portal for such).
2. Eligibility for Master's funding requires that the independent research component of the degree must contribute at least one-third of the final Master's degree credits (i.e. 60 of 180 credits).
3. Applicants should be registered UCT students before funding is disbursed. (*See Section 2.*)
 - o All awards are disbursed through the student fee account, once the student has registered and submitted a claim form. Some funding/awards are paid in installments depending on the nature of the award, and in many cases in two tranches, the second installment being only payable in the second semester and dependent on satisfactory progress reported.
4. Students are not eligible for UCT-sourced funding if they work for more than 20 hours per week. (*See Section 3.*)
5. Students who hold income (from all sources) in excess of the limitations shown in *Section 4* below are eligible only to hold a portion of certain awards (up to the max. limit), or, in some cases, specific awards preclude a student from holding concurrent funding awards.
 - o UCT reserves the right to recover any UCT-sourced funds allocated to any student from the University's own funding if the student receives support in excess of the stated maxima in *Section 3*.
6. Students who already hold a postgraduate degree and who register for a second degree at the same or lower level are ineligible, e.g.: a Master's graduate who

registers for a further Master's degree or a Doctoral graduate who registers for a Honours or a second Doctoral degree.

7. Students registered for the MMed and MBA degrees are not eligible for funding.
8. There are also some other Master's programmes (professional degrees) which are ineligible for specific funding, which is outlined under the Conditions of Award in those specific cases.
9. Students will be required to submit a mid-year academic progress report approved by their course convener or supervisor, for the release of second instalments (remaining credit balances), if applicable, and the application for renewal of awards. (*Sections 4 and 5 below, respectively.*)
10. Funding applications are year-specific and will not be transferred to a subsequent year except in the case of renewals or approved deferrals.
11. Should a student change their academic programme during the course of their studies, such as at the beginning of the second year, the funding tenure will be calculated from the start of the original degree programme and may not be extended.

2. Disbursement of award on receipt of claim forms

Students are only eligible for payment of a bursary or scholarship after they have been accepted for study and once the student is registered for the degree for which funding was applied for.

The award claim form in which the conditions of awards and grants are recorded is the legal document in which students undertake to accept and abide by the rules, conditions and requirements made of them. Each student receives a claim form for each award, or part thereof, awarded.

Successful award holders will be notified via their official UCT email address and are required to accept their funding via an award claim form which is generated by the PGFO to the student's UCT email address.

In line with SARS regulations no award will be disbursed/refunded to the supervisor's research or scholarship funds. All awards will be disbursed by the PGFO upon receipt of a completed and signed claim form to student's UCT fee account.

Students who cancel registration during the year, will have their funding adjusted on a *pro rata* basis according to the merits of the case. Any debt arising from such and adjustment is the responsibility of the student.

Failure to report other sponsorship/funding received will result in UCT-sourced funds being withdrawn and cancelled. Any debt arising from such and adjustment is the responsibility of the student.

3. Employment

Full-time employed students are ineligible for funding.

For the purposes of UCT-sourced funding, full-time employment is defined as working more than 20 hours per week. Students who are employed for up to 20 hours per week are required

to provide a letter from their employers stating their employment details, specifically the number of hours worked per week and the total remuneration package.

Students who receive a National Research Foundation (NRF) award may not exceed 12 hours of work per week.

4. Overall limitations on income from all funding sources

Applying a limit to total income from all sources (in respect of students receiving support via the University as well as external sources) ensures equitable distribution of available funding.

The overall limits (2021) are:

Honours – R180 000.00

Master's – R241 000.00

Doctoral – R300 000.00

UCT reserves the right to recover any UCT-sourced funds allocated to any student from the University's own funding if the student receives support more than the stated maxima.

5. Progress reports

A condition of all awards, except in a few cases, is the submission of an academic progress report from the student's course convener or supervisor reflecting satisfactory academic progress at stipulated intervals (normally in June and December) each year. Failure to make satisfactory progress and/or to submit the required academic progress report may result in withdrawal and cancellation of the award. Any resulting debt will be the responsibility of the student involved.

6. Renewals of awards

Some awards allow for renewals provided a student has made satisfactory progress and they are within the funding tenure for the degree (*see Section 6 below*).

7. Time frames for support (tenure)

7.1 Honours degree

Funding support is only available for one year for Honours students.

7.2 Master's degree

Normally two years – the second year of funding being renewable subject to proof of satisfactory progress.

Exception: A further award (extension funding) may be allocated to students for a third year; however, such extension awards will be pro-rated and subject to limitations depending on the source of funding and merits of the case. Extension funding may be allocated to students who require an additional few months to complete their degree and graduate. Such motivation must be lodged and managed via an appeals process (see below). Acceptable reasons for extension awards could include:

- Requirement for corrections and re-submission of the dissertation.

- Late completion of the degree due to supervision problems, laboratory /equipment failure, etc. In such cases, a detailed motivation endorsed by the supervisor and Dean of Faculty is required.

7.3 Doctoral degree

Normally three years – the second and third years of funding being renewable only on proof of satisfactory progress.

Exception: A further award (extension funding) may be allocated to students for a fourth year; however, such extension awards will be pro-rated and subject to limitations depending on the source of funding and merits of the case. Extension funding may be allocated to students who require additional few months to complete their degree and graduate. Such motivation must be lodged and managed via an appeals process (see below). Acceptable reasons for extension awards could include:

- Requirement for corrections and re-submission of the thesis.
- Late completion of the degree due to supervision problems, laboratory /equipment failure, etc. In such cases, a detailed motivation endorsed by the supervisor and Dean of Faculty is required.

7.4 Upgrade from master's to Doctoral degree

Normally four years in total – the second, third and fourth years of funding being renewable only on proof of satisfactory progress.

Exception: A further award (extension funding) may be allocated to students for a fifth year; however, such extension awards will be pro-rated and subject to limitations depending on the source of funding and merits of the case. Extension funding may be allocated to students who require additional few months to complete their degree and graduate. Acceptable reasons for these awards could include:

- Requirement for corrections and re-submission of the thesis.
- Late completion of the degree due to supervision problems, laboratory /equipment failure, etc. In such cases, a detailed motivation endorsed by the Dean of Faculty is required.

8. Late or incomplete applications and cancellations

The University reserves the right to decline late, incomplete or inappropriate applications for funding. Withdrawn applications will be cancelled. This ensures that selection processes are fair, and that those students who have complied with the deadlines and application conditions compete on the same level.

9. Funding for international students and refugees

A limited amount of UCT funding is available for students with international citizenship and refugee status. The funding from UCT (through the University Research Committee General Operating Budget) awarded to this category of students may be held concurrently with other awards.

10. Conditions of awards and grants as laid down in bequests or by donors

There is some funding for postgraduate students that is granted via bequests and specific donors. After establishing that they follow national tax laws and current UCT ethical

considerations (as appropriate), UCT will ensure that the conditions of awards and grants as laid down in bequests or by donors, sponsors or the University, are adhered to.

The University reserves the right to cancel or withdraw any award made if the recipient of such an award does not comply with the stated conditions of the award.

All awards made are governed by conditions that are approved by the DVC for Research & Internationalisation (or nominee). Such conditions ensure that:

- the University remains compliant with tax regulations/guidelines.
- the applications submitted by students in competition for such awards are assessed using the stated criteria, and
- the selection process for all awards is based on set and approved criteria.

The University is legally bound to abide by the conditions of award, which are often based on bequests or on the instructions of external donors, such as the NRF.

11. Recovery of awards

The University reserves the right to recover any funding disbursed to any student (including funding disbursed on behalf of the NRF and/or parastatals), if that individual does not comply with the conditions of award; does not make satisfactory progress or if students deregister without prior notice or reasonable cause, or if they are academically excluded. The University reserves the right to act and withdraw all funding if such funding was received as a result of fraud. The recovery process is routed through the University's Finance Department, via the Fees Office and the Debtors' section.

12. Guarantee of funding and outstanding fee debts

The PGFO is not responsible for the outstanding fee debt of any student. The University is unable to provide any guarantee that every applicant for funding will receive support.

13. Recovery of allowances and refunds paid in error or when a student deregisters without notification

Where there have been omissions when paying allowances or refunds to a student or where a student deregisters without notifying the supervisor, these funds will be recovered. The student will be required to repay these funds to the UCT fee account within a reasonable time frame (i.e., 72 hours) from the time the student has been notified.

14. Leave of absence

A student who is granted a prospective academic concession for Leave of Absence (LOA) must submit supporting documentation to and inform the PGFO. Funding will be pro-rated or deferred according to the approval date of the LOA.

15. Appeals

Appeals will only be considered from students who have submitted Postgraduate Funding Application forms in the first instance (i.e., a student who has not applied for funding cannot 'appeal' for funding if they have not applied for funding in the first instance, and timeously. An appeal may be considered for the following reasons:

- Re-assessment of the funding application because of a change in status/information originally submitted
- Permission to retain awards – requiring a consideration of the concurrent award rules
- Registration beyond 2-year (Master’s) and 3-year (Doctoral) degree tenure
- Request to hold funds that exceed the maximum income limit
- Deferral of award
- Change to programme of study

Repeat appeals (i.e., where an appeal has already been considered and the outcome communicated), will not be considered.

This policy is subject to change without prior notification.

This Policy Document was approved by UCT Council on 05 November 2003, and was effective immediately.

Postgraduate Studies Funding Committee –

First Review 2004

Second Review 2006

Third Review 2007

Fourth Review 2008

Fifth Review 2011

Sixth Review 2013

Seventh Review - 2020 (Updated May 2021)