

7th-year Funding Policy

Whether students can receive funding in their 7th year generally depends on whether the department has sufficient funds. The department aims to make 0.5 FTE¹ appointments (or CE appointments) available to students to ensure that they can cover their basic living expenses.

However, regardless of the department's budget, PhD students will receive funding in their 7th year (from the department or CE) only if they are making *reasonable progress* towards finishing their dissertation. This assessment will be completed during the fall of the student's 6th year, to match the timelines for assigning regular and CE teaching. Students can receive an appointment in their 7th year only if their teaching performance has been adequate up to that point.

Assessing a student's progress:

- In order for a student's progress to be deemed satisfactory, the student must have already written at least one chapter of their dissertation by the time they are being considered for 7th-year funding.
- A student's progress shall be assessed by the Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC), or a committee of at least three TT faculty members. Nobody from the student's dissertation committee can be a member of the committee that assesses a student's progress. If the composition of the GCC overlaps with that of the student's dissertation committee in such a way that fewer than three members of the GCC are eligible to assess the student's progress, the DGS shall appoint additional members to the assessment committee.
- The evidence on the basis of which the Assessment Committee will determine whether a given student is making reasonable progress should be both forward- and backward-looking, and it should come from the student and their advisor.
 - a. Backward-looking evidence: The student must document the progress they have made on their research during the preceding 12 months. This can involve writing new drafts of papers or dissertation chapters, revising existing drafts, submitting work for publication or conference presentations, or doing significant preparatory work, such as translating relevant material or working out formal proofs. As a rough guide, students should write a new paper/chapter draft every semester or equivalent.

Interruptions: If a student was unable to make academic progress during some period of time due to, for example, illness or the birth of a child, their progress will be assessed during the preceding 12-months period that excludes this interval. (For example, if a student is being assessed in December 2024 and had an illness from

¹ A 0.5 full-time equivalency (FTE) appointment corresponds to *full funding*. The rationale is this: Graduate students who hold a 0.5 FTE appointment are expected to work 20 hours per week as TAs or GPIIs, which means they work half time. But they receive full funding because part of the graduate student pay is meant to support the student's own research.

April to June 2024, then the relevant assessment period would be October 2023 – March 2024 and July to December 2024.)

Summer: Students will be expected to make progress commensurate with summer funding received. Both the amount of funding and the work done by student in exchange will be taken into account.

- b. Forward looking evidence: The student must submit a research plan that documents that they are on track to complete their dissertation by the end of their 7th year.

Advisor: The student's dissertation advisor can provide additional evidence to complement a student's file, but at a minimum, the advisor must comment on the accuracy of the documentation submitted by the student.

Possible outcomes:

- If the Assessment Committee determines that the student is making reasonable progress, then the student shall receive a 0.5 FTE appointment in their 7th year, assuming sufficient funds are available.
- If the Assessment Committee decides that the student is not making reasonable progress, then the student will not receive a 0.5 FTE appointment in their 7th year. They will either receive a reduced appointment or no appointment. (Note: not receiving an appointment does not mean that the student is removed from the program. The student can continue the program if they wish, they just need to find other ways of funding themselves.)

Further notes:

- The policy will be applied immediately.
- We currently offer 6th-year funding to all PhD students. If budget cuts require us to reassess this policy, the above guidelines will also apply to 6th-year funding.
- If insufficient funds are available to give 7th-year appointments to all students who are making reasonable progress, then students who began the program with a BA degree will receive priority over students who began the program with an MA degree. The rationale for this policy is that post-MA students will have already had more time to work on their dissertation when at the start of their 7th year than post-BA students.