

- For the McCormick department, the RAS is only for PhD students. If an MS student will be funded from chart strings using the RAS tuition amounts, please contact the McCormick Business Administrator, Paula Straaton p-straaton@northwestern.edu, for the tuition funding arrangement.

**EVANSTON CAMPUS
RESEARCH ASSISTANT SCHOLARSHIP (RAS)
Instructions & FAQ**

The Research Assistant Scholarship (RAS) is a program of tuition support for graduate students who are paid as research assistants on sponsored projects or non-sponsored project chart strings. The account codes for the stipend and tuition are 60076 and 78020 respectively. To activate a RAS award, a department administrator or designee enters the stipend and tuition portion to be paid from the sponsored project or non-sponsored chart string(s) as well as the Research Assistantship Scholarship in SES. Separate instructions are available for completing this data entry.

Eligibility requirements for the RAS program are:

1. The required minimum stipend amount for RAS is \$1,975.00 per month.
2. If funding is from a sponsored project, the project must fund the stipend and tuition in the appropriate quarter(s).
3. Stipend and tuition must be paid proportionately from the sponsored project(s) or non-sponsored project(s). For example, if two projects are supporting a student equally, then 50% of the stipend and 50% of the tuition payment must be paid from each project.
4. University policy requires that all students receiving RAS be enrolled full time in The Graduate School (TGS) each quarter, either for 3-4 graduate units or TGS 500. *Please check that students have registered appropriately.* (For the TGS 500 registration, make certain the student has already completed 8 quarters at the full-time rate exclusive of any previous TGS 512 registrations.)
5. Students must maintain good academic standing.
6. Students on an approved extension of the deadline for completion of all PhD requirements are eligible for RAS.
7. Students supported by research assistantships in the summer must be registered full-time during the summer quarter.

RAS Minimum Stipend Level and Scholarship Amounts for 2014/2015 year

Registration	Required minimum stipend	Tuition per quarter	RAS tuition portion	Principal Investigator(PI) tuition portion
3-4 units	\$1,975/month	\$15,612	\$12,381/quarter	\$3,231/quarter
TGS 500	\$1,975/month	\$3,903	\$672/quarter	\$3,231/quarter

The RAS may be entered for more than one quarter as long as payroll and project budget period covers the entire quarters requested.

Pay Periods for RA Stipend and RAS Quarterly Payments	
Fall Quarter	09/1 – 11/30
Winter Quarter	12/1 – 02/28
Spring Quarter	03/1 – 05/31
Summer Quarter	06/1 – 08/31

If you have any questions, please contact Michael Fernandez in The Graduate School at 847/491-7334 or m-fernandez@northwestern.edu.

Frequently Asked Questions for RAS

Where do I obtain the information for the project period?

You may access COGNOS in NU Financials to review this information on GM045 – Sponsored Project Budget Statement.

If a student is being paid from a combination of sponsored and/or non-sponsored chart strings, how should the tuition amount be distributed?

The tuition must come from the chart strings proportionately. For example, if two projects are supporting a student equally, then 50% of the stipend and 50 % of the tuition payment must be paid from each chart string.

If a student is being paid from a combination of a sponsored chart string and a non-sponsored/departmental chart string (for instance, \$3179.55/quarter from a sponsored chart string and \$2601.45/quarter from a departmental chart string) can tuition be proportionately charged directly to each chart string?

Yes, the distribution of the tuition must be split proportionately between the sponsored project and non-sponsored project chart strings.

Does the student pay tax on or have to declare on tax returns the portion of tuition assistance applied against the chart string?

Because this tuition assistance takes the form of a scholarship, the portion of tuition assistance charged to a project on behalf of the student is not taxable according to current IRS regulations.

How do I revise or cancel a previously submitted RAS request?

You or your designee will need to reenter the information on the student's award in SES SMART Pages. SMART Pages are located in the *NU Tuition Stipend WorkCenter* with links to manually edit funding. Separate instructions concerning the data entry can be found at <http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/faculty-and-staff/tips-faq/index.html>.

Avoid common problems:

- Make sure the math calculation of the funding is correct.
- Make sure the item type number(s) corresponds to the chart string for funding.
- The sponsored chart string must be open for the term of the RAS award.
- Please enter the appropriate RAS tuition departmental item type according to the student's home department enrollment.
- Expense Accounts 60076 (stipend), 60182 (fringe), and 78020 (tuition) must all be open and budgeted. If they are not open, please contact your Office of Sponsored Research (OSR) representative to open the accounts, particularly the 78021 account code group for tuition funding.
- Payroll period must be within the budget and project start & stop dates shown on GM045 statement.
- Chart strings with a stipend account code of 78050 (Fellows or trainee chart strings) are not RAS eligible.
- When drawing on multiple chart strings, make certain that the tuition amounts being paid are proportionate to the percentages of the payroll appointment. If a stipend chart string is used to supplement the student's funding and no tuition is being charged to that chart string, there is no need to prorate the tuition amounts.

Further Information for Sponsored Chart Strings:

Please keep in mind the following:

- Any student paid on account code 60076 is required to report effort.
- The PI listed for the chart string must certify effort on the sponsored project.
- If a student has already been paid out of one sponsored chart string, and effort has already been certified, it is **not** possible to retroactively revise sponsored research funding in order to switch the student to another chart string.
- *Please be advised that revising payroll on sponsored chartstrings is an audit flag after 90 days of entry.*
- Revisions that are over 90 days old require a **90-day exception letter** addressed to ASRSP.