ELECTRICAL & COMPUTER ENGINEERING

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

University Funding Guide for Faculty

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RA Overview

Table 1: RA Type Comparison

Type	Criteria	Pay	Additional Benefits
Volunteer RA	Unpaid undergrad or grad RA's. International students must either be currently enrolled as a student or recently graduated and eligible for OPT.	N/A	• Current students could be eligible to receive ECE 3970, 6950, or 6970 credit.
Undergrad RA (Hourly)	Paid hourly RA's who are hourly who have not yet earned their Bachelor's degree.	$16/hr MIN - $20/hr MAX	• Current students could be eligible to receive ECE 3970 credit.
Grad RA (No tuition benefit)	Paid RA's who have had their Bachelor's degree conferred. Typically only used for RA's during the summer when not enrolled. If not enrolled, faculty may increase student rates to 1.0 FTE.	$33k/yr MIN - $42k/yr MAX for 0.5 FTE • 40 hrs/week or 1.0 FTE = $66k • 10 hrs/week or 0.25 FTE = $16k	• Current students could be eligible to receive ECE 6950, 6970, or 7970 credit.
Grad RA (with tuition benefit)	Paid RA's who have had their Bachelor's degree conferred and qualify for admission to our Master's or PhD program.	$33k/yr MIN - $42k/yr MAX for 0.5 FTE *Pay per term at 0.5 FTE:* • Fall/Spring = $12,350 • Summer = $8,250	• Tuition Coverage • Graduate Student Health Insurance (GSHIP) • ECE 6950, 6970, or 7970 credit
Research Associate	Can be for students/non-students. Can be used to increase pay rate, but also for students whose project doesn't have student tuition built in (but the salary can be used by students to cover tuition costs themselves). Requires approval from chair, dean, and SVP. Only for U.S citizens.	No set amounts, but it is recommend to be similar to Post Doc (see below)	• Health Insurance • Current students could be eligible to receive ECE 6950, 6970, or 7970 credit.
Post Doc	Researchers who have defended their PhD thesis	$63,480/yr MIN for 1.0 FTE	• Health insurance • Retirement benefits (optional for PI to offer)

Can I adjust student pay?

Yes, many PI's increase student pay for a variety of reasons (to cover increased cost of living, reward for hard work, etc.), but increase in pay comes with the following caveats:

- Once a student's pay rate has been increased, it cannot be decreased. (FTE can be adjusted, especially over the summer, but not pay rate)
- Cannot exceed maximum rate
- Extreme jumps in pay will need to be justified to and approved by the College's HR department.

Can students work remotely?

Remote work for university employees must be approved by the College of Engineering. Please be aware that no regular out-of-state work can be done until approved by the College.

- Telecommuting Plan and Agreement Form
- Out-of-State Telecommuting Request – 60 Days or Longer - *requires department, college, and VP approvals. Can take up to 2 months for a decision.*

Tuition Benefit Program

Tuition benefits should be charged to external funding sources, such as research grants, first before utilizing limited tuition benefit waivers, when at all possible. For an in-depth explanation of the TBP, we recommend reading the Graduate School's Tuition Benefit Program Guidelines page.

Who qualifies for tuition benefit?

Graduate students who:

- Have a 3.0 GPA or higher
- Are enrolled full-time (See Table 2)
- Are working for the university in applicable RA and/or TA job codes (students on Graduate Fellowship have their tuition and health insurance directly paid for by the fellowship).
- Projected to earn the minimum support level for the term. (See Table 3)
    - Student must earn the minimum support level for the term; otherwise, tuition benefits will be retroactively removed. Our minimum pay department pay currently meets this requirement, but concerns arise if: a student takes an extended vacation, is delayed getting onto payroll, or is removed from payroll too early (typically due to their defense)

Table 2: Credit Enrollment

Credit(s)	Description
12.0	Max # of credits a student can enroll in and have covered through tuition benefits for Fall and Spring semesters
9.0	Full-time enrollment that all students enrolled in any sort of coursework need to maintain. International students whose admission term is summer must be enrolled in 9 credits their first term.
6.0	Max # of credits a student can enroll in/have covered through tuition benefits during the summer.
3.0	Full-time enrollment, if a student is only enrolled in thesis credits. Current departmental policy is that a student may reduce down to 3 once they complete their proposal or if enrolled during summer term.
1.0	Used for students who are self-paying (i.e. industry PhDs), including domestic and international students who are defending before the end of their final term and no longer qualify for tuition benefits.

Table 3: Minimum Support Projections, AY27 thru AY30

Unless noted as confirmed, the minimum support listed below is projected and subject to change.

Academic Year	100% TBP Minimum Support (FA/SPR Total)	100% TBP Minimum Support (FA/SPR/SU Total)	Fall	Spring	Summer
AY27	$21,500 (confirmed)	$28,670 (confirmed)	$10,750	$10,750	$7,170
AY28	$23,000	$30,670	$11,500	$11,500	$7,670
AY29	$24,500	$32,670	$12,250	$12,250	$8,170
AY30	$26,000	$34,670	$13,000	$13,000	$8,670

Note for Fall 2026: As our department minimum is currently above the Graduate School minimum support amounts, this means students can miss up to 1 pay period (approx. 2 weeks) and still earn just enough to still qualify. At the start of Fall 2027, this gap will close and there will be much less wiggle room.

Note for future funding: By 2030 the Graduate School minimum support levels will likely surpass the ECE department's minimum salary. Because of this, faculty submitting grants should plan for salary increases accordingly.

What happens to a student when they defend? A student's "end of pay" is the same as their program end date (defense date). If a PI wants a student to continue to be eligible for tuition benefit, they must make sure that the student will earn enough to reach the minimum support level. This can be done in several ways:

1. Increasing student's pay rate their last term
2. Reaching out to the accountants to verify that you would like to continue paying the student after they defend (but since they have defended, they will now automatically qualify for an increased pay rate).

Graduate Subsidized Health Insurance Plan (GSHIP)

TBP-supported students working in assistantships (RA, TA) may be eligible for subsidized health insurance (medical, dental, and vision), with premiums. GSHIP does not automatically cover student dependents. If students need to add dependents, they will pay have pay approximately $2000 per dependent.

Miscellaneous

Paternity Leave

- Up to 8 weeks fully funded by specific chart field, will be given by Graduate School and they will cover the student at the exact same stipend amount that they are contracted.
- Needs to be enrolled in credits/coursework (essentially otherwise meeting tuition benefit program criteria)
- Need to be on payroll as an RA or TA
- FMLA will impact TBP eligibility

To enroll, students complete form on https://gradschool.utah.edu/navigating-grad-school/graduate-policies/parental-leave-policy-for-graduate-students.php

Travel Reimbursement

- Travel requests need to be made prior to travel
    - one-week prior for domestic travel
    - four-weeks prior for international travel
- See Purchasing and Travel Requests page for more information and steps: https://www.ece.utah.edu/purchasing/

Cost Breakdown (All students on TBP billed at residential rates)

Breakdown of graduate tuition costs for one Fall/Spring semester under 2026-2027 rates:

CHARGE	*COURSEWORK COSTS*	*THESIS COSTS*	*NOTES*
Base Tuition	$1075.50	$792.46	Also known as zero hour tuition. This charge is incurred at a flat fee, no matter how many credits a student is enrolled in.
Per Hour Tuition	$332.86 / credit	$283.18 / credit	Links to tuition tables Coursework (includes differential) | Thesis
Mandatory Fees	$500.06	$480.37	This changes minutely based on how many credits a student is enrolled in (the maximum charge is $529.05).
Differential Tuition	$101.70 / credit	$101.70 / credit	This charge is covered by faculty at the same % rate that a student is employed as an RA. If a student is a TA, they must pay the remaining amount themselves.
TOTAL	**$5,486.60 - $6,819.27** **(9 credit min.) (12 credit max.)**	**$2,365.04 - $4,736.75** **(3 credit min.) (9 credit max.)**	Many students are in a mix of coursework/thesis credits, which can cause variance in term costs.

Additional fees that might be charged to a student's account:

CHARGE	*COSTS*	*NOTES*	*WHO PAYS?*
GSHIP	$3,594.20 / year	Graduate Subsidized Health Insurance Plan	PI
International Student Surcharge	$150.00 / term	Charged each term to international students on a visa.	Student
Class/Lab Fees	Variable	Based on individual courses.	Student
Late Fee	$75.00	If the late fee is due to a delay on the part of the department, students may request a waiver.	Student/Waived

Loss of Funding

Securing funding is primarily the responsibility of the PI and the student. In some cases, funding may run out or fail to be renewed before a student has completed their program. If this occurs, the student will have the following options to consider:

a) Applying for fellowships and other financial awards (see University Funding Resources section)
b) Applying to *potentially* be hired as a TA for ECE (or another department) for a term of emergency funding. This option is not guaranteed, and a student must meet application deadlines and requirements to even be eligible. Please see the ECE department's TA Application page for more information.
c) Paying for their tuition themselves (it is recommended that they consult with the Graduate Student Coordinator about minimum credit enrollments for cost-saving measures). Students who are authorized to work in the U.S. may also consider seeking an industry position, where the company is willing to pay the student's tuition and/or a summer internship where students can earn more and save for upcoming expenses.
d) Applying to other faculty's labs, who may have funding, to work as an RA in their lab. This can be faculty in ECE or other departments. It is recommended that the student consult with their faculty advisor, who may be able to suggest appropriate collaborators.
e) A student may discontinue their studies in the PhD program (such as completing with a master's degree). Students should consult with the Graduate Student Coordinator, who can suggest the most efficient way to complete the degree.

A student's annual assistantship is renewable on their yearly anniversary date listed in their offer letter, and salary raises will be evaluated based on satisfactory progress in coursework and research. Faculty may revoke their offer of financial funding mid-contract if a student meets criteria for dismissal and has the course of action approved by the department chair.

University Funding Resources

Courses

Opportunity	When Offered	Recommended For
ENGIN 6960 Writing and Communication for Graduate Students (3.0)	Spring, Fall	**2nd Year+ Graduate Students**. Must have a tangible, thesis-specific project to complete during the semester. Special Topics class to prepare students for writing and communication efforts specific to their careers in engineering.
MDCRC 6350 Grant Writing Course (3.0)	Spring, Fall	**Students should be in the process of writing a research grant (usually NIH format) with a planned submission in the next 12 months.** The course will have students complete a grant application and will cover the preparation including Abstract, Aims, Significance, Innovation, Research Plan, and Biosketch, as well as supporting appendices.
PROED 504 Grant Writing (Continuing Education)	Variable	Faculty, staff
WRTG 4002 Grant Writing (3.0)	Spring	**Undergraduate students**
WRTG 5905 Proposal Writing (3.0)	Fall	**Undergraduate/graduate students**

Workshops

Opportunity	When Offered	Recommended For
Graduate School NSF GRFP Workshops	September – Information Sessions October – Application Review Workshops	• Previous Successful NSF GRFP Proposals from U of U • Alex Lang Fellowship Support Site
Rajesh's Fellowship Writing Workshop	Summer, but not an official course (typically 1/hr per week from mid-May to mid-August)	**Domestic junior/senior undergraduates and first-year graduate students** (but any student is welcome to join to just learn about improving their writing)
R01 Writing Group	3 times a year	
Undergraduate Research Education Series		**Undergraduate student researchers and faculty mentors**

Awards and Scholarships:

Opportunity	Deadline	Eligibility
Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP)	Offered Fall, Spring, and Summer	Undergraduate students
Summer Program for Undergraduate Research (SPUR)	Mid-January	Undergraduate students
Travel and Small Grants	Monthly	Undergraduate students (awarded only 1x per student)
Professional Development Supplement Award	Monthly	Graduate students (awarded only 1x per student). Does not cover full cost, it is a 50/50 split up to $500.
Graduate Research Fellowship	November	For PhDs who have completed their Qualifying Exam, close to proposal
University Teaching Assistantships	December	For graduate students who have provided major assistance to curriculum (either through the development of a new class or major change to current course curriculum)

Additional Resources

- Library Grant Training Information
- VP of Research Grant Preparation, Training and Development
- Nationally Competitive Scholarships