

Doctoral Dissertation Completion Award: Frequently Asked Questions

We thank you for your interest in the 2022-2023 Doctoral Dissertation Completion Award. We are very happy to answer any questions you may have – please send your questions to vpr@clemsont.edu.

You may also find an answer to your question below:

Q: What is GAD?

A: GAD (Graduate Assistant Tuition Differential) is funding to off-set the cost of tuition for graduate students appointed to assistantships. The option to receive GAD as part of this award is available.

Q: Am I eligible for a Doctoral Dissertation Completion Award if I am entering candidacy just before the application deadline?

A: Yes, if you are entering degree candidacy 30 days before the award application is due, you are eligible to apply.

The Doctoral Dissertation Completion Award is intended to support students in the final semester prior to graduation; applicants should be in the final phases of dissertation writing (six months or fewer from graduation). We ask your faculty advisor to affirm you are in the final phases of dissertation preparation in the application form.

If you feel that it will take a year or more to be ready to defend, you should consider applying for this support in the next round of funding.

Q: If I am awarded the Doctoral Dissertation Completion Award, do I need to register for classes?

A: Yes, if you are awarded stipend support, you must be registered for an adequate number of credit hours per supported semester.

Q: The stipend total is less than what I could make as a GRA/GTA. Can my department supplement the stipend?

A: Yes, your department may provide additional funding to support stipend totals. Departments are permitted to supplement funding *by one-time payment to the student through the grants section of the GS61 database*. Please note that recipients of the Doctoral Dissertation Completion Award may not perform ANY work for the university other than the research directly involved in completing the dissertation during the time the award is in place.

Q: I have some specific needs (e.g., to recruit participants for a survey, transcription services for research interviews) to aid the completion of my doctorate. Can I apply for this type of funding?

A: Yes, for unique and well-justified circumstances we may offer limited additional funding support directly related to the completion of your doctoral research. The space for “other” support in the application form is the appropriate place to enter this information. In the justification document appended to your application, please provide rationale for the request and an itemized list with expected costs.

Q: I need to hire an individual with a specific expertise on a part-time, temporary basis to provide technical support (e.g., model development, software development) to aid the completion of my dissertation. Is this possible?

A: Yes, in well-justified circumstances, it is permissible to hire an hourly worker to support specific tasks to aid the completion of dissertation research. The space for “wages” support in the application form is the appropriate place to enter this information. In the justification document appended to your application, please provide rationale for the request and total expected costs.

Q: If I have a job and I don't want to leave my position, am I eligible for a Doctoral Dissertation Completion Award?

A: The Doctoral Dissertation Completion Award is intended to support doctoral students in a way which permits them to devote their time and attention to the completion of their dissertations.

Recipients of the Doctoral Dissertation Award may not perform ANY work for the university other than the research directly involved in completing the dissertation during the time the award is in place. Further, recipients may not hold employment (full- or part-time) outside the university for the time the award is in place.

This financial support is intended to release students from teaching and other responsibilities; it is not intended as a salary supplement or a supplement for other forms of support.

We ask students to carefully consider their own individual needs before applying for the Doctoral Dissertation Completion Award.

Q: I do not plan to return to the United States and would like to apply for a Doctoral Dissertation Completion Award while I work on my dissertation. Is this possible?

A: No, students eligible for the Doctoral Dissertation Award will be in the United States for the duration of supported semesters.

Q: I want to use awarded Doctoral Dissertation Award funds to support travel. Is there anything I need to be aware of?

A: Yes, students awarded travel support should not commence travel prior to being appointed to a GRA position (the mechanism used to provide stipend/GAD support).

Requests for travel support are very rarely funded and must be relevant to completion of the dissertation. There are other funding mechanisms available at the university to support travel for activities like presentation at academic conferences.

Travel restrictions in place to protect public health may impact students' ability to arrange travel and/or the timing of travel. If travel support is requested in the initial application, reviewers will apply additional levels of scrutiny to ensure safety.

Q: What should I do if it looks like I won't be able to graduate by my anticipated graduation date?

A: Please contact vpr@clemsun.edu as soon as you determine you will need to delay your anticipated graduation date.