

2025-2026 UNIVERSITY GRADUATE LAURELS BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

PROPOSAL DEADLINE November 5, 2024

Overview

The purpose of Laurels funding is to provide financial support to academic units so they may diversify and strengthen their graduate programs. This is achieved by providing tuition support ***to assist with the recruitment of new degree-seeking graduate students to OSU.***

Laurels funding is a one-year block grant awarded directly to programs in the form of tuition scholarships and/or tuition remissions.

Graduate Program Eligibility

Programs offering master's and/or doctoral degrees are eligible for funding under the Laurels program.

The intent of the Laurels program is to provide support to individual graduate programs. Academic units may submit only one proposal per graduate program (as defined by [university major code](#)). On occasion, departments, schools, or colleges with more than one program may wish to combine graduate majors within one proposal. The Graduate School recommends this approach only when there is a strong rationale for doing so and expects authors to provide clear justification for their combined request. Joint proposals from multiple majors must still meet the one-per-major code limitation.

Funding Formats

University Graduate Laurels Block Grant funding is available to programs in two formats: (1) tuition scholarship (funding *not* tied to a graduate assistant [GA] appointment and formerly referred to as “tuition waivers”) and (2) tuition remission (funding that *must be* tied to a GA appointment). Please note that these formats represent distinct and separate funding sources for the Graduate School and requests cannot be changed once the award has been made.

(1) Tuition scholarship funding

- Tuition support in the form of scholarships may be used to fund tuition in any amount equal to or less than the recipient's actual tuition charges. Allocated award amounts that exceed actual tuition charges will be reduced accordingly.
- Programs may use Laurels tuition scholarship funding to cover tuition costs for a single academic term or an entire academic year, or to fund different students throughout an academic year. Rather than a scholarship dollar amount, programs will specify award allocations based upon how many credits the tuition scholarship will cover each academic term of the award.
- Laurels tuition scholarship recipients must be enrolled for a minimum of three graduate credits (site-based or Ecampus) for the entirety of each term in which they receive funding, though financial aid funding may have additional requirements. Audit registrations and enrollment in INTO-OSU courses may not be used to satisfy enrollment requirements.
- Costs associated with tuition scholarships are applied to student accounts in accordance with each recipient's residential status (i.e. in-state, WICHE, out-of-state, staff fee benefit) and academic unit.

(2) Tuition remission funding

- Tuition support in the form of remissions must be used for supporting an academic year or 12-month GA appointment, with the academic unit responsible for all costs associated with the stipend, fees, and other associated charges. All appointments must comply with institutional [graduate tuition remission policies](#) and the Coalition of Graduate Employees most recent [Collective Bargaining Agreement](#).
- All Laurels tuition remission recipients must be enrolled for a minimum of twelve credits (site-based or Ecampus, though units may ultimately determine the appropriateness of students' particular course enrollment) for the entirety of each term in which they receive funding. Audit registrations and enrollment in INTO-OSU courses may not be used to satisfy enrollment requirements. Other standard OSU GA rules and policies apply to funds awarded in this format.
- Tuition remission awards are intended to offset the cost of tuition for the academic year (fall, winter, spring) for the equivalent of 12 credits of enrollment each term at the academic unit's resident tuition rate. Funding associated with this award will be transferred to an E&G index to offset tuition charged for the respective GA appointment.

Units must indicate the format(s) in which they would like to receive funding when submitting their proposals. The total award request may include a combination of tuition scholarship and tuition remission funding. Once awarded, the funding must be used in the format awarded (i.e., tuition scholarship awards can only be allocated as tuition scholarships and tuition remission awards can only be allocated for qualifying GA appointments).

Per OSU policy, E&G tuition remissions may not be used as cost share on grant indexes, unless cost share is standard on the grant index. Units may not use Laurels funding as cash awards or for any other purpose other than tuition.

Recipient Criteria

The purpose of Laurels funding is to provide financial support to academic units so they may diversify and strengthen their graduate programs. This is achieved by providing tuition support ***to assist with the recruitment of new degree-seeking graduate students to OSU.***

Eligible recipients must:

- Be degree-seeking, regularly-admitted (i.e., not conditionally or provisionally admitted), and accepted through OSU's electronic DAF system.
- Be newly admitted for the 2025-2026 academic year. Students who successfully completed a previous degree within the same program are eligible if their continuation to another degree meets with the spirit and intent of recruiting new graduate students. In these cases, the student must have submitted a new application for admission or a Change of Degree to add the new degree. These documents must indicate an official start date of summer 2025 or fall 2025. Please note that a student who has been readmitted to the same degree within the same degree program (e.g., after an authorized break in enrollment) is not considered a newly admitted student for purposes of this award.
- Be admitted through a comprehensive holistic admissions process that augments traditional measures of academic achievement (e.g., GRE, GPA) with rigorous consideration of an applicant's unique experiences and non-cognitive factors associated with success in graduate school. Comprehensive holistic admissions processes must include, at a minimum:
 - a) evidence of a holistic approach in the program's outward facing recruitment materials and communications with prospective students,
 - b) an application process carefully designed to elicit valuable information about a candidate's strengths in a variety of dimensions,

- c) a rubric for evaluating those strengths in several relevant areas, and
 - d) a collaborative method by which faculty and staff make final admissions decisions. More information about graduate holistic admissions is available [at the Graduate School's website here](#).
- Make satisfactory academic progress as a graduate student in the admitted degree program each term of the award, as defined by the Graduate School and the program.
 - Diversify and strengthen the graduate program to which they have been recruited and admitted. Eligible recipients must show evidence of (a) academic success; (b) scholarly potential; (c) commitment, persistence, and leadership; and (d) rich and diverse life experiences and backgrounds. See the [Graduate School's Holistic Admissions Guide](#) for sample indicators for each of these areas.

Laurels Award Details

Laurels funds are intended to supplement existing funding in an academic unit and should not be considered a primary or sustainable funding stream.

- Authors are strongly encouraged to make reasonable requests that align with unit's needs, enrollment trends, and past utilization of Laurels funds, if applicable. The Graduate School will consider requests to fund at least one student from each program, but no more than 10% of a program's newly matriculated students annually, based on the previous year's enrollment numbers. New graduate programs without previous enrollment data should submit proposals based on anticipated enrollment. On a trial basis for the 2025-2026 award year, the Graduate School will consider proposals that request funds beyond the 10% threshold only in cases where the unit is able to establish a compelling need (e.g., large percentage of self-pay students enrolled, significant recent growth in enrollment). Awards beyond the 10% threshold will be made only if the award budget permits.
- Programs may not offer or imply the availability of multi-year Laurels funding. Laurels funding is for one year only.
- The Graduate School will define awardee eligibility criteria, oversee the award schedule, generate award letters to the students, and administer the disbursement of funds at the beginning of the academic award year. This approach will allow colleges/units to recruit on their own timelines and permit them to offer awards to alternate candidates in their own units, if needed. Programs are responsible for developing their own internal processes for awarding Laurels funds to their students, managing term-to-term distribution, and working in accordance with their allocations. Additionally, programs are expected to monitor the status of recipients to ensure their continued eligibility.
- Programs receiving Laurels funds may not transfer these resources to any other graduate program. If a scholarship or remission awardee is no longer eligible (e.g. on a leave of absence, dismissed) or transfers to another OSU graduate degree program, the award to that student must be terminated.
- To optimize the impact of Laurels funding, units must allocate at least 50% of awarded funding to graduate student recipients during the nationally-recognized graduate student recruiting cycle (i.e. on or before April 15). As OSU is a signatory of the Council of Graduate School's Resolution Regarding Graduate Scholars, Fellows, Trainees, and Assistants, programs cannot require awardees to accept or decline award offers prior to April 15.
- To maximize limited tuition scholarship funding for graduate students, 100% of the Laurels funding must be committed to recipients in full by June 30, 2025. Adjustments may be made to individual recipients or amounts,

but any remaining resources not committed by June 30, 2025 will be budgeted to support other tuition support programs offered by the Graduate School.

- Laurels tuition scholarship funds may be utilized to support students in the summer term preceding the academic year if the graduate program has a summer term matriculation.

Laurels Funding Proposal Submission Procedures

To apply for a Laurels block grant, department heads, chairs and/or graduate program directors must submit proposals online at the Graduate School Awards website. Authors must submit the following materials as part of that online application:

1. Contact information and request details (all are required)

- Name and title of the department head, chair, and/or graduate program director submitting the proposal
- Graduate program(s) for which funding is being sought
- A Laurels Funding Request Worksheet (Appendix A)
- A Laurel's Graduate Program Profile Worksheet (Appendix B)

2. Supporting narrative and data (all are required)

- Evidence the program needs Laurels funding to provide financial assistance to its newly admitted graduate students, including the reasonability of its specific request and the likelihood it will use the requested funds in the manner proposed given the program's enrollment data and other metrics.
- Evidence of a comprehensive holistic admissions process including, at a minimum, (a) evidence of a holistic approach in the program's outward facing recruitment materials and communications with prospective students, (b) an application process carefully designed to elicit valuable information about a candidate's strengths in a variety of dimensions, (c) a rubric for evaluating those strengths in several relevant areas, and (d) a collaborative method by which faculty and staff make final admissions decisions. Authors must provide documentation (e.g., recruitment materials, website narrative, application form, applicant interview questions, rubrics/scoring guides used in the evaluation of applicants, faculty selection process) to demonstrate their commitment to holistic admissions.
- A **systematic and transparent process** that guides the program's decision making for awarding Laurels funds to individual students (e.g. Laurels award criteria, Laurels scoring guides etc.). Programs' decision-making processes in determining Laurels awardees *must* be distinct from general admissions processes and should include a plan for alternate awardees should initial awardees decline the offer. Any alternate awardees must meet award eligibility requirements and, as such, plans cannot include the intent to offer Laurels funding to continuing students in the unit.

Proposal Review and Selection

The Graduate School will appoint a Laurels Selection Committee that will include faculty and staff largely beyond the Graduate School. Authors of Laurels proposals, or personnel in those programs/units directly impacted by the potential award of Laurels funds (i.e., a specific major professor), must disclose this potential conflict of interest and may not serve on the Selection Committee.

Committee members will review proposals independently using the criteria outlined in the requested narrative discussion points stated earlier.

Evaluation Criteria

- Quality of the case made for financial need, including the reasonability of its specific request and the likelihood it will use the requested funds in the manner proposed given the program's enrollment data and other metrics.
- Quality and comprehensiveness of the program's holistic admission process including documentation that clearly demonstrates activity related to program's (a) outward facing recruitment materials and communications with prospective students, (b) application process, (c) evaluation rubric, and (d) method by which faculty and staff make final admissions decisions.
- Quality and thoughtfulness of the program's distinct decision-making process for awarding Laurels funding to individual and eligible students (e.g. Laurels award criteria, Laurels scoring guides etc.).

Scholarship Processing and Monitoring

Graduate programs receiving University Graduate Laurels Block Grants will be responsible for adhering to the [Guidelines for Administering University Graduate Laurels Block Grants](#), including:

- Developing transparent selection and award procedures under which graduate students are considered for Laurels funding within the program

Dedicating funding to recipients by the respective Laurels deadlines, and making awardee allocation requests in a timely manner to ensure qualified recipients receive their Laurels tuition scholarship award letters. Programs successfully receiving Laurels block grants will be provided details on allocating funds to students by use of an awardee allocation form.

- Monitoring the status of Laurels recipients and ensuring continued student eligibility for funding

Assessment

Recipients of Laurels funds are required to provide the Graduate School with clear evidence and details as to how funds have been utilized during the award cycle.

At the end of each Laurels funding period, program recipients must complete a final utilization report via a Qualtrics Survey that details the impact of the Laurels funds and how closely the distribution of the funds aligned with the initial proposal.

The survey will prompt you for the following:

- How did your Laurels funding assist with the recruitment of new graduate students to OSU?
- What plans are in place to support awarded students financially and academically through degree completion?

Timing

Deadline for Proposal Submission: **November 5, 2024**

Anticipated Graduate Program Award Notification: **December 16, 2024**

Graduate Program Tuition Scholarship Offers Made: **50% or greater recommended by April 15, 2025**

Graduate Program Tuition Scholarship Awardee Allocations: **100% by June 30, 2025**

Graduate Program Laurels Remission Awards – Awarded Student Information and E&G Index for JV Transfer: **July 21, 2025**

FY25-26 Year-End Assessment Report Deadline: **August 31, 2026**

Units that do not submit the requested information by the designated date(s) will forfeit the funds or may be ineligible for consideration within future Laurels RFP award cycles.

APPENDIX A – FUNDING REQUEST WORKSHEET

Part 1: Tuition Remission Requests*

Remission Requests	Number of new graduate students (master's and doctoral combined) that matriculated to your program for the 2024-25 academic year	Total number of remissions requested

*1 remission=3 academic terms @ 12 credits each term. If requesting remissions that will be used on a quarterly basis for multiple students, please report only the total number of 3-term/36-credit remissions (i.e., this may include remissions for multiple students, but would count as 1 remission for purposes of calculations here).

Part 2: Tuition Scholarship Requests**

Academic Year (AY) Scholarship Requests	Number of new graduate students (master's and doctoral combined) that matriculated to your program for the 2024-25 academic year	Number of AY scholarships requested
Resident		
Nonresident		
Total scholarships requested		

**1 AY scholarship=3 academic terms @ 12 credits each term, or 36 credit total. If requesting scholarships that will be used on a quarterly basis for multiple students, please report only the total number of AY scholarships (i.e., this may include scholarships for multiple students, but would count as 1 AY scholarship for purposes of calculations here).

Part 3: Total Request*** – total of each part above

Remission and AY Scholarship Requests	Part 1: Total	Part 2: Total	Total Number of Remission and AY Scholarship Requests

***This number should align with Item #3 in Appendix B. The Graduate School will consider requests to fund at least one student from each program, but no more than 10% of a program's newly matriculated students annually except in compelling cases, based on the previous year's enrollment numbers.

APPENDIX B: GRADUATE PROGRAM PROFILE

Each program must submit a Graduate Program Profile Worksheet. In the case of combined proposals, each program represented in the proposal must submit its own Graduate Program Profile worksheet.

Please provide the following information about the graduate program(s) applying for these Laurels funds

1. Number of students (master's and doctoral combined) that applied to your program for the 2024-25 academic year	
2. Number of graduate students (master's and doctoral combined) to whom you offered admission to your program for the 2024-25 academic year	
3. Number of new graduate students (master's and doctoral combined) that matriculated to your program for the 2024-25 academic year	
4. Total number of graduate students enrolled in your program for the 2024-25 academic year, including those newly matriculated students in #3	
5. Total number of students (master's and doctoral) in your program on Graduate Assistantships (GRA and GTA) for the 2024-2025 academic year	
6. Total number of students (master's and doctoral) in your program that received fellowships for the 2024-2025 academic year	
7. Number of new students (master's and doctoral) your program anticipates enrolling for the 2025-26 academic year	