

Dear Graduate Students,

The summer is a good time to be productive. Without the distractions of classes and teaching, the summer offers many consecutive days for uninterrupted research. However, many students find it challenging to make ends meet over the summer without holding full-time jobs, and thereby research productivity suffers.

The Biology Department is pleased to announce that we will be offering up to **7 Graduate Summer Stipend Awards** for Summer 2026. Each stipend will provide one masters student **\$4,000** to help cover living expenses over the summer (May – August), so that they can afford to achieve research goals without outside employment. ***Please note the additional requirements to be considered for the following awards:***

**Sarah Barlow Stipend (up to 2 awards):**

- Minimum of 1 semester of GTA experience.

**Charles W. Holland Memorial Stipend (up to 2 awards):**

- MTSU undergraduate Biology degree.

**TO APPLY**, submit the following 2 documents to the Chair of the Biology Graduate Awards Committee, Dr. Matt Klukowski ([Matt.Klukowski@mtsu.edu](mailto:Matt.Klukowski@mtsu.edu)) by midnight of Sunday, April 5, 2026. You must submit a concise (3-5 pages) scholarship proposal which includes/addresses the bulleted items below. Please organize your proposal to efficiently communicate the items. Simply submitting the research proposal you used for your graduate degree plan may prove to be insufficient for proper evaluation for this award. However, feel free to reuse any parts of previous proposals or scholarship applications that you feel are appropriate for this call as long as you do so with these requirements in mind.

**Your proposal should include:**

- A title that communicates the research aim.
- A clearly stated hypothesis or research question.
- Background literature to explain why the question is of interest to the broader research community.
- A clearly defined scope of work or methodological plan (**including what part of that plan will be accomplished during the summer**).
- A timeline of completion for the proposed work (**including what parts will be accomplished over the summer that this award supports**).
- A description of anticipated products from the completion of the proposed work **including what products are anticipated from the summer**.
- A statement regarding other current or pending sources of financial support.

- You must have your thesis mentor fill out and sign the accompanying support form. If your mentor wishes to also provide a letter of support, that may help your proposal. Your thesis advisor can send this material to Dr. Klukowski either as a hard copy or electronic document to be received **on or before the deadline**.

### ***Factors that may positively influence your application***

#### **All Graduate Stipends –**

- Having successfully passed the “proposal” stage of your degree plan or will have done so by the end of Spring 2026 semester.
- Being actively engaged in your research project.
- Having strong support from your research advisor.
- Having well-articulated responses to the application items (write well).
- Not having other sources of summer support for living expenses thereby allowing one to make a strong case for financial need.
- Having the required equipment and supplies for summer research (or access to funds to purchase them).
- Strong academic record.

### ***Factors that may negatively influence your application***

- Having a poorly written application (grammatical errors, poor organization, etc.).
- Having unrealistic goals about what can be accomplished over the summer.
- Having too many non-project related commitments that require time away from your research.

### ***Expectations from awardees***

- No external employment that requires you to work more than 2 days/ week. (e.g. a weekend job is OK, but Monday – Friday are for research).
- A commitment to perform summer research and be a good steward of the **Summer Stipend Award**. It is permissible to take a brief vacation over the summer, but you are expected to earnestly commit to summer research and be productive.

#### **Graduate Stipend -**

- You will be expected to present the results of your research at MTSU Scholars Week, CBAS Scholars Day, and/or at a suitable regional or national conference.

**During the application review process applicants whose proposals are especially competitive may be asked to meet with the Graduate Scholarship Committee sometime in mid-April to discuss their proposals in person. This meeting will be used to help evaluate students and projects.**

## Summer Stipend Support Form from the Faculty Mentor

Dear Faculty Mentor, the student mentioned below is applying for a **Graduate Summer Stipend and/or a Sarah Barlow Summer Stipend or Charles W. Holland Memorial Stipend** to provide summer living expenses from the months of May to August (4 months) so that the student can continue doing research over the summer on their masters project. Since these awards are limited in funds and highly competitive, we need to ensure the awarded moneys have the greatest impact, so part of the application evaluation is to confirm that the student has material support for the summer and supervision if needed. This form can be printed and given to Dr. Klukowski or an electronic version can be emailed to Dr. Klukowski ([Matt.Klukowski@mtsu.edu](mailto:Matt.Klukowski@mtsu.edu)).

Please check the appropriate answers below to acknowledge your consent. You may also provide a written letter of support if you wish. Doing so will strengthen the student's application.

Student's name:

Student's email address:

Faculty mentor:

**Check each of these 3 items below if you agree. If any need discussing, feel free to explain or clarify in the space at the bottom of this page or additional page.**

I have materials and supplies to support the student's research over the summer.

I do not otherwise have summer support funding to pay this student's living expenses.

I will monitor and encourage productivity from this student over the summer.

**Answer the following 2 questions by checking the appropriate answer. If any need discussing, feel free to explain or clarify in the space at the bottom of this page.**

Has the student presented their research proposal to the thesis committee yet?

Yes

No

Has the student made good progress on their research project up to this point?

Yes

No

Faculty Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments (optional; please use another sheet if necessary):