



## MEMORANDUM

Date: 23 February 2025

To: Deans

From: Charles Isbell, Jr., Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs  
William J. Karpus, Dean of the Graduate School

Re: Guidance for graduate student offers of admission and support

Because of the increasing uncertainty of extramural funding, many of our peer institutions have decided to slow or pause their graduate student admission process. We, too, are concerned about funding uncertainty and its effect on a normal graduate student recruitment process. In addition to the possibility that we may not have the funds to support normal enrollment, as our peers reduce their incoming PhD population there is a real possibility that UW-Madison programs may have larger-than-normal yield. Given these circumstances, graduate programs should carefully consider their existing and future resources prior to making offers of admissions.

While there is no university multi-year funding commitment policy, we recognize that multi-year offers of support have been a valuable practice for many programs. We should do our absolute best to honor these existing commitments. Further, while it might be natural to consider eliminating these commitments for new students while keeping incoming class sizes the same, this approach would impact long term competitiveness without eliminating the need for new students to find funding in the (possibly near) future. The fundamental issue is overall class sizes. **So, we do not advise eliminating these multi-year commitments; rather, programs should consider decreasing the number of admissions offers.**

We recognize some programs have already issued letters of admission with financial support. In these and future cases, if an applicant who has been admitted declines, programs should carefully consider whether to move down the wait list.

We are in uncertain times. As deans, you are best situated in these times to consider how to best marshal the likely resources available to your programs to both maintain quality graduate programs and to minimize hardship for our current and future students.

Cc: Chancellor's Office  
Robert Cramer, Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration  
Dorota Brzezinska, Vice Chancellor for Research  
Diana Harvey, Vice Chancellor for Strategic Communications  
Craig Thompson, Vice Chancellor for University Relations