

## Department of Human Genetics Master's Student Merit Awards

The Department of Human Genetics recognizes the importance of promoting of diversity, equity, and inclusion within our community and believes that these values are vital to the fulfillment of the research, academic, and intellectual missions of the department. We are committed to develop, support, and engage diverse students who enrich the quality and depth of the training environment within our Human Genetics Master's degree program. Thus, we strive to attract outstanding, highly motivated students from broadly diverse backgrounds, including those who are from groups who are underrepresented in the field of human genetics. To advance these goals, we are pleased to announce the implementation of two interrelated award mechanisms for the Master's degree program that provide substantial financial assistance for eligible students: (1) the Rackham Merit Award (RMA); and (2) the Department of Human Genetics Master's Merit Award (HGMMA).

### Rackham Master's Award (RMA)

<https://rackham.umich.edu/funding/funding-types/rackham-merit-fellowship-program/>

The Rackham Master's Award is offered by the University of Michigan Rackham Graduate School and the Department of Human Genetics. It offers financial assistance to those students who might not otherwise have access to a Master's program and aims to reduce disparities in graduate education.

The RMA is structured as collaborative funding between Rackham and the Department to assist eligible Master's students with support consisting of tuition, insurance, and a current year stipend of \$11,217 per semester. Only students already admitted into the Department of Human Genetics Master's Program are eligible for nomination.

### Eligibility\*

The RMA is open to newly admitted students in a Rackham graduate program who:

- Have a record of superior academic achievement
- Are U.S. citizens or permanent residents or are undocumented students with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA)

And who meet ONE or more of the following additional criteria:

- Come from an educational, cultural, or geographic background that is underrepresented in the discipline of Human Genetics at the post-baccalaureate level in the United States or at the University of Michigan
- Have demonstrated a sustained commitment to diversity in the academic, professional, or civic realm through their work experience, volunteer engagement, or leadership of student or community organizations. By commitment to diversity, we mean efforts in the U.S. to reduce social, educational or economic disparities based on race, ethnicity or gender, or to improve race relations in the U.S
- Have experienced financial hardship as a result of family economic circumstances
- Are first-generation U.S. citizens or are the first generation in their families to graduate from a four-year college

\*See <https://rackham.umich.edu/downloads/fellowships/rmf/rmfGuide.pdf> for a detailed description of eligibility requirements

### Department of Human Genetics Master's Merit Award (HGMMA)

A second, related award is the Department of Human Genetics Master's Merit Award (HGMMA) that, like the RMA, offers financial assistance to those students who might not otherwise have access to a Master's program and aims to reduce disparities in graduate education. This award is administered entirely within the Department of Human Genetics. It is modeled after the Rackham Merit Award (RMA) but with some differences in administration of the award, eligibility requirements, and selection of awardees. Funds to support this award come from the Department of

Human Genetics. Student award funding is equivalent to the RMA and includes tuition, health care, and stipend for two semesters.

### Eligibility

The HG Master's Merit Award is open to eligible applicants to the Department Human Genetics Master's Degree Program who:

- Have a record of superior academic achievement (e.g., grade point average, honors, or other designation)
- Have a strong interest in the study of human genetics as demonstrated through academic, research, work experience, or other activities
- Are U.S. citizens, permanent residents, or undocumented students with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA)

And meet TWO or more of the following criteria:

- Come from an educational, cultural, or geographic background that is underrepresented in the discipline of Human Genetics at the post-baccalaureate level in the United States or at the University of Michigan
- Have demonstrated a sustained commitment to diversity in the academic, professional, or civic realm as manifest by efforts to reduce social, educational, or economic disparities based on race, ethnicity, or gender, or to improve race relations in the U.S
- Have experienced financial hardship as a result of family economic circumstances
- Are first-generation U.S. citizens or are the first generation in their families to graduate from a four-year college

### **Applying for the Master's Student Merit Awards**

Eligible applicants for the RMA and HGMMA should include a brief description in their Statement of Purpose describing how the award will help them achieve their career goals, specifically in the field of human genetics. Decisions will be made by the MS Program Admissions Committee together with the Department Chair and Associate Chair for Education. To qualify for nomination for the Rackham RMA, interested students must apply to the Department of Human Genetics MS Program by February 1 and March 1, 2021. Application deadlines to be considered for the HGMMA will follow the current April 1<sup>st</sup> application deadline to the MS Program.

### **Award Selection**

One award will be granted to an admitted and eligible Human Genetics Master's student each year: RMA with matching support from the Department of Human Genetics **OR** HGMMA with full support from the Department of Human Genetics. Qualified applicants who are admitted prior to the Rackham deadlines will be nominated for the RMA. In the event that they are not selected for the RMA, they will be offered the HGMMA, which provides equivalent support. If no applicants are nominated for the RMA, the HGMMA will be available for eligible students who submitted their applications by the April 1<sup>st</sup> deadline and are accepted to the Human Genetics Master's program.