Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How many students participate in iSHINE?

A: Ten scholars will be funded for the 2020-2021 academic year. It is anticipated that 3-4 scholars will be selected from each of the three participating graduate programs (SLP, Special Education, Reading Education), however the application process is competitive and the final make-up of the 2020-2021 iSHINE scholar cohort may include more/fewer students from each program.

Q: Will participating in iSHINE increase the length of my graduate program?

A: No, iSHINE activities are incorporated into the requirements of your graduate program and will not add any additional length. Upon acceptance, each scholar will meet with iSHINE faculty and review their plan of study as scholars will have additional requirements and activities in addition to the coursework and practicum requirements for their graduate program. Specifically, iSHINE scholars will participate in an additional 20-hours of interprofessional school-based practicum (over 2 semesters), as well as an additional interdisciplinary course and online seminars related to working with children who have high-intensity needs.

Q: How much time do iSHINE scholars spend on iSHINE activities each week?

A: iSHINE scholars can expect to spend an average of 10 hours on iSHINE related activities each week.

Q: I’m an out-of-state student. Will I still receive a tuition waiver if I am selected as an iSHINE scholar?

A: Tuition waivers provided to iSHINE scholars cover in-state graduate tuition. Out-of-state scholars will receive a tuition waiver in the amount of the current in-state rate, and are responsible for paying the balance.

Q: Can I participate in iSHINE as a part-time graduate student?

A: No, students must maintain full-time enrollment status during their time as an iSHINE scholar.
Q: I’m interested in completing a graduate thesis. Could I do that as an iSHINE scholar?

A: Yes, iSHINE scholars may incorporate a master’s thesis project into their iSHINE activities as long as the thesis topic is related to school-aged children with significant disabilities.

Q: If I’m accepted to the iSHINE program, will I still need to take out student loans?

A: iSHINE scholar funding includes graduate tuition and a stipend that is deposited into students’ accounts at the beginning of each semester (Fall 2020 and Spring 2021).

- Scholars will not need loans/additional funds to pay for their tuition for these two semesters, but would need to secure additional tuition funds for any additional semesters, if applicable (dependent upon graduate program length/requirements).
- In terms of living expenses, the iSHINE stipend ($4,200 per semester) is provided in an effort to support dedicated study and allow scholars to focus on their academic program and iSHINE activities without needing to seek outside employment during their time as an iSHINE scholar.

Q: Can iSHINE scholars accept other scholarships/funding?

A: iSHINE funding is provided through a grant supported by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Projects (OSEP) which requires that all funds awarded to scholars go toward expenses directly related to their education. iSHINE funding (tuition and stipend) is intended to cover educational expenses for scholars, however if scholars receive additional scholarships (or assistantships) in addition to iSHINE, the amount awarded/earned would be deducted from the scholar’s iSHINE funding, to ensure that all grant funds are going toward scholars’ educational expenses. For this reason, iSHINE scholars are not permitted to accept both an iSHINE assistantship and graduate assistantship.

Q: I’m a speech-language pathology student and my graduate program is 5 semesters. Can I participate in iSHINE for more than 2 semesters?

A: No, iSHINE is a cohort-based program and for the 2020-2021 academic year, all scholars will be funded for two semesters.
Q: What is a ‘forgivable loan’? Will I need to pay back the tuition and stipend provided through iSHINE?

A: The iSHINE program is considered a "forgivable loan" which means that students who are funded as iSHINE scholars will have a service obligation to work for 2 years in a position that meets specific requirements per the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, after graduate. Students participate in iSHINE for 2 semesters (considered 1 year of funding), so the service obligation is to work with children with disabilities for 2 years. The specific post-graduation work requirements are:

- At least 51 percent of the infants, toddlers, and children to whom the individual provides services are receiving special education, related services, or early intervention services from the individual;
- The individual spends at least 51 percent of his or her time providing special education, related services, or early intervention services to infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities; or
- If the position involves supervision including in the capacity of a principal, teaching at the postsecondary level, research, policy, technical assistance, program development, or administration, the individual spends at least 51 percent of his or her time performing work related to the training for which a scholarship was received

This 2-year service obligation must be completed within 7 years of completing your graduate program. The Dept. of Education Personnel Development Program website has answers to any service-obligation-related questions:

https://pdp.ed.gov/OSEP/Regulation/ProgramRegs2006