

# University-Administered Graduate Student Fellowships and Traineeships

## Related Policy:

- *University-Administered Graduate Student Fellowships and Traineeships*

## Frequently Asked Questions

**1. Can my program impose work or study requirements on a student who has a graduate fellowship?**

A graduate fellowship is a non-service award. Programs may not require graduate student fellows to work as a teaching or research assistant during the period of the fellowship award unless the student receives a supplemental GRA position.

However, programs may set expectations about student progress in the graduate program during the period of the fellowship award, including specific goals in terms of coursework or preliminary examinations or conducting independent or directed research, if these expectations are consistent with the program's degree requirements.

**2. What is the difference between a "fellowship" and a "scholarship"?**

The two words are often used interchangeably. Fellowships usually provide support for post-baccalaureate education and are based on academic merit. Scholarships usually provide support for undergraduate education and are based on academic merit or financial need.

**3. What is the difference between a "fellowship" and a "traineeship"?**

A fellowship is a merit-based stipend award that an individual student wins competitively. The student applies (or is nominated) directly to the funding source. The competition can be national (e.g., the National Science Foundation Fellowship) or University-wide (e.g., the Graduate School Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship) or department wide (e.g., fellowships from department funds.) The stipend is set by the

funding agency each fiscal year. It is a non-service award requiring that the student be actively enrolled in a graduate program. Depending on the source of funding, the fellowship may provide tuition and health benefits in addition to the stipend. Traineeships are awarded competitively to a group of faculty members in a particular disciplinary or interdisciplinary area, the discipline having been specified in advance by the funding agency. The University faculty group awarded the training grant identifies the recipients from among its students interested in studying in the targeted field. The agency invites proposals for the support and graduate level training of future scholars, scientists or engineers, in specific areas of interest. The training grant usually provides [full or partial](#) tuition and health insurance in addition to the trainee stipend.

**4. My fellowship application does not require me to provide information about my financial status. Why is that?**

Fellowships are typically awarded based on academic merit, rather than financial need. Need-based awards may require the student to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to help determine the amount of financial aid a student may be eligible for from a broad range of sources (e.g., federal and state grants, federally-subsidized student work-study, and/or loans).

**5. What is the minimum registration requirement for a University-administered fellowship or traineeship?**

Generally, students are required to register full-time (minimum of 6 credits per semester), in order to be eligible for a University-administered fellowship or traineeship. Check with the fellowship or traineeship sponsor for more information on the specific fellowship or traineeship requirements.

**6. I am registered for GRAD 999. Do I meet the registration requirement to be eligible for and hold a fellowship or traineeship?**

No. GRAD 999 is a zero-credit, zero-tuition special registration option intended to allow qualifying graduate students to maintain active status and meet the continuous registration requirement. GRAD 999 cannot be used to meet the registration requirements of fellowships or traineeships. Consult with *One Stop Student Services* for more information on GRAD 999.

**7. I received a University-administered fellowship. Will this impact my financial aid award?**

If you are receiving a fellowship or traineeship, this may affect your financial aid package, and may cause your federal loan eligibility to be adjusted. You should consult with One Stop Student Services to *see how accepting a fellowship or traineeship will affect your financial aid.*

**8. I have received a University-administered fellowship from my department and am also receiving federal grant funds for my graduate education. Can I use**

**both the fellowship and my federal funds for educational costs in the same term?**

Accepting additional financial support while already receiving another form of financial aid may require that you reduce or pay back some of the funds from other sources. You should check with all of the sources from which you expect to receive funding in the same term to determine what restrictions or conditions, if any, there are on your acceptance of the funds.

**9. I have received a University-administered fellowship and also have a graduate assistantship. Can I receive funds from both the fellowship and assistantship in the same term?**

Some University-administered fellowships allow the recipient to receive additional funding up to the equivalent of a 25% graduate assistantship in the same term.

~~Examples of such fellowships are the Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship, the Interdisciplinary Doctoral Fellowship, and the DOVE Fellowship.~~ You should check with the source of your fellowship to determine what restrictions or conditions, if any, there are on your receipt of graduate assistantship, or other, support while you hold a fellowship.

**10. If my fellowship covers tuition, does it also cover fees?**

You should check with the source of your fellowship. Fees can represent a substantial sum each semester, and students should plan carefully when accepting an award.

**11. If my fellowship covers tuition, does it also cover health insurance?**

Check with the source of your fellowship to see if health insurance is covered. For more information on graduate student health benefits, including eligibility and costs, contact the *Office of Student Health Benefits*.

**12. I am eligible for the extended benefit of resident tuition rates according to the policy. Do I have to do anything to receive this benefit?**

Yes. You should contact the *Graduate School Fellowships Office* to request the extended benefit. With your request, you should provide the following information: 1) your student ID number, 2) the semesters of support qualifying you for the extended benefit, and 3) a copy of the the award letter from the sponsoring entity of your fellowship or traineeship.

**13. Do I have to pay taxes on my University-administered fellowship?**

University-administered fellowships are subject to federal and state taxes. The University does not automatically withhold federal and state taxes from fellowship awards. The Office of Human Resources website provides *additional information and resources on taxable graduate fellowships*.

**14. I have a University-administered fellowship but will graduate two months before the end of the spring semester. I received my stipend at the beginning**

**of the term. Do I need to pay back some, or all, of the stipend?**

It is unlikely that you would be required to pay back some of the stipend if you graduate early, but you should check with the source of your fellowship.

15. **I have a University-administered fellowship and need to take a leave of absence in the middle of the fall semester. I received my stipend at the beginning of the term. Do I need to pay back some, or all, of the stipend? If I return for the spring semester, can I receive the fellowship for that term?**

You should check with the source of your fellowship.

16. **I have a University-administered fellowship and have been terminated from my graduate program for failing to maintain good academic standing. Do I need to pay back some, or all, of the fellowship stipend?**

You should check with the source of your fellowship.

17. **I have a University-administered fellowship and my spouse would like to enroll in University courses. Does my resident rate tuition benefit also extend to my spouse?**

Possibly. Graduate students who hold fellowships or traineeships that are administered by the University and provide a stipend that is equivalent to at least a 25% graduate assistantship may be eligible for *resident tuition rates*. Members of the student's immediate family may also be eligible for resident tuition rates.

"Immediate family members" include spouse, children, or legal wards living in the household. "Acceptable documentation" includes a marriage license (in English or an English translation), a birth certificate, or a visa. See Administrative Appendix: *Resident Tuition Rate* which supports Administrative Policy: *Graduate Assistant Employment* for more information.

18. **I have received [a fellowship administered by the Graduate School an Interdisciplinary Doctoral Fellowship](#) and am also in a joint degree program that combines a first-professional degree and the Ph.D. degree. If the college of my first professional degree requires me to register in that college for one or both semesters of the academic year, how will this affect my [award](#) ~~!DF?~~?**

You need to register in the college of your Ph.D. program during the fall and spring semesters in which you hold the [Graduate School fellowship](#) ~~!DF~~ or a [Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship \(DDF\)](#).

19. **Our graduate program has offered a first-year fellowship to an outstanding applicant and we would like to encourage the student to accept our offer by February 1. Can we expect the student to commit to our program by this date?**

No. Students are under no obligation to respond to offers of financial support prior to April 15; earlier deadlines for acceptance of such offers violate the intent of the *Council of Graduate Schools' Resolution Regarding Graduate Scholars, Fellows,*

*Trainees and Assistants.* In instances in which a student accepts an offer before April 15, and subsequently desires to withdraw that acceptance, the student may submit in writing a resignation of the appointment at any time through April 15.