

November 4, 2017

MEMORANDUM

TO: Department Chairpersons and Graduate Program Directors

FROM: Susan Carvalho, Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

SUBJECT: Graduate Council Fellowships Round 1: Current Student Support (**Nominations Due 4:30pm, December 11, 2017**)

We are pleased to announce Graduate Council Fellowship (GCF) Round 1 nominations for the 2018/19 academic year. This round is for current UA students. GCFs carry a one year non-renewable \$15,000 stipend and a full tuition grant. This is a one year fellowship. There are three categories in which you can nominate students. **Departments must commit to an additional year of a 0.50 assistantship for students awarded fellowships in categories 1 and 2.** This commitment can come from internal or external funds. The three categories follow:

- 1) *Proposal preparation:* Faculty who are working on a research project that will mature into a proposal submitted for external funding (prior to May 15, 2019) may nominate a student to assist with research related to proposal preparation. The planned proposal will have funds budgeted for graduate student support (stipend, in-state tuition, and fringe).
- 2) *Research and Creative Activity:* Awarded to students who are working under the supervision of a faculty member on a research project or creative activity for which any amount of external funding was received (student eligibility will not be affected by the amount of external funding supporting the project). The grant must be active during the 2018/19 academic year. The student may be working on their own individual project, or a faculty driven project. For faculty driven projects, we anticipate that this award will provide resources to include a student in a project where student funding was not available, add an additional year of student support, or provide funding to an additional student who will further the goals of the funded project.
- 3) *Degree Completion:* Awarded to students in the FINAL year of their thesis, dissertation, or culminating experience (i.e. performance or final portfolio preparation). If applicable, students in this category must be admitted to candidacy. This award is not available to students whose degree will be earned based on coursework or exams alone, or some combination of coursework and exams alone.

Nomination Process

Nominations are limited to two students or 5% of the department/program fall 2017 graduate enrollment, whichever is greater. If the department offers both a master's and a doctoral degree, three students may be nominated. Ideally, nominees should have graduate GPAs above 3.5 on coursework in your program. **Quantitative qualifications (GPA or admission test scores) alone are insufficient to determine eligibility for this fellowship.** Submit your nominations electronically at <https://gradservice.ua.edu/login/dept.aspx> (select box 5C and then select GCF) no later than **4:30 pm on December 11, 2017**. The nomination package must include:

- Nomination letters from the advisor and department chair (see included guidelines on writing nomination letters). Nominations in the *proposal preparation* and *research activity* categories must include a commitment to a 0.5 FTE assistantship in year 2.
- A research statement written by the student nominee (max. 350 words).
- A curriculum vita for the student nominee.
- Additional details regarding the proposal submission or successful proposal as applicable (submitted as part of the online nomination form).

Students selected for a GCF will be expected to register as full-time students with 9 credits each term of the fellowship. If departments elect to award a .50 assistantship to fellowship recipients, students will be allowed to take a minimum of 6 graduate hours. Please note that, unlike an assistantship, a fellowship may reduce the base level of total allowable federal financial aid. If your nominee is selected for a GCF and plans to receive federal loans or aid, he or she should contact the UA Student Financial Aid Office before accepting the fellowship.

Nomination Letter Guidelines

The nomination letters are **VERY** important. The following suggestions were developed by the Graduate Council Fellowship & Scholarship Committee to assist you in writing your nomination letter.

- If the student has published, presented, or received awards, emphasize these accomplishments. If a student has published an article in a journal, additional information such as acceptance rate is useful.
- Clearly explain how the nominee's credentials are superior in their particular field using language and terminology that can be easily understood.
- Give comparative information that helps committee members assess the nominee's status and performance relative to other nominees. For example, if the nominee has already published a paper, is this typical or not for your field.
- Personalize the letter and highlight the specific strengths of the student and how each of these strengths will contribute to the department.
- Explains weaknesses that are readily apparent in the applicant's materials.
- Be concise and well organized. It is OK to use bullets and bold print to emphasize the main points that you want the committee members to remember about your nominee.
- Explain how the research is important to your field of study
- For the proposal preparation and research activity categories the nomination letters from the advisor and department chair must describe why the student is a good fit to the project and how there is a high potential for success.

Other Upcoming Graduate Council Fellowship Deadlines

Round 2 (student recruitment)	January 19, 2018
Round 3 (student recruitment)	February 8, 2018
Round 4 (student recruitment)	March 1, 2018

c: Dr. Kevin Whitaker
Deans