

## **Graduate Fellowships Process**

2022-2023

### **Overview**

Graduate School fellowships include a \$20,000 stipend (unless otherwise noted), a fulltime tuition scholarship, and annual health insurance. Round one is for current UA graduate students. Nominees must be currently enrolled degree-seeking graduate students who are in good academic standing and are continuing in the same degree program in the upcoming fall semester. Rounds 2-4 are aimed at new graduate students who show excellence in their field and who might not commit to UA without this award.

Students selected for a fellowship will be expected to register as full-time students with 6 or more credit hours each semester of the fellowship (plus 6 hours of teaching or research assistantship). 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 fellowship and plans to receive federal loans or aid, he or she should contact the UA Student Financial Aid Office before accepting the fellowship. It is also advised that the fellowship recipient consult with a tax professional to determine the tax implications of the fellowship.

Note that in some cases a student might be selected for more than one Graduate School fellowship. In this situation, in consultation with the student and department, only the fellowship that is financially most advantageous to the student will be awarded. Other Graduate School fellowship offers will be rescinded.

Students who receive a Graduate School fellowship may also receive up to \$10,000 in additional funds (internal or external) before a reduction in the annual stipend is applied to maintain a \$30,000 (academic year) earning cap. Additional support may be in the form of assistantships, fellowships, or other funds.

### **Fellowship Enhancement Partnership (FEP)**

Departments can choose to take part in the Fellowship Enhancement Partnership (FEP) program. For a maximum of five students (total for fellowship rounds 2, 3, and 4), departments can commit up to \$2000/student each year. This will be matched by the Graduate School for a total stipend of \$24,000. All GCF nominees are eligible for FEP matches, whereas only Capstone MGF are FEP eligible and NAAF nominees are not eligible.

Regardless of the length of the fellowship awarded (i.e., one-year versus multiple year), doctoral students will receive the additional departmental contribution and Graduate School match for a total of six years. Master's students will receive the additional departmental contribution and Graduate School match for a total of two years.

### **Limits on the number of students who can be nominated in each round**

1) *GCF*: Two students or 5% of the department/program fall 2020 graduate enrollment, whichever is greater. If the department offers both a master's and a doctoral degree, three students may be nominated

2) *NAA*: Two students or 5% of the department/program fall 2020 graduate enrollment, whichever is greater. If the department offers both a master's and a doctoral degree, three students may be nominated

3) *MGF*: No limits

### **Nomination Procedures**

Since the department has limits on the numbers of students it can nominate in each category of fellowship (GCF, MGC, NAAF), the Graduate Program Director solicits for nominations for each round approximately three weeks in advance of the due date. Faculty advisors are notified that their nominee will be forwarded two weeks in advance of that due date, with materials (see below) from the faculty member due ~5 days in advance of the due date. The Graduate Program Director submits nominations electronically at <https://slate.ua.edu/register/fellowship-nomination>. The nomination package must include:

- At least one letter of nomination. See included guidelines on writing nomination letters. If 0.5 FTE assistantship matching is required there must be a letter from the chair stating that the department is willing to make this commitment.
- Letters of recommendation and a CV/résumé are required for fellowship nominations. If your nominee did not digitally submit these as part of their UA Graduate School application package, these documents must either be added to their application package or uploaded as part of the nomination package (please upload in the "Additional Supporting Letter" box).
- For Round 1, additional documentation is required for GCFs, depending on the category selected. For example, all GCF require a 350-word research statement written by the student nominee, while GCFs in the Proposal Preparation category require details about the grant being submitted (agency, submission date, etc.). See Graduate School Fellowship materials for Round 1 for more details.

### **Nomination Letter Guidelines**

The nomination letters are the most important part of a nomination package. 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 presented a paper as an undergraduate student, explain if this is 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.
- If the student has been accepted by other institutions, include information about these institutions.
- Explain weaknesses that are readily apparent in the applicant's materials. If a student has a low admission test score, offer some insight.
- Be concise and well organized. It is OK to use bullets and bold print to emphasize the main points that you want the committee member to remember about your nominee.

## Graduate Council Fellowship (GCF)

### I.

Rounds 2-4 are aimed at new graduate students who show excellence in their field and who might not commit to UA without this award. The second round nominees are eligible for one of three categories, whereas nominees in rounds 2-4 are eligible for the first two only:

1) **Regular GCF:** Fellowship support for 1 academic year. A commitment to a 0.5 FTE departmental assistantship is required in year 2 if an FEP is requested.

2) **Capstone GCF:** Up to 3 years of fellowship support (2 years for master's students). For doctoral students the nominee's department must commit to an additional 2 years of 0.5 FTE assistantship funding (the student will be supported by the fellowship in years 1, 3, and 5 and the assistantship in years 2 and 4). The Graduate Council Committee on Fellowships and Scholarships will select Capstone GCF recipients from the pool of nominees. Departments can indicate in the nomination materials that they would like their nominee to be considered for this fellowship.

3) **Franko GCF:** Up to five years of full fellowship support in the amount of \$25,000 per year. Does not require departmental FEP match or assistantship offer. Students cannot be specifically nominated for the Franko GCF, the Graduate Council will determine which students will receive this fellowship out of all GCF applicant's university wide. This fellowship is only awarded from the pool of nominees submitted during round 2.

### II.

Round 1 is strictly for currently enrolled students who are in good academic standing and are continuing in the same degree program in the upcoming fall semester. Awards are for one year only (i.e., "Regular GCF"). There are three categories in which you can nominate students. Departments must commit to an additional year of a 0.5 FTE assistantship for students awarded fellowships in categories 1 and 2. The 0.5 FTE assistantship will be awarded in year 2. This commitment can come from internal or external funds. The three categories are:

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 of the following year) 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 upcoming 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.

Note that students nominated in Round 1 must submit a short research statement. Additional details are required for the Proposal Preparation and Research and Creative Activity categories, e.g., grant title and date of submission. See Round 1 memo from Graduate School for details.

### III.

Departments can choose to take part in the Fellowship Enhancement Partnership (FEP) program. For a maximum of five students (total for fellowship rounds 2, 3, and 4), the Graduate School will match up to \$2,000/student each year in addition to the \$20,000 fellowship stipend. To match our annual GTA stipend (\$25,620), an additional \$3,620 is required. During the first year of fellowship, the department will pay this amount (from gift funds).

The FEP match is in effect for two years for MS students and up to 6 years for PhD students, regardless of the length of the fellowship (i.e., Capstone versus Regular GCF). Faculty advisors with grant funding can satisfy the FEP match with a summer GRA (\$6,405); however, if the advisor is without grants, the student will be appointed as a GTA during the summer term (\$6,405). During subsequent years of fellowship funding (i.e., for students with Capstone or Franko awards), the annual stipend will be  $\$20,000 + \$2,000 + \$6,405 = \$28,405$ . If a student without GRA decides to not accept a GTA during the summer, the student's advisor must pay the \$2,000 to match the FEP contribution from the graduate school, and the student will therefore have a total salary of \$24,000. (See Appendix 1 for details on annual fellowship amounts.)

### IV.

Regular Graduate Council Fellowship support is for 1 year. The nominee's department must commit to a 0.5 FTE assistantship in year 2. Capstone Graduate Council Fellowships award up to 3 years of fellowship support. For doctoral students the nominee's department must commit to an additional 2 years of 0.5 FTE assistantship funding (the student will be supported by the fellowship in years 1, 3, and 5 and the assistantship in years 2 and 4).

Awardees who do not receive the FEP match will receive an additional \$5,620 from the department (from gift funds) during the first year of their fellowship, to match the department's annual stipend (\$25,620). In subsequent years, these students will be offered a full-time summer assistantship. Advisors with funding may offer the student a GRA (\$6,405); otherwise, the department will offer a GTA (\$6,405). In these cases, the total annual salary will be \$26,405. However, some students may elect to forgo a GTA in order to devote their efforts to research, and their annual stipends will total \$20,000. (See Appendix 1 for details on annual fellowship amounts.)

### V.

The nomination package must include at least one letter of nomination. If 0.5 FTE assistantship matching is required there must be a letter from the chair stating that the department is willing to make this commitment. A CV/résumé is also required for fellowship nominations. If your nominee did not digitally submit these as part of their UA Graduate School application package,

these documents must either be added to their application package or uploaded as part of the nomination package (please upload in the “Additional Supporting Letter” box).

## VI.

After receiving a Graduate Council Fellowship, students will receive official notification from the Graduate School. The Graduate School facilitates all financial distributions, tuition waivers, and healthcare for fellowship recipients. Students will receive \$20,000 as a part of their fellowship divided evenly into 9 payments, deposited into the student’s account the last business day of each month, August – April. FEP match funds, if applicable, will be paid during the summer months by the department and Graduate School.

## McNair Graduate Fellowship (MGF)

### I.

To be eligible for an MGF, students must satisfy at least 1 of the following criteria:

- Completion of a McNair Scholars program as an undergraduate prior to the start of the upcoming fall semester.
- Low income AND a first-generation college student. For students nominated in this category Graduate School will contact the nominee to obtain a copy of the most recent tax return to verify eligibility. Please see <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/incomelevels.html> for the definition of low income used for this purpose.
- A member of a group traditionally underrepresented in graduate education (Hispanic, African American, Native American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander).

*Preference is given to students who have completed an undergraduate McNair Scholars program. International students are not eligible.*

### II.

Departments can choose to take part in the Fellowship Enhancement Partnership (FEP) program. However, only the Capstone MGF is FEP eligible. For a maximum of five students (total for fellowship rounds 2, 3, and 4), the Graduate School will match up to \$2,000/student each year in addition to the \$20,000 fellowship stipend. To match our annual GTA stipend (\$25,620), an additional \$3,620 is required. The Dean's Graduate Recruiting and Opportunity Awards may act as funding match, if awarded. If not awarded, the department will pay this amount during the first year of fellowship (from gift funds).

Note that the FEP match is required for two years for MS students and up to 6 years for PhD students. Faculty advisors with grant funding can satisfy the FEP match with a summer GRA (\$6,405); however, if the advisor is without grants, the student will be appointed as a GTA during the summer term (\$6,405). During subsequent years of fellowship funding (i.e., 2<sup>nd</sup> and subsequent year for students with Capstone awards), the annual stipend will be \$20,000 + \$2,000 + \$6,405 = \$28,405. If a student without GRA decides to not accept a GTA during the summer, the student's advisor must pay the \$2,000 to match the FEP contribution from the graduate school, and the student will therefore have a total salary of \$24,000. (See Appendix 1 for details on annual fellowship amounts.)

### III.

Regular McNair Fellowship support is for up to 2 years (1 year for master's students). For doctoral students the nominee's department must commit to a 0.5 FTE assistantship in years 3 and 4. For master's students the nominee's department must commit to a 0.5 FTE assistantship in year 2.

Capstone McNair Fellowships award up to 3 years of fellowship support (two years for master's students). The nominee's department must commit to an additional 2 years of 0.5 FTE

assistantship funding (the student will be supported by the fellowship in years 1, 3, and 5 and the assistantship in years 2 and 4). The Graduate Council Committee on Fellowships and Scholarships will select Capstone MGF recipients from the pool of nominees. Departments can indicate in the nomination materials that they would like their nominee to be considered for this fellowship.

Capstone awardees who do not receive the FEP match are eligible to receive full-time summer assistantships. However, some students may elect to forgo this assistantship in order to devote their efforts to research, and their annual stipends will total \$20,000. Summer Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs) will be offered in the amount of \$6,405. The student's advisor may instead offer the student a summer Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA) in the amount of \$6,405. (See Appendix 1 for details on annual fellowship amounts.)

#### IV.

The nomination package must include at least one letter of nomination. If 0.5 FTE assistantship matching is required there must be a letter from the chair stating that the department is willing to make this commitment. A CV/résumé is also required for fellowship nominations. If your nominee did not digitally submit these as part of their UA Graduate School application package, these documents must either be added to their application package or uploaded as part of the nomination package (please upload in the "Additional Supporting Letter" box).

#### V.

After receiving a McNair fellowship, students will receive official notification from the Graduate School. The Graduate School facilitates all financial distributions, tuition waivers, and healthcare for fellowship recipients. Students will receive \$20,000 as a part of their McNair fellowship divided evenly into 9 payments, deposited into the student's account the last business day of each month, August – April. Departmental FEP matches will be paid during the summer months.

## **National Alumni Association Fellowship (NAA)**

### **I.**

To be eligible for a NAA, the nominee must be an Alabama resident for tuition purposes. There are no exceptions to this rule. NAA is a one-year, non-renewable fellowship in the amount of \$20,000.

Round 1 is aimed at currently enrolled students in good academic standing who will be continuing in the same degree program. Rounds 2-4 are aimed at new graduate students.

### **II.**

NAA awardees are not eligible for FEP match. Awardees will receive an additional \$5,620 from the department (from gift funds) during the first year of their fellowship, to match the department's annual stipend (\$25,620). In subsequent years, these students will be offered a full-time assistantship. (See Appendix 1 for details on annual fellowship amounts.)

### **III.**

The nomination package must include at least one letter of nomination. A CV/résumé is also required for fellowship nominations. If your nominee did not digitally submit these as part of their UA Graduate School application package, these documents must either be added to their application package or uploaded as part of the nomination package (please upload in the "Additional Supporting Letter" box).

### **IV.**

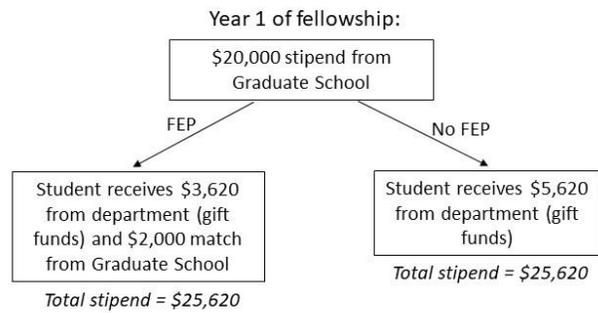
NAA awards are for one year. The nominee's department must commit to a 0.5 FTE assistantship in year 2. After receiving a NAA fellowship, students will receive official notification from the Graduate School. The Graduate School facilitates all financial distributions, tuition waivers, and healthcare for fellowship recipients. Students will receive \$20,000 as a part of their fellowship divided evenly into 9 payments, deposited into the student's account the last business day of each month, August – April.

## Appendix 1: Fellowship annual amount flowcharts

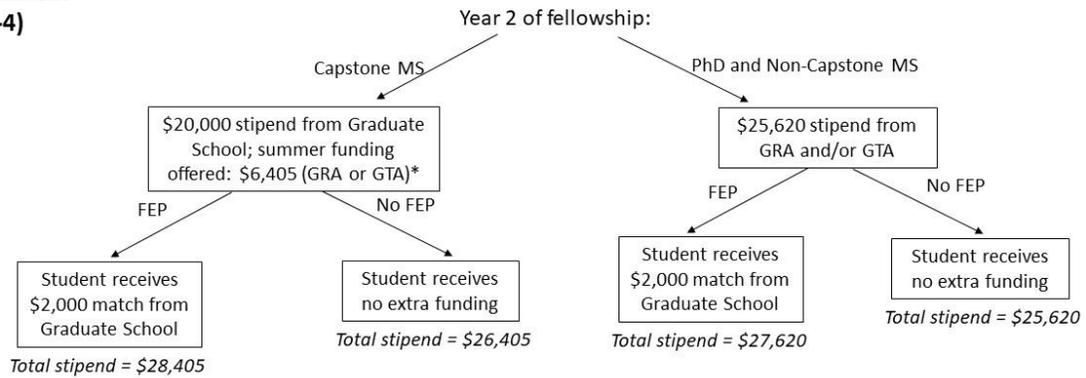
### Fellowships awarded to current students (Round 1)

\$20,000 stipend from Graduate School; summer funding offered: \$6,405 (GRA or GTA)  
*Total stipend = \$26,405*

### Fellowships awarded to new students (Round 2-4)

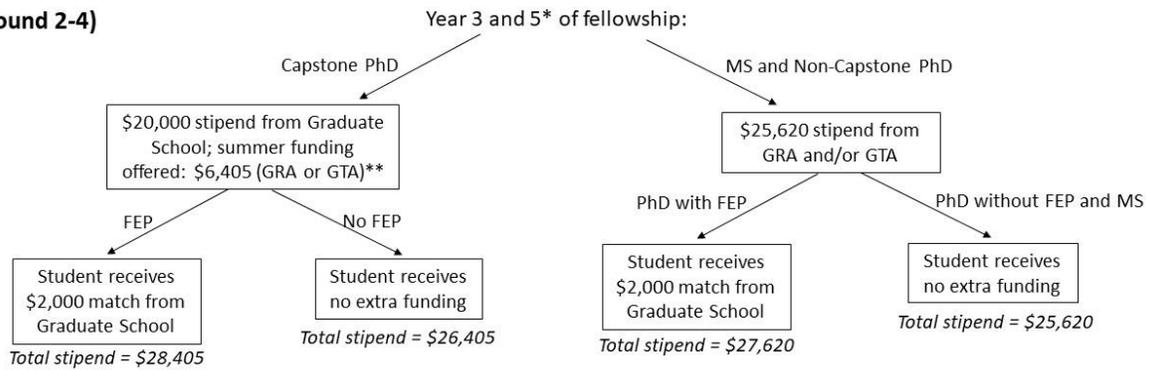


**Fellowships awarded to new students (Round 2-4)**



\*Student may choose to not receive summer funding; advisor must then supply \$2,000 match for those students with FEP match.

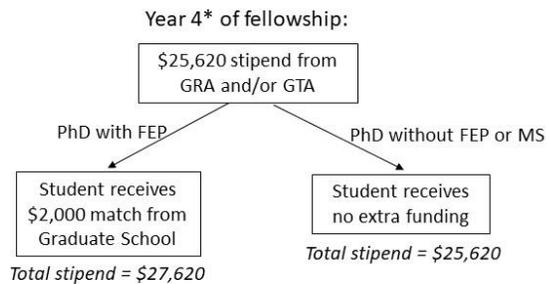
**Fellowships awarded to new students (Round 2-4)**



\* Year 5 only applies to PhD students; MS students must finish within three years, and thus no funding is given after year 3.

\*\* Student may choose to not receive summer funding; advisor must then supply \$2,000 match for those students with FEP match.

**Fellowships awarded  
to new students  
(Round 2-4)**



\* Year 4 only applies to PhD students; MS students must finish within three years, and thus no funding is given after year 3.

**Fellowships awarded  
to new students  
(Round 2-4)**

Year  $\geq$  6\* of fellowship:

\$25,620 stipend from  
GRA and/or GTA  
*Total stipend = \$25,620*

\* Year 6 and beyond only applies to PhD students; MS students must finish within three years, and thus no funding is given after year 3.