Graduate Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Topic: Graduate Tuition Fellowship (GTF) Administration

Document #: GR-SOP-Finance-01

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The Graduate Tuition Fellowship (GTF) is a competitive award program administered by the Graduate School that covers the cost of in-state tuition and mandatory fees for qualified Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) and Masters of Fine Arts (MFA) students. GTF funding supports the strategic priorities of the University of Houston in the following ways:

1. GTF funding for Ph.D. students is in line with the national best practices among the comprehensive research-intensive universities, where recruitment and retention of high quality Ph.D. students is essential for the vitality of both research and educational missions. Furthermore, Ph.D. production is among the many key quality metrics and rankings including Top American Research University (TARU) classification.

2. GTF funding for MFA students is in line with the national best practices among the comprehensive research-intensive universities, where recruitment and retention of high quality MFA students is essential for the vitality of both scholarly and educational missions. The investment into MFA programs is in line with the University of Houston commitment to the Arts and Humanities.

Note: Non-resident graduate students may be eligible for either non-resident tuition employment waivers per MAPP 05.03.02, or for academic competitive scholarship waivers.

B. Requests for non-GTF tuition support for all other graduate students will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Such requests will only be considered if aligned with the strategic priorities of the University. For example, certain masters-only programs may request non-GTF tuition support in cases where the recruitment of highly-qualified graduate teaching assistants, essential for undergraduate student success, would otherwise not be possible.

C. The eligibility criteria discussed in Sections II and III are the minimum eligibility criteria as set by the Graduate School. Individual colleges and programs may impose additional eligibility criteria based on availability of funds and strategic priorities.

II. ELIGIBILITY (Academic)

A. Possess an undergraduate degree or its equivalent and be admitted to a Ph.D. or MFA degree program.

B. Register for a minimum of nine (9) credit hours during an academic semester (fall and spring).

C. As a one-time exception, a reduced course load (less than full-time enrollment) is typically allowed due to an expected graduation in the last semester of a program.

D. Minimum academic standing requirements:

1. Begin doctoral program with a minimum cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0.
2. Maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0. Requests for an exception from the minimum GPA requirements will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis only for students entering their second long semester (fall or spring). These exceptions can be requested with a Graduate & Professional Student Petition.

3. Demonstrate satisfactory progress in course work, timely progress in completing the degree requirements as defined by the enrolling graduate program. Note: Degree requirements include both course work and thesis/dissertation.

4. Students entering a doctoral program with a Master’s degree qualify for up to eight (8) semesters of GTF funding. Students entering a doctoral program directly from a baccalaureate program qualify for up to twelve (12) semesters of GTF funding.

III. ELIGIBILITY (Employment)

A. Employment is not required to be considered for a GTF award; however, individual colleges and programs may impose employment as one of the eligibility criterion (see Section I.C).

B. ALL students holding a title of Research Assistant/TE (Tuition Eligible) will receive GTF awards as long as they meet Academic Eligibility Criteria detailed in Section II.

C. Research Assistants who are not employed as “Research Assistant/TE” are NOT eligible for the GTF award.

D. Students holding the GTF must not be employed, on or off-campus, for more than twenty (20) hours per week (50% of Full-Time Equivalent [FTE]). Any violation of this provision without prior approval by the Dean of the Graduate School will result in withdrawal of the funding during the semester in which the violation occurs by the student.

EXCEPTION: Approval is not required to work additional hours when class is not officially in session and/or during semester breaks and holidays.

IV. ADMINISTRATION

A. Colleges will receive an allocation of GTF funds for the following fiscal year. The allocated dollar amount will define the number of GTF the college can award based on the tuition rates published at http://www.uh.edu/financial/graduate/tuition-fees/tuition/ and mandatory/required fees published at http://www.uh.edu/financial/graduate/tuition-fees/required-fees/.

B. Colleges may choose to add additional criteria for awarding GTF funds to graduate students. Such college-specific criteria must be published on the college’s appropriate web site and adopted by the college committee making GTF decisions.

C. Selection of GTF awardees must be made by a respective scholarship committee in the college, in which the student is enrolled in a Ph.D. or MFA degree program according to clearly defined criteria consistent with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0, academic standing in general, and full-time enrollment.

D. Any waiver or exception from the GTF eligibility guidelines must be requested using the General Petition ("Other" category) with a memo attached providing justification for the exception. Such requests require approval from the Dean of the Graduate School.

E. Nominations of students for GTF must be sent to the Graduate School from the college in the following format:

1. Each graduate student’s first and last name,
2. Student's ID (Empl_ID),
3. Number of credit hours enrolled,
4. Current cumulative GPA,
5. Academic program and degree objective,
6. Date of first enrollment.

This information must be received by the Graduate School no later than four weeks (20 working days) before the start of the academic semester.

F. The Graduate School will send compiled award memos to the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid (SFA) for GTF posting to student accounts within two weeks of the receipt of the nominations from the colleges.

G. The Graduate School will audit the enrollment and billing records to verify the enrollment hours and GPA for each student. The Graduate School notifies the GTF student’s college of any student rejections due to non-compliance.

H. If a student with a non-resident employment waiver per MAPP 05.03.02 has to leave UH before the graduating semester end, in-state tuition waivers can be requested using the academic competitive scholarship waiver, provided that the student has completed all the degree requirements. This exception must be requested on a General Petition and signed by the Graduate School Dean before the student leaves UH. The Graduate School will submit a waiver request to SFA to ensure that the student is not billed non-resident tuition.

I. If the GTF awardee makes any changes in enrollment after SFA disburses GTF funds, the college/program is responsible for ensuring the student’s compliance with the GTF requirements. The Graduate School will audit the GTF compliance for all GTF awardees during the semester. Failure to maintain full-time enrollment will result in revoking the GTF award.

V. DOCUMENTATION

A. MAPP 05.03.02 – Non-Resident Tuition Employment Waivers
B. General Petition and General Petition Instructions
C. Current Tuition Rates Web Site: http://www.uh.edu/financial/graduate/tuition-fees/
D. Current Mandatory/Required Fees Web Site: http://www.uh.edu/financial/graduate/tuition-fees/required-fees/

VI. APPROVAL

Dr. Dmitri Litvinov
Vice Provost and Dean, University of Houston Graduate School

September 19, 2014
Approval Date

REVISION LOG

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| 03/06/2015 | Section: IIB – Enrollment requirements update  
Section: II.D.2 – Requesting exceptions from the minimum GPA requirements in the second long semester |
| 06/15/2015 | Section I.C – Clarification of GTF policies for Inter-Institutional and Concurrent Enrollment program courses |
| 01/12/2016 | Section II.A – Addition of automatic Research Assistants (RA) GTF eligibility  
Section II.B – Correction of requirements for Reduced Course Load  
Sections II.D.1-4 – Corrected wording for academic standing requirements  
Section II.E – Addition of exception to GTF work requirements  
Section III.C – Correction of wording |
| 1/20/2016  | Section II – Correction of wording  
Section III.D – Clarification of employment terms for GTF |