

## COLLEGE OF NATURAL AND AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES

### *Functional Reference Guide*

Graduate Student Support Procedures  
Revision Date: 07/17/2008

#### *General Use*

Managing graduate student support commitments and tracking GSR allocations has become more complex in the last 5 years because almost all students are guaranteed a multiple-year support package (up to 2 years for Masters and up to 5 years for PhD). The financial support package is the basis for determining the amount of support paid to the student as well as the category of support. Categories include fellowships, departmental/program GSR support, TAs and PI support. Financial charts can be revised to change the year in which each category is paid, however, Graduate Division (GD) must approve any change that impacts a fellowship disbursement. If the fee commitments increase due to the change in year, the program is responsible for the difference. You can exceed the financial commitments on the student's approved Financial Support Chart without prior approval as long as you follow the graduate student support regulations (see reference below).

#### *Guidelines and Procedures*

**Financial Support Charts:** The home department for the graduate program should receive an approved copy of every graduate student support chart in their program. These charts will drive the student's financial support throughout his/her program and they are basis for your commitments in out years. Any changes that impact the GD fellowship will require the chart to be revised by your SAO or the Graduate Center, and submitted to GD for approval. Other changes such as exchanging PI support years with Departmental/program support years should just be noted on the financial charts for reference and future financial planning.

**Tracking Financial Support:** Departmental/program GSR allocations and individual graduate student support must be tracked during the current fiscal and the out years to avoid over commitments during the student recruitment process.

*Current Year Tracking:* We recommend your spreadsheet include all students (with and without support) in your program. We also recommend that you have columns that represent the various categories of support (i.e., Departmental/program, Fellowships, PI support, TA support). This will allow you to track your commitments in the various categories and project your support by student for the entire fiscal year. Itemizing individual student support by the quarter has proven to be very beneficial. Adding columns for fees (GSTR, GSHIP and GSFR/GSTR) is also beneficial for tracking and CNAS reimbursements. At a glance, this spreadsheet provides a current-year financial support picture for each student, and it provides you with an unexpended balance in your individual funding categories. This sheet can be shared with your Financial Analysts for financial planning for individual PI's, and your PPS Specialist can use the report to process PPS updates. This tool is very useful for the Graduate Advisor and/or Chair when considering PI financial hardships. The spreadsheet should be used by your SAO or Graduate Center to process the Awards by Employment (ABE's) and Department Grant in Aid (DGIA's). At the end of the fiscal year, you can use this report to fulfill the CNAS reporting requirements for departmental/program GSR support. Two sample spreadsheets are attached.

*Out Year Tracking:* Tracking student support commitments in the out years (beyond the current fiscal year) is also very important. Like the current year spreadsheet, we recommend you list all students within your program. The columns on this report should be by Fiscal Year with a sub column for departmental/program support and a sub column for PI support. The goal of this report is to make sure you do not over commit your funds during student recruitment activity, which can be very useful for graduate advisor. Your Financial Analysts can use the report to assist PI's with financial planning on their extramural grants. This type of spreadsheet does not need to reflect dollars for all funding categories (you can just state GD fellowship or PI grant, etc.), but you must make sure dollars are reflected for the departmental/program support categories to make it useful. A sample spreadsheet is attached.

**Graduate Student Researcher (GSR) Title:** A new student who has been admitted for the incoming Fall quarter is eligible to be employed as a GSR during the summer preceding Fall quarter. A student can be employed up to 100% time during the summer. Academic year months are normally paid at 49% time; however, you can request approval from GD to pay a student a higher percentage under special circumstances. Students can also be paid at a higher percentage during the two holiday breaks. Students are not eligible to be paid as a GSR when they are on Filing Fee status. As an alternative, some departments pay their students using titles within the Student Assistant series during the Filing Fee status quarter. Normally a student graduates after Filing Fee status. If a student needs to return to GSR status after the Filing Fee, then the Graduate Advisor must request an exception from GD to re-enroll and be paid a GSR salary. A student must be making acceptable academic progress towards their degree objective and a minimum GPA of 3.0 to be paid as a GSR. Students on leave of absence cannot be paid as a GSR or any other title.

**Financial Hardships:** Tracking your graduate student financial support as described above allows you and/or your Graduate Advisor to make informed decisions when PI's request student support because they are unable to support the student commitment. Since the PI's portion of the student support package is based on extramural funds, you must have some fiscal flexibility to be able to back fill their support from time to time. If the department is unable to provide financial assistance, then the PI must request bridging funds. To formally request the bridging funds from CNAS to support a student you will need to submit the following:

- 1) A memo from the major professor requesting bridging funds and the status of the PI's current and pending grants. This memo should go the student's graduate program director and the chair of his/her department.
- 2) A memo from the graduate program director with a recommendation on the request. If they support the request for funds, they must indicate their financial commitment to help solve the funding problem.
- 3) You must provide comments about the student's academic standing and progress to his/her degree. The student should be seeking TAships whenever possible through the TAAC program.
- 4) A memo from the Department Chair with a recommendation about the request and confirming the financial need.

**CNAS GSR Funding:** The College office will notify each program of their respective GSR Allocation. Generally, they will provide a written commitment that includes two fiscal years. This 2-year commitment allows us to make recruitment commitments for the coming year cohort. All programs use a 3-step series within the Graduate Student Researcher salary scale, but each program can request the 3-step series that will work best for their discipline. For example, Plant Biology uses steps IV, V and VI and Entomology uses Steps II, III and IV. If a graduate program decides to change their 3-step series to another 3-step series they must request approval from the Graduate Division through the CNAS Dean. GSR allocations are eligible for range adjustments and the amount is dependent on the state budget.

CNAS funds the GSR allocations at the middle step of the 3-step series. For example, if your 3-step series is II, III and IV then CNAS will fund your entire allocation at step III. The funds are allocated to assist with programs in the recruitment of new students. CNAS strongly encourages programs to use the CNAS funds to fund a portion of year 1 and/or year 2 of the student's graduate student financial chart. The amount of program GSR funds committed on an individual financial chart is dependent upon the student's fellowship level and the availability of PI extramural support. CNAS can draw off carry forward GSR funds at the end of each fiscal year. GSR funds cannot be used for any other purpose.

**Teaching Assistant (TA) Fellowships Funds:** Life Science TA ships are solicited and allocated through the CNAS TAAC system. Students apply online and the TAAC committee makes the final TA assignment. Departments are then notified about the TA ships through the Graduate Center on a quarterly basis so that PPS transactions can be processed along with the TA letters. This support information should be added to your GSR tracking spreadsheet because you will be asked to prepare a report at year end to collect your TA funds. TA funds cannot be used for any other purpose. TA funds for Physical Science programs are allocated directly to departments based on historical enrollment data. All departments are required to complete an annual Departmental TA (Lecturer/Reader) Utilization report to assist CNAS with financial planning. This chart requires data on how funds were spent in the previous academic year and you are required to project how you will use the funds in the next fiscal year.

**Graduate Student Health Insurance (GSHIP) and Partial Fee Remission (GSFR for domestic and GSTR for foreign students formally referred to as PFR) Fees:** GSHIP, GSFR and GSTR fees incurred on CNAS GSR and TA allocations will be reimbursed by CNAS at year end after you submit your report. Students with a qualifying appointment of 25% or more as a TA or GSR are eligible for these fee remissions, and all students must receive these remissions regardless of fund source. If student fees are not allowable for a specific fund source then a DGIA must be processed to the pay remissions from another unrestricted fund source (see functional reference guide DGIA).

**Graduate Student Tuition Remission Fees (Nonresident Fees or GSTR formally referred to as NRT):** Fee remission for tuition fees (GSTR) requires a 45% time GSR appointment to be eligible for the automatic fee remission through the payroll system. TA appointments are not eligible for GSTR. Most non-resident students are admitted with a fellowship that pays the first two years of GSTR (CA non-residents receive 1 year and international students can receive up to two years). Students are expected to advance to candidacy by the end of year two of their program and then the GSTR fees are reduced to zero. After 9 quarters the GSTR fees will return to 100% of the NRT fee. Students who failed to advance to candidacy on time or go beyond normative time must have a 45% time GSR appointment to be eligible for the GSTR fee remission. If the student is not on a qualifying appointment for GSTR, then the student is responsible for paying the fees or the PI must pay the fees by DGIA using a non-restricted fund source (see DGIA guide for details). Students who are awarded TA ships after their first two years of their program must be monitored carefully to make sure the GSRT is paid in accordance with the student's financial support chart.

**Note:** GSR and TA appointments are paid in arrears through the payroll system and fellowships are paid in advance through SIS. When a student transitions from a fellowship to GSR/TA support the SAO must inform the student about the change in the payment schedule because it can create a 2-month lag. Another option is to request GD revise the fellowship payments to avoid this two-month lag by moving a portion of the fellowship into the following quarter.

## ***References***

Sample Excel Spreadsheets (2) for tracking current fiscal support are attached.

Sample Excel Spreadsheets for tracking out year GSR commitments is attached.

Graduate Division – Publications and Forms

<http://www.graddiv.ucr.edu/ESforms.html>

Graduate Division – Financial Support Regulations

<http://www.graddiv.ucr.edu/ESforms.html>