



**Guidelines for
Providing Support to Graduate Students**

for

Academic Year 2006 - 2007

Office of the Provost

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I. Introduction

This document replaces and expands upon the *Guidelines for Appointing Graduate Research & Teaching Assistants*. Its intended audience is the faculty and staff who operate graduate programs, but graduate students may also find it useful. The *Guidelines* will be updated annually, and comments from the units about how it could be improved are most welcome.

II. Graduate Appointments

Restrictions on Appointments

The following restrictions apply to all appointments:

- The appointment offer letter constitutes the contract between the student and the university. Sponsoring units must use the offer templates found on the provost's Web site at <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/provost/geninfo.htm> to develop their offer letters.
- Graduate students will normally be limited to the equivalent of one 20-hour per week assistantship or lectureship. Students may (under exceptional circumstances) be appointed for more than a total of 20 hours per week, but under no circumstances may students be appointed for more than 30 hours per week. Exceptional circumstances must be approved by the dean of the academic home of the student in question. This policy applies whether the student is appointed in a single unit or in multiple units across campus. ***F-1 or J-1 international students may not work more than 20 hours per week during the fall or spring semester.***
- If the student is hired by another unit, perhaps jointly, the home unit of the student must approve the appointment and the conditions attached.
- Fellowship and assistantship/lectureship funds may be combined to create a financial aid package for an individual student. However, the maximum compensation for a given student should not exceed the levels normally prevailing in the unit(s) involved.
- Assistantships and lectureships are intended to contribute to the graduate student's educational experience. Therefore, they may not be assigned to perform secretarial or clerical duties.
- Assistantships will be awarded only to full-time students.* Lectureships may be awarded to part-time students.
- ***Any student who holds an assistantship and engages in other employment during the semester without explicit approval of the departmental chair may be removed from the assistantship.***

* Graduate students who must document their full-time status for reasons such as F-1 visa maintenance or health insurance eligibility should complete the Graduate Assistant/Graduate Lectureship Full-Time Status Form, posted at <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/provost/geninfo.htm>.

Eligibility

- Students must be admitted to graduate study at George Mason University. Eligibility may further be limited to students in degree programs.
- A student hired as a graduate teaching assistant or graduate lecturer to teach a class must have at least 18 hours of graduate work in the field in which he or she is to teach. A transcript or transcripts documenting the required number of graduate hours must accompany the hiring documentation when the student is hired (even if this is the student's second appointment). Students who conduct labs, grade papers, or perform other teaching support services are not required to have 18 hours of graduate work in the pertinent field.
- As a matter of general principle, teaching by graduate students should be at the undergraduate level. In unusual circumstances, graduate students who have completed all coursework and examinations toward the doctorate and who have been advanced to candidacy may teach a lower level graduate course. Graduate students who have teaching appointments should not teach graduate courses that enroll students in the same program or programs in which the teaching assistant or graduate lecturer will take courses. (Graduate Council Motion #188.8, adopted March 28, 1990.)
- Students must be in good academic standing; that is, the student must have a minimum 3.0 GPA and may not have any recent unsatisfactory grades.
- All international GTAs or graduate lecturers whose native language is not English must take the SPEAK test. Arrangements for the SPEAK test can be made with the English Language Institute, 202 Krug Hall (703-993-3642). Students who score less than 50 out of a possible 60 are required to take 12 hours of tutoring to improve their pronunciation and/or fluency and then are allowed to retake the test. Tutoring is provided by the English Language Institute and is free to students and their departments.

A SPEAK test score must accompany the hiring documentation. Students cannot be given a teaching assignment (primary responsibility for a class or lab) unless they have scored at least 50/60 on the test, but they may perform non-instructional duties such as homework grading, assisting with a lab, etc.

Types of Appointments

Students are eligible for appointments as **Graduate Research Assistants**, participating directly in research or research-support activities under faculty supervision for not more than 20 hours per week, or in one of the five teaching assignments described below.

Students enrolled in graduate degree programs should not be given adjunct appointments in order to teach. The single exception to this policy is described in 4) below.

Teaching Assignments for Graduate Students

1) Graduate Teaching Assistants are students enrolled in graduate degree programs who participate directly in instructional activities under faculty supervision for not more than 20 hours per week. GTAs may not teach more than two undergraduate lecture courses, six semester hours of recitation sections, or nine semester hours of laboratory per semester.

GTA assignments may also be given to activities that are not enrollment related, but which relate to teaching in some way. These activities typically include tutoring, advising, and curriculum development (for example, TAC students), and the specific activity should be described in the offer letter.

2) Graduate Lecturer [NEW CATEGORY]. Graduate students who are the instructor of record for a credit-bearing course. Graduate lecturers will be paid at rates no less than those listed in the adjunct matrix.

3) Summer Graduate Teaching Assistant [NEW CATEGORY]. Graduate students hired to provide instructional support for summer course offerings.

4) Full-time exempt (not eligible for overtime) Mason employees who are enrolled in graduate degree programs may, with permission of their supervisor, be awarded adjunct appointments. Graduate students in this category are subject to University Policy Number 2209, Employee Tuition Exemption Benefit. Non-exempt (overtime eligible) full-time employees may not be awarded adjunct appointments.

5) Graduate students enrolled in a non-degree status may be awarded adjunct appointments. Graduate students in this category are subject to University Policy Number 2209, Employee Tuition Exemption Benefit.

Eligibility for Tuition Support

No graduate student is guaranteed tuition support in conjunction with a teaching assignment. The following table summarizes the eligibility of specific teaching appointments to receive tuition waivers or grants.

Graduate Assignment	Eligible for Employee Tuition Waiver	Eligible for Graduate Waiver	Eligible for Tuition Grant	Banner Position Prefix
GRA	No	Yes	Yes	GR
GTA	No	Yes	Yes	GA
Graduate Lecturer	No	Yes	Yes	GL
Summer GTA	No	Yes	Yes	GS
Full-time Mason employee with adjunct appointment	Yes	No	Yes	PO
Non-degree seeking graduate student with adjunct appointment	Yes	No	Yes	PO

Table 1. Eligibility for Tuition Support by Assignment

The Hiring Process

Graduate appointments must be made from the available applicant pool of all students who have requested consideration on the graduate application for admission. Continuing graduate students may apply for graduate appointments by following the procedures outlined by the local academic units.

Each department or program establishes procedures to ensure that students are selected fairly and in accordance with university hiring guidelines.

Original Appointments

1. The department or sponsored project director prepares and sends an appointment offer letter to the student. Appointment offer templates posted at <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/provost/geninfo.htm> must be used to draft the appointment offer.
2. If the student wishes to accept the offer, he or she must sign the offer letter.
3. The student returns the signed acceptance portion of the appointment offer letter and reports to the department or sponsored project director to complete the following forms, which are available on the HR/Payroll Web site, <http://hr.gmu.edu/forms/>.
 - a. Employment Eligibility Verification (I-9) form. The federal I-9 form must be **verified in person** and signed by the hiring department, unless the student is an international student on a nonimmigrant visa. The I-9 form's Instructions provide important details on employer and employee responsibilities for proper completion of the form.
 - If the appointment is for an international student on a nonimmigrant visa, the student **MUST** go to the Office of International Programs and Services (OIPS) to present the appropriate documents in order to complete the I-9.
 - OIPS will schedule an appointment to meet with the tax coordinator to prepare tax forms.
 - b. Tax Forms (W-4 and VA-4, D-4, or MW507 as appropriate). International students will be given tax forms at OIPS when they complete the I-9.
 - c. Direct Deposit Authorization Form
 - d. Commonwealth Alcohol and Drug Policy
 - e. Wage Employee Information Form
 - f. Selective Service Compliance Document (to be completed only by male U.S. citizens, age 18 through 25)
4. The department forwards completed paperwork to the collegiate dean/institute director for approval. The package should include the following items:
 - a. Signed appointment offer letter
 - b. Direct Deposit Authorization Form
 - c. Employment Eligibility Verification Form (I-9)

- d. Completed Tax Forms (W-4 and VA-4, D-4, MW507 as appropriate). For international students, tax forms may be completed at a later date. See #8 below.
 - e. Commonwealth Alcohol and Drug Policy
 - f. Wage Employee Information Form
 - g. Selective Service Compliance Document (to be completed only by male U.S. citizens, age 18 through 25)
 - h. Copy of SPEAK Test results, if required by assignment
 - i. Copy of TOEFL score, if required by assignment
 - j. Copies of transcripts, if required by assignment
5. The hiring department will then enter the employee into the Banner HR system through the Electronic Approvals process. Please note that FTE must be assigned for GTAs. For assistance with this electronic action, please contact your HR/Payroll Service Team at 703-993-2600.
 6. The hiring department will forward the completed original tax forms and Direct Deposit Authorization Form to Human Resources.
 7. Hiring departments are responsible for maintaining complete records, including all of the aforementioned forms, on all graduate assistants hired by them. The I-9 must be stored separately from all other employee paperwork.
 8. In the case of nonimmigrant visa holders, original tax forms and I-9s will be forwarded to Human Resources and Payroll by OIPS. Students will be given copies of these documents to bring to the hiring department to show that they have been completed.

Reappointments

The department or sponsored project director prepares and sends an appointment offer letter to the student. Reappointment offers should be made using the templates posted at <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/provost/geninfo.htm>.

1. If the student wishes to accept the offer, he or she must sign the offer letter.
2. International students must take a copy of the signed letter to OIPS. The OIPS verifies the student's eligibility for employment, and will provide the student with a signed and dated copy of the I-9.
3. The student reports to the department or sponsored project director with the signed offer letter. International students will also bring the I-9 verified by OIPS. All forms from the original appointment should still be on file.
4. The department forwards all completed paperwork to the collegiate dean/institute director for approval. The package should include the following items:
 - a. Signed appointment offer letter

- b. For international students, a copy of the verified I-9
 - c. Copy of SPEAK Test results, if required by assignment
 - d. Copy of TOEFL score, if required by assignment
 - e. Copies of transcripts, if required by assignment
5. Upon receipt of the documentation listed in 4 above, the hiring department may enter the employee into the Banner HR system through the Electronic Approvals process. For assistance with this electronic action, please contact your HR/Payroll Service Team at 703-993-2600.

Important Notes about the Hiring Process

NOTE 1: All appointment offer letters must include the dates of the appointment, the hours of work required of the student, the enrollment requirement, the stipend to be received, and the type of tuition benefit, if applicable.

NOTE 2: Verify the student's domicile status. You must include the student's in-state or out-of-state tuition status as you award or define tuition benefits in the offer letter.

NOTE 3: All students must provide appropriate documentation **in person** for verification and to complete their I-9.

Students who are U.S. citizens or permanent U.S. residents should report to their academic departments to complete the I-9.

International students who have temporary, nonimmigrant status **must** report to the Office of International Programs and Services. Students should bring their immigration documents, passport, and I-94 (or alternative documentation which proves identity and employment eligibility) to OIPS to verify and to complete the I-9. **The I-9 must be verified by OIPS prior to an original appointment and for each subsequent appointment.**

NOTE 4: Hiring departments should enter assignments into the HR system no later than September 1 to ensure that the first check is received on time. Paychecks will be issued on a semi-monthly basis. The first check will be issued beginning September 16, and the final check on June 1. Check issuance dates for summer appointments should be confirmed with the HR/Payroll Office.

NOTE 5: Assistantship and lectureship stipends are wages and must be disbursed through the Payroll Department, not Accounts Payable. The Accounts Payable Department processes only non-compensatory payments.

NOTE 6: Students who have completed their degrees should no longer be employed on graduate assistant or graduate lecture appointments. Departments wishing to continue to employ such individuals should do so under a wage, classified, or other appropriate appointment.

International Students

The **Office of International Programs and Services** provides the following information for international students:

1. F-1 and J-1 students are required by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to take a full course load each fall and spring semester (excluding summer term). A full course load for graduate students is 9 credit hours per semester; **however, DHS has declared that students who are assigned teaching or research responsibilities pursuant to the terms of a scholarship, fellowship, or assistantship may carry a reduced course load.**
 - For international students with teaching or research assistantships of 20 hours per week, full time is defined as a minimum of 6 credit hours per semester. See the Graduate Assistant Full-Time Status Form, posted at <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/provost/geninfo.htm>.
 - Part-time assistantships requiring only 10 hours of work per week do not allow a student to reduce his or her course load.
 - Students who require fewer than 9 credits to complete their course requirements may take only the required credits in their final semester, but still need to have OIPS approve the reduced course load.
2. F-1 and J-1 students who are maintaining their status are limited to **20 hours** of work per week during semesters, and may work full time during breaks.
3. F-1 and J-1 students are admitted to the U.S. for “duration of status,” that is, to complete an educational program. If a student must remain in an educational program beyond the date originally estimated for completion of the program (as stated on Form I-20 or Form DS-2019), the student must comply with DHS or Department of State (DOS) procedures for a program extension. Delay caused by academic probation or suspension is not an acceptable reason for a program extension. The Office of International Programs and Services projects that the normal period of time required to complete a master’s degree is 2 ½ years; the normal period required to complete a Ph.D. degree is five years.
4. Students may use stipends as proof of financial support for issuance of their I-20/DS-2019. A copy of GRA/GTA offer letters **must** be sent to OIPS indicating **stipend amount and specific tuition benefit**. If the student’s financial support is based on a GRA or GTA, it is assumed that the same level of financial support will be renewed in subsequent years. U.S. law requires the Designated School Official to verify source of financial support for all years of study prior to issuing an I-20 or DS-2019. In some cases, the stipend will not cover all of the student’s educational and living expenses and may need to be supplemented with personal or family funds or sponsorship by an outside organization. Immigration forms will not be issued until all financial support documents have been submitted and have met estimated expense requirements: tuition (variable), plus living expenses for a calendar year (\$12,600), plus the mandatory health insurance fee (approximately \$1,095).

5. I-9 forms for all employees in nonimmigrant status must be completed at the **Office of International Programs and Services by the employee. In addition, all employees in nonimmigrant status must complete a Foreign National Information Form and federal and state withholding forms and review them in an interview with the OIPS International Tax Coordinator at the time they are first hired. The Foreign National Information Form needs to be updated when any information thereon changes. These forms can be obtained from OIPS.** F-1 and J-1 students must bring proof of identity and evidence of their eligibility to work at George Mason University for purposes of completing Form I-9. In addition, J-1 students require written permission from OIPS for all employment.
6. International students on nonimmigrant visas are required to provide hiring departments with verified copies of the I-9 for the original appointment and all reappointments before they are entered into the Banner HR system.
7. International students who have completed their program of study are no longer eligible for student-based employment. They may be eligible to work based on Optional Practical Training or Academic Training, but this eligibility should be confirmed with OIPS before a job offer is extended.

NOTE: OIPS must verify, in person, the immigration documents of any GRA/GTA who has a temporary, nonimmigrant visa. OIPS must receive copies of the offer letter and signed acceptance form. OIPS will work with the student to complete the I-9 and necessary tax forms.

Determining Appointment Periods and Dates of Service

Appointment periods must be specified on the appointment offer letter. For the 2006-07 academic year, the following payroll dates should be used:

Full Academic Year	08/25/06 to 05/24/07
Fall Semester	08/25/06 to 01/09/07
Spring Semester	01/10/07 to 05/24/07
Summer Sessions	Dates of service are for three months extending from 5/25/07 to 8/24/07

Determining the Stipend

Compensation for graduate assistants is determined by level of education and skill requirements. The Associate Provost for Personnel and Budget posts current stipend ranges for graduate assistantships on the provost's Web page,

<http://www.gmu.edu/departments/provost/geninfo.htm>.

The compensation rates posted for graduate assistantships are for 20 hour-per-week assignments. Students who have received approval for appointments of more than 20 hours per week should have their compensation prorated appropriately.

Should there be an increase in stipends announced for the spring semester, a memo will be distributed to graduate units to describe the adjustment. This adjustment does not apply to fellowship or scholarship stipends or to Presidential Scholars stipends.

Graduate lecturers, Summer GTAs, and graduate students entitled to adjunct appointments (see Types of Appointments for restrictions on graduate appointments) are paid according to the guidelines of the part-time faculty matrix, <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/provost/documents/ptmatrix.doc>.

Work Expectations

Full-time graduate assistants are expected to work an average of 20 hours per week during the academic year; part-time graduate assistants are expected to work an average of 10 hours per week during the academic year. Work expectations will be established at the beginning of the assignment and will be monitored by the supervising faculty member. The supervising faculty member also has the responsibility to evaluate graduate assistants.

The supervising faculty member may require that a GRA be available to work two weeks prior to the start of the spring semester. In this situation, the faculty member is not obliged to give compensatory time off during the spring semester.

If the faculty member needs to have the GRA work at other points in the holiday period, and the student is able to, the faculty member should give the student compensatory time off during the spring semester.

GTAs should be available for a planning meeting with their supervisor sometime during the two-week period prior to the start of the semester. GTAs who serve as the instructor of record for a course should be available at the conclusion of the semester to answer questions that might arise about grades.

Prorating GTA/GRA Stipends When an Appointment Ends Early

Graduate assistants and graduate lecturers who are terminated early, regardless of reason, should be compensated in direct proportion to the total time worked up to the point of termination. To avoid overpayments, the hiring department must inform Human Resources and Payroll of the early termination as soon as it is practical to do so.

Enrollment Requirements

With certain exceptions noted below, all full-time (20 hours/week) graduate assistants must be enrolled for at least six hours of graduate work during the fall and/or spring semesters during which they are employed. Part-time graduate assistants (10 hours/week) must enroll for a minimum of three hours of graduate coursework during the fall and/or spring semesters during which they are employed. Each academic unit should monitor enrollment at the end of the

schedule adjustment/registration period. *A graduate assistant not enrolled for the minimum hours of coursework must relinquish his or her assistantship.*

Exceptions to the six-hour enrollment required are only considered for students who need fewer than six hours to complete their degree and graduate. If the student falls into this category, the student's graduate coordinator must forward a written request to carry a reduced load to the unit by the latest schedule adjustment date. This request should include the student's status in his or her program and the number of remaining hours and specific courses that remain. If all dissertation or thesis hours have been expended, the student must still register for one credit of dissertation or thesis work per semester. F-1 and J-1 international students also need the approval of OIPS before engaging in less than a full course load.

Students who receive graduate assistantship appointments for the summer do not have to enroll in classes; however, their stipends will be subject to FICA withholding (unless they are exempt under a special rule that applies to certain F-1 and J-1 students). Students who are enrolled full-time during the summer and who hold graduate assistantships will not be subject to FICA withholding. Full-time status for students enrolled during the summer term is the same as for fall and spring semesters. That is, students holding graduate assistantships in summer are full-time only if they are enrolled for six or more credit hours. Students who hold graduate assistantships during the summer and who are enrolled for fewer than six credit hours will be subject to FICA withholding (unless exempt under a special rule that applies to certain F-1 and J-1 students).

II. Tuition Support

Tuition support to graduate assistants can be provided through graduate tuition waivers (allocated annually by the central administration to the units) or tuition grants (support from any source other than the tuition waiver allocation). **Students holding graduate assistant or graduate lecturer appointments are not eligible for employee tuition waivers.**

Students who do not complete the assignment as described in the offer letter may be removed from the assistantship and lose their tuition support in future terms. Tuition charges will be subject to university tuition liability rules if the student withdraws from any of his or her classes.

Tuition Waivers

Tuition waivers are unfunded scholarships that represent revenue forgone by the university. Tuition waiver funding is approved by the central administration and allocated to academic units. Waivers are awarded to students at the discretion of the unit. The awards will vary depending on the amount of tuition dollars allocated to the unit. Students must hold a graduate assistant or graduate lecturer appointment in order to be eligible for a tuition waiver, but receipt of such an appointment does not guarantee a tuition waiver. Tuition support for summer is not guaranteed to students receiving waivers in the fall and spring semesters. Tuition waivers must not be used as a substitute form of compensation; all compensation must be paid through payroll. The value of the tuition waiver must be described in the award letter, and cannot exceed the tuition charge.

To be eligible for a tuition waiver, a student must earn a minimum of \$4,000 from academic related activities during the academic year, be hired as a graduate assistant, and take a minimum of six hours of graduate course work during each of the fall and spring semesters. Fellowship monies may not be included or used when determining a student's eligibility for tuition waivers. The value of the tuition waiver must be described in the award letter.

Tuition waivers should be processed as follows:

- The unit must complete the Departmental Tuition Waiver Authorization, which is available on the Fiscal Services Web site, <http://fiscal.gmu.edu/forms/index.html>. Forward the completed authorization to the Office of Student Financial Aid.
- The Office of Student Financial Aid will post the waiver on the student's account. Approved authorizations must be received by the Office of Student Financial Aid at least 72 hours before the payment due date for each applicable semester.

Tuition Grants

Tuition grants are funded scholarships that can be awarded to graduate students, regardless of whether that student holds an assistantship. Furthermore, if a unit separate from the funds allocated by central administration for graduate tuition waivers has sufficient unit funds, it may provide tuition grants to graduate assistants who have not received a full tuition waiver. Tuition grants must not be used as a substitute form of compensation; all compensation must be paid through payroll. Tuition grants funded through other than restricted funds should be processed as follows:

- The unit must complete the Departmental Tuition Grant Authorization, which is available on the Fiscal Services Web site, <http://fiscal.gmu.edu/forms/index.html>. Forward the completed authorization to the Office of Student Financial Aid.
- The Office of Student Financial Aid will post the grant on the student's account. Approved authorizations must be received by the Office of Student Financial Aid at least 72 hours before the payment due date for each applicable semester.

Tuition Funded through Restricted Research Funds

Graduate assistants may be hired as research or teaching assistants on specific grants or contracts. Wherever possible, the tuition remission for graduate assistants paid from restricted funds will be included as a sponsor cost. All policies and procedures governing university funded assistantships apply. Tuition remission must not be used as a substitute form of compensation; all compensation must be paid through payroll.

Tuition remission for graduate assistants whose tuition is funded through restricted funds should be processed as follows:

- The unit must complete the Departmental Tuition Grant Authorization form, which is available on the Fiscal Services Web site, <http://fiscal.gmu.edu/forms/index.html>. Forward the completed authorization to the Office of Sponsored Programs.
- The Office of Sponsored Programs will forward the approved memo authorizing the grants to the Office of Student Financial Aid, which posts approved tuition amounts on each student's account.
- Approved authorizations must be received by the Office of Student Financial Aid at least 72 hours before the payment due date for each applicable semester.

NOTE: Documents for graduate assistants on restricted funds must be signed by the principal investigator/project director, the collegiate dean/institute director, and the Office of Sponsored Programs.

In cases where sponsor regulations specifically prohibit the use of restricted funds for tuition remission, the academic unit **may** provide tuition remission **if the unit determines it has sufficient departmental or unit funds**. See procedures associated with tuition waivers and tuition grants.

III. Presidential Scholars Award

The Presidential Scholars Award is a program of support to first-time PhD students. It is intended to assist the university in attracting and retaining doctoral students of the highest caliber.

The maximum term of the award is three years. Benefits of the program include:

- A research assistantship that covers the period from August 25 through May 24 of the award year. There is a 20 hour-per-week work requirement associated with the award.
- A stipend of \$18,000 per year (from August 25 through May 24 of the award year).
- A tuition grant covering 9 credit hours in the fall and 9 credit hours in the spring.

The Presidential Scholars Award should be used for recruitment and will only be awarded to entering full-time doctoral students.

To be eligible for a Presidential Scholars Award, the student must have a minimum GPA of 3.5 in their most recently earned degree and minimum combined math and verbal GRE scores (where applicable) of 1200. To continue to be eligible for the award, the student must have a minimum graduate GPA of 3.5 at the end of their first and second years and a determination by their graduate program of continuous progress towards the dissertation.

Each doctoral program is eligible for one new Presidential Scholars Award each year. If a program's nominee declines the award *in writing*, the program may submit another nomination.

If a graduate program supports a Presidential Scholar on a grant after the first year (on terms comparable to those of the Presidential Scholars Award), the program may nominate students for two new awards for the following year.

Tuition grants for the Presidential Scholars Award come with the following restrictions:

- Tuition grants will not be awarded for courses taken in any summer term.
- Tuition grants may not be used for noncredit courses, undergraduate courses, or course work taken through audit.
- The Scholar will be responsible for paying for course work taken in excess of 9 credit hours in a given semester.
- Tuition grants do not cover course or lab fees.

Presidential Scholars do not have to request renewal of their awards. The Office of the Provost will coordinate with the Scholar's department to determine whether the student's award will be renewed. Renewal letters will be sent after spring grades are posted and the Scholar's department has confirmed that the award should be renewed.

Doctoral coordinators nominate admitted applicants for the award, which must be approved by the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (VPAA). Doctoral coordinators should submit a copy of the one-page Admissions Graduate Profile Report, detailing GPA and standardized score results, to the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, D115 Mason Hall, MSN 3A2. The fax number is 3-8871. Unless there are questions about the nomination package, the VPAA will prepare an award letter within 24 hours of receipt of the package. **Only the VPAA is authorized to offer the Presidential Scholars Award.**

Students must sign and return a copy of the award letter to the Office of the Provost by the date prescribed in the award letter. After receiving the signed copy of the award letter, the Office of the Provost will authorize the Office of Student Financial Aid to post a tuition grant on the Presidential Scholar's student account.

Presidential Scholars must follow hiring procedures described in Section II of this document. Copies of all hiring documentation must be received by the Office of the Provost at least two weeks prior to the start of classes to ensure that the Scholar will be paid on time. The Office of the Provost will also enter information into the university's human resource system about each Scholar's graduate assistantship.

Students who need to terminate the Presidential Scholars Award must do so in writing.

IV. Fellowships

Centrally-Allocated Fellowships

In addition to providing resources for graduate assistantships and tuition waivers, the central administration each year allocates resources to colleges to fund master's- and doctoral-level fellowships. These fellowships are funded through the Virginia Commonwealth Award Program, <http://www.schev.edu/Students/factsheetcomma.asp?from=x>. Local academic units should adhere to the following guidelines in the awarding of centrally-allocated fellowships:

- Fellowships should be awarded only to full-time students.
- Fellowship awards should be documented in a formal letter.
- Fellowships are not considered compensation, and no work requirement may be attached to the offer of a fellowship.
- Within the framework described above, colleges may develop additional criteria for the award of fellowships. If they do, those criteria should be made available to students.
- If a fellowship is renewable, conditions for renewal should be stated in the award letter.
- The fellowship award may not exceed tuition and required fees.
- All nonimmigrant fellowship recipients, regardless of visa type, must contact OIPS and arrange to meet with the International Tax Coordinator before the award can be processed.

Centrally-allocated fellowships are processed using the Departmental Tuition Grant Authorization form using the following procedures:

- The unit must complete the Departmental Tuition Grant Authorization, which is available on the Fiscal Services Web site, <http://fiscal.gmu.edu/forms/index.html>. Forward the completed authorization to the Office of Student Financial Aid.
- The Office of Student Financial Aid will post the grant on the student's account. Approved authorizations must be received by the Office of Student Financial Aid at least 72 hours before the payment due date for each applicable semester.

Tuition Support for Fulbright Fellows

The Office of the Provost will provide tuition support to students who have been admitted to degree programs and who have also been awarded Fulbright Fellowships. Master's-level Fellows are eligible for tuition support for one year; doctoral-level Fellows are eligible for tuition support for two years. Terms of the award follow.

- The Office of the Provost will provide Fulbright Fellows admitted to degree programs tuition grants of 9 credit hours at the out-of-state rate in each of the fall and spring semesters.

- The Office of the Provost will prepare a letter describing the terms of the award, and the Fulbright Fellow will be required to sign the letter to indicate acceptance of the letter's terms.
- Renewal of a doctoral-level award is contingent upon the student's remaining in good academic standing, availability of funding, and renewal of the Fulbright Fellowship.

Tuition grants for Fulbright Fellows come with the following restrictions:

- Tuition grants will not be awarded for courses taken in any summer term.
- Tuition grants may not be used for noncredit courses, undergraduate courses, or course work taken through audit.
- The Fulbright Fellow will be responsible for paying for course work taken in excess of 9 credit hours in a given semester.
- Tuition grants do not cover course fees or lab fees.

Externally-Sponsored Fellowships

Students receiving externally-sponsored fellowships, other than Fulbright fellowships, are usually funded as graduate research assistants unless the sponsor stipulates a different funding arrangement. Externally-sponsored fellowships are set up as restricted accounts in the Office of Sponsored Programs and graduate fellowship recipients are appointed using the graduate appointment process described in these guidelines.