

GUIDELINES FOR AWARDING AND MANAGING GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP CONTRACTS 2009-2010

Base Allocation

You must use your 2009-2010 account to fund contracts during Summer 2009, Fall 2009, Spring 2010 or for full year Dissertation (non-service) Fellowships. This allocation cannot be "carried over" to fund contracts during Summer 2010 or beyond.

All money in your allocation that remains unspent as of June 1, 2009 will be returned to the Graduate College to create a centralized fund that will be available for redistribution to any department. **Beginning June 1st the Graduate College will cancel all contracts that remain unsigned 30 days after they have been sent out. It is the responsibility of the department to follow-up with students on unsigned contracts. We will accept fax copies, e-mails from the student confirming they will sign, scanned contracts, etc. (The student must still eventually sign the original contract and return it to us for our files.)**

All departments will have the opportunity to re-access this money on a case-by-case basis as qualified applicants become available. We are prepared to work closely with departments which may identify special circumstances that should be considered in their area.

Every effort will be made to allow funds freed up by resignations occurring after June 1 to remain in units for reuse. However, this will depend upon the overall budgetary picture of the university at that time. Please do not make any contract offers after June 1 (including replacing cancellations) until you have checked with the Graduate College to determine whether or not funds are available.

We encourage you to make all contract offers before April 15th so that you have the best possibility of attracting the most competitive and academically qualified students within the guidelines described in the *Council of Graduate Schools resolution Regarding Graduate Scholars, Fellows, Trainees, and Assistants*. A copy of this document is enclosed.

The Graduate College will monitor stipend allocations from late Spring through the start of Fall Semester. Your student records team member can periodically provide you with management reports that identify the total available allocation, total spent for Summer 08 and Academic Year 09-10 contracts, your current allocation balance and unsigned contracts that have been issued in your program.

Diversity Initiative

Bowling Green State University embraces, as an important education value, the ideal of a diverse institution. To promote this goal and ensure academic excellence, the Graduate College sponsors several important initiatives including the *Winifred O. Stone Fund*, the *Presidential Graduate Scholarships for Diversity*, and the continuing development of partnerships with Universities which have a large number of historically underrepresented students. The Graduate College will continue to make available reports each fall semester that summarize the mix of students in your program by gender, age, ethnicity, residency (county/state/country) and part-time vs. full-time enrollment.

Monitoring of Expenditures

It is the responsibility of each unit to monitor its assistantship expenditures from all budgets, including the Graduate College allocation, any allocation from your College Dean, grants, etc. to insure that you do not overspend the funds available to you. The Graduate College is not in a position to "bail out" a unit that overspends its allocation. We do not have a system in place to "cut off" contract writing when you have spent all of your funds. It is your Department's responsibility to cover any contracts submitted to us which exceed the funds you have received from the Graduate College and your College Dean.

IMPORTANT: Some departments choose to write all contracts against their Graduate College allocation and then do addendums later shifting the charges to their department budgets or grants. All adjustments must be made by August 1, 2009. If you have overspent your Graduate College Allocation on August 1, 2009 the excess charges will automatically be shifted to your department budget.

Head Count

Your Graduate Assistant Allocation should be used to maximize **Fall** enrollment. Departments should not make drastic changes in their overall headcount, make shifts in the number of master's and doctoral students funded in their area, or shift funding from academic year contracts to summer contracts without first consulting with the Graduate Dean. For example, a Department which has always funded 10 half-time appointments may not automatically fund 20 quarter-time appointments (or vice versa) without approval of the Graduate College. Departments should not reduce the number of academic year stipends to provide summer funding for students.

International Students

As of November 26, 2001 all men between the ages of 16 and 45 from certain countries who are applying for U. S. entry visas will be subject to background checks by the Department of State (DOS). These background checks are expected to take up to an additional 20 days for processing. The current list of countries are: Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. More countries may be added to this list. The DOS has indicated that there could be processing delays of up to 20 days or longer. Visa applicants who are subject to these checks will also be required to complete a new background questionnaire that includes previous military service, weapons training, other passports held, and previous travels.

Departments are encouraged to admit and fund international graduate students as early as possible. This will allow the students the extra time they need to receive their visa document from BGSU and to apply for a student visa.

Also, current international students in certain selected academic disciplines (biology, chemistry, physics, geology) have experienced difficulty having their visa's renewed when they have returned home during the break and/or summer. Please advise your students to go to the Center for International Programs for advice in these matters.

Please contact Paul Hofmann in International Programs directly if you have any specific questions or concerns regarding the visa process for international students

Tuition Scholarship Grants

All graduate student contracts are accompanied by a tuition scholarship grant covering the Ohio instructional fee and non-resident fee, as well as a general fee grant. In addition, students receiving stipends during the academic year receive a tuition scholarship grant for the following summer. This summer grant does not include the general fee, nor is it transferable to an academic year or subsequent summer term.

It is the Graduate College's policy to provide tuition scholarship grants for graduate students supported by funds generated from external sources whenever the agency's funding guidelines require this contribution. General fee grants cannot be provided. The general fee must be paid by the external source. Procurement of external support for graduate assistantships will not result in a decrease in a unit's allocation from the Graduate College; it will be in addition to that allocation. By the same token, the Graduate College is not in a position to "pick up the slack" when externally funded positions expire.

Health Insurance Reimbursement Eliminated

The \$100 health insurance reimbursement for graduate assistants purchasing the University health insurance plan **has been eliminated**.

Academic Requirements

A minimum GPA of 3.0 is required for appointments at the master's level. A minimum of 3.2 is required at the doctoral level. *If you choose to make a request for a student who does not meet these minimum standards, you must submit a written rationale to the Graduate College.*

Years of Funding Eligibility

Please make sure you have funding set-aside to cover all of your eligible continuing students before writing contracts for new students.

Students working toward a master's degree are eligible for up to two years of funding as a graduate assistant. Students who complete two master's degrees are eligible for up to three years of funding as a graduate assistant. The Graduate College will not provide assistantship support for students working on a third master's degree at the University.

Students working toward a doctoral degree are eligible for up to four years of funding as a graduate assistant. Dissertation Fellowships should only be awarded in the student's *final* year of funding, after the topic is approved, and when the student is on a schedule that indicates that they can complete the degree at the end of the fellowship.

If a student completes both a master's and doctoral degree at BGSU they are eligible for no more than six years of total funding. If a student is offered a doctoral level contract, then they do not complete their master's degree prior to the start of the fall semester, their contract will be "bumped down" to master's level funding for the fall semester (and for spring if necessary). They are still eligible for a maximum of six years of funding for both degrees. Therefore, if the student uses three years of master's level funding to complete their master's degree they are only eligible for three years of doctoral level funding.

Standardized Test Requirement

Appointments for new students are contingent upon the student's completing either the GRE, GMAT or PRAXIS (PRAXIS for Curriculum & Teaching only). The TOEFL is also required of international students. Where justified, a stipend may be awarded to an international student subject to a student taking the GRE or GMAT by the end of his/her first term as a graduate student. Since the GRE may now be taken throughout the U.S. at any time, contracts will only be written for domestic applicants who have submitted GRE scores. Under no circumstance will contracts be written for second year students who have not taken the GRE or GMAT.

Responsibilities of Units Receiving Graduate Assistantship Funds

1. Recruitment

Units are expected to recruit vigorously and to use stipends to attract quality students with diverse backgrounds. Wherever possible, larger stipends should be offered to better students. Units should also explore the possibility of making a commitment to full-year (academic year plus summer) awards to their top candidates during the recruitment process.

2. Contract Offers

In order to reduce paper work and facilitate the prompt writing of contracts by the Graduate College, contract requests should only be submitted for students who are very likely to accept them. Thus, whenever possible, students should give a verbal indication (preferably as a result of telephone or e-mail contact) that they will accept a contract offer, if it is approved by the Graduate Dean, prior to the submission of the request for the writing of a contract.

3. Timing of Contract Offers

Contract offers can be made at any time. However, Bowling Green State University is a signatory to an agreement sponsored by the Council of Graduate Schools, which reads as follows:

"Students are under no obligation to respond to offers of financial support prior to April 15; earlier deadlines for acceptance of such offers violate the intent to this Resolution. In those instances in which a student accepts an offer before April 15, and subsequently desires to withdraw that acceptance, the student may submit in writing a resignation of the appointment at any time through April 15. However, an acceptance given or left in force after April 15 commits the student not to accept another offer without first obtaining a written release from the institution to which a commitment has been made. Similarly, an offer made after April 15 is conditional on presentation by the student of the written release from any previously accepted offer."

A copy of this resolution accompanies the initial contract sent to students and is enclosed in this packet.

4. **Resignations**

Last minute resignations prior to the start of fall term are a problem in several departments. Please make every effort to insure that students who sign contracts show up for the start of the term. This involves offering contracts to students who are likely to enroll, and maintaining contact with the student by phone or E-mail between the time they sign contracts and the start of classes. Please make sure all mid-semester cancellations or cancellations at the end of fall term are reported to the Graduate College promptly to avoid "overpayments" that will end up on the student's Bursar account.

5. **Management of Funds**

Units with multi-year programs are responsible for managing their stipend funds in a way that preserves a workable balance between classes. In other words, the Graduate College does not have funds to "bail out" a unit that, for example, has 10 stipends and works itself into the bind of having 9 continuing students. Nor does the Graduate College have funds to pick up the slack when external funding of positions expires.

Either because of the need to maintain a balance between classes, or because the quality or quantity of applicants is down in a given year, responsible management may result in a decision not to use a unit's entire allocation for a given year. Such decisions should be made as early as possible in the year and discussed with the Graduate Dean.

6. **Credit Hour Load**

It is the responsibility of every unit to insure that all of its contract students are enrolled for at least 12 graduate credit hours per term during the academic year (no audits/no undergraduate courses). Failure to meet this responsibility may result in a decrease in a unit's allocation.

7. **Increasing Enrollment**

The institution's goal of increasing graduate enrollment can only be achieved if we are able to enroll more full-time students than we can support on our own resources. Thus, units are expected to make every effort to have a larger full-time student base than can be supported by University resources.

Among the various ways of doing this, units are urged to consider the following:

- a. Expanding faculty research and grant-seeking activities and making the building of graduate research assistants into these grants a high priority.
- b. Attempting to secure scholarships and internship opportunities for graduate students from external sources.
- c. Improving program quality, and developing innovative curricular thrusts, so that Bowling Green State University is the first choice of an increasing number of applicants.
- d. Recruiting at undergraduate institutions with concentrations of students capable of paying their own way.
- e. Working closely with the Student Financial Aid Office, and encouraging applicants to do so also, to develop alternative support packages.
- f. Encouraging good students for whom there are no contracts to pay their own way for a year with the promise of second-year funding if they perform well.