

From: Dean of Graduate Education Susan L. Ettner
Sent: Monday, September 12, 2022 10:31 AM
Subject: Graduate Opportunity Fellowship Program (GOFP) Expansion



What you need to know:

- The Graduate Opportunity Fellowship Program (GOFP) provides funding for graduate students from underrepresented backgrounds
- Changes are being made to align the GOFP more closely with Cota-Robles funding protocols
- The annual number of GOFP award offers will increase to 150
- Departments will be required to match funding for one term for each student awarded
- Neither GOFP eligibility requirements nor the process for nomination and review will change

Dear Deans, Chairs, Vice-Chairs, CAOs, MSOs and SAOs/Graduate Advisors:

The Graduate Opportunity Fellowship Program (GOFP) provides critical funding for entering students pursuing terminal or professional master's degrees who come from backgrounds that are currently underrepresented in graduate education. The intent of the fellowship is to provide access to higher education for students who might otherwise find it difficult or impossible to successfully pursue graduate study. The GOFP, along with the Eugene V. Cota-Robles Fellowship for entering doctoral students, is an important resource in campus efforts to increase the yield of a diverse graduate student population. For example, among underrepresented minority applicants nominated for the GOFP, the yield is 21 percentage points higher among those offered an award than among those not offered an award (69% vs. 48%).

Historically, the Graduate Division has been able to offer 100 awards for GOFP each year— representing only about one-third of all nominees in a highly qualified pool, with nominations rising ever more in recent years. We are aware that departments would like more certainty in fellowship awarding. Although variability in award rates over time is inevitable with competitive merit-based fellowships, increased availability of awards overall would boost the possibility of any one student or department receiving an award in a particular year, assuming the number of nominations stays relatively constant.

Given these challenges, the Graduate Division has engaged in a strategic review of the GOFP program and its goals. Based on this review, we are implementing some structural changes to the program to align it more closely with the Cota-Robles funding protocols. By implementing a funding match while simultaneously increasing our annual GOFP funding to cover the anticipated higher yield rates, the Graduate Division will be able to make an additional 50 GOFP award offers each year, bringing the total to 150.

Effective with the 2023-2024 admissions cycle, departments nominating students for GOFP will be required to commit to match funds with the Graduate Division, as outlined below:

- For programs on a quarter schedule, the Graduate Division will cover the student stipend, tuition and fees, and NRST (excluding PDST if applicable) for Fall and Spring, while the School/Division/Department will be expected to cover these same costs in Winter.
- For programs on a semester schedule, the Graduate Division will cover the student stipend, tuition and fees, and NRST (excluding PDST if applicable) for Fall, while the School/Division/Department will be expected to cover these same costs in Spring.
- Similar to the Cota-Robles, Schools/Divisions/Departments can use any combination of block allocation, gift funds, TA/GSR funding, or other sources to meet the fund match.

Introducing matching aligns GOFP more closely with the Cota Robles program and ensures that departments put forward only the students to whom they are most committed. While the per-student funding from Graduate Division decreases, departments will receive more resources overall over time, as more students are awarded from the increased funding pool.

Neither GOFP eligibility requirements nor the process for nomination and review will change. Each department will forward their nominees to the Graduate Division, where the application will be scored by a Graduate Division staff member for the objective components of the rubric and rated by two faculty reviewers for underrepresentation and contributions to diversity. Award rates at the department level will continue to vary year-to-year, based on the total size and competitiveness/quality of the applicant pool. Additional information about the [GOFP review process \(PDF\)](#) can be found on the *Go.Grad* portal.

We hope that this increase in GOFP funding will be a catalyst in your efforts to attract graduate students from underrepresented backgrounds and strengthen UCLA's commitment to diversity in all forms. The Graduate Division looks forward to working with you toward this goal.

Questions concerning procedures or deadlines should be directed to Chief of Staff/Chief Financial Officer Kristen McKinney (kmckinney@grad.ucla.edu / x5-4386) or Assistant Dean of Fellowships and Financial Services Ana Lebon (alebon@grad.ucla.edu / x64309).

Best regards,

Susan L. Ettner
Dean of Graduate Education

The UCLA logo is centered within a solid blue horizontal bar. The letters "UCLA" are rendered in a white, bold, sans-serif font.

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