

# **Graduate Program Fiscal Policies**

## **Department of Nuclear Engineering, Texas A&M University**

**Approved 2/25/05**

### **Funding for Students**

Graduate students are provided funding as either Graduate Assistants Non-Teaching (GANTs) supported by department funds or Graduate Assistants Research (GARs) supported by research contracts. This funding, referred to as an assistantship, includes a stipend (e.g., salary or scholarship to cover health insurance premium) and may include tuition and fees.

- Available funding is determined each semester by the department budget (GANTs) and the budget of research contracts (GARs).
- The limit of available GANT funding is determined each semester by the Department Head in consultation with the Academic Business Administrator and the Graduate Coordinator.
- Only the Department Head can authorize assistantship offers, both GANTs and GARs.
- All assistantships are reviewed before the start of each semester and may be terminated at any time due to unsatisfactory academic performance, poor work performance, lack of department need, or loss of funding.
- Standard assistantship offers to new domestic and international students include payment of tuition and fees.
- Standard assistantship offers to new domestic students commit to paying stipends and tuition and fees for two regular semesters (9 months). There is no commitment for summer.
- Standard offers to new international students commit to paying stipends and tuition and fees for one full year (12 months).
- Continuation of GANTs beyond the standard offer period (9 or 12 months) will be done only on an exception basis following Department Head approval.
- Initiation of GANTs for continuing students and all Ph.D. candidates will be done only on an exception basis following Department Head approval.
- Students are encouraged to find advisors with research projects that can pay their assistantships as GARs as quickly as possible. Encouragement will include the following:
  - Notification verbally (at orientation) and in writing (memo of expectations) that it is in a student's best interest to be paid to do research that is part of the thesis or dissertation (as opposed to being paid to grade papers, for example).
  - Departmental support for tuition and fees will end after the standard offer period (9 or 12 months). If a student continues as a GANT beyond this period, the assistantship will not pay tuition and fees.
- Every GANT for a given semester will receive an assignment letter defining 20 hours/week of work.
- Every GANT must meet academic standards established by the department. If a GANT does not meet these standards, the department will take prescribed actions relative to the GANT appointment.
- The department will make sure that winning and accepting a fellowship improves a student's financial state. All professors should clearly communicate this to students, strongly encouraging them to apply for fellowships.

- No student will be admitted into the PhD program unless the student is funded independently or the Graduate Coordinator and the Department Head believe there is a high probability that the student will find support as a GAR.

## **Faculty Responsibilities**

Faculty serve as students' advisors in the following capacities: informally as agreed prior to approval of the student's degree plan, as supervisor of a GANT, as supervisor of a GAR, and as Research Advisory Committee Chair (usually the last two are the same).

- Advisors are responsible for recommending stipend levels.
- Advisors of GANTs are responsible for assisting these students to find alternative funding sources.
- Advisors of GARs are responsible for initialing the GARs' respective offer letters signifying commitment to provide the offered funding.
- Advisors of GARs are responsible for notifying the Academic Business Administrator in a timely manner of the account(s) to which GAR payments are to be posted.
- Advisors of GARs are responsible for securing funding for their advisees' stipends, tuition, and fees unless the student becomes independently funded. If the advisor does not have funds for this, *the advisor* must make arrangements with the Department Head or other sources. Leaving this task to the student is unacceptable.
- Advisors are responsible for supervising work assigned to an assistant (GANT or GAR), counseling the assistant relative to work performance, ensuring that the work quantity is commensurate with the assistantship pay, and recommending to the Department Head any changes of stipend levels.
- Faculty should never require or pressure students to work for a faculty member's personal gain. Of course it is appropriate for students to participate in projects that help their professional development (such as writing proposals, writing papers, reviewing papers, etc.). However, working for a professor's private company, babysitting, yard work, car washing, etc., are well outside appropriate ethical boundaries, unless: (a) the student is compensated by non-university funds, AND (b) the student feels free to refuse such outside employment.