

Awards Qualifying for In-State Tuition and Subsidized Health Insurance under Policies 6001 and 6003

The purpose of this document is to describe the procedures by which external funding awards and approved internal fellowships made to Doctoral and MFA students at George Mason University may be deemed “qualifying awards,” rendering the recipient of the award eligible for tuition as well as subsidized health insurance under University Policies [6001](#) and [6003](#).

Recipients of qualifying awards as described below who are enrolled in George Mason University Doctoral and MFA programs will be granted a quarter-time assistantship appointment with a stipend of \$4,000/academic year (\$2,000/semester) as a supplement to their external award, and is paid for by the recipient’s academic unit. Tuition, at the in-state rate and up to 9 credits per semester, as well as Student Health Insurance, will be provided by the Office of the Provost.

Consultation regarding these procedures is available through the Office of Graduate Fellowships.

All qualifying awards must, at a minimum, meet the following basic eligibility criteria:

- For External Awards: The award is made directly to the student or to/via the university in the name of the student, pursuant to an application to an external funder made by the student in their own name or by/via the university on the student’s behalf.
- For Internal Awards: The award is made directly to the student in their own name as the result of a merit-based selection process.
- The minimum tenure of the award is one academic year.
- The minimum stipend of the award per academic year meets or exceeds the current 9-month minimum pay rate for graduate assistantships at George Mason University. The assistantship must cover both the fall and spring semesters.

Qualifying awards that meet these criteria may fall into one of the following categories:

Category 1: Federally funded graduate fellowships, scholarships, and grants in which the award is made directly to the student or to/via the university in the name of the student. Within this category, the following awards will be regarded as “pre-qualified”:

- [National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program \(NSF GRFP\)](#)
- [National Institutes of Health \(NIH\) F31 – Ruth Kirschstein Predoctoral National Research Service Awards \(NRSA\)](#)
- [National Institute of Justice \(NIJ\) Graduate Research Fellowship Program](#)
- [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency \(NOAA\) Nancy Foster Scholarship Program](#)
- [National Aeronautics and Space Administration \(NASA\) Graduate Fellowship Programs](#), including:
 - FINESST (Future Investigators in NASA Earth and Space Science and Technology)
 - ROSES (Research Opportunities in Space and Earth Sciences)
 - NSTGRO (NASA Space Technology Graduate Research Opportunities)

- [MUREP AS&ASTAR](#) (Minority University Research and Education Project Aeronautics Scholarship & Advanced STEM Training and Research Fellowship)

Under some circumstances, the following award may also qualify, depending on the specific terms of the award: [National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grants \(DDRIG\)](#)

Category 2: Nationally or regionally competitive merit-based fellowships, scholarships, and grants made by non-governmental funding agencies (including research institutes, professional organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and private philanthropic trusts) in which the award is made directly to the student or to/via the university in the name of the student. Most “dissertation completion” fellowships fall within this category. Within this category, the following awards will be regarded as “pre-qualified”:

- [Ford Foundation Pre-Dissertation and Dissertation Fellowships](#)
- [Mellon / American Council of Learned Societies \(ACLS\) Dissertation Fellowships](#)
- [American Association of University Women American Fellowships and International Fellowships](#)
- [Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowships for New Americans](#)
- [Harry Frank Guggenheim Dissertation Fellowships](#)
- [Southern Review Educational Board \(SREB\)-State Doctoral Fellowships and Dissertation Fellowships](#)

Category 3: Internal Fellowships. Internal fellowships are merit-based fellowship awards where the selection process is internal to the university. In such cases, only GMU graduate students (or students offered admission to a GMU graduate program) are eligible for consideration, and awards may only be used in support of study/research toward a graduate degree from GMU. Funds supporting this kind of fellowship typically arise from either grant funding or philanthropic gifts made in support of a specific degree program, research center, or other academic unit at GMU. The purpose of such awards is to attract, recruit, retain, and support high achieving students of exceptional promise to GMU graduate programs. Only internal fellowships that are explicitly approved via the process described below in “Determination of Qualifying Awards” will be deemed “qualifying awards” for the purposes of Policies 6001/6003. There are no “pre-qualified” awards in this category.

Special Category – International Awards: Fellowships, Scholarships, and Grants for Overseas Research / Fieldwork: In the case of advanced doctoral students who receive external awards in support of overseas research or fieldwork, tuition remission will be granted ONLY when the student is advanced to doctoral candidacy and must remain registered for dissertation hours while engaged in overseas research. Within this category, the following awards will be regarded as “pre-qualified”:

- [Fulbright U.S. Student Program Awards](#)
- [Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad \(DDRA\) Fellowships](#)
- [Boren Fellowships](#)
- [Social Science Research Council \(SSRC\) International Dissertation Research Fellowships](#)

Under some circumstances, awards made by the [Council of American Overseas Research Centers \(CAORC\)](#) or its member organizations may also qualify, depending on the specific terms of the award.

Determination of Qualifying Awards

Lists of “pre-qualified” awards provided above are subject to revision depending on changes to the award programs themselves (such as cancellation or restructuring of an award program.)

Awards other than those described above as “pre-qualified” may be deemed qualifying awards if they meet basic eligibility criteria listed above AND are granted explicit approval as described below. Approval will be facilitated through the Associate Provost for Graduate Education and the Office of Graduate Fellowships. A request for approval may take place:

- Prior to application (when the student is making a decision about whether to apply);
- At any stage in the application or review process (pre-award);
- Upon receipt of an award offer (post-offer).

A request for approval may be initiated by:

- A student (the applicant, prospective applicant, or awardee)
- A department, program, or faculty mentor

In order to receive full consideration:

- Requests for approval should be accompanied by information about the award, including the rules governing the award program (such as information from the program web site or published program solicitation, or CFA) as well as information about the student’s application (such as the duration and timing of the award and level of funding.)
- Recipients of award offers seeking post-offer approval should notify the Office of Graduate Fellowships of any potential qualifying award within two weeks of receiving the offer, and include a copy of the award notification in addition to the information described above. Students whose acceptance of the award offer depends on the outcome of the approval request should allow two weeks prior to the response deadline to complete the process.

Approval Process:

- The Associate Provost for Graduate Education and the Office of Graduate Fellowships will convene a faculty panel to review pending requests for “qualifying awards” designation. The panel will review the details of the award program (or offer) and make a determination as to whether the award in question qualifies for support under the terms of Policies 6001 and 6003 and fulfills criteria developed and specified by the convening panel. If the “qualifying award” designation is approved and issued, the convening panel has the right to reconsider its decision in the future depending on changes to the award program (such as cancellation or restructuring of an award program)
- The panel reserves the right to request additional information about the award if such information is necessary to make a fair and reasoned decision regarding support.