



MEMO

DATE: June 21, 2021  
TO: Graduate Coordinators, Department Heads, Deans & Associate Deans  
FROM: Jim Ahern, VP for Graduate Education  
RE: Fall 2021 Graduate Tuition & Fees Fellowship program for international graduate students; employment of overseas international students

Travel restrictions and visa processing delays related to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic continue to have significant impacts on UW's international graduate students. Many new and continuing international graduate students will be unable to come to campus for part or all of the Fall 2021 semester. In an effort to help these students achieve their dreams of starting or continuing their graduate degrees at UW, the Office of Graduate Education (OGE) is pleased to announce the continuation of the temporary Graduate Tuition & Fees Fellowship (GTFF) Program that was begun last year. This program is intended to provide tuition & fee funding for international graduate students who were to be hired as graduate assistants for Fall 2021 but are unable to be graduate assistants because they are unable to enter the U.S.

**Funding sources for the temporary Graduate Tuition & Fees Fellowships**

Funding for GTFF awards may come from departmental/college sources (e.g., unrestricted, restricted, Foundation, grants, contracts) or OGE-funded Graduate Teaching Assistantship funding allocations to colleges and programs as long as the student is also hired to fulfill GTA duties (see Independent Contractor section, below). Unlike AY20-21, the Office of Graduate Education will not be able to provide additional tuition & fee funding beyond that already allocated to units.

**Temporary modification to the Graduate Fellowships & Assistantships SAPP**

Interim Provost Alexander has granted a renewal of the temporary modification to the Graduate Fellowships & Assistantships policy that facilitates the creation of graduate fellowships that fund only a student's tuition & fees. This modification is solely to support the temporary GTFF program for international graduate students, and the exception is only valid through FY22. Prior to this temporary modification, graduate fellowships had to provide a stipend award at least equivalent to half of a full graduate assistantship stipend. Under the temporary modification, the GTFF program provides tuition at the resident rate and fees but no stipend is provided (and no GA work may be expected).

**Eligibility criteria:**

- Student is an international graduate student.
- Student is unable to enter the U.S. and come to campus due to government-imposed travel restrictions and/or an inability to obtain a visa in time due to consular delays or closures. Personal discomfort with travel to the U.S. or other personal reasons will not

be considered a valid reason for GTFF funding. An explanation of the student's circumstances, accompanied by any documentation (if available), must be provided. Furthermore, the UW International Students & Scholars Office must agree that it is impossible for the student to enter the United States in time for the fall semester. Once any barriers to a student's entry are lifted, the student is expected to arrive at U.W. within 60 days. GTFF funding will not be extended beyond this time limit.

- Student had been promised and had accepted graduate assistantship funding for the Fall 2021 semester. Copies of the offer letter and the student's acceptance must be provided.
- The student is not able to fulfill the GA duties or cannot be hired as a GA while overseas and away from campus. An explanation must be provided of why the GA-ship duties can only be fulfilled on campus/in the U.S.A. and/or an explanation of why the student cannot be hired and paid as a GA while overseas. Possible reasons for the latter include: a) the duties of the GA-ship are such that they cannot be performed remotely, b) the student does not have an active SEVIS record or their SEVIS record will be terminated because they are unable to meet the F1 status requirement, or c) other governmental restrictions on such employment (by the U.S. or home country).

#### **Other GTFF restrictions:**

- If the student meets the above eligibility criteria, the maximum Graduate Tuition & Fee Fellowship that may be awarded shall be equivalent to the promised T&F coverage as given in the student's GA offer letter. E.g., if a student was offered and accepted a full GA-ship, then their GTFF award would cover up to 9 credit hours of tuition & fees. If a student was offered and accepted a half GA-ship, then their GTFF award would cover up to 5 credit hours of tuition & fees.
- GTFF awardees are not eligible for UW's student health insurance as long as they remain overseas and away from UW's campus. Please contact the [Office of Risk Management](#) with any questions about student health insurance eligibility.

#### **Employment as a graduate assistant while the student is overseas**

Only some international graduate students located overseas are eligible to be hired and paid as true graduate assistants while they are out of the U.S. If the student was previously employed at UW as a graduate assistant and holds and maintains a valid F1 visa<sup>1</sup>, they may be eligible for being employed as a graduate assistant while located overseas, on a temporary basis. Please consult with the UW Tax Office ([tax@uwyo.edu](mailto:tax@uwyo.edu), 766-2821) in order to obtain the appropriate tax liability for any students who can be hired while they are overseas. Consultation with UW Legal (766-4997) may also be necessary if the student is a citizen of or is located in a country embargoed by the U.S.

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<sup>1</sup> F1 visa holders who left the U.S. during or after Spring 2020 and have maintained full-time enrollment will be allowed to maintain their F1 status if they are unable to choose not to enter the U.S. and attend on campus classes. This exception has been approved through the 2021-22 academic year at this time.

### **Employment as an independent contractor while the student is overseas**

For a very limited number of students who are not eligible to be hired/paid as graduate assistants while they are located overseas, it *may* be possible to employ them as independent contractors. If the student was promised and had accepted a UW GA-ship, any employment as an independent contractor must be *in addition to* a GTFF funding award equivalent to the tuition & fee amount originally offered. Although overseas students who were not promised or accepted GA funding may be employed as independent contractors without an appropriate GTFF award, programs are strongly encouraged to arrange GTFF awards for such students whenever possible. Please note that, budgetarily, independent contractors are paid as “Professional Services” not from the GA stipends budget. Any unbudgeted transfer between expenditure classifications requires presidential approval and may not exceed 10% of the Org’s or Division’s Total Expenses budget or \$100,000, whichever is less without Board of Trustees approval ([UW Regulation 7-1](#)). Before beginning the contract process in the system, please send the services agreement to Michele Peck ([mpeck@uwyo.edu](mailto:mpeck@uwyo.edu)) before proceeding further. If Presidential approval is required, OGE will pursue it. Michele will work with the appropriate offices to help facilitate these hires. Do not submit a Graduate Assistant requisition for any student to be hired via the independent contractor route.

#### Crucially:

- Please direct the student to investigate any local legal or tax implications of being employed by UW while they are located outside of the U.S. UW Legal, ISS and the UW Tax Office are **not** able to provide information on the legal and tax implications for countries other than the U.S.
- Departments must immediately terminate any independent contractor employment upon a student’s entry into the United States since continued independent contractor employment could be considered a violation of the student’s F1 status.

### **How to apply for the GTFF program**

If a graduate program would like to request authorization to self-fund a Graduate Tuition & Fees Fellowship, please complete the attached form and submit via email to [GradEd@uwyo.edu](mailto:GradEd@uwyo.edu). The target date for submission is July 1, 2021. Forms submitted after this date will be considered as time and resources allow. Prior to submission, I recommend that you consult with the following as needed in order to assess a student’s eligibility:

- For student travel, immigration and visa issues: the International Students & Scholars Office’s [International Topics and Issues](#), [Current Immigration Related Presidential Proclamations, Executive Orders, and Other Issues of Concern](#), and [COVID-related Enrollment Information for UW Faculty and Advisor Use](#) webpages.
- The UW Tax Office (766-2821) regarding the tax implications for international students who will be employed while overseas.
- UW Legal (766-4997) regarding any relevant import/export regulations related to making a GTFF award and especially if you intend to employ a student as a GA or an independent contractor to fulfill duties while overseas.

## Fall 2021 Graduate Tuition & Fees Fellowship for International Students

### Request Form

Please convert this completed page and all attached documents into a single PDF

Graduate student's name (last name, first):

W #:

Continuing or New (mark one)

Degree Program Name

Degree Level: Master's or PhD (mark one)

Advisor's Name:

Name of person completing form (should be program's graduate coordinator, director or department head):

- 1) *Intended funding source for the GTFF award. What funding will be used to pay for the student's tuition and fees for the Fall 2020 semester? Please note that OGE is not able to provide funding for GTFF awards for FY22, and all GTFF awards must be funded via other sources. OGE GTA funding allocations may be used to fund GTFF awards if the student will also be able to fulfill appropriate GTA duties (and will need to be hired as an independent contractor, see above).*
  
- 2) *Please provide a brief explanation of why the student is unable to enter the United States and come to campus (attach any supporting documentation, if available). Please note that OGE will consult with the UW Office of International Students & Scholars on each GTFF request in order to ensure that the student's absence from campus is justified.*
  
- 3) *Please attach the program's offer letter to the student in which graduate assistantship funding was offered. Please also attach written acceptance of this GA funding offer by the student. Both documents must be dated.*
  
- 4) *Level of original GA offer: half (10 hrs/week),  $\frac{3}{4}$  (15 hrs/week), or full (20 hrs/week)  
(mark one)*
  
- 5) *Please explain why the student cannot be hired & employed as a regular graduate assistant while they are located overseas. Provide any documentation, if available.*
  
- 6) *Does the program intend to hire the student as an independent contractor in order to fulfill GA duties while the student is overseas?*

Please submit this form and any supporting documentation as a single PDF to [GradEd@uwyo.edu](mailto:GradEd@uwyo.edu).