

# Graduate Financial Aid Policies and Procedures Handbook

Office of Graduate Studies  
3101 Sadler Hall

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## **Overview: Graduate Appointments Policies and Procedures**

This handbook addresses policies and procedures for assigning and disbursing funding, as well as guidelines for awarding and supervising graduate assistantships. It is intended for graduate students, department and college administrators and assistants, Graduate Financial Aid and Human Resources staff, and any others involved with assigning and implementing graduate student appointments, tuition awards, and stipends or other pay. Specific questions about policies and procedures for awarding graduate aid should be addressed to the Dean of Graduate Studies or the Graduate Financial Aid Advisor, Sadler 3101.

### **Purpose and Sources of Support**

Financial support for graduate students furthers the academic mission of this University, and enables awarded students to make efficient progress toward their degrees. During their studies at TCU, most graduate students receive support from one or more sources.

TCU supports graduate students through fellowships, assistantships/instructorships (hereafter referred to simply as “assistantships”, except where a distinction between the two is necessary) in consideration of graduate assistantship duties, or other student or tuition awards for program-specific purposes. Funding originates from three primary sources: graduate financial aid budget through the Office of Graduate Studies, program unit sources, and external funding from grants or gifts.

Rules, regulations, and restrictions depend on the source of support; some are restricted to U.S. citizens; some are available only to students who qualify under federal need-based criteria; others carry restrictions on undertaking any additional employment during the tenure of the award. In some circumstances, receiving financial support from one source could prohibit additional support from another. Because graduate students often receive funding from multiple sources, it is important that students and staff understand and adhere to the collective requirements of all funding sources.

Most graduate financial support is determined by academic units who administer specific graduate programs (hereafter called “graduate program units”) on the basis of academic merit and availability of funding. Assistantships and fellowships support both doctoral students and master’s students.

### **Key Assistantship Policies**

1. Financial support allows graduate students to work on their studies, enabling them to make expeditious progress towards their degree. For this reason:
  - a. Graduate students must be enrolled in a degree-seeking program in order to receive a stipend or tuition support.
  - b. The total of all concurrent assistantship appointments for one non-international student is not to exceed 27 hours of duties per week. Any exceptions to this must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Vice Chancellor for Human Resources and may require benefits for the student paid by assigning units.
  - c. International students and other visa holders are governed by the appropriate immigration regulations limiting the number of hours they may hold assistantship duties while in the United States to no more than 20 hours per week.

2. Assistantship appointments provide stipends and/or tuition in exchange for service (teaching, research, or administrative support). The graduate student assistant is governed by an agreement regarding the maximum hours of work per week for which the student will be expected to hold duties. The teaching, research, or administrative support to be performed must advance the student's academic and professional training, and must be relevant to the student's field of study or professional intentions post-graduation.
3. A fellowship award is made without the expectation of service to the unit or University.
4. Hourly employment for services the student provides which do not relate to the student's field of study or professional preparation are considered "work for hire" and therefore do not carry associated tuition allowance or stipend from the graduate financial aid budget. Generally such employment is by units other than the graduate program unit. These are subject to the same 27 hours limit in total of assistantship and work for hire hourly expectations.
5. Assistantship appointments are 9 or 12 month periods. Stipends are disbursed in two-week increments throughout the 9 or 12 month appointment. In the case of limited funding or student availability (due to graduation, illness, other employment, or similar) half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) appointments of one (1) semester are possible.
6. International students must show they have financial support (either from TCU or from another source) before they can be issued a visa to come to TCU.
7. Acceptance of a TCU award obliges a student to inform the graduate program unit of any other aid received. The TCU award may be adjusted to insure adherence to requirements for all aid received.
8. If a conflict exists between University and College/Department policy, University policy takes precedence.

## **Graduate Financial Aid Award Categories**

The University recognizes six types of graduate financial awards. The following award categories provide partial or whole tuition awards and often include a stipend which will be divided over the length of the appointment: usually 9 or 12 months. Stipend amounts are determined by the coordinator of the graduate program unit or other awarding unit.

### **Fellowships**

Fellowship recipients are not required to support the academic missions of the university through duties. Fellowship awards provide financial assistance through tuition awards and/or a stipend. Fellowships are awarded by the head of each graduate program unit and awards are disbursed at the beginning of each semester. Graduate Fellows may be encouraged to take additional semester hours and/or participate in professional development and leadership roles based on the needs and expectations of the graduate program unit.

Stipends To Attract Remarkable Students (STARS) are special Fellowship awards added onto regular assistantship or fellowship awards as a recruitment enticement for exceptional program applicants. There are no additional duties associated with the STARS stipend regardless of the initial regular award. STARS stipends are provided for 3 years for doctoral student awardees, and for 2 years for master level students.

### **Assistantships**

Graduate assistantships are opportunities for TCU graduate students to advance their studies and careers through meaningful contributions to the academic missions of the university. Graduate student assistants work closely with TCU faculty and staff while: supporting the University's administrative infrastructure; generating new knowledge, creative activities, and artifacts through scholarly endeavors; and teaching undergraduate students, either as teaching assistants or instructors of record.

TCU's Academic Engagement points are centered on the Teacher-Scholar and Student-Scholar models. As graduate students are in transition between these two models, it is expected that students may hold various assistantships during their graduate career. If a student is awarded an assistantship, hiring for additional, concurrent assistantship positions must be approved through the TCU Office of Graduate Studies and will be added onto their current assistantship. This will ensure students are committed to no more than the maximum allowed 27 hours per week. During the academic year, international students may work no more than 20 hours per week in assistantship duties, per visa requirements. Awards and assignments will be determined by each graduate program unit and the awarding unit may require awardees maintain full-time status.

Outside employment, including work for hire at TCU, for students holding assistantships is usually not allowed. The University assumes that the student's primary obligation is toward graduate study. The program coordinator and the dean of the appropriate graduate program unit reserve the right to review any outside employment and require the student modify the commitment to the outside employment or relinquish the financial aid appointment.

### **Graduate Assistantships**

Graduate Assistants (GAs) assist with program-related work for a graduate program unit, or other awarding unit. GAs are assigned to departments or graduate colleges (units) and directors of academic programs rather than to assist individual faculty or staff members with research or teaching duties.

### **Graduate Instructorships**

The opportunity to teach an independent section of a lecture or lab course is vital for the development of graduate students as well as for their future careers. Graduate Instructors (GIs) usually teach full sections of undergraduate classes. They are recommended by the coordinator of their graduate program unit and appointed by the Dean or Dean's representative of the course program unit. To be eligible to teach undergraduate courses, GIs must hold at least 18 earned credit hours of graduate work in the discipline of the course. Doctoral students who have completed a master's degree may teach master's level courses, depending on the discipline and determined by the coordinator of the graduate program unit. Maximum teaching assignment for a GI is one (1) writing intensive course, two (2) lecture courses, or three (3) labs each semester. These assignments carry a work load of no more than 20 hours per week.

Graduate Instructors are instructors of record for lecture courses or supervisors of complete lab courses and are responsible for all course preparation and research, supervising of Teaching Assistants assigned to their courses/labs, and hold ultimate responsibility for grading, equipment care, ordering textbooks, and holding office hours for their courses. GIs are not adjunct faculty.

### **Research Assistantships**

Demonstrating the Student-Scholar model by offering students the opportunity to participate in faculty-led research projects allows Research Assistants (RAs) to experience the various stages of completing a focused research project. RAs provide research support to designated faculty members through: experiment design; data collection; proofreading or copyediting written or other presentations of results; managing correspondence related to the research project; and/or scheduling, organizing, or completing library, online, or field research. These appointments are typically funded by grants.

Though they may have the opportunity to participate in courses related to faculty research projects, RAs are not considered teaching support; their duties are primarily research functions.

### **Teaching Assistantships**

Teaching Assistants (TAs) perform work relating to the Teacher-Scholar Model, blending experiences of teaching and scholarship as they assist a TCU faculty member or GI. TAs support core teaching duties within each graduate program such as: monitoring undergraduate laboratories; supporting large lecture sections through attending class, taking attendance, calculating averages, grading exams, monitoring online discussions; and providing occasional lectures. TAs may also assist a professor through: data collection; proofreading or copyediting written materials; managing correspondence; and/or library,

online, or field research that is related to the course development and delivery. These assignments carry a work load of no more than 20 hours per week.

TA duties are primarily related to teaching. They are not, however, instructors of record or adjunct faculty and do not carry full responsibility for the courses they assist.

**Merited Tuition**

Some awards of tuition only (no stipends) are made without the expectation or requirement of duties performed by the awardee. These are usually one or two semester awards of less than 6 tuition hours each semester.

## **Funding Sources for Graduate Financial Aid Awards**

### **University Budget – Office of Graduate Studies**

This aid is disbursed each fiscal year as an allocation to college officers on behalf of the University by the Dean of Graduate Studies. Allocations are based on University goals and principles; capacity for students in the graduate programs; number of assistantships needed to support the graduate unit in administrative, teaching, and research tasks; and length of time to complete graduate degrees. This aid is intended to recruit high-quality graduate students to TCU, enable students to gain valuable discipline specific experience, and assist departments and support units. While each graduate program unit determines the specific use of its annual allotment, this aid should be used to fund assistantships through tuition awards and stipends and should not be used to pay fees, whether annual or initial, related to the graduate program unit or to pay signing bonuses or equipment allowances of any sort. Assistantship duties are possible and usually expected on all awards valued at six (6) or more tuition hours per semester (see assistantship duties section for examples of duties and hours expected). Stipends with duties attached must be disbursed to students through Human Resources, and students will be expected to perform their graduate assistantship duties for a specified number of hours each week. Tuition Awards are transferred to student accounts the day prior to tuition billing, and stipends are disbursed in bi-weekly payments through direct deposit or check.

Graduate Studies has some funds for recruiting exceptional applicants that are used to increase stipends for the first few years of their TCU appointment (see STARS in the Fellowship section for details). University budget funds for other fellowship appointments must have special permission from the Dean of Graduate Studies.

### **External Funding, Grants, Donations, Revenue Funds**

Graduate Assistantships, Research Assistantships, and Fellowships may be funded by an externally sponsored grant or contract, or a gift to the University for this purpose. These generally support specific projects or programs and must adhere to the written agreements with granting offices or donors (see Graduate Student Eligibility section for additional grant requirements).

Fellowships are generally provided from endowed funds donated for this purpose. Examples include Green, Schmidt, and Radford Fellowships. Some annual gifts may also provide for Fellowship appointments. TCU abides by the donors' wishes when making fellowship appointments.

### **TCU Program Unit Sources**

Some program units (academic or otherwise) have endowed funds, annual donations to the graduate program unit for graduate aid, and funds the unit designates from budget or generated through fees that are intended to support graduate students. Endowments can be awarded to students as (named) fellowships for tuition and stipends. Graduate program units and colleges may also provide assistantships with duties from budgeted or donated funds under their control.

## **Funding Disbursements and Taxes**

### **Fellowships**

Fellowship stipends that do not require duties will be disbursed to student accounts at the start of each semester. No taxes are withheld on fellowship payments for U.S. citizens and permanent residents, but some or all of the fellowship payment may be taxable income to the extent it exceeds course-related expenses. Taxes are withheld for international students depending on the student's country of residence or citizenship. It is the student's responsibility to report the fellowship income appropriately when filing a tax return.

### **Tuition Awards**

Graduate students may be granted tuition awards for all or part of their tuition. The maximum award is for the total amount of their registration from June through May of the next year (i.e., one fiscal year). There is no minimum award. Tuition awards cannot be made retroactively to a previous semester, nor can they be carried forward to a subsequent fiscal year.

Merited tuition and employee benefit tuition may be taxable.

### **Stipends**

Stipends are awarded for most assistantships. The amount of the stipend varies by program and the period of the assistantship. When funds do not support a full stipend award, graduate program units may award a lesser amount than usual for up to 10 hours of duties and may make awards for a single academic semester. Non-program units may make stipend awards to current assistantship holders for additional duties as long as the total duties do not obligate for more than 27 hours of duties per week.

Stipend payments are taxable.

*Tax information here is a statement of general applicability. It is not to be construed as legal advice. Students seeking particular advice should consult with the appropriate University officials and/or seek competent professional assistance.*

## **Graduate Student Assistant/Fellow Eligibility**

### **Enrollment Status**

Students must be enrolled in at least one hour each regular semester and at least one hour total for all summer terms to be eligible for an award during that semester. Most awards will stipulate that students must maintain full-time enrollment during the award period. The definition of full-time varies based on the graduate program of study and the degree completion status. In general, students enrolled for 6 or more hours will be considered full-time. If a student has successfully completed all coursework, including thesis and dissertation hours and lacks only the thesis or dissertation completion, the student must be engaged in research and enrolled for a minimum of one hour of thesis or dissertation credit during the fall and spring semesters in order to qualify for graduate financial aid awards. This applies to summer as well, when the award covers any summer terms. Undergraduates, post baccalaureate students, non-degree students as well as students enrolled through Continuing Education are not eligible for any graduate financial aid awards.

### **Outside Employment**

Graduate Assistants are not allowed to work additional off-campus or on-campus jobs without written permission from the Dean overseeing their graduate program unit or from the Dean of Graduate Studies.

### **Language Training**

It is the responsibility of each academic department to determine that each graduate student who holds an assistantship with instructional responsibilities (Teaching Assistant or Graduate Instructor) has appropriate oral proficiency in English. Instructional responsibilities extend to both classroom and laboratory settings. GIs and TAs shall be deemed to have the appropriate oral proficiency in English by meeting one of the following criteria:

- Speaks English as a first language;
- Has an undergraduate degree from a U.S. university where they studied in residence;
- Has submitted a TOEFL iBT speaking section score of 26 or higher, or a Versant score of 70 or higher, or a SPEAK test score of 50 or above.

Graduate Assistants with instructional responsibilities who have not met at least one of the above criteria must be evaluated by the Director of the TCU Intensive English Program for appropriate oral proficiency. Graduate student assistants who are not assessed as prepared for their duties may be required to participate in the Intensive English Program until they achieve appropriate English speaking level. If the assistantship with instructional responsibilities has already begun, the test result will have no bearing on the funding for the duration of that appointment. However, graduate student assistants may be reassigned responsibilities corresponding to their level of proficiency. Reappointment to an instructional position will not be made unless the appropriate level is achieved. International students should be advised that they are required to complete all testing requirements immediately after arrival on the TCU campus.

### **Aid Funded by Grants**

All students whose awards are funded by grants, whether from internal or external sources, must meet any criteria specified in the grant agreement. Graduate students are required to take TCU's on-campus Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training during the first semester of their grant-related work. RCR training is offered during the first week of each semester, and information can be found on the TCU Research and TCU Graduate Studies websites: [research.tcu.edu](http://research.tcu.edu) and

[graduate.tcu.edu](http://graduate.tcu.edu). Funding will be terminated if the student does not complete RCR training in a timely manner.

**Assistants Working with Children**

Some appointments, particularly those involving contact with children, require a clear background check before the appointment can be finalized. Units with such obligations should specify this requirement in appointment letters. Students expecting to work with children should check with their supervisor as soon as possible to ensure the background check is completed in a timely manner.

## **Provisions of Appointments**

### **Period of Appointment**

Most commonly, assistants and fellows are appointed from mid-August through mid-May or June through May. Appointments of one semester or for a period of a few months are possible, but not usual. All graduate appointments terminate at the end of the specified appointment period. No appointment or reappointment of a graduate student to an assistantship commits the University to reappoint that same student at some later time. However, a doctoral student *may* receive re-appointment and serve for a second, a third, a fourth, or even a fifth year and a MA/MS/MFA/MBA student may be awarded up to two years of funding depending on the graduate program unit policies and the availability of funds.

### **Orientation for Teaching Appointments**

All first time teaching appointments (either TA or GI) must attend an orientation to teaching workshop developed or approved by the TCU Koehler Center for Teaching Excellence. Graduate students in this category will receive information about the orientation during the summer prior to their first appointment as TA or GI. Any time a graduate student spends in training required by the University or the graduate program unit before the appointment begins, whether provided by the department or the University, shall be counted towards the total number of required hours for the subsequent appointment period.

### **Workload and Duties**

Graduate students are limited to University duties/obligations of 27 hours per week (not counting course enrollments). The total of all concurrent assistantship appointments for one student is not to exceed 27 hours of duties per week. Any exceptions to this, including particular assistantships that require more than 27 hours, must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Vice Chancellor for Human Resources and may require benefits for the student.

If a graduate student has additional work for compensation on campus, the total commitment of assistantship and additional work must be no more than 27 hours without approval as stated above. Assistants should inform the coordinator of their graduate unit of additional commitments as soon as they are known.

International students with F1 and J1 Visas may not work more than 20 hours per week while classes are in session. Exceptions are not usually possible, but if one is contemplated it must have the approval of the TCU Director of International Student Services before a commitment beyond 20 hours is made.

Assistantship duties vary widely but generally fall in one or more of these categories:

- Teaching duties. Duties include responsibility for planning, teaching, and assessing student achievement. Responsibility for preparation of laboratory materials for undergraduate lab courses is also usual. Assistants may prepare assignments and grade assignments and examinations.
- Research duties. Research duties vary widely by discipline. In general these may include general library/archival research; planning, conducting, and recording results of experiments; analysis of data; authoring professional presentations and papers; presentations of results.

- Professional administrative duties. These duties should relate to the discipline of study or to the professional career plans of the students. Examples include planning and attending professional meetings; planning, conducting, and assessing effectiveness of undergraduate and graduate student training and professional development activities; assisting with international study programming for students at all levels; and general activities related to development programs for faculty and future faculty career development.

Personal duties such as housesitting, watering plants, pet care, or running errands are not appropriate duties for graduate student assistants. Clerical duties or other work that does not professionally enhance and provide educational value toward the student's academic and career goals are also not appropriate assistantship duties, though they may be appropriate as "work for hire" appointments.

Fellowships do not ordinarily have any expected or assigned duties.

### **Supervisors**

Each graduate student assistant will be assigned a supervisor who is responsible for assigning tasks, supervising, and evaluating the job performance of the graduate assistant. The supervisor may perform an evaluation of each student and submit to the appropriate supervising unit and graduate program unit each year of the assignment. Appendix D includes a sample Graduate Student Assistant Evaluation Form.

### **Additional Compensation/Multiple Appointments**

A full or part-time graduate student assistant may receive additional compensation from University sources in the form of other assistantships, hourly work, or fellowships as long as the hours worked are under the 27 hour limit and 20 hour limit for international students described under "Workload and Duties" above. Students must have special permission from the coordinator of their graduate program unit or the Dean of Graduate Studies in order to take on multiple appointments.

### **Summer Session Appointments**

In addition to regular academic year appointments, graduate students, who have begun their academic course of study, may be appointed to assistantships in the summer. This is a common practice in some disciplines and is unusual in others. Check with the graduate program coordinator before assuming availability of summer assistantships. Most summer appointments require that students enroll full-time by the requirements of their graduate program unit. In general, students must be enrolled in at least one hour total for all summer terms to be eligible for any assistantship during the summer semester.

### **Time Off and Holidays**

Graduate student assistants are not usually expected to be in attendance or perform duties on university holidays. Research assistants and other graduate assistants who may be required to perform duties on a university holiday due to the nature of their continuing assignment shall receive compensatory holiday time off. Time off may also be granted for jury duty, illness, or family leave at the discretion of the dean overseeing the graduate program unit.

When the university is closed due to emergency conditions, graduate student assistants shall also be released - this includes snow, ice or other weather related emergencies.

### **Leave of Absence**

A leave of absence may be granted by the dean of the college or school of the graduate program unit. Students should consult the appropriate Dean's office for requirements and procedures. Such a leave is not usually "with pay".

### **Health Insurance**

Some students will be eligible for a Graduate Financial Aid Health Insurance Award (HIA). These conditions of eligibility apply:

- Student has a Fellowship award of full tuition and at least a \$9000 stipend.

or

- Student has an assistantship or instructorship with full tuition, at least a \$9000 stipend (\$4500 stipend for fall if graduating in December), and at least 10 hours of duties/week.

HIA provides three-quarters (3/4) of the cost of the TCU student health insurance for students who qualify and elect to receive the insurance. Students will be informed as to their eligibility before the election period and must elect within the specified time period each year. Students with assistantships that begin in spring semester and who meet the eligibility above may be able to elect the insurance and receive HIA for spring and summer, subject to the availability of funding.

Letters of appointment for assistantships and fellowships for newly recruited students may include information about the eligibility for health insurance. If the student will be eligible by accepting the award offer, the following paragraph may be added to the offer letter:

"Your award makes you eligible to receive a grant from TCU that will cover three-quarters (3/4) of the cost of the student health insurance. You will receive a notification of the grant, the insurance coverage, and the election period for electing or declining the TCU student health insurance coverage. Students who do not elect within the specified period will not receive the grant."

## **Awarding Assistantships and Fellowships**

### **Requesting a New Assistantship Allocation**

The graduate program unit will communicate needs to the dean or dean's associate responsible for graduate issues in the college/school, determine stipend and tuition requirements, and provide a justification. These should be submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies by the college/unit dean (or dean's representative) prior to budget request meetings during the fall semester before the position is needed. Requests for Graduate Assistants may be made by units that do not have graduate programs. A form for requesting support from the graduate financial aid budget for a GA is included in Appendix D.

New fellowships are available when endowment or department funds exist for it. Confer with Finance, Development, and Graduate Studies for the availability of appropriate funds.

### **Awarding the Assistantship, Instructorship or Fellowship to a Graduate Student**

Selection will be made by the graduate program unit or the office holding the allocation funding the award. If a student from one program has been selected for the award in another unit, the unit holding the allocation should make the official award.

Note well: Before a final selection and hours expected are determined, the award makers should check the Student PAF/Review Current Jobs page on PeopleSoft and be sure the student awardee is not already committed for more than 27 hours per week. Any appointment that will obligate the student for more than 27 hours requires permission from the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, and may require benefits, including health care, to be paid by the awarding unit.

### **The Offer Letter**

The college/school or unit will notify the selected student/applicant of the assistantship or fellowship award in writing, with instructions as to the process for accepting the offer. Template letters are provided in Appendix A. The letter must include:

- a. the type of award (RA, GA, TA, GI, Fellowship, Merited Tuition),
- b. for assistantships – a brief description of duties or instructions for obtaining the assignment, including the maximum hours of expected duties per week.
- c. for assistantships -- the supervisor or instructions for obtaining supervisor.
- d. the minimum course load required,
- e. the amount of stipend and tuition award,
- f. the period of the award,
- g. and instructions for accepting the award according to CSGS agreement.

Each graduate assistant will be assigned a supervisor who will be responsible for assigning tasks, supervising, and evaluating the job performance of the graduate assistant. If known at the time of the appointment, this information may be included in the award letter. If not included, a statement of who will assign the supervisor should be in the letter.

International students may be informed of English speaking requirements if appropriate. International students who will have testing requirements should be advised that they must

complete all testing immediately after arrival on campus. (See section on Eligibility for more information about language requirements and testing.)

### Arranging for stipend and tuition payments

Once the student has accepted an appointment in writing, a Graduate Financial Aid Request Form (GFARF) should be prepared to indicate the source of all funds for stipend and tuition, the type of award, and the amount of stipend and tuition hours covered. A sample GFARF is in Appendix B. The GFARF is available as an electronic form here: [graduate.tcu.edu/forms/](http://graduate.tcu.edu/forms/). Send the GFARF to Graduate Financial Aid and to [GraduateAid@tcu.edu](mailto:GraduateAid@tcu.edu).

If the student is a *first time assistantship* awardee, direct the student to TCU Career and Professional Development in Jarvis Hall to complete a Personnel Data Form (PDF). They will need: social security card, picture ID, a bank deposit slip for direct deposit, and I9 (for international students only). These documents must be provided to Career and Professional Development not later than the fifteenth (15<sup>th</sup>) of the month in which the assistantship begins. The PDF should be brought back to the awarding office and submitted to Human Resources.

For all assistantship awardees,

- a. If the stipend is being paid from a grant, the grant Personal Investigator (PI) must sign the GFARF indicating approval to use grant funds. Send the GFARF to Graduate Financial Aid and to [GraduateAid@tcu.edu](mailto:GraduateAid@tcu.edu). Also, the PI or awardee must complete a Grant Employment Form (GEF), obtain the PI signature, and send to TCU Sponsored Programs. Grants administration will see that a Personnel Action Form (PAF) is completed and sent to Human Resources. A Sample GEF is in Appendix B.
- b. For all other assistantships, the awardee completes the electronic Student PAF, selecting the appropriate category of assistantship and enters the stipend amount and the account codes for the stipend. Send the GFARF to Graduate Financial Aid and to [GraduateAid@tcu.edu](mailto:GraduateAid@tcu.edu). Sample screen shots of PAF and GPAF are in Appendix C.

For all *fellowship* awards, no PAF is needed. Complete the GFARF and send it to Graduate Financial Aid and to [GraduateAid@tcu.edu](mailto:GraduateAid@tcu.edu).

### Stipend Disbursement

Assistantship stipends are paid out every two weeks, according to the bi-weekly payroll calendar provided by TCU Human Resources. To insure the timely receipt of the first paycheck, appointments of assistantships should be made, and the completed, fully signed acceptance received by the appropriate dean's office or Graduate Studies, at least 1 week before the appointment is scheduled to begin. Retroactive appointments are not generally permitted and no graduate student should begin duties until he or she has signed and returned the official appointment letter.

The Fellowship stipend (including STARS stipends) will be paid directly to the student's account at the start of each semester covered by the award.

### Required Acknowledgement

Awardees should be informed of any steps necessary before the assignment of the award is complete. At the least, awardees must acknowledge their acceptance by signing the award letter

and returning it to the awarding office. Offer letters and acknowledgement forms should be kept on file for the duration of the student's study at TCU.

**International Students**

Offers to international students are to be made contingent upon verification of their identity and eligibility to work in the United States as required by the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. International students are responsible for obtaining and providing the appropriate identity verification and work authorization. Failure to provide identity verification and work authorization prior to the commencement of their duties may result in a withdrawal of the assistantship or fellowship offer.

**Sample letters**

Awarding units should use the templates in the Appendix A to this handbook which are provided by the Office of Graduate Studies and meet all requirements for award letters.

## **Amendments, Termination, and Rights**

### **Amendments**

A graduate assistant award may be modified prior to the end of the appointment period for any of the following reasons:

1. The student has not been making acceptable academic progress, as determined by the coordinator of the student's program of study.
2. The student has enrolled for fewer hours than the awarded tuition hours.
3. An addition to the award is recommended and supported by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

The student and Graduate Financial Aid must be notified in writing of modifications to the original award. Unless additional duties or less funding is part of the modification, it is not necessary that the amendment be signed and returned by the student.

### **Resignation from an Assistantship**

If during the course of the semester a student needs to resign from the assistantship, it is expected that thirty (30) day's written notice will be given. Should a student resign from an assistantship before completing 62.5% (5/8) of the assignment, all tuition benefits may be forfeited and the student may be held responsible for the tuition that has been posted to the student's account.

### **Termination**

A graduate assistantship or fellowship award may be terminated prior to the end of the appointment period for any of the following reasons:

1. The student is no longer enrolled in the graduate program, or is deemed ineligible in the case of an international student without proper credentials.
2. The student is registered for fewer graduate semester credit hours than full-time as stipulated in the appointment letter.
3. The student's performance is determined to be unsatisfactory by the awarding academic dean.
4. The student has committed an act of academic misconduct, as described in the [Graduate Catalog](#).

The student and Graduate Financial Aid must be notified in writing upon termination of any assistant. If possible the termination should go into effect at the end of a semester, with the student given notice (thirty) 30 days prior. Termination from the assistantship for any reason will require the student to assume responsibility for all tuition for the semester.

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

TCU is a signatory on the [Council of Graduate Schools \(CGS\) Resolution Regarding Graduate Scholars, Fellows, Trainees and Assistants](#), which states that students are not required to inform TCU of a decision on attending a university or accepting an assistantship until April 15. However, the offer letter may encourage them to respond sooner and let them know that an early response will be helpful to TCU planning for the coming year. A copy of the CGS resolution is to be provided to each awardee with their award offer letter. A PDF version is available at [graduate.tcu.edu/forms/](http://graduate.tcu.edu/forms/).

Graduate assistants must be notified in writing of all decisions that affect their status as an assistant/instructor. This includes advance notifications of evaluation procedures and a summary of the evaluation by the graduate unit. It is important to resolve, as early as possible, any disagreement

which may arise between assistants and supervisors. Should a problem arise in the work assignment, the graduate assistant has the right to initiate a grievance or to appeal a decision through the specified channels.

The student shall first inform the supervisor of the problem and, if necessary, appeal to the department head or the supervisor of the department head. If the matter cannot be resolved in an informal manner, the formal grievance procedure below is to be followed:

1. If the grievance is not resolved in discussion with the immediate supervisor, a formal, written complaint is filed with the department head within five (5) working days after the conference described above. The department head must give a written decision on the grievance, within five (5) working days after receipt of the complaint.
2. Either the immediate supervisor or the student may appeal the department head decision to the college/school dean. The written appeal must be filed no later than ten (10) working days after receipt of the department head's decision on the grievance.
3. If the grievance is not resolved by this decision, a written appeal must be filed with the Dean of Graduate Studies not later than ten (10) working days after receipt of the college/school dean's decision on the grievance. A Grievance Committee, composed of members of the Graduate Council, will be convened by the Dean to hear any grievance. A decision is expected within fifteen (15) working days during regular, long semesters. The decision time may be longer if the grievance process extends to the summer terms due to unavailability of Graduate Council members.



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## APPENDIX A: Sample Award Letters

### FELLOWSHIP AWARD

[Date]

ID # [ ]

[Mr./Ms] [Recipient Name]

[Street Address]

[City, State Zip]

Dear [Appropriate student name]:

I am pleased to inform you that you have been awarded the [name of fellowship, donor, or other] Fellowship [For new student only: and to offer you admission to the PhD/MBA, etc. program of study] at TCU. The fellowship carries a total value of [calculate value and insert here]. You will receive a tuition award to cover [number of hours] semester hours for Summer 20XX, [number of hours] semester hours for Fall 20XX and [number of hours] semester hours for Spring 20XX. You will receive a stipend of [total amount of stipend] for the period [date if summer, otherwise Fall 20XX through Spring 20XX]. Fellowships are prestigious awards to students who have excellent credentials and in whom the graduate faculty and dean have high confidence. You are to be congratulated on your impressive record. [Note newly admitted students summer award may be for the following summer, and in the subsequent year their letter must state: "This award includes hours and stipend previously awarded to you for Summer 20XX."]

[For students eligible for Health Insurance Award (HIA):

Your award makes you eligible to receive a grant from TCU that will cover three-quarters (3/4) of the cost of the student health insurance. You will receive a notification of the grant, the insurance coverage, and the election period for electing or declining the TCU student health insurance coverage. Students who do not elect within the specified period will not receive the grant.]

There are no duties or service requirements associated with the fellowship appointment. No taxes are withheld on fellowship payments for U.S. citizens and permanent residents, but some or all of the fellowship payment may be taxable income to the extent it exceeds course-related expenses. Sometimes taxes are withheld for international students depending on the student's country. The IRS does not require institutions to report fellowship payments; it is the student's responsibility to report the fellowship income while filing a tax return.

You may accept a partial graduate assistantship or other part-time compensated employment at TCU during the time you hold this fellowship; however, your total employment may not exceed 20 hours per week. We hope this fellowship award will provide helpful support as you complete your degree.

If you find your enrollment will be different from the hours/semester indicated above, please notify the graduate program coordinator in your field of study [or insert name here] as soon as possible. Note that you are responsible for tuition charges for any hours exceeding your tuition award. Remember that you are required to be on campus as a full-time student and to enroll for the requisite number of hours that enable you to continue regular progress toward completion of your degree requirements.

[For returning students:

To accept this appointment, please sign and return a copy of this letter. This offer is made under conditions described in the accompanying "Resolution Regarding Scholars, Fellows, Trainees, and Graduate Assistants" adopted by the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States to which TCU is a signatory.]

[For newly admitted students where the offer is also an offer of admission:

We would like to hear from you as soon as you make a decision regarding enrollment in our program but you

must respond no later than April 15, 20XX. We may withdraw our offer if we have not heard from you by that time. This offer is made under conditions described in the accompanying "Resolution Regarding Scholars, Fellows, Trainees, and Graduate Assistants" adopted by the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States to which TCU is a signatory. By agreement of the member institutions of the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), you are free to postpone your decision until April 15, or change your decision before that date. After that, you need a release from the program you have already accepted in order to accept an alternative offer. By accepting our offer, you also agree to abide by the terms and conditions outlined above.

To accept the admission offer and Fellowship appointment, please sign and return a copy of this letter to [my office]. If I do not hear back from you or receive a signed copy of this letter by April 15, I will presume you have declined the admission and appointment and it will be withdrawn.]

We recommend that you keep a copy of this signed letter for your records. If you have any questions regarding this award, please contact [professor name] at 817-257-xxxx or [[professor@tcu.edu](mailto:professor@tcu.edu)].

Yours truly,

[Name]

[Associate Dean/ Dean/ Unit head of awarding unit]

cc: [Graduate Program director of student's accepting program]  
Graduate Financial Aid

- I accept the [admission offer and the] fellowship offer for the [20XX-20XX academic year].
- I decline the offer.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP AWARD

[Date]

ID # [ ]

[Mr./Ms] [Recipient Name]

[Street Address]

[City, State Zip]

Dear [Appropriate student name]:

I am pleased to offer you [For included new admit only: admission to the PhD/MA/MS/etc. program and ]a Graduate Assistantship in the [insert name of the graduate program unit or other department] for the academic year [20XX-20XX]. This award carries a total value of [calculate and insert value]. You will receive a tuition award to cover [number of hours] semester hours for Summer 20XX, [number of hours] semester hours for Fall 20XX and [number of hours] semester hours for Spring 20XX. You will receive a stipend of [total amount of stipend] for the period [date if summer, otherwise Fall 20XX through Spring 20XX]. [Note newly admitted students summer award will be for the following summer, and in the subsequent year their letter must state: "This award includes hours and stipend previously awarded to you for Summer 20XX."]

[For students eligible for Health Insurance Award (HIA):

Your award makes you eligible to receive a grant from TCU that will cover three-quarters (3/4) of the cost of the student health insurance. You will receive a notification of the grant, the insurance coverage, and the election period for electing or declining the TCU student health insurance coverage. Students who do not elect within the specified period will not receive the grant.]

This graduate assistantship requires up to [20] hours of duties per week, as assigned and directed by [person who will oversee the duties or indicate how the student will be notified]. Outside employment for students holding financial awards carrying stipends is discouraged. Any outside employment must be approved in advance by the [can be dean of graduate program or dean of awarding unit or similar]. I hope this appointment will prove to be a valuable educational experience for you.

If you find your enrollment will be different from the hours/semester indicated above, please notify the graduate program coordinator in your field of study [or insert name here] as soon as possible. Note that you are responsible for tuition charges for any hours exceeding your tuition award. Remember that you are required to be on campus as a full-time student and to enroll for the requisite number of hours that enable you to continue regular progress toward completion of your degree requirements.

[For returning students:

To accept this appointment, please sign and return a copy of this letter. This offer is made under conditions described in the accompanying "Resolution Regarding Scholars, Fellows, Trainees, and Graduate Assistants" adopted by the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States to which TCU is a signatory.]

[For newly admitted students where the offer is also an offer of admission:

We would like to hear from you as soon as you make a decision regarding enrollment in our program but you must respond no later than April 15, 20XX. We may withdraw our offer if we have not heard from you by that time. This offer is made under conditions described in the accompanying "Resolution Regarding Scholars, Fellows, Trainees, and Graduate Assistants" adopted by the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States to which TCU is a signatory. By agreement of the member institutions of the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), you are free to postpone your decision until April 15, or change your decision before that date. After that, you need a release from the program you have already accepted in order to accept an alternative offer. By accepting our offer, you also agree to abide by the terms and conditions outlined above.

TCU Graduate Financial Aid Policies and Procedures Handbook – 23

To accept the admission offer and Graduate Assistantship appointment, please sign and return a copy of this letter to [my office]. If I do not hear back from you or receive a signed copy of this letter by April 15, I will presume you have declined the admission and appointment and it will be withdrawn.]

We recommend that you keep a copy of this signed letter for your records. If you have any questions regarding this award, please contact [professor name] at 817-257-xxxx or [professor@tcu.edu](mailto:professor@tcu.edu).

Yours truly,

[Name]

[Associate Dean/ Dean/ Unit head of awarding unit]

cc: [Graduate Program director of student's accepting program]  
Graduate Financial Aid

- I accept the [admission offer and the] assistantship offer for the [20XX-20XX academic year].
- I decline the offer.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## GRADUATE INSTRUCTORSHIP AWARD

[Date]

ID # [ ]

[Mr./Ms] [Recipient Name]

[Street Address]

[City, State Zip]

Dear [Appropriate student name]:

I am pleased to offer you [For new admit only: admission to the PhD/MA/MS/etc. program and ]a Graduate Instructorship in the [insert name of the graduate program or department] for the academic year 20XX-20XX. This award carries a total value of [calculate and insert value]. You will receive a tuition award to cover [number of hours] semester hours for Summer 20XX, [number of hours] semester hours for Fall 20XX and [number of hours] semester hours for Spring 20XX. You will receive a stipend of [total amount of stipend] for the period [date if summer, otherwise Fall 20XX through Spring 20XX]. Graduate Instructors are “instructors of record” for lecture or lab courses. These appointments are awarded to students who have excellent credentials and in whom the graduate faculty and dean have high confidence. You are to be congratulated on your selection. I am certain that this appointment will prove to be a valuable educational experience for you. [Note newly admitted students summer award will be for the following summer, and in the subsequent year their letter must state: “This award includes hours and stipend previously awarded to you for Summer 20XX.”]

[For students eligible for Health Insurance Award (HIA):

Your award makes you eligible to receive a grant from TCU that will cover three-quarters (3/4) of the cost of the student health insurance. You will receive a notification of the grant, the insurance coverage, and the election period for electing or declining the TCU student health insurance coverage. Students who do not elect within the specified period will not receive the grant.]

This graduate instructorship requires up to 20 hours of duties per week. You will have responsibility for course preparation, research, supervision of assistants, grading, equipment care, textbook orders, and office hours, as assigned and directed by [person who will oversee the duties or indicate how the student will be notified]. You must be enrolled as a full-time student each semester of the appointment. Outside employment for students holding financial awards carrying stipends is discouraged. Any outside employment must be approved in advance by the [can be dean of graduate program or dean of awarding unit or similar].

If you find your enrollment will be different from the hours/semester indicated above, please notify the graduate program coordinator in your field of study [or insert name here] as soon as possible. Note that you are responsible for tuition charges for any hours exceeding your tuition award. Remember that you are required to be on campus as a full-time student and to enroll for the requisite number of hours that enable you to continue regular progress toward completion of your degree requirements.

[For returning students:

To accept this appointment, please sign and return a copy of this letter. This offer is made under conditions described in the accompanying “Resolution Regarding Scholars, Fellows, Trainees, and Graduate Assistants” adopted by the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States to which TCU is a signatory.]

[For newly admitted students where the offer is also an offer of admission:

We would like to hear from you as soon as you make a decision regarding enrollment in our program but you must respond no later than April 15, 20XX. We may withdraw our offer if we have not heard from you by that time. This offer is made under conditions described in the accompanying “Resolution Regarding Scholars, Fellows, Trainees, and Graduate Assistants” adopted by the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States to which TCU is a signatory. By agreement of the member institutions of the Council of Graduate Schools

(CGS), you are free to postpone your decision until April 15, or change your decision before that date. After that, you need a release from the program you have already accepted in order to accept an alternative offer. By accepting our offer, you also agree to abide by the terms and conditions outlined above.

To accept the admission offer and Graduate Instructorship appointment, please sign and return a copy of this letter to [my office]. If I do not hear back from you or receive a signed copy of this letter by April 15, I will presume you have declined the admission and appointment and it will be withdrawn.]

We recommend that you keep a copy of this signed letter for your records. If you have any questions regarding this award, please contact [professor name] at 817-257-xxxx or [professor@tcu.edu](mailto:professor@tcu.edu).

Yours truly,

[Name]

[Associate Dean/ Dean/ Unit head of awarding unit]

cc: [Graduate Program director of student's accepting program]  
Graduate Financial Aid

- I accept the [admission offer and the] instructorship offer for the [20XX-20XX academic year].
- I decline the offer.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIP AWARD

[Date]

ID # [ ]

[Mr./Ms] [Recipient Name]

[Street Address]

[City, State Zip]

Dear [Appropriate student name]:

I am pleased to offer you [For included new admit only: admission to the PhD/MA/MS/etc. program and ]a Research Assistantship in the [insert name of the graduate program unit or other department] for the academic year 20XX-20XX. This award carries a total value of [calculate and insert value]. You will receive a tuition award to cover [number of hours] semester hours for Summer 20XX, [number of hours] semester hours for Fall 20XX and [number of hours] semester hours for Spring 20XX. You will receive a stipend of [total amount of stipend] for the period [date if summer, otherwise Fall 20XX through Spring 20XX]. [Note newly admitted students summer award will be for the following summer, and in the subsequent year their letter must state: "This award includes hours and stipend previously awarded to you for Summer 20XX."]

[For students eligible for Health Insurance Award (HIA):

Your award makes you eligible to receive a grant from TCU that will cover three-quarters (3/4) of the cost of the student health insurance. You will receive a notification of the grant, the insurance coverage, and the election period for electing or declining the TCU student health insurance coverage. Students who do not elect within the specified period will not receive the grant.]

This research assistantship requires up to [20] hours of duties per week, as assigned and directed by [person who will oversee the duties or indicate how the student will be notified]. Outside employment for students holding financial awards carrying stipends is discouraged. Any outside employment must be approved in advance by the [can be dean of graduate program or dean of awarding unit or similar]. I hope this appointment will prove to be a valuable educational experience for you.

If you find your enrollment will be different from the hours/semester indicated above, please notify the graduate program coordinator in your field of study [or insert name here] as soon as possible. Note that you are responsible for tuition charges for any hours exceeding your tuition award. Remember that you are required to be on campus as a full-time student and to enroll for the requisite number of hours that enable you to continue regular progress toward completion of your degree requirements.

[For returning students:

To accept this appointment, please sign and return a copy of this letter. This offer is made under conditions described in the accompanying "Resolution Regarding Scholars, Fellows, Trainees, and Graduate Assistants" adopted by the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States to which TCU is a signatory.]

[For newly admitted students where the offer is also an offer of admission:

We would like to hear from you as soon as you make a decision regarding enrollment in our program but you must respond no later than April 15, 20XX. We may withdraw our offer if we have not heard from you by that time. This offer is made under conditions described in the accompanying "Resolution Regarding Scholars, Fellows, Trainees, and Graduate Assistants" adopted by the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States to which TCU is a signatory. By agreement of the member institutions of the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), you are free to postpone your decision until April 15, or change your decision before that date. After that, you need a release from the program you have already accepted in order to accept an alternative offer. By accepting our offer, you also agree to abide by the terms and conditions outlined above.

TCU Graduate Financial Aid Policies and Procedures Handbook – 27

To accept the offer and Research Assistantship appointment, please sign and return a copy of this letter to my office. If I do not hear back from you or receive a signed copy of this letter by April 15, I will presume you have declined the admission and appointment and it will be withdrawn.]

We recommend that you keep a copy of this signed letter for your records. If you have any questions regarding this award, please contact [professor name] at 817-257-xxxx or [professor@tcu.edu](mailto:professor@tcu.edu).

Yours truly,

[Name]

[Associate Dean/ Dean/ Unit head of awarding unit]

cc: [Graduate Program director of student's accepting program]  
Graduate Financial Aid

- I accept the [admission offer and the] research assistantship offer for the [20XX-20XX academic year].
- I decline the offer.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP AWARD

[Date]

ID # [ ]

[Mr./Ms] [Recipient Name]

[Street Address]

[City, State Zip]

Dear [Appropriate student name]:

I am pleased to offer you [For included new admit only: admission to the PhD/MA/MS/etc. program and ]a Teaching Assistantship in the [insert name of the graduate program unit or other department] for the academic year 20XX-20XX. This award carries a total value of [calculate and insert value]. You will receive a tuition award to cover [number of hours] semester hours for Summer 20XX, [number of hours] semester hours for Fall 20XX and [number of hours] semester hours for Spring 20XX. You will receive a stipend of [total amount of stipend] for the period [date if summer, otherwise Fall 20XX through Spring 20XX]. [Note newly admitted students summer award will be for the following summer, and in the subsequent year their letter must state: "This award includes hours and stipend previously awarded to you for Summer 20XX."]

[For students eligible for Health Insurance Award (HIA):

Your award makes you eligible to receive a grant from TCU that will cover three-quarters (3/4) of the cost of the student health insurance. You will receive a notification of the grant, the insurance coverage, and the election period for electing or declining the TCU student health insurance coverage. Students who do not elect within the specified period will not receive the grant.]

This teaching assistantship requires up to [20] hours of duties per week, as assigned and directed by [person who will oversee the duties or indicate how the student will be notified]. Your duties will be generally related to the teaching of courses or labs. Outside employment for students holding financial awards carrying stipends is discouraged. Any outside employment must be approved in advance by the [can be dean of graduate program or dean of awarding unit or similar]. I hope this appointment will prove to be a valuable educational experience for you.

If you find your enrollment will be different from the hours/semester indicated above, please notify the graduate program director in your field of study [or insert name here] as soon as possible. Note that you are responsible for tuition charges for any hours exceeding your tuition award. Remember that you are required to be on campus as a full-time student and to enroll for the requisite number of hours that enable you to continue regular progress toward completion of your degree requirements.

[For returning students:

To accept this appointment, please sign and return a copy of this letter. This offer is made under conditions described in the accompanying "Resolution Regarding Scholars, Fellows, Trainees, and Graduate Assistants" adopted by the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States to which TCU is a signatory.]

[For newly admitted students where the offer is also an offer of admission:

We would like to hear from you as soon as you make a decision regarding enrollment in our program but you must respond no later than April 15, 20XX. We may withdraw our offer if we have not heard from you by that time. This offer is made under conditions described in the accompanying "Resolution Regarding Scholars, Fellows, Trainees, and Graduate Assistants" adopted by the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States to which TCU is a signatory. By agreement of the member institutions of the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), you are free to postpone your decision until April 15, or change your decision before that date. After that, you need a release from the program you have already accepted in order to accept an alternative offer. By accepting our offer, you also agree to abide by the terms and conditions outlined above.

To accept the admission offer and Teaching Assistantship appointment, please sign and return a copy of this letter to [my office]. If I do not hear back from you or receive a signed copy of this letter by April 15, I will presume you have declined the admission and appointment and it will be withdrawn.]

We recommend that you keep a copy of this signed letter for your records. If you have any questions regarding this award, please contact [professor name] at 817-257-xxxx or [[professor@tcu.edu](mailto:professor@tcu.edu)].

Yours truly,

[Name]

[Associate Dean/ Dean/ Unit head of awarding unit]

cc: [Graduate Program director of student's accepting program]  
Graduate Financial Aid

- I accept the [admission offer and the] teaching assistantship offer for the [20XX-20XX academic year].
- I decline the offer.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## MERITED TUITION AWARD

[Date]

ID # [ ]

[Mr./Ms] [Recipient Name]

[Street Address]

[City, State Zip]

Dear [Appropriate student name]:

I am pleased to offer you [For included new admit only: admission to the PhD/MA/MS/etc. program and] a Merited Tuition Award in the [insert name of the graduate program unit or other department] for the academic year 20XX-20XX. This award carries a total value of [calculate and insert value] which is tuition to cover [number of hours] semester hours for Summer 20XX, [number of hours] semester hours for Fall 20XX and [number of hours] semester hours for Spring 20XX. [Note newly admitted students summer award will be for the following summer, and in the subsequent year their letter must state: "This award includes hours and stipend previously awarded to you for Summer 20XX."]

There are no duties or service requirements associated with the fellowship appointment. You may accept a partial graduate assistantship or other part-time compensated employment at TCU during the time you hold this award; however, your total employment may not exceed 20 hours per week. We hope this tuition award will provide helpful support as you complete your degree.

If you find your enrollment will be different from the hours/semester indicated above, please notify the graduate program coordinator in your field of study [or insert name here] as soon as possible. Note that you are responsible for tuition charges for any hours exceeding your tuition award.

[For returning students:

To accept this award, please sign and return a copy of this letter. This offer is made under conditions described in the accompanying "Resolution Regarding Scholars, Fellows, Trainees, and Graduate Assistants" adopted by the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States to which TCU is a signatory.]

[For newly admitted students where the offer is also an offer of admission:

We would like to hear from you as soon as you make a decision regarding enrollment in our program but you must respond no later than April 15, 20XX. We may withdraw our offer if we have not heard from you by that time. This offer is made under conditions described in the accompanying "Resolution Regarding Scholars, Fellows, Trainees, and Graduate Assistants" adopted by the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States to which TCU is a signatory. By agreement of the member institutions of the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), you are free to postpone your decision until April 15, or change your decision before that date. After that, you need a release from the program you have already accepted in order to accept an alternative offer. By accepting our offer, you also agree to abide by the terms and conditions outlined above.

To accept the admission offer and Merited Tuition Award, please sign and return a copy of this letter to [my office]. If I do not hear back from you or receive a signed copy of this letter by April 15, I will presume you have declined the admission and award and it will be withdrawn.]

We recommend that you keep a copy of this signed letter for your records. If you have any questions regarding this award, please contact [professor name] at 817-257-xxxx or [professor@tcu.edu](mailto:professor@tcu.edu).

Yours truly,

[Name]

[Associate Dean/ Dean/ Unit head of awarding unit]

cc: [Graduate Program director of student's accepting program]  
Graduate Financial Aid

- I accept the [admission offer and the] tuition award offer for the [20XX-20XX academic year].
- I decline the offer.

\_\_\_\_\_

Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

**STARS AWARD**

[Date]

ID # [ ]

[Mr./Ms] [Recipient Name]

[Street Address]

[City, State Zip]

Dear [Appropriate student name]:

As you consider our admission and award offer to join TCU's [insert name of the graduate program unit or other department], I am delighted to offer you an additional, prestigious award. In light of your outstanding admissions application, you have been granted a STARS Award from the Office of Graduate Studies. **STARS Awards** or **Stipends To Attract Remarkable Students**, are special Fellowship awards intended for exceptional program applicants, like yourself; your graduate program applied for this award on your behalf. STARS awards carry a total value of \$6000.00 annually for [3 years for doctoral student awardees / 2 years for master level students], and are added onto regular assistantship or fellowship awards. Your STARS stipend raises your total award offer of [assistantship or fellowship + tuition + Health Insurance Award] for the 20XX-20XX academic year to \$XXXXX [add previous award total and \$6000].

The STARS award payment will appear in full on your student account at the beginning of each fall semester for which you are enrolled for the following X academic years [2 for masters or 3 for doctorate]. There are no additional duties or service requirements associated with the STARS stipend.

Congratulations on this prestigious award! We hope this will provide helpful support as you complete your degree at TCU. STARS awardees will be honored at a luncheon with the Chancellor in the fall, so watch your inbox for your invitation.

If you have any questions regarding this award, please contact [professor name] at 817-257-xxxx or [\[professor@tcu.edu\]](mailto:professor@tcu.edu).

Yours truly,

[Name]

[Associate Dean/ Dean/ Unit head of awarding unit]

cc: [Graduate Program director of student's accepting program]  
Graduate Financial Aid

APPENDIX B: Sample GFARF and GEF

**Graduate Financial Aid Request Form**

Date <u>2/27/2016</u>		TCU I.D. Number <u>000111222</u>	
This is to request appointment of <input type="checkbox"/> MR <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MS		Student <small>(Last)</small>	Graduate <small>(First)</small> , who is pursuing the PhD
degree in <u>International Relations</u>		in the capacity below during the period	
		<u>8/13/2016</u> <small>(Date)</small>	through <u>5/5/2017</u> <small>(Date)</small>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Student	Address <u>1111 Typical University Blvd.</u>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Initial Award <input type="checkbox"/> Amended Award	City/State/Zip <u>Fort Worth, Texas 76109</u>		

University Awards	Total Amount of Stipend	Tuition Award	Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer
Merited Tuition	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Graduate Instructor	<u>\$19,000</u>	_____	_____	<u>9</u>	<u>6</u>	_____
Graduate Assistant	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Teaching Assistant	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Fellowship_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Grant Funded Awards	Total Amount of Stipend	Tuition Award	Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer
Research Assistant	<u>\$2,500</u>	_____	_____	_____	<u>3</u>	_____
Fellowship	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Grant/PI <u>Prof. I. M. Global</u>	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

<b>FA ITEM TYPE: STIPEND</b> <u>\$2,500</u> Dept. <u>99999</u> Fund <u>16275</u> Acct. <u>6710</u> Project <u>00099</u> Project Start Date <u>4/5/2014</u> Project End Date <u>4/4/2018</u>	<b>TUITION</b> <u>3 hr</u> Dept. <u>99999</u> Fund <u>16275</u> Acct. <u>6710</u> Project <u>00099</u> Project Start Date <u>4/5/2014</u> Project End Date <u>4/4/2018</u>
---	--

Student has been assigned 23 hours of duties weekly.

**Notes:**  
 Additional stipend and partial spring tuition from I.M. Global grant.

**Authorizations:**  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Principal Investigator/Graduate Advisor  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Director/Department Chair  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 School/College

**OFFICE OF SPONSORED RESEARCH  
GEF (Grant Employment Form)**

Date: 2/27/2016

Name:  TCU ID#:

Will be employed under a grant/contract in the capacity indicated below:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Principal Investigator | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Research Assistant |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Project Director       | <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative Assistant      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Research Scientist     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Research Associate     |  |

Beginning Date:  Ending Date:  Total Pay Periods:

Base Salary:

The amount of time employee will devote to this project during this period is:   
(percent of time, hours to be reported, etc.)

Total amount committed:

is  is not in addition to the employee's salary

9 months/12 payments       12 months/12 payments       12 months/26 payments

Rate of Pay:

Monthly       Biweekly       Hourly

The grant/contract  will  will not pay retirement benefits

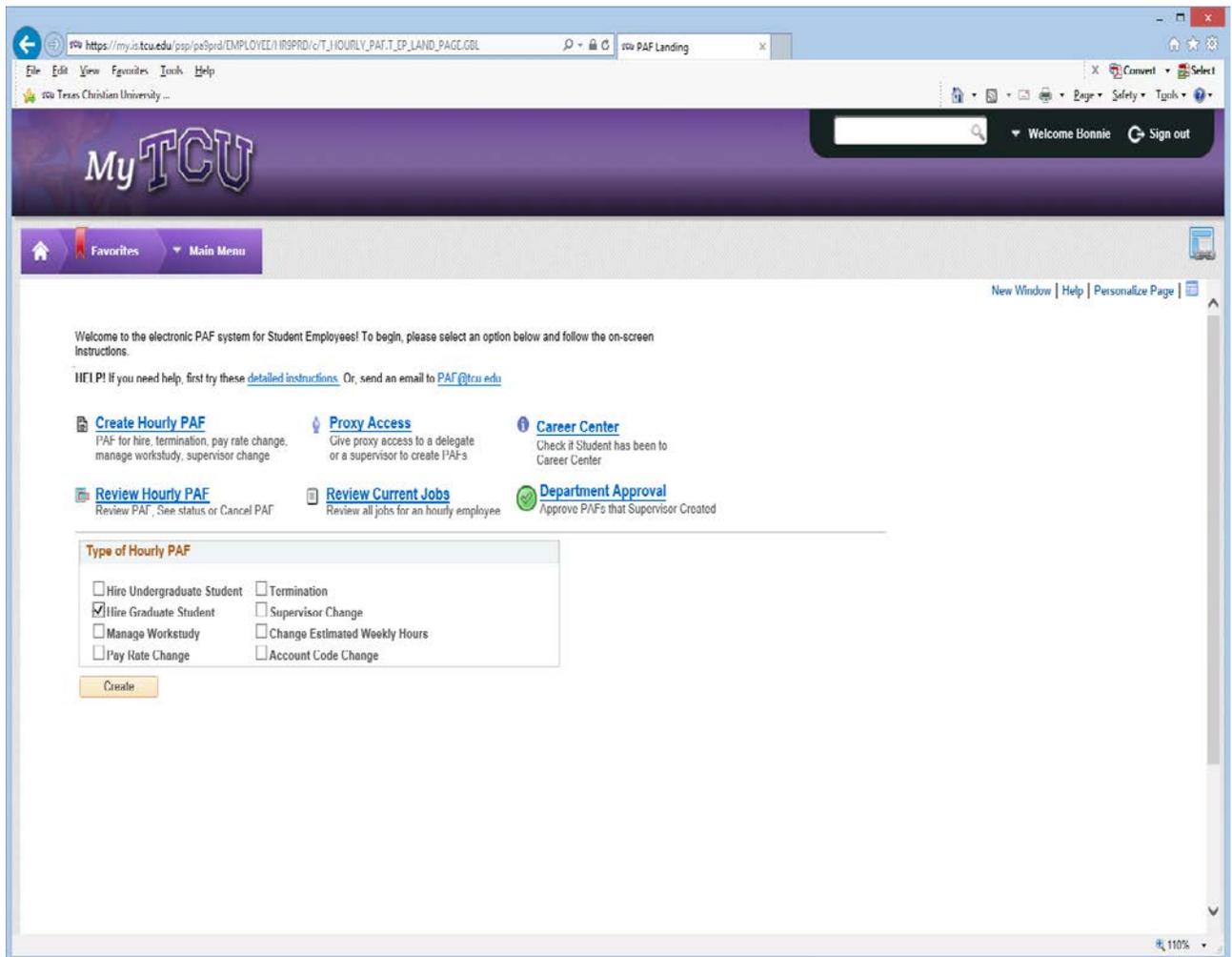
The employee  is  is not a student

Office Use Only:	
OSR	_____
ORA	_____
Payroll	_____

TCU	
Account <input type="text" value="6710"/>	Department <input type="text" value="99999"/>
Fund <input type="text" value="16275"/>	
Project <input type="text" value="00099"/>	
_____ Signature	

Approved by:

**APPENDIX C: Sample ePAF Completion**



Hire Date: 
  
 Term Date:  Termination Date not required on Hourly Grad. Student.
   
 20 Pay Periods Between Hire & Term

**Type of Graduate Student**
  
 Hourly Student
  Teaching
  Instructor
  Research
  Graduate

**Job Information**
  
 Department: 
  
 Supervisor ID: 
  
 Total Award:  Biweekly Amount: 
  
 Standard Hours:  Job Code: 
  
 Earnings Code:  Pay Group:  EE Classification:

**Department Accounting Portion**
  
 Department:  Account:  Percent of Distribution: 
  
 Fund Code:  Project:

**Current Jobs**
Personalize | Find | First 1 of 1 Last

Empl ID	Empl Record	Name	Date Effective	Job Code Description	Job Status	Pay Rate	Department ID	Department	Estimated Weekly Hours	Supervisor ID	Supervisor Name
1	0								0.00		

## APPENDIX D: Additional Aids

### REQUEST FOR NEW GRADUATE FINANCIAL AID SUPPORTED POSITION

Requests for graduate financial aid supported Graduate Assistantship (GA) positions from units other than graduate program units will be evaluated according to these criteria:

1. The proposed GA provides opportunities for enhancing undergraduate education, student learning (including the graduate student), and professionalism within the disciplines (e.g., teaching, research protocols, administrative techniques).
  2. The unit provides evidence of mentoring/supervision of student assistant, process of evaluation of performance of student assistant, and process of evaluation of contributions to the enhancement of undergraduate education, student learning and professionalism within the disciplines (e.g., teaching, research protocols, administrative techniques).
  3. The proposed position meets program development needs, including current department needs and future departmental plans.
  4. The department or office is able to fill open positions.
  5. There are unique department/office needs requiring the help of a graduate students (e.g., conference planning, editorial assistance, outside grant assistance).
  6. The unit has a demonstrable history of working with graduate students who have received such assistantship positions in a way that positively impacts the students' experiences.
- 

#### **Graduate Student Financial Aid Supported Position Request Form**

***Complete form and submit to unit director or dean, who will submit to the Dean of Graduate Studies with their endorsement.***

**Unit making the request:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Intended GA Supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Expected hours of duties per week (limit of 20 hours/week):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Preferred work schedule:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Job Justification** (a one-paragraph description of the purpose for this position):

**Job Functions/Responsibilities** (List the duties GA will be expected to perform.):

**Graduate Student Outcomes** (List the skills/abilities the GA can expect to learn in this position.):

**Appropriate TCU Graduate Majors** (List the TCU graduate programs that would be the most appropriate source of candidates for this position):

**Recruiting Strategy:**

**Approved by:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Requesting Unit Head

\_\_\_\_\_  
Overseeing Director or Dean

*Send Completed Form to the Office of Graduate Studies, TCU Box 297014, 3101 Sadler Hall*

**SAMPLE GRADUATE ASSISTANT APPLICATION**

**Graduate Assistant Application**

\_\_\_\_\_ Last Name First Name Middle I

TCU ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Local or Cell Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Currently Enrolled? \_\_\_\_ (Y) \_\_\_\_ (N, Term You Plan To Enter: \_\_\_\_\_)

Colleges or Universities Attended, Including TCU	Date of Attendance	Degree(s) Received	Major Field of Study	GPA
--	--------------------	--------------------	----------------------	-----


**Work Experience:** (Include research, teaching, tutoring, paper grading, industrial, farm and military.) or (preferable) you may attach your resume/C.V..

Dates	Employer	Nature of Work

**Special Skills:** (Include computer experience) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**GRADUATE STUDENT ASSISTANT EVALUATION FORM**

*This is intended as a sample evaluation form that may be used for all assistantship positions. It is recommended that a decision as to confidentiality of the specific evaluation be made before assessment and communicated in advance to the graduate student assistant and all evaluators. The student must be provided a summary of the evaluation(s).*

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**GRADUATE STUDENT ASSISTANT EVALUATION**

*(To be completed by the individual(s) most directly responsible for supervising the Graduate Student Assistant)*

Term of Evaluation:    \_\_\_Fall \_\_\_Spring        \_\_\_Summer                    Year: 20\_\_\_

Name of Graduate Student Being Evaluated: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Individual Completing Evaluation: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Position (GA, GI, RA.TA): \_\_\_\_\_

Department or Unit Where the Student is Assigned: \_\_\_\_\_

Please rate the student. in the following areas: <i>(Circle the appropriate rating)</i>	Exceptional	Good	Fair	Poor
Punctuality/Attendance <i>(by agreed schedule)</i>	4	3	2	1
Professionalism <i>(including interpersonal skills, confidentiality and communication)</i>	4	3	2	1
Completes assigned tasks in a timely manner	4	3	2	1
Quality of completed tasks and projects	4	3	2	1
Technical/Research/Administrative skills <i>(appropriate to position)</i>	4	3	2	1

Summarize tasks that the student has undertaken as a part of the assistantship or instructorship:

What skills applicable to the student's program of study has this assistantship/instructorship provided?

Would you recommend this student for continuation in this placement? Yes      No

Other comments by the Evaluator:

Signature of the Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please feel free to attach additional documentation that you think useful in evaluating this student.*

**Return to student's graduate program coordinator by the last day of the term of appointment.**

## Stipends to Attract Remarkable Students (STARS) Program

STARS is an opportunity to enhance stipends offered to exceptional applicants for graduate study. Students must be identifiably superior to other applicants and/or current students in the program, and the department must award the applicant at least a regular stipend for their program. If accepted and as funds remain, an additional stipend will be awarded from STARS to increase the departmental award by \$6,000. The enhanced stipend award will be for 3 years of doctoral studies or 2 years for master's level study.

Requests for these enhancing stipends are to be made by the graduate program director. Requests will be considered as long as uncommitted STARS funds remain. To make a request, the following information should be sent to Associate Dean Tim Barth ([t.barth@tcu.edu](mailto:t.barth@tcu.edu)).

Graduate Program Director Name	
Graduate Program	
Degree Sought by Applicant	
Applicant Name	
Student ID Number (if assigned)	
<b>Stipend Department has awarded or will award to this student (no STARS award will be made if this is not given)</b>	
Standardized Test Scores (if applicable)	
Undergraduate/Graduate GPA	
Other Schools Attended	
Rationale for superiority of this applicant to your program (exceptional qualifications, test scores higher than you normally see, remarkable university background, ...)	