

GRADUATE FELLOWS SUBPROGRAMS FISCAL YEAR 2015-16 COMPETITIONS

Questions and Answers about Requests for Proposals (RFPs)

New Questions:

1. Q: Is a student currently enrolled in a master's program who might be recruited to the department's doctoral program eligible to receive BoRSF graduate fellowship?

A: Provided the student is newly enrolled in the awarded degree program in the semester he/she is appointed to the fellowship and meets all other eligibility criteria, the student may receive BoRSF support. Consistent with the language of the Constitutional amendment establishing the Support Fund, Graduate Fellows subprograms emphasize recruitment of superior students, so student previously enrolled in the awarded degree program may not receive a BoRSF fellowship.

Previously Submitted Questions:

2. Q: Can the form 12-GF be modified to reflect more types of publications than just monographs and journal articles, to make room for edited collections, book chapters, books of poetry, novels, creative works, translations, etc.? This would allow faculty productivity to be more accurately reflected.

A: The form may be adjusted as necessary to report the information the submitting department or unit believes is relevant, provided the proposal clearly indicates how the panel is to interpret the table as presented (i.e., which publications were counted, how determinations were made as to what to include, etc.) and provided all self-published works are excluded.
3. Q: In an application for BoR/SREB fellowships, can the definition of under-represented minorities (URM) include women as an underrepresented group eligible to receive fellowship support?

A: Program guidelines do not set a standard definition of URM for the BoR/SREB subprogram. Instead, the proposal requires the applying institution to define URM for the purposes of the fellowship (on Form 4-SREB) and the review panel considers the definition as part of the application. If women were to be included in the definition of underrepresented minority, the application must strongly justify the inclusion as reasonable and, depending on how the application is framed, provide some assurance that women would only be eligible as URMs in specified disciplines (given high levels of participation and even majority status of women across many disciplines). The case for defining women

as URM in particular disciplines should be supported by quantitative data, not only from the submitting campus but also nationally, showing that women are systemically underrepresented.

4. Q: Can a campus pledge other institutional match for fellowship recipients, including equipment, supplies, and travel, in lieu of providing tuition? In these cases, fellowship recipients could receive financial aid to pay tuition and fees.

A: No. The RFP specifies that the institution must provide full tuition for all fellowship recipients during the life of the award. Other institutional matching is allowed and encouraged, but must be in addition to tuition support.

5. Q: What is the minimum number of degrees a department/unit must produce in a year to be competitive in the GF program?

A: There is no minimum number required or recommended and GF regularly funds both large and small degree programs. The most competitive proposals are those that demonstrate their success in the activities that count most in all graduate programs: recruiting excellent students, ensuring students make steady progress, and bringing students to a timely completion of the intended degree. In addition, any request for fellowships should be aligned with and justified based on enrollment and degree production in the department.

6. Q: In final reports over the last several years, the Graduate Fellows Review Panel has expressed concern that proposals were breaching privacy rights by providing personal information about students and requested that applicants remove this information from their proposals. What kind of information does this include?

A. The Board expects all applicants to the Graduate Fellows Program not to disclose personal information about students or faculty involved in their programs, particularly since these proposals are public documents and available to all citizens upon request. Applicants may include any student information that is in the public domain, including awards won, work histories, graduation records, and so forth. Any information that is private to the individual student should be eliminated, particularly grade point averages, GRE scores, personal endorsements, personal history (including reasons for leaving a degree program) and other information. Aggregated information on test scores is expected, but reporting individual student scores is strictly disallowed. Certain information, like an individual student's research focus or special circumstances of which the panel should be aware, can be presented while maintaining the student's anonymity. When the applicant is uncertain into which category a certain piece of information about an individual student falls, the Board

encourages caution and prefers the applicant keep the student anonymous or omit the information altogether.

7. Q. May a principal investigator submit more than one Graduate Fellows proposal?

A. According to the Graduate Fellows RFP, the LSU Health Sciences Center in New Orleans, the LSU Health Sciences Center in Shreveport, and the Tulane Medical Center may submit up to three Graduate Fellows proposals in years in which "Health and Medical Sciences" is an eligible discipline. Colleges and universities may submit one proposal per year per eligible discipline in the Traditional Graduate Fellows Program and one proposal per year in each of the eligible mathematics and sciences disciplines in the Graduate Fellowships for Teachers Program. No restrictions upon multiple submissions by principal investigators apply, other than those that may be imposed by the above regulations.
8. Q. Can a Graduate Fellows or BoR/SREB application request support for a fellowship recipient's tuition?

A. No. Tuition must be provided as part of the institutional match.
9. Q. Can Graduate Fellows stipends be supplemented by the department to provide an increased level of support to the student?

A. Yes, additional funds may be added to the Graduate Fellows stipend, provided no additional work is required as a condition for any increase. Any increase in stipend level can be claimed as matching funds in the proposal. A PI is not permitted, however, to provide Fellows with teaching or research assistantships for additional pay without the permission of the Board, which is granted on a case-by-case basis only.
10. Q. What is the maximum stipend level allowed by the Board of Regents?

A. In the Traditional Graduate Fellows subprogram, there is no prescribed maximum or minimum stipend level; BoR/SREB fellowships are \$20,000 with an additional \$5,000 provided in the first three years for student membership in the SREB Doctoral Scholars program. For Traditional proposals, the review panel will determine whether requested stipend amounts are competitive in the market, and are sufficient to attract and retain truly superior students. The panel can recommend reductions or increases in stipends from requested amounts if the reviewers determine such changes are warranted.
11. Q. Can a department submit a proposal in each year of eligibility, or is there a restriction preventing consecutive submissions?

A. There is no restriction against a department or college submitting a

proposal each year in which its discipline is eligible.

12. Q. Can a faculty member who has accepted a job at another institution beginning in the academic year following proposal submission act as the Principal Investigator for a Graduate Fellows project for the proposal submission phase?
 - A. While the Board has no restriction against a faculty member who knows himself/herself to be leaving the institution writing and submitting a Graduate Fellows proposal, it is not recommended that the faculty member do so because changes in PI require substantial paperwork from the submitting institution and the Board of Regents. This work, moreover, probably will not be offset by any particular benefit to the submitting institution. A competitive proposal should include several faculty members of distinction, thus not require the participation of a single faculty member to ensure success.
13. Q. Can a graduate program that has received provisional approval from the Board of Regents submit a proposal in the Graduate Fellows program?
 - A. Yes. In the event, however, that provisional approval is rescinded by the Board, any award made to such a program would be cancelled.