

Texas A&M University
Graduate and Professional Student Council
**Aggies Commit to Graduate and Professional
Student Educational Experiences Fellowship**

Updated September 1, 2016

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I. Award Information

1. *The Aggies Commit to Graduate and Professional Student Educational Experiences Fellowship* administered by the Graduate and Professional Student Council and Office of Graduate and Professional Studies and sponsored by the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President aims to support the high-impact learning experiences of graduate and professional students that go beyond required degree program activities. This award is to further graduate and professional education, for example, by providing support and access to resources and programming not available at Texas A&M University, collaborative research with senior scholars at other campuses in the United States as well as internationally, diversity and global learning activities, unpaid internships, professional and/or entrepreneurship development, and interdisciplinary experiences.
 - a. High-Impact Learning Activity Examples and Definitions can be found in Section VI.
2. Recipients are not required to present and/or work-on their own scholarly research to be eligible for funding, but it is encouraged. It is expected that the activities go beyond general degree requirements (e.g., required internship, dissertation research).
3. This award is not intended to support activities that would normally be funded by or are already part of an externally funded project.
4. This award is not designed to support travel to professional or research society meetings or thesis/dissertation research, which are eligible for funding through existing OGAPS and GPSC award programs.
5. Recipients may receive up to \$2,000.⁰⁰ in one-time funding.
6. Completed applications must be submitted online at <http://gpsc.tamu.edu> by 11:59 PM Sunday, October 23, 2015.
7. The application review period will be from October 23 through November 27, 2015.
 - a. The winners will be notified by December 1, 2015.
8. Award recipients must conduct the work described in the application during the fellowship year (September 1, 2016 - August 31, 2017).
9. Award monies will be disbursed by the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies as reimbursements for costs incurred.

II. Applicant Eligibility

1. The applicant and applicant's department, program, and/or organization to which the applicant is claiming eligibility under must meet the following eligibility requirements:
 - a. Applicant:
 - i. Be enrolled in a graduate or professional degree program at Texas A&M University (excluding Texas A&M University at Galveston, and Texas A&M University at Qatar).
 - ii. Be in good standing with the University and academic department.
 - iii. Have a GPA greater than or equal to 3.00.
 - iv. Have completed at least two (2) semesters within their program.
 - b. Applicant's department, program, and/or organization to which the applicant is claiming eligibility under:
 - i. Be recognized by and represented within the Graduate and Professional Student Council General Assembly at the application deadline.
 - ii. Have eligibility (voting delegate status) within the Graduate and Professional Student Council at the application deadline.
2. It is the responsibility of the applicant to determine if they and their department, program, and/or organization to which they are claiming eligibility under are eligible before the submission of an application.
 - a. Eligibility questions can be directed to the Graduate and Professional Student Council Vice President of Information.

III. Application Requirements

1. Applicants will complete an online application in full available at <http://gpsc.tamu.edu>.
 - a. Incomplete applications will not be considered.
2. Applicants will be required to provide the following:
 - a. A proposal describing the proposed educational enhancement experience which must:
 - i. State the purpose of the experience and how it aligns with identified graduate and professional student high-impact learning outcomes (example descriptions are provided below).
 - ii. State how the experience contributes to the student's development beyond the requirements of the student's degree program.

- iii. Specify any additional financial support that the applicant is already receiving or anticipates receiving in regards to the proposed experience.
 - iv. Include dates of travel, if travel is involved.
 - v. Include an itemized budget and budget justification.
 - vi. Be limited to three (3) single-spaced pages using one-inch margins and 12 point Times New Roman font.
 - b. One (1) letter of recommendation from the student's advisor/committee chair.
 - i. Letters are to be emailed separately to gpsc@tamu.edu.
 - ii. Letters must be received by the application deadline.
 - c. Résumé or Curriculum vitæ.
 - d. GPA.
3. Applicants will submit two PDF documents with the application via the GPSC website:
- a. the proposal
 - b. résumé or curriculum vitæ
 - i. Please see the detailed instructions, application, and checklist on our website.

IV. Application Evaluations

I. Review Committee

- 1. A pool of thirty (30) evaluators will be recruited to review the applications that fulfill all application requirements. This pool will consist of ten (10) faculty members and twenty (20) graduate or professional students selected by the Graduate and Professional Student Council Executive Committee.
- 2. Each application will be reviewed by one (1) faculty member and two (2) graduate or professional students.

II. Evaluation Criteria and Method

- 1. Evaluators will consider the following:
 - a. How the proposed activity aligns with identified graduate and professional high-impact learning activities.
 - b. The academic performance and productivity of the student including, but not limited to research, teaching, and service while at Texas A&M University.

- c. How the proposed experience will potentially impact the applicant's professional goals.
 - d. The financial needs associated with the proposed experience.
2. Evaluators will score applications as follows:
- a. Proposal: 1-10 total points (weight 70%)
A proposal with 10 points (maximum score) has a strong central idea that is related to the questions outlined in the instructions while providing compelling support for it. The proposal will be clearly organized and include well developed major points that are supported with concrete and specific evidence. The proposal will use proper sentence structure and will not include grammatical errors.
 - b. Résumé or curriculum vitae: 1-10 total points (weight 20%)
Highly rated résumés or curriculum vitae may include relevant educational experiences (e.g. classes, projects, extracurricular activities related to the proposal topic, publications), professional experiences (e.g. internships, jobs, assistantships), career plans, and service activities.
 - c. Financial need: 1-10 total points (weight 10%)
Funding needed for the activity proposed, breakdown of the intended budget, potential sources of funding.
3. Evaluators will receive a minimum of two (2) weeks to review applications.
4. The Graduate and Professional Student Council Executive Committee will collect all scores and announce all recipients.

V. Recipient Requirements

1. Award recipients must submit a 250-500 word reflection essay once the educational experience is completed which should address the following questions:
 - a. How did this activity advance your discipline-specific knowledge and/or expertise?
 - i. Responses should specifically address one or more of the identified graduate and professional student high-impact learning outcomes discussed in the original application.
 - b. If you connected with peers and/or senior experts in your field, the community, etc. what did you learn from them? What did you teach them?
 - c. What did you learn from this experience that you would not have learned within the classroom?

- d. Do you feel this award helped you progress towards your chosen professional career path?
 - e. How did the activities relate to the GPSC tenets of advocacy, community, and research?
- 2. Award recipients must submit in person or by email to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS) all receipts for all incurred costs up to the maximum award amount for which they would like to be reimbursed.
 - a. A Reimbursement Request form will be provided via the GPSC website.
 - b. The OGAPS office is located in the Jack K. Williams Administration building, suite 112. Phone number is 979-845-3631
 - c. Electronic reimbursement requests should be sent to allisonharms@tamu.edu, with the subject "Aggies Commit Fellowship Reimbursement."
- 3. Reimbursement requirements:
 - a. The funds must be used as stipulated in the proposal submitted with the Fellowship application. If for some reason the activities must change, you must contact Graduate and Professional Student Council for spending approval. Reimbursement for the fellowship will be posted to your Texas A&M University student account in the form of a scholarship. If you have a balance due, it will be deducted from that posting. Any credit amount will be sent to you via direct deposit. It is essential that you have direct deposit set up in the MyFinances tab in the Howdy portal.
 - b. Reimbursement items are due within 30 days of completing your awarded activity, but no later than August 30, 2016 (unless receiving prior approval to extend funding term). Students must be a currently enrolled student at Texas A&M University at the time of reimbursement, there are no exceptions. Required items to submit for reimbursement include:
 - i. Reimbursement form
 - ii. Original receipts for each expense you list
 - 1. If submitting receipts via email, scanned copies are acceptable.
 - iii. A copy of your award letter
 - iv. Evidence that you completed the proposed activity (ex. a letter from a faculty member involved with the activity, pictures taken during activity with participants, etc).
 - v. A copy of email confirming submission of online summary report.
- 3. Award recipients may additionally provide photos and/or videos detailing their educational experience which may be used for further marketing and securing of funding.
 - a. A Photo Release for Organization Marketing Purposes Form may be required.

VI. High-Impact Learning Activity Examples and Definitions

1. Interdisciplinary Learning

May include collaborative research projects with graduate and/or professional students and/or faculty members in another unit at Texas A&M University and/or another institution. These experiences may include academic research but also extend to collaborative projects outside of the classroom. These activities can allow students to learn about research in other disciplines and can help to establish interdisciplinary networks that may persist beyond a student's time in school.

2. Professional Development

Professional development activities can include workshops, seminars, and other similar opportunities that provide specific training towards career goals that incorporate oral and written communication development, career development, and instruction and assessment skills. Local workshops are offered on a regular basis through the Career Center; Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning; Center for Teaching Excellence; Writing Center; Office of Graduate and Professional Studies; Graduate and Professional Student Council; and several other departments and University programs. Graduate and professional students can receive detailed knowledge related to the stages of developing a dissertation, career paths available to graduates, how to prepare for the academic job search, and how to achieve a work-life balance. While often limited in space, these workshops occur often and are open to all students. Participating in these or similar seminars will allow students to gain knowledge that can assist in the attainment of personal, academic, and short or long-term career goals.

3. Selective Quality Discipline-Specific Advanced Training Programs

Graduate and professional students are expected to become well-versed in a number of new methods, technologies, protocols, and subject matter in order to produce quality research. However, students may also participate in additional training that is above and beyond the requirements to graduate from their respective programs. These experiences can greatly enhance the marketability of the student when they are seeking employment in academic and non-academic settings. These programs may be offered on campus, nationally, or internationally depending on the nature of the program and the needs of the student.

4. Grant or Technical Writing Training or Experience

Sponsored research and program investments from government and foundation sources play key roles in advancing educational goals at Texas A&M University. The ability to write successful grants can often lead to the ability to create innovative new research agendas. While students may experience the benefits of grants, they do not often receive instruction on how to apply for or prepare grants as part of their graduate or professional

training. By participating in grant writing training or collaborating in the writing of a competitive grant, students learn how to market their research to a number of audiences. Experience in this area as a student can boost future prospects of being awarded grants that can further scholarly inquiry that may influence other students, faculty, and staff as well as researchers and practitioners.

5. Mentorship or Management of Junior Students and Research Assistants

Graduate and professional students often instruct undergraduates in the classroom, but they may also have the opportunity to mentor, collaborate-with, and/or train undergraduate research assistants or more junior graduate students. These opportunities may occur through sponsored Research Experiences for Undergraduates, Student Research Week, or college and department-based research teams. In this role, graduate and professional students can contribute to the high-impact learning experiences of undergraduates while also learning how to manage students in preparation for future research collaborations. Graduate and professional students who aspire to work in the academy will need to learn how to advise students in a variety of contexts; those seeking non-academic placements must also be versed with how to manage and work with other people.

6. Regional, National, and International Presentations

Graduate and professional students are encouraged to participate in conferences and workshops with an above-average barrier to entry. For some students, these events may be regional while, for others, these may be national or international in nature. Students who present solo authored or coauthored high profile work can develop oral presentation skills, receive constructive feedback to cultivate publishable research, and participate in networking with other established scholars. Relationships fostered may also lead to coauthoring opportunities or employment opportunities.

7. Fostering Diversity and Global Learning

Just as undergraduate students are encouraged to broaden their academic and personal horizons through diversity and study abroad-oriented internships, graduate and professional students may also benefit from international travel and experiences. These opportunities may exist as conferences, seminars, study abroad programs, staff rides, collaborative research, or exploration of internationally located resources. Students can grow as individuals through experiencing other cultures and customs while also growing research ideas that are international in scope and impact.

8. Internships

High-impact internships may be directed largely to master's students who seek non-academic job placement, but this category may also include doctoral and professional students who intern for an organization whose personnel or actions are included in

research projects or that may benefit from the results of the students' research. Similar to undergraduate internships, graduate and professional internships can aid the job search of students while also providing training and experience in a given industry that supplements the material learned in the classroom.

9. Leadership and Professional Service

Texas A&M University prides itself on developing leaders; graduate and professional students are not an exception. Graduate and professional students should be encouraged to seek leadership positions both on campus and in their scholarly communities. The most visible organization available for graduate and professional student leadership is the Graduate and Professional Student Council, but of course there are many departmental, ethnic, and interest-specific organizations where graduate and professional students can also be involved. Further, graduate and professional students should seek leadership opportunities within their field at conferences, organizations, and communication moderators.

10. Organization and Facilitation of Meetings and Conferences

The organization and execution of conferences requires more advanced skills that could be deemed high-impact for graduate and professional students. This would include department and college-led conferences and symposia, professional service in field-specific conferences, or university-wide research presentations such as Student Research Week. Experiences could include serving as a judge to an undergraduate oral panel or poster session or as a coordinator for the event. In some instances, for those graduate and professional programs whose field does not view research and conference presentation as the norm, presentations may also be considered a high impact practice. Most conferences and meetings require a team of coordinators who plan and execute the event, which gives graduate and professional student coordinators the chance to receive hands-on training about the art of planning a conference—a skill meaningful to apply to their specific fields.

11. Entrepreneurship Training

Graduate and professional students in a number of academic disciplines and field have routinely expressed interest in starting their own businesses before, during, and after earning their respective degrees at Texas A&M University. Certificated-based programs, workshop series, and conferences that detail how to be a successful entrepreneur are highly relevant and provide training beyond that offered in the classroom.

12. Educational Outreach (K-12, Community)

The ability of graduate and professional students to effectively organize and deliver programs which translate the core principles of their respective disciplines to school-age children and/or the community at large provides valuable experience in displaying the significance of that discipline into lay terms that all can understand. This is a valuable

skill used, for example, when writing grant proposals to governmental agencies or to private foundations.

13. Service Learning

Designing and implementing service-oriented projects is being used in numerous higher education disciplines to immerse students in activities relevant to their field that translate to “real world” value for the community outside the university. Graduate and professional students may, in many cases, be the individuals developing, instigating, and facilitating these types of projects.