

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR**

**OFFICE OF THE DEAN - GRADUATE DIVISION**

**November 8, 2019**

**DEANS  
DEPARTMENT CHAIRS  
ASSISTANT DEANS  
DEPARTMENT BUSINESS OFFICERS  
GRADUATE COORDINATORS**

**SUBJECT:** Graduate Student Funding Reforms: An Update

Thanks so very much to those of you who have engaged us in conversation as we work to implement several key reforms to graduate student funding, all of which are aimed at improving student well-being and success. In light of our conversations with many divisional/departmental leaders and with Senate Leadership, we want to provide an update about implementation timing, clarified wording, and ongoing further consultation. Please also see the updated [FAQ page](#).

First off, the goal is to *work toward* a model where we will be able to admit doctoral students with five years of guaranteed funding. This is aspirational and we have appreciated hearing your strong affirmation of this shared objective. We hope, over the next few years, to be able to firmly ensure this goal becomes a reality across all our departments. We recognize this will take time and joint effort. We believe the three initial funding reforms will position UC San Diego to eventually be successful in achieving this aspirational goal.

As a reminder, the October 14 memo announced three graduate student funding reforms:

1. The Graduate Student Researcher Tuition and Fee (GSRTF) remission process has been revised to be independent of the Block Grant. This will eliminate the annual positive or negative adjustment to the Block Grant allocations to departments. Rather, the GSRTF process now includes an internal annual adjustment to correct for any mismatch between funds and expenditures.
2. Graduate students remain eligible for tuition and fee payments and other benefits according to the criteria of their appointment(s). The cost of the tuition and fee payments and other benefits will be charged proportionally across the funding sources of the student's support.
3. Effective winter quarter, Doctoral and MFA students\* must be supported at a minimum of the equivalent of a 50% Teaching Assistantship. The minimum may be met by a combination of appointments and/or fellowships. The student's home department is responsible for monitoring their level

of support. The Graduate Dean has the authority to grant limited exceptions to this policy when deemed appropriate and in the best interest of the student.

\*See below for new clarifying language being added.

**Reform Item 1** was already underway prior to the announcement and will continue moving forward. This reform has no immediate impact on the GSRTF rates charged to funding sources or used in extramural proposal budgets. It will impact how future rates are calculated and thus may impact the actual future rates. Any changes to future rates will follow the current review and notification processes. Note that this reform had already been in place in several units and had been found to increase clarity and stability of the GSRTF process in those units; extending this reform across campus will provide that same benefit to all campus units.

**Implementation of Reform Item 2** will be delayed until the conversion to UCPATH and Oracle Financial Cloud is completed. It has become clear that implementing this reform by Winter 2020 would be unduly challenging. A number of you pointed out that, given the upcoming system conversions to UCPATH and Oracle Financial Cloud in Spring/Summer 2020, it would make sense to delay implementation of this reform until after these new systems come online. We agree and we thank you for this tremendously helpful feedback. In the meantime, we are already starting a process of extensive consultation with units and Senate about implementation details.

**Reform Item 3** shall proceed as announced in the original memo, because it so directly supports the well-being of our students. However, at the suggestion of divisional partners, we are adding language to clarify the precise meaning of the first sentence so that it now reads, “Effective winter quarter, Doctoral and MFA students who were admitted with a guarantee of support must be supported at the minimum of the equivalent of a 50% Teaching Assistantship.”

Central funding for graduate student support is not decreasing and we remain committed to sustaining and growing graduate degree programs in partnership with you. We are committed to working with Divisional Deans to find a reasonable solution for cases where financial gaps exist for their departments. We have already been meeting with several Divisions that have identified potential financial gaps, and we look forward to finding immediate- and long-term solutions together. We have already identified a source of central funding and will work with those Divisions that have financial gaps to put a firm plan in place by December 6, 2019.

In the coming weeks, we anticipate receiving initial Senate feedback on the Senate-Administration Work Group Report that has recommended a further and complementary pair of reforms: changes to the Block Grant and revisions to the TA allocation models. We will work closely with Senate and unit leaders to determine the best way to proceed in light of the recommendations.

In the meantime, as you plan Winter and Spring 2020 course offerings, please be mindful that departments adding courses in a way which increases overall enrollment will continue to receive additional TA funds, as has been true in the past.

Please continue to visit the [FAQ page](#) for the most current information on graduate student funding reforms and direct additional inquiries to Steve Ross, AVC for Resource Administration at [ross@ucsd.edu](mailto:ross@ucsd.edu).

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