



UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

Research and Graduate Studies

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TO: Deans, Chairs, Directors of Graduate Studies

FROM: Doug Kalika; Acting Dean of the Graduate School

RE: Procedures for universal tuition scholarships for RAs and GAs

In a memo distributed on October 12, 2001 by Drs. Nietzel, Boling and Collins, a new policy was outlined by which all qualified research and graduate assistants (RAs and GAs) at the University will receive tuition scholarships for both the in-state and out-of-state portions of tuition, consistent with the policy currently in place for teaching assistants. This policy is to start with the 2002 Fall Semester. As part of this policy, all principal investigators who include research or graduate assistants on a grant or contract are expected to include a separate budget line for tuition in any new proposal submission; the Office of Sponsored Projects Administration (OSPA) has been assisting PI's in meeting this requirement since the initial announcement last fall. The corresponding tuition cost for RAs and GAs was set at \$4100 for 2002-2003, \$4600 for 2003-2004, and \$5100 for 2004-2005.

For the last several months, a working group comprised of individuals from the Graduate School, Research Administration, and the Controller's Office has been developing an implementation plan for the awarding of tuition scholarships to all RAs and GAs and the corresponding charging of this tuition cost against grants and contracts, as applicable. This has included the review of feedback provided by Chairs, Directors of Graduate Studies, individual investigators, and college and departmental business officers. The implementation procedures that are presented here are the result of these discussions.

The working group sought to establish a process by which the financial challenge of providing this tuition benefit for RAs and GAs would be met in a manner that was as equitable as possible. Based on GSAS data in the Graduate School, the University had the equivalent of ~700 full-time RAs and GAs in Fall 2001; a similar number is anticipated for the coming year. At the present time, resources from RCTF (TORA awards), as well as funds provided by the Vice-President for Research are available to support tuition scholarships for 350 RAs and GAs. These resources will be distributed in the manner discussed, below. The remaining portion of the tuition cost will need to be

borne by the units employing RAs and GAs; the cost can be charged against grants and contracts that include tuition in the budget, as well as other departmental sources. In order to provide units maximum flexibility in meeting this obligation, an invoice process has been developed that will allow the units, working within their respective colleges, to identify sources of funding for each assistant and to charge this expense accordingly. The details of this process follow.

PROCEDURES FOR THE AWARDING OF TUITION SCHOLARSHIPS FOR RAs AND GAs :

- 1.) Each semester, the Graduate School will identify all RAs and GAs eligible* for tuition scholarships based on GSAS forms (Notice of Appointment to Graduate Student Academic Staff) submitted by the program Directors of Graduate Studies; this is the process currently in place for handling out-of-state tuition scholarships for RAs and GAs. For all RAs and GAs in good standing, the Graduate School will automatically pay the tuition at the start of the semester.

**Eligible are all degree-seeking research assistants and graduate assistants with a 3.0 graduate grade-point average or higher who (1) are identified in the Human Resources System (HRS) with an RA or GA job classification (group S) of 0.5 FTE for a full tuition scholarship, or 0.25 for a half tuition scholarship, (2) have a signed Graduate Student Academic Staff Notice of Appointment form (GSAS) on file with the Graduate School, and (3) have a stipend that meets Reasonable Compensation rates. Please note that these tuition scholarships apply for the Fall and Spring terms. During the summer terms, RAs and GAs are eligible for tuition scholarships for the out-of-state portion of tuition, only. Please note that tuition for summer terms may not be charged to grant accounts.*

The scholarship payment (Fall & Spring) will include both the in-state and out-of-state portions of tuition, as applicable. The individual student is responsible for the student health fee and Seaton Center recreation fee.

- 2.) Based on the tuition payments completed in the Graduate School Fellowship Office, an invoice will be prepared for each graduate program that has RAs or GAs. This invoice will provide a detailed listing of each student who received the tuition benefit in a particular graduate program, and the corresponding tuition liability. The tuition liability for RAs/GAs will be \$4100 per full-time student for 2002-2003 (\$2050 per semester). Tuition will be assessed for all RAs and GAs, regardless of their source of stipend funding (i.e., ledgers 2, 3, 4, 5). The tuition liability for part-time students will be pro-rated according to their actual registration. There will be no tuition liability for students registered in zero-hour (i.e. residency) status.

It is anticipated that the tuition invoice will be distributed approximately four weeks after the start of each semester. An invoice will be submitted to each College Dean's office for all graduate programs in a particular College; the invoice will be broken out by graduate program and student.

3.) According to the invoice, the individual graduate programs will meet their tuition liability by completing an IDIV which charges grant accounts (ledger 4) or other departmental accounts (ledgers 2, 3, 5) for the tuition liability, and credits the Graduate School tuition account. It will be the responsibility of the Colleges to coordinate this effort; a standard spreadsheet will be prepared by the Controller's office that will allow the "IDIV" transfer to be accomplished with a minimum of paperwork. It is recognized that certain RA and GA assignments reside outside of graduate programs (e.g., research centers; service units). In these cases, it will be the responsibility of the graduate program in which the student is enrolled to work with the hiring unit to determine how the tuition liability will be met.

Ultimately, each College will be responsible for its RA/GA tuition liability and for addressing any non-payment within its individual units. The IDIV spreadsheet, which includes the account information necessary to meet the tuition liability, would be completed and returned by the College business officer (or appropriate designee) by approximately the eighth week into the semester.

RESOURCES:

Resources are available to assist the colleges/programs in meeting the tuition obligation associated with this policy. These resources are detailed, below:

TORA Awards: TORA awards have been available to Tier I and Tier II "*Target of Opportunity*" graduate programs since Fall 1998. These awards will be continued at their current allocation levels for Tier I and Tier II programs for the next three academic years. The tuition associated with the TORA allocations will appear as a credit directly on the tuition invoice prepared for each graduate program, and the overall tuition obligation of that program will be reduced accordingly. It will no longer be necessary for each program to identify specific student awardees for the TORAs.

Other Tuition Scholarship Resources: The Vice-President for Research has budgeted funds to the Graduate School to assist in providing tuition scholarships to Research Assistants and Graduate Assistants. At current budget levels, these funds can provide for the equivalent of 135 full-time tuition scholarship awards. These scholarships will be made available to the graduate programs on a petition basis. The Dean of the Graduate School will maintain an advisory committee to evaluate requests for these scholarships. Representation on the committee will be drawn from the Graduate School, Research Administration, the University Research Advisory Committee, and selected Directors of Graduate Studies and investigators. Priority for these awards will be given to:

- RAs on existing grants and contracts that do not provide for tuition (*initial priority to non-TORA units*).
- GAs and RAs in service-oriented units and Centers.
- RAs on new grants that do not allow the charging of tuition.

Given the finite number of these awards, requests for scholarships are to be coordinated through the College Deans' offices. Additional instructions for applying for these awards will be provided in the near future. It is anticipated that the deadline for the initial round of requests for the 2002 Fall Semester will be June 1st.

SAMPLE INVOICE:

To assist program planning, a sample invoice for the RA/GA tuition obligation has been prepared for each graduate program based on Fall 2001 assistantship assignments and payroll records. If you have not received a copy of this sample invoice, or need additional copies, please contact Lynn Peters at <lpeters@uky.edu>. In the invoice, tuition was assessed for each research or graduate assistant within a given *graduate program* (i.e., the academic home of the student, not necessarily the unit in which the student was employed). For the 2001 Fall Semester, the (sample) tuition charge for a full-time student was \$2050 [9 or more credits]; students registering for fewer than 9 credits were assessed at a rate of \$228 per credit. There was no charge for students in zero-hour status. For units receiving TORA allocations, the allocation amount was credited directly on the invoice.

We encourage you to review each sample invoice carefully, recognizing that they were prepared using the best available RA and GA information that we had on file in the Graduate School. If you have questions, or identify problems in your invoice, we welcome your feedback; please contact Lynn Peters at <lpeters@uky.edu>. It is our hope that we can work through as many issues as possible using these sample invoices, and thereby reduce possible difficulties during implementation in the Fall Semester.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS:

The staff in the Graduate School, Research Administration, and the Controller's Office are committed to implementing this new policy as smoothly and fairly as possible. Long-term, we feel that a universal tuition policy for research assistants is in the best interest of our students and the institution. We appreciate your assistance in the implementation of this new policy, and stand ready to answer your questions or to assist in any way that we can.

If you have specific questions or concerns, the following staff are available to assist you:

Graduate School Fellowship Office: Lisa Collins lcollin@uky.edu
Lynn Peters lpeters@uky.edu

Office of Sponsored Proj. Adm. Debbie Davis ddavis@uky.edu