

## NDSU Guidance for NSF GRFP Awards

### Background:

Students apply to the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program for funding. If successful, the student indicates acceptance and designates tenure dates in the NSF Fastlane system. NSF requires institutional oversight of the grant dollars, and all GRFP fellowships to a university are administered through a single grant to the institution.

Grantee GRFP Institutions support and advise Fellows throughout their Fellowship Period, receive NSF Awards (Grants) to financially support Fellows on Tenure, and report to NSF on Fellow and Award activities. The primary GRFP Institution representatives are the Principal Investigator (PI), Coordinating Official (CO), and Financial Official (FO). The Fellows' Academic/Research Advisors are also integral to ensuring Fellows are making Satisfactory Progress toward degree completion. The NSF document for guidance for Fellows and Coordinating Officials (CO) appears at [http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub\\_summ.jsp?ods\\_key=nsf11031](http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=nsf11031)

Each GRFP Institution is required to designate a PI for the GRFP Award. The designated PI serves as the PI for all institutional Fellows. For example, the PI certifies the Satisfactory Progress for all Fellows. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that the dean of the graduate school (or equivalent) serve in this capacity. A PI is responsible for ensuring that the GRFP Annual Report is submitted by the annual deadline. PI changes are handled through the normal NSF FastLane notification and request process – not the GRFP FastLane Module. The CO is designated by the GRFP Institution to serve as the primary and day-to-day point of contact for Fellows and the Program Office. The CO is paired with a representative from the sponsored research/projects office and/or grants accounting office, the FO who is responsible for the financial reporting requirements. The FO is the GRFP Institutional representative responsible for financial oversight of NSF awards. In coordination with the PI and CO, the FO is responsible for ensuring that the quarterly Federal Financial Reports (FFR) and the GRFP Annual Report are submitted by the established deadlines. The FO also is responsible for assisting the PI/CO with NSF FastLane requests for Supplemental funding requests, NCE, etc.

NDSU has designated the Assistant Dean of the Graduate School to serve as the CO and PI. NDSU has designated that the FO be the Director of Grants and Contract Accounting.

A CO performs the following:

- Advise Fellows on NSF GRFP policies and procedures and interpret these policies in the context of their institutional procedures (instruction in Responsible Conduct of Research [RCR, see [Policy 348](#)], stipend payment schedules, enrollment requirements, acknowledgement of support, etc.).
- Review Fellow requests on FastLane and provide academic institution approval or denial of such requests as appropriate.
- Review Fellow requests to change graduate programs within the institution.
- Review and advise Fellow requests for dependent care, medical or military leave
- Review information on new and continuing Fellows for their institution during the new award announcement and tenure declaration periods each Spring.
- Submit to NSF via FastLane an accounting of funds expended for the ending fellowship year.
- Confirm accuracy of the Fellows listed and their statuses for the upcoming fellowship year and submit via FastLane a request for funds to support these Fellows (the Grants Roster/Budget Request).
- Participate in the preparation and submission of the GRFP Annual Report in coordination with the FO
- Process the annual NDSU proposal transmittal form for the grant

In coordination with the CO/PI, Fellow's primary graduate Advisors are responsible for:

- Monitoring Fellows' degree progress
- Reviewing Fellows' annual activities reports and verifying Fellows' satisfactory progress and continued eligibility by May 15 each year (starting in 2012, Advisors designated by Fellows will receive email from NSF)
- Recommending or approving, as appropriate, Fellows' participation in activities that require the Advisors' support, such as the Nordic Research Opportunity
- Advisors are also strongly encouraged to participate in the judicious planning of the Fellowship Resources, such as Tenure versus Reserve Years.

### **GRFP Grant Management:**

The institutional GRFP grant dollars will be centrally administered by the NDSU Graduate School. An amount equivalent to 2% of the COE will be retained in a fund in the Graduate School to cover administrative costs and to buffer pre-award spending. Unspent COE funds for each tenure year will remain in the Graduate School fund and may be used for programs to help students apply for such fellowships.

NDSU Financial Services must be notified by the Fellow as such an award affects the student's eligibility for financial aid based on federal Title IV regulations. Stipends may be considered taxable income. Fellows may find it helpful to consult the US Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Tax Topic 421: Scholarship and Fellowship Grants and Publication 970: Tax Benefits for Education. These are available at <http://www.irs.gov>. Specific questions regarding the taxation of Fellowship funding and personal tax liability should be referred to the IRS. NDSU and NSF do not provide income tax advice. Fellows bear the responsibility of filing and paying any taxes due.

The GRFP stipend dollars are explicitly limited to the Fellow's stipend and must follow the requirements of the GRFP. The stipend is considered as 1.0 FTE. Each Fellow is expected to devote full time to advanced scientific study or work during tenure. However, because it is generally accepted that teaching or similar activity constitutes a valuable part of the education and training of many graduate students, a Fellow may undertake a reasonable amount of such activities. It is expected that furtherance of the Fellow's educational objectives and the gain of substantive teaching or other experience, not service to the institution as such, will govern these activities. Compensation for such activities is permitted based on the affiliated department/program policies and in consultation with the CO. Fellows are permitted to solicit and accept support for research expenses, such as laboratory supplies, instrumentation usage fees, field-station usage fees, travel expenses, conference/registration fees, workshop expenses, or subscription fees. For Fellows on Tenure, support for living expenses associated with off-site research activities will require approval by the CO and NSF.

NDSU has administrative oversight of the cost of education (COE) allowance of the award. The expenses listed below may be paid from the COE dollars:

#### Primary expenses:

- Tuition (a waiver may already be in place) and Student Fees are required to be covered from the COE
- Health Insurance
- Books and Study Supplies
- Computer, printer, other relevant electronic equipment for digital information directly related to the student's education
- Travel to meetings

#### Secondary expenses (may only be paid if there are adequate funds to cover primary expenses):

- Lab supplies and/or equipment directly related to the student's dissertation project; not to be used for other projects