



Graduate Student Opportunity Program AY 2017-18

Purpose

The Graduate Student Opportunity Program (GSOP) forms an important link in the continuum of support for academically promising graduate students. This award assists recipients in acquiring and developing advanced research skills that will result in a significant achievement for the student. It is designed to improve mentoring for UC Merced (UCM) doctoral students who will not be at the dissertation stage during the award period, but who are currently engaged in research with a faculty mentor. The award is expected to increase the number of graduate students who complete their Ph.D. degree and successfully acquire a faculty appointment.

Eligibility Requirements & Standards

- Doctoral graduate students are eligible for this award regardless of United States citizenship.
- Preference will be given to PhD students who are not eligible for the Faculty Mentor Program due to citizenship status.
- Continuing UC Merced doctoral students in any graduate program who will not be at the dissertation stage during the tenure of the award, but who are currently engaged in research with a faculty mentor, are eligible for nomination.
- Must have a minimum 3.0 GPA in their graduate studies at UC Merced, and be enrolled full-time during the award period.
- The student is expected to conduct research under the guidance of the faculty mentor during both semesters leading to progressively more independent work. Considerable efforts are to be focused on degree work and progress.
- Fellows are expected to participate in activities designed by faculty mentors to improve research skills and preparation for an academic career.
- Faculty mentors are expected to participate in mentoring sessions and assist student participants with their scholarly research leading to the development of a doctoral dissertation.
- It is expected that the student mentee will develop substantial research skills and experience, resulting in a significant achievement or outcome such as a published research paper worthy of a scholarly journal by the end of the year in which the fellowship was awarded.
- Both students and faculty mentors will be required to submit an evaluation at the end of the academic year.

Financial Support

- Up to two awards will be made each academic year.
- Recipients will receive a fellowship of \$20,700, paid monthly over a 9-month academic year period plus payment of Graduate Fees (Resident Tuition, Non-Resident Supplemental Tuition (if applicable), Student Services Fee and Health Services Fee), excluding Campus Based Fees.
- Recipients will also receive a summer award of \$6,900 following the academic year of the award period.
- Fellows may not be employed during the tenure of this fellowship.

Application Procedures

- This application is open to all students who meet the eligibility criteria. Faculty advisors are encouraged to invite eligible students to apply on the basis of academic merit as well as contribution to program.
- Students must complete the online application by **Friday, January 20, 2017 by 5pm**. The application is available at <https://gradopportunities.ucmerced.edu/grad>. The application includes the following:
 - Curriculum vitae (CV)
 - Unofficial UCM transcript, including current semester.
 - Statement – 2-4 pages describing the schedule of training goals and activities for the 9-month time period. The plan should include joint participation in meetings of professional societies, and/or unit committees, seminars or activities that provide professional development as faculty of the future. The statement should be written for a general academic audience, i.e. a faculty reviewer who does not necessarily have expertise in the specific area of study.
 - Declare Estimated Financial Resources - Complete the financial resources section on the application indicating all sources of known or estimated financial support the applicant will receive during the award year. The name, type and amount of support should be included for each known or estimated source. Also include a list of known or estimated financial obligations.
 - Letters of Recommendation - Faculty advisor name and email must be provided under the Letters of Recommendation tab on the online application form. Advisors will receive an email request for a letter of support for the applicant. The letter of support should include 1) a description of the mentor relationship and the project that the student will complete during the 9-month period; 2) how the experiences, accomplishments and points of view of the individual contribute to the diversity of the graduate program; and 3) how the student's academic research interest and degree goals relate to cultural, societal or educational issues, particularly in terms of educationally disadvantaged segments of society. Please note that the letter of support will go to the Graduate Division and the Graduate Council (GC), and will not be visible to the applicant. Advisors must submit letters no later than **Wednesday, January 25, 2017 by 5pm**.

Review Procedures

- This fellowship will follow a multiple step review process that considers all applicants. Review criteria will include adherence to the fellowship guidelines, intellectual merits of the proposal, and the academic qualifications of the applicant.
 - First Review - The review will begin with each Graduate Group nominating and ranking their top two applicants. Nominations must include a brief narrative of the process and criteria that the graduate group used to choose nominees. Nominations without this narrative will not be considered. For each nominee, the faculty advisor should be listed, along with 3-4 sentences highlighting the nominee's qualifications for the non-expert reviewer. Each Graduate Group must submit their ranked list and narrative to the Graduate Division by **Friday, February 24, 2017 by 5pm**.
 - Second Review - The Graduate Council will then review the nominations made by each Graduate Group and make recommendations to the Graduate Division.
 - Third Review - Final award decisions will be made by the Graduate Dean.

Deadlines

- Application Closes – January 20, 2017 by 5pm
- Letters of Recommendation – January 25, 2017 by 5pm
- Graduate Group Narrative and Rankings – February 24, 2017 by 5pm

Quick Applicant Checklist

- Curriculum vitae (CV)
- Unofficial UCM transcript
- Statement
- Declare Estimated Financial Resources
- Letters of Recommendation