

Graduate Group Chairs' Frequently Asked Questions

RECRUITMENT & OUTREACH RELATED:

Where can I send in any prospective student lists that I receive for my graduate program for general email follow-up and tracking?

You can email prospective student lists to grad@ucmerced.edu. The names will be entered into the Customer Relations Management (CRM) System for email communication and application tracking.

How can I get access to recruitment materials and/or PowerPoint presentations for a recruitment talk or conference I am attending?

For recruitment materials such as promo items, table cover, fliers, banners and PowerPoint presentations please contact Iqbal Atwal at iatwal@ucmerced.edu.

How can I update my graduate program recruitment fliers and email templates for the CRM (Customer Relations Management) System?

To start the process of making updates please contact Iqbal Atwal at iatwal@ucmerced.edu.

ADMISSIONS RELATED:

Where can I find basic admissions requirements?

See <http://graduatedivision.ucmerced.edu/prospective-students/how-apply/requirements> for admissions requirements and criteria

Where can I find the link to the admissions review tool?

The link to the review tool itself is <https://ucm.force.com/gpas/>

For a quick guide for faculty, see

http://graduatedivision.ucmerced.edu/sites/graduatedivision.ucmerced.edu/files/documents/review_tool_quick_guide_for_faculty.pdf

FUNDING RELATED:

What is USAP?

The University Student Aid Program (USAP) is a UC system wide program designed to meet our commitment to the state of California. Generally speaking, to meet this commitment, the university as a whole must return roughly 50% of the tuition collected back to the students. To this end, each year a pot of funds are ear marked as USAP and

given to the Graduate Division. The Graduate Dean then divides that pot up via the funding model.

What can I use USAP funds for?

Funds marked as graduate USAP funds can only be utilized for graduate student fellowships/awards. These funds are considered restricted funds. They may be used for:

- Top-offs to recruitment packages
- Summer fellowships
- Travel awards
- Computers or other equipment fellowships
- Best paper awards
- Bridge funding
- Cost sharing
- Tuition & fee awards

What can't I use USAP funds for?

- Employment/Payroll (eg, GSRs)
- Reimbursements

How is a fellowship defined? What qualifies as a fellowship?

A fellowship is a form of financial award given to a graduate student for the purposes of supporting the student's educational and graduate career goals. Unlike employment, a fellowship cannot be given on the condition of deliverables (outside of the student's academic progression).

What are the ways students can be selected for a fellowship?

Our students are primarily selected on academic merit, but other criteria can be utilized as well to target specific populations. For example, showing financial need is a traditional criterion.

In addition, a fellowship process can run in a few ways:

- **Application** – Student apply to a call for applications by a certain deadline. They are then reviewed by a committee, selected by the committee chair and awarded.
- **Nomination** – Faculty nominate based on a call for nominations by a certain deadline. They are then reviewed by a committee, selected by the committee chair and awarded.
- **Conditional** – A condition is set and disclosed in a call for applications. All who apply and meet the condition receive the award.

Please note, the guidelines and/or call should clearly define for the students the criteria as well as the fellowship process.

Are incoming students eligible for UCM awards? Can we use our funds to offer recruitment awards?

Absolutely. Each graduate group is given a pot of UCM Graduate Student Support funds each fiscal year to make awards to their graduate students within the given fiscal year. Those funds can be committed for recruitment purposes. For example, a top candidate can be selected to receive a \$4,000 award to attract them to UCM. So if they enroll the next Fall semester, they will then receive that award via their student account.

What are the Graduate Division eligibility requirements that need to be included?

They must be an enrolled (12 units) UCM graduate student in good academic standing.

Is there a funding cap?

Yes. If a graduate student is receiving any USAP funds during the summer, there is currently a cap of \$10,000. This applies to all funding sources, (TA or GSR appointments and fellowships). During the academic year, there is a cap of \$32,000.

What is the difference between fellowships and GSRs?

There are times when these two can appear to be similar, but when this occurs it's very important to highlight their differences:

A GSR is a form of employment with a defined exchange of services/benefits. Meaning, the student does X, then they get Y. Also, this is the form that is tied to salary, which is paid after the work is performed and subject to tax withholdings.

A fellowship is a form of student support solely for the student's academic progression. Meaning, you get Y because we believe you can accomplish Z. This is the form that is tied to stipend, which is paid up front and taxed as such.

How will students with loans be impacted?

When a student takes out an academic year loan, it's based on the student's loan eligibility, which is generally defined by the (cost of attendance)-(tuition & fees)-(stipend awards). If the student receives an award paying a stipend after they have already accepted their loan, then that award will reduce their loan eligibility. This will cause a recalculation of the loan to take place and the award will most likely go toward paying off the loan. This remains true until the loan amount for that academic year is paid off in full. Please note, this is a rough explanation of the impact awards can have on student loans. Individual cases should be handled with consultation from the Graduate Division and the Financial Aid office.

ACADEMIC POLICY RELATED:

Where can I find major policies and procedures?

- Look under “Faculty and Staff” tab on Graduate Division website Handbook, Mentoring Guidelines, and other resources for faculty and staff - <http://graduatedivision.ucmerced.edu/>
- This page also has a link to the Graduate Council website - <http://senate.ucmerced.edu/committees/graduate-council-gc>
- Once they are approved by Graduate Council, graduate group policies and procedures will be archived on the Graduate Division website under “Academic Programs”
- For resources for graduate students (writing, job search, etc.) look on Graduate Division website under “Current Students” and then the Professional Development and Resources tab - <http://graduatedivision.ucmerced.edu/current-students/professional-development-and-resources/academic-professionalization-resources>

Are electronic signatures allowed on forms?

Yes, if the electronic signature is a scanned image of a wet signature. Please see [Adobe's Quick Start Guide, step 4.c](#)

Other acceptable approvals/signatures for forms:

- **UC Merced Email** - Forms should be completed online and forwarded as an email attachment to the appropriate persons for approval. Signers should indicate, "I approve" or "I do not approve" and add any notes they wish in the body of the email, and then forward it (with form attached) to the next person for approval via UCM email. The email approvals should be submitted through a single email trail. The final person to approve/disapprove should forward the form and email trail to graddiv@ucmerced.edu, with a copy to the school's graduate coordinator.
- **Wet Signature/Copy of Wet Signature** - Traditional original ink signature on paper. Forms submitted without acceptable approvals/signatures will be considered incomplete and will **NOT** be processed. When a form is processed the student will receive an email notification to their UCM email account.

Website, Communications, and Marketing Related:

Who is responsible for maintaining my graduate group’s webpage?

You are, but we can help with some basic content updates. Call Christy when you need help: csnyder4@ucmerced.edu.

How can I recognize outstanding graduate students and faculty members in my group and/or market my graduate group to the campus community, external groups, and prospective students?

To initiate news stories about outstanding graduate students or faculty, newly funded grant proposals, or anything else that you feel deserves attention from internal or external audiences, contact Christy at csnyder4@ucmerced.edu.

MENTORING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION RELATED:

Who can help when problems arise between graduate students and faculty or among graduate students, besides the grad group chair?

- Ombuds (Callale Concon)
- Office of Climate (De Acker)
- Other senior faculty
- Graduate Dean or Associate Dean
- School Dean