The University of Alabama

Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN)

Grant Management

The Department of Education (DED) applies very specific regulations to the GAANN program. The GAANN program purpose is to provide fellowships through institutions of higher education to assist graduate students of superior ability who demonstrate financial need. The regulations applicable to the GAANN program are found in 34 CFR Part 648 and the DED’s GAANN program information includes useful FAQs, http://www.ed.gov/programs/gaann/faq.html.

Important Facts:

- GAANN fellows are selected based on the following criteria:

  1) An academic department shall only consider individuals who:
     a) Are currently enrolled as graduate students, have been accepted at the grantee institution, or are enrolled or accepted as graduate students at an eligible non-degree-granting institution;
     b) Are of superior ability;
     c) Have an excellent academic record;
     d) Have financial need;
     e) Are planning to pursue the highest possible degree available in their course of study;
     f) Are planning a career in teaching or research;
     g) Are not ineligible to receive assistance under 34 CFR 75.60; and
     h) Are United States citizens or nationals or are permanent residents of the United States and provide evidence from the Immigration and Naturalization Service that they are in the United States for other than a temporary purpose with the intention of becoming permanent residents; or are citizens of any one of the Freely Associated States.

  2) An individual who satisfies the eligibility criteria in paragraph (1) of this section, but who attends an institution that does not offer the highest possible degree available in the individual’s course of study, is eligible for a fellowship if the individual plans to attend subsequently an institution that offers this degree.

- GAANN fellows are true fellowship recipients. They are not Graduate Assistants and are not required to provide services.

- GAANN fellows are, however, required to teach as part of the program. The program requires the institution to provide fellows with at least one academic year of supervised training in
instruction at the graduate or undergraduate level at an assignment comparable at least to that of a one-half-time teaching assistant. During this year, the fellows are still fellowship recipients and not graduate teaching assistants.

- The grant includes funding for stipends and an institutional payment, which is used to cover the fellow’s tuition, fees and other educational expenses related to the academic program in which the fellow is enrolled (e.g. books, research travel). To ensure consistent treatment compared to other federal grants providing tuition for graduate students, the grant is to be charged in-state tuition and the out-of-state (OOS) portion is to be covered in the same manner as it is for grant funded GRAs. The OOS portion cannot be counted within the 25% match requirement.

- As the GAANN program is need based, the stipend amount must be adjusted so as not to exceed the fellow's demonstrated level of financial need as determined under Part F of Title IV of the Higher Education Act.

- The GAANN program requires the University to provide, from non-Federal funds, a matching contribution equal to 25 percent of the amount of the grant received to be used for the same types of expenses the grant covers. The matching contribution cannot be used to increase the stipend beyond the fellow’s financial need.

- Graduate Student health insurance is not an allowable cost of the GAANN program (as a charge to the grant or to meet the institutional match obligation) as the University does not require students to maintain health insurance coverage. To ensure compliance with consistency standards, however, health insurance is to be made available to GAANN fellows.

**University forms and procedures:**

- **Stipends** -- GAANN stipends are initiated by using “Student Stipends, Scholarships and Fellowship Form”, [http://ovpred.ua.edu/files/2016/10/stipend-form.xls.zip](http://ovpred.ua.edu/files/2016/10/stipend-form.xls.zip). This allows the department to use one form to specify the total stipend amount for each student and each semester (Fall, Spring and Summer) while distributing the stipend in equal monthly installments during each applicable semester. **It is not necessary to process a separate form for each student or multiple times during the calendar year.** Please ensure that the form includes:

  - Correct CWIDs and Names (First, Middle and Last)
  - Total amounts, by semester, for each student
  - Signature/approval of the principal investigator

The completed form should be forwarded to Contract and Grant Accounting (CGA). Once processed (CGA, Graduate School and Student Receivables), the students will receive
monthly payments through their UA student accounts. Please do not process GAANN stipend payments through a personnel action form (ePA).

GAANN fellows must have their financial need determined using the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/. Before informing a candidate of a fellowship, the PI/PD should contact the Director of Financial Aid for a “needs assessment” analysis. Financial Aid will give the PI/PD the stipend amount allowed for the particular student, if the student qualifies for the award based on the need analysis. Tuition is also provided as is in addition to the stipend amount.

- **Tuition** – All graduate tuition scholarships are processed through Graduate Assistant Tuition Online Processing System, https://oirax.ua.edu/gatops/. Instructions can be found at https://graduate.ua.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/gatops_manual1.pdf.

- **Other** – If during the GAANN fellow’s “instructional semesters”, the fellow needs access to UA Faculty systems to input grades, that access is initiated using the “New Faculty/Staff Setup (Demographic Information) form”, found on the payroll website at http://payroll.ua.edu/documents/New_Employee_setup.xls. Please ensure that the form includes:
  - Correct CWID and Name (First, Middle and Last)
  - Beginning date the fellow will need access to input grades, “Date Employee Will Need Access to Campus Services” *
  - Ending date the fellow will need access to input grades, “Date Access to Campus Services will end” *
  - Under “Person will be”, select the “Graduate Fellow” box AND note that this is a GAANN fellowship
  - Signature/approval of principal investigator AND Dean

* Access will be granted only one year at a time. The form must be completed each year that the GAANN fellow needs access.

- **Procedures and key facts**
  1. Contact Financial Aid early to determine if the student is eligible, prior to informing the student of a fellowship. Email the Director of Student Financial Aid (Helen Allen, helen.allen@ua.edu) with the possible candidate’s name and CWID.
  2. Financial Aid will do a needs assessment and provide the appropriate stipend amount allowed given the student’s need. Students cannot receive other federal aid. Any other, non-federal, scholarships/etc. will be deducted from the amount of need to arrive at the stipend allowed on the GAANN project.
  3. The match requirement is the greater of the proportion proposed or 25% of the total project.
  4. GAANN fellowships are based on need and, therefore, vary from student-to-student and year-to-year.
  5. Stipends cannot be paid through payroll.
  6. Students should attend school year-round (Fall, Spring & Summer). Students are not required to take classes in the summer but must document that they are involved in research or some activity where they can be marked as active.
  7. GAANN students are charged in-state tuition. OOS tuition and health insurance is cost share but not counted as part of the 25% match.