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## Secondary Appointments for NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program Fellows (GRFP)

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Responsible Office: Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS)

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### Policy Statement

This policy establishes when Harvard will permit the provision of secondary teaching fellow appointments (TF) and research assistant (RA) positions to National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship Program fellows (GRFP Fellows) on Tenure. These TF and RA positions are generally an integral component of the student's education and training; such appointments primarily exist to further the student's educational objectives. In all cases, such appointments must be reasonable in terms of commitment, and align with the student's educational objectives. Appointments may not be required or otherwise used to cover Harvard tuition and fees while the GRFP Fellow is on Tenure.

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### Reason for Policy

Per the GRFP Administrative guide (<https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2022/nsf22067/nsf22067.pdf>, NSF 22-067 section 3.10):

#### Teaching and Similar Activities

Each Fellow is expected to devote full time to advanced scientific study or work during the Fellowship Period. As teaching or a similar activity, such as a research assistantship, constitutes a valuable part of the education and training of many graduate students and such opportunities may arise during a Tenure year, a Fellow on Tenure may choose to undertake a reasonable amount of such activities without NSF approval. It is expected that such activities should further the Fellow's educational objectives and the gain of substantive teaching or other experience; the activities should not constitute service to the IHE or a method to make up the difference between the COE [Cost-of-Education] and the IHE's [Institution of Higher Education] regular tuition and fees (see also Section 2.2). Additional compensation for such activities is determined by the IHE, based on and consistent with the IHE's existing general employment policies for graduate students of similar academic standing.

This policy is written to comply with the NSF Guidelines.

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### Who Must Comply

All Harvard University schools, tubs, local units, and University-wide Initiatives who host or otherwise appoint GRFP Fellows must comply. Due to differences in appointment and stipend supplementation practices across the University, some units may have stricter local policies relevant to secondary appointments; such more stringent requirements take precedence over this policy.

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## Roles and Responsibilities

The **Department/local unit** serving as the GRFP Fellow's home degree program is responsible for ensuring compliance of all TF and RA appointments with this policy.

**The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences** is responsible for maintaining and communicating this policy to relevant administrators and graduate students.

**Directors of Graduate Studies** are responsible for resolving any questions regarding the alignment between a prospective TF or RA appointment and the GRFP Fellow's educational objectives. Upon request the Directors of Graduate Studies should confirm that such TF or RA appointments aligned with the GRFP Fellow's educational objectives.

The **NSF GRFP Coordinating Official** is responsible for adjudicating GRFP Fellow concerns regarding the level of commitment of their secondary appointment or its alignment with their educational objectives.

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## Procedure

1. Departments, units, and schools may allow a TF or RA appointment for an NSF GRFP Fellow on Tenure, if:
  - a. The TF or RA appointment aligns with the educational objectives\* of the student, as determined by the GRFP fellow's home school and degree program, and
  - b. Activities required of the TF or RA appointment are limited to a reasonable amount:
    - i. For a TF appointment, a reasonable amount:
      1. constitutes no more than two standard sections<sup>1</sup> per academic year; and
      2. does not exceed the number of sections required by the academic program<sup>2</sup> (i.e., a GRFP Fellow is allowed to fulfill the teaching requirements of their academic program while on Tenure; however, any teaching beyond such requirements requires an approved exception).
    - ii. For an RA appointment, a reasonable amount can be no more than an average of ten (10) hours per week of effort over the course of the appointment period toward support of general functions and activities within a research lab or program.<sup>3</sup>

\*If a GRFP Fellow on Tenure believes any such secondary appointment does not align with their educational objectives, or that the amount of activities they are expected to perform within the scope of the appointment are unreasonable, the GRFP Fellow should contact the University's NSF GRFP Coordinating Official in the GSAS Office of Financial Aid

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<sup>1</sup> A standard section is determined by the academic program and may be program or discipline specific. A standard section in one discipline/program may not be the equivalent to a standard section in another.

<sup>2</sup> An exception to exceed the total number of sections as required by the program (program teaching requirement) can be made if initiated **by the GRFP Fellow** and approved by the program [Director of Graduate Studies](#) (DGS). For example, if the GRFP Fellow wishes to gain additional experience teaching and the DGS agrees that the additional teaching will be beneficial to the student's educational goals, then the GRFP Fellow may teach beyond the number of required sections within the program.

<sup>3</sup> GRFP Fellows are also expected to engage in course work, teaching, and/or research in fulfillment of their degree requirements, all of which are academic efforts that are not part of the appointment hourly limit.

## Definitions

**GRFP Fellow:** A student on an active GRFP fellowship award who is currently resident within a degree program at Harvard.

**On Tenure:** A GRFP Fellow receiving NSF GRFP financial support during a fellowship year and certified by Harvard to be making satisfactory progress.

**Research Assistant (RA):** This title is used for individuals in training status whose purpose is to achieve competence as an independent investigator.

**Stipend<sup>4</sup>:** Stipends are payments made to individuals for subsistence support or to defray expenses during a period of academic appointment.

**Teaching Fellow (TF):** Serve as section leaders and tutors under the supervision of faculty members.

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## Resources

[NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program Administrative Guide \(effective March 2022\)](#)

[Sponsored Expenditures Guidelines](#)

[Fellowship Payments and Reimbursements for Students and Non-employee Postdocs/Fellows.](#)

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<sup>4</sup> Departments, units, and schools may at their discretion or to meet a financial aid commitment provide an additional stipend payment to an NSF GRFP Fellow on Tenure.