Procedures for Awarding Departmental Dissertation Fellowships (DDFs)

Updated 1 November 2026

I. Guiding principles

A. Each academic year, the Graduate School awards University Fellowship (UF) funds to the Department. Money for DDFs comes from this pool, and from the department's own funds. Each DDF covers one semester and is paid at a rate roughly equivalent to a standard TA appointment. Existing practice is to award the maximum number of DDFs possible, relative to our available funds. Most recently, we have been able to make three DDFs available per academic year, but this could change if the allocated funds rise or fall.

B. Generally speaking, the Faculty would like all Ph.D. students to have some fellowship-based dissertation-writing support at some point prior to graduation.

II. Procedure

A. DDFs are awarded by the Fellowship and Awards Committee.

B. There is no formal application process. All students who have successfully defended a prospectus are thereby candidates for a DDF. Both the DGS and Graduate Secretary attend the meeting of the Fellowship and Awards Committee and work together to ensure that every eligible student is considered. The DGS prepares his/her own list, which is checked against the Graduate Secretary's records. Prior to the meeting of the Fellowship and Awards Committee, the DGS may send out a message to eligible students to request information that bears on the selection criteria if needed.

III. Selection Criteria

The following selection criteria are an unranked list of considerations that are weighed by the committee in making their decision.

A. Seniority. Motivated by guiding principle I.B, the Department gives higher priority to students who are most senior, as measured by a student's number of years in the Ph.D. program, setting aside those students who have already been awarded a DDF or who will defend their dissertation prior to the beginning of the award period at issue.

B. Prior support. Students who have had other substantial forms of dissertation support – internal or external fellowships, in particular – are given lower priority, other things being equal.

C. Whether the student has applied for previous dissertation-stage fellowships outside the department (e.g., the Arts and Humanities Dissertation Fellowships). A student who cannot document any history of applying for outside dissertation fellowships (of the sort that would provide at least one semester free of teaching during the regular academic

year) will be given lower priority in the awarding of DDFs. More generally, the Fellowship and Awards Committee will take into consideration a student's history of applying for external fellowships; the more attempts a student has made, the more favorably the student's application will be viewed by the Committee, other things being equal.

D. Academic performance. Other things being equal, students' GPAs will be considered, as might other evidence related to academic performance (e.g., having won the Jentzsch Prize).

E. Hardship. Certain forms of hardship may also be considered. Nearly everyone faces some significant form of hardship in life; the Committee will be particularly concerned about hardships that have slowed students' progress on their dissertation and that have been introduced into students' lives by the Faculty, University, or Department.

Please note that students may not hold a concurrent teaching, research, or other paid university appointment during the semester in which they receive a DDF. Fellows also may not concurrently hold another fellowship or grant during the fellowship period. The purpose of the fellowship is to allow recipients to devote their full attention to the dissertation.