



COLLEGE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

Policy: Graduate Research Opportunity Enhancement (GROE) program

Effective Date: 2/11/2014

Last Review Date: 4/22/2016

Purpose:

To assist in funding highly ranked new and early career (RA1) graduate students who do not have a confirmed source of external funding.

Rationale:

The number of active graduate students, and specifically those enrolled in Ph.D. programs, has declined in the CoEnv (-13.4% from 2010-11 to 2013-14 for Ph.D. students).

The Executive Committee voiced their concern that a rising pattern of risk aversion among faculty to accept new graduate students in the absence of guaranteed support is contributing to a slowing of admission of graduate students, and ultimately contributing to decreased research activity in the College.

There are several possible reasons that numbers of graduate students involved in advanced research within the CoEnv are down:

- Lower federal funding levels overall
- Increased funding competition and uncertainty
- Shift in off-campus ICR rules
- Faculty demographic shift
- Funding shifts to post-doctoral researchers as GSRA costs increase rapidly

Policy:

GROE funding will provide a bridge to successful grant and contract support by PI's, and enhance research activity at the unit level. Preference will be given to recruiting new Ph.D. students over existing Ph.D. students and terminal Masters students, except in cases where a Masters is the only degree awarded.

Program Objectives:

- Encourage more robust research activity within units
- Encourage a larger research-focused graduate student population
- Somewhat diversify the financial risk of accepting new graduate students among PI, unit and College

Program Details:

The Dean will provide up to 16 quarters of RA support annually during this first three-year pilot program.

GROE awards will be either for one year (four quarters) or for two years (eight quarters), at the unit's discretion. No single student will be supported by GROE for more than two years. All GROE funding for a student must be used within 4 years of its allocation to the unit. Supported students, the grants and contracts to which the GROE funding is bridging, and any ICR that may be generated, must reside entirely within the College of the Environment.

The College will provide a **1:1** match of the unit's contribution (stipend, fees, tuition waiver). Units may choose from two possible match configurations for each student:

- 2 quarters GROE support + 2 quarters matched by unit = 1 year of funding
- 4 quarters GROE support + 4 quarters matched by unit = 2 years of funding

The number of quarters awarded to each unit is independent of which configuration is chosen (e.g. a unit could receive support for one student for two years or two students for one year).

Awards will be made only to students whose faculty advisor has submitted, or who will submit within six months of requesting a GROE award, a grant proposal that includes at least nine months per year of GSRA funding. The grant, its submission date, and its funding source must be specified.

Whether the grant is received or not, the GROE award will continue for the entire four (or eight) quarters of its award. If the submitted grant is not awarded, submission of another proposal including full GSRA funding would be required for consideration of an extension of a one-year GROE to a second year. An extension is not guaranteed and must be competitive with new applications.

Funds may only be used to increase the number of students in the unit, they cannot be used as substitute funding to allow diversion of unit student support to other needs. GROE funds are not applicable to senior graduate students (more than three years in a graduate program).

Application Submission and Award Procedure:

Faculty interested in applying for a GROE award need to submit the following information to their unit chair/director:

- Student name (if known)
- Student status (recruit or current student)
- Faculty PI name (and advisor(s), if different from the PI)
- Preferred start of GROE funding
- Title and eGC1 number of grant proposal submitted (if already submitted)
- Grant proposal submission date (past or anticipated)
- Funding source applied to (e.g. agency and program or RFP)
- Award notification date (estimated)
- Short justification: (see example below):

[Student name] completed their undergraduate degree at [institution name] in [year of undergraduate matriculation] with a GPA of [number]. Their GRE scores are in the [ordinal number] percentile in every category. They have extensive research experience and have worked in several labs during their academic career and have experience working with

[describe area(s) of research]. They have the exact skill set the PI is looking for in a graduate student. All of their letters of recommendation are very positive. They have been admitted into [department name]. Having the ability to offer them an RA will greatly increase our chances of recruiting them.

Unit chairs/directors, and their executive structures, are responsible for prioritizing all requests within the unit for submission to the Dean's Office. The unit head will submit a prioritized list of GROE proposals to the Associate Dean of Research. A statement committing matching funds from the chair/director is also required.

Although applications will be accepted at any time, because we anticipate this fund will be used to recruit new graduate students, we expect GROE applications to largely coincide with the graduate application cycle. Regardless of award date, acceptance of the award by a particular student must be made by April 16, at which time unclaimed GROE awards are placed into the next yearly cycle for competition.

If a recruited student chooses not to accept the award, then the unit director may ask for consideration of the next student on the priority list. A reasonable maximum number of pending requests for any unit would be for 8 quarters of GROE support. This would provide alternative choices if first offers are not accepted.

Reporting:

One year following the start of GROE funding, a short report must be submitted to the Associate Dean of Research containing:

1. Supported student name, advisor name, unit name
2. Grant(s)/contract(s) applied for (please include eGC1 number, agency, requested/awarded amount), award decision(s) and date of decision.
3. Plan for continued support of the student

Award Evaluation:

Evaluation of requests for GROE funding will consider the following elements:

- College-wide distribution of funding
- Prioritization by Chair/Director
- Evaluation of future funding potential
- Quality of student (where prospective student has been identified)

Post-Award Evaluation:

After three years, the Dean's Office and Executive Committee will evaluate the impact of the program in terms of:

- Attitude of faculty, and of unit chairs/directors, towards the usefulness of the program
- Number of supported students who transitioned to funded grants and contracts
- Student numbers and G&C activity trends in research labs with and without a GROE funded student

Dean's Office contacts: [Ivan Eastin](#); [Suzanne Zitzer](#)