

# Fellowship Best Practices



OFFICE OF SPONSORED PROGRAMS  
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

The [Office of Sponsored Programs](#) at CSU developed the following fellowship guidance.

Fellowships provide financial support for an individual's pursuit of learning, whether in the classroom or in tandem with a project. Because fellowships are awarded to support scholarly endeavors, funds may be used to cover textbooks, housing, tuition, travel, and other costs related to education and/or training in a particular area, depending on the fellowship terms and conditions.

Fellowships may or may not include a service component; may be paid directly to an individual or through the institution; and may or may not have deliverables. **Bottom line: Fellowships benefit the Fellow.** Because fellowships support learning, students receiving a fellowship stipend should not be classified as university employees. When creating a Workday job profile for a Fellow, it is imperative that they be brought in as a Predoctoral Graduate Research Assistant so they are eligible to receive all the benefits they are entitled to under the fellowship.

Sample fellowships and key points by sponsor are provided below.

## National Science Foundation

### Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP)

- Proposals are submitted by the Fellow through NSF's portal.
- The Fellowship award is made to the Institution at which the Fellow is enrolled, and the Institution is responsible for the distribution of funds. At CSU, distribution is through payroll.
- Fellows must make acceptable progress toward their degree. The Fellow and their Advisor are responsible for reporting progress toward the degree.
- Must be enrolled, full-time, in an eligible research-based graduate degree program.
- The GFRP provides up to three (3) years of financial support, which is usable over the five-year fellowship period. Fellows are exempt from paying tuition and fees during the three years they are on tenure.
- Tuition and fees must be paid from a Cost of Education account assigned to the Fellow. Any tuition and fee costs that exceed the per-semester allocation must be paid by a department account.

### Non-GRFP Fellowship/Trainee Programs

- Funds are awarded to the Institution, and a 5-3 account is established.
- Fellows/Trainees must be full-time students, as defined by CSU, and require the fellow to be enrolled in a minimum of 9 credits per semester.
- Fellows/Trainees are exempt from paying tuition and fees during their tenure.

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- Tuition and fees must be paid from a Cost of Education account assigned to the student. Any tuition and fee costs that exceed the allocation per semester must be paid by a department account.

## National Institutes of Health (NIH)

### NRSA Fellowships

- Funds are awarded to the Institution, and a 5-3 account is established.
- Funding is provided to pursue research training on a full-time basis, normally defined as at least 40 hours per week.
- Awardees are eligible to apply for childcare costs (currently \$3,000 annually).
- NIH contributes to the combined cost of tuition and fees at the rate in place at the time of the award. Check the award terms and conditions for allowable rates.
- Institutional Allowance is provided to defray the cost of expenses such as health insurance, research supplies, equipment, books, and travel to scientific meetings.

### NRSA Institutional Training Grants

- Funds are awarded to the Institution, and a 5-3 account is established.
- NIH contributes to the combined cost of tuition and fees at the rate in place at the time of the award. Check the award terms and conditions for allowable rates.
- Training-related expenses are provided to defray the cost of expenses such as health insurance, staff salaries, consultant costs, equipment, research supplies, and faculty/staff travel related to the research training program.

## United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

### NIFA Fellowships

- Funds are awarded to the Institution, and a 5-3 account is established.
- Fellows must carry out their program on a full-time basis, as defined by CSU.
- Institutional Allowance is provided in lieu of indirect costs. Funds may be used for tuition, fees, fringe benefits, supplies, travel, workshops, and publications.
- There may be restrictions on whether unspent budget categories can be carried forward from one year to another. Check the award terms and conditions for restrictions.
- Residual Institutional Allowance funds are returned to the sponsor.