Texas A&M University Fellowships  
2015-2016 Nomination Guidelines

TAMU/AFS Graduate Merit Fellowship  
*Deadline for submission: 5 p.m., Friday, January 23, 2015*

The Merit Fellowship seeks to encourage high-quality applicants to enroll in Texas A&M’s graduate programs. Only U.S. citizens or permanent residents seeking entry to master’s or doctoral programs at TAMU will be eligible for these awards. In addition, the prospective student must be graduating with a bachelor’s or master’s degree no later than August 2015, so that he/she can begin graduate work at TAMU in Summer or Fall 2015. Although students starting their graduate programs in Summer 2015 are eligible for nomination, fellowship funding will not begin until Fall 2015. Master’s students currently enrolled at TAMU are not eligible for doctoral Merit Fellowships; these Merit awards are restricted to students enrolling in TAMU graduate programs for the first time. Nominees must have submitted an application for graduate admission to Texas A&M by the date of their nomination for this fellowship. The nominating program must plan to admit the nominated student should he/she be selected as a Merit Fellow.

First-time enrolled TAMU domestic doctoral students who are awarded the fellowship receive ~$63,000 over a four year period. This includes a $25,000 stipend paid out over the first year, $9,000 for tuition and fees in year one, $9,000 scholarship each year for years 2-4, and reimbursement for the cost of personal health insurance coverage equivalent to the student health insurance plan during the first year.

First-time enrolled TAMU domestic master’s students will receive ~$31,000 in funding over one year which includes a $20,000 stipend, $9000 for tuition and fees, and reimbursement for the cost of personal health insurance coverage equivalent to the student health insurance plan. Outstanding students entering master’s thesis programs and master’s level professional programs will receive priority.

For the master’s level award, no matching funding is required from the department. For the doctoral level award, matching funding at a minimum equivalent to the standard assistantship level for the nominating department and tuition payment in years 2-4 is required from the department and/or faculty.

As part of the nomination process, nominators must submit the student’s Apply Texas application materials and a nomination letter. Letters of nomination should not exceed two double-spaced pages in length and provide an evaluation of the applicant’s 1) past superior academic performance, 2) relevant experiences outside the classroom, and 3) other indicators of future success. Attached you will find a checklist of all items that MUST be included when you submit your nomination packet. Reviewing these now will assist you as you prepare for the IGPS submittal process. The deadline for submitting a nomination is 5 p.m. January 23, 2015. Nominations will automatically be forwarded to appropriate department and college personnel for approvals.

It is essential that Graduate Merit Fellowship recipients be given ample opportunities for success and integration into the culture of their respective department early in their campus residence. Should the...
student be awarded the Fellowship, the faculty and/or department will be required to develop an individualized mentoring plan, stipulating how the mentor will guide this Merit Fellow to achieve success in his/her academic program while integrating the Fellow into the local academic community, by the end of the first year of the fellowship.

**Reviewers will consider the Masters and Doctoral applicant nominations separately.** The award selection committee will complete their review by February 13th, and the official award letters will be distributed shortly thereafter. Nominators, graduate advisors, department heads and graduate deans will be notified of which applicants have been selected for the Merit Fellowship. In our effort to distribute comprehensive financial packages, we will include a copy of the faculty/department’s financial commitment along with the OGAPS fellowship award letter.

Please be prepared to provide a copy of the faculty/departmental offer letter, when notified, around **February 20, 2015**. For award offers made prior to this date that are (1) greater than or equal to the required minimum, submit a copy to OGAPS; or (2) less than the required minimum, submit a revised offer letter to OGAPS.

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**2015-2016 Graduate Merit Fellowship Evaluation Criteria**

The selection process has been refined to establish a more consistent evaluation system among reviewers. Explicit, detailed evaluation criteria are needed because of the continuing increase in nominations, and the difficulty in ranking large numbers of nominees. The criteria to be used for selection of 2015-2016 fellowship recipients are provided below.

Reviewers will consider all aspects of the applicant’s experiences in the evaluation process with a focus on academic achievement. Specifically, reviewers will consider the following elements:

- **Evidence of superior academic achievement** such as class rank; GPA; standardized test scores, quality of undergraduate program; honors or other awards; etc.

- **Relevant experiences outside of the classroom** such as extracurricular experience related to course of study; leadership experiences; work experiences; military experience; internships; personal history; international experiences (i.e., study abroad, semester at sea, etc.); research experiences (either at their own university or in summer undergraduate research opportunities at other universities); oral or poster presentations; publications; etc.

- **Letters of recommendation**
TAMU/AFS MERIT FELLOWSHIP NOMINATOR CHECKLIST

**MERIT FELLOW nominators** MUST complete/submit the following items online to IGPS and you MUST submit in the correct database….one is for prospective MASTER’S students and the other for prospective DOCTORAL students:

1. Entry fields regarding nominee

2. Completed nomination letter clearly describing how this student’s application meets all of the criteria regarding selection for the Master’s or the Doctoral Merit Fellowship (no more than two (2) pages).

3. Three (3) references for the student.

4. A statement of financial support (assistantships/scholarships, with $ amounts) that the department/program plans to offer this candidate to complement the Merit Fellowship.

5. Student’s resume or curriculum vitae (no more than four (4) pages).

6. Apply Texas Application materials.

Items 2-6 should be saved in one (1) pdf file, in the order noted, and uploaded into the IGPS submission system.