# Blazer Graduate Research Fellowship Guidelines for AY 2022/2023

**Blazer Graduate Fellows:** The UAB Graduate School will award Blazer Graduate Research Fellowships annually to outstanding, highly qualified doctoral trainees who will engage in full-time research. Blazer Graduate Research Fellowships will provide financial support to include stipend, tuition, and health insurance to select first-year doctoral students training across our campus.

**Period of Support:** The term of the fellowship is four consecutive academic terms, typically beginning with the fall semester. Only under special circumstances and with permission from the Graduate School can the support be delayed to later years. *All support is contingent on satisfactory performance per Program and Graduate School policies.* It is expected that fellows will be supported after completion of the Blazer Graduate Research Fellowship by the faculty mentor’s intra- or extramural grant awards, contracts, institutional training grants, individual fellowship awards, or start-up packages in the case of new faculty.

**Stipend Amount for Blazer Graduate Fellows:** The recommended stipend amount for Blazer Graduate Research Fellows is $29K for STEM programs and $26K for non-STEM programs. This same level of stipend support is to continue throughout the fellow’s training, provided satisfactory progress is being made per Program and Graduate School policies. Program Directors can petition the Graduate School for a different stipend level if the recommended amount is significantly above or below the average for similar competing programs at other universities. The Graduate School will then make the decision on the requested change.

**Number of Blazer Graduate Research Fellows Supported for Individual Programs:**  The total number of Fellows supported for a single program is based upon capacity of program faculty to provide support and will be assessed annually. Blazer Graduate Research Fellows are expected to be engaged in full-time research. These fellows can spend up to a maximum of **four** academic terms as a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) per program curriculum requirements. When the fellow is serving as a GTA, stipend support should be provided, at least in part, from departmental resources (e.g., tuition revenue and/or laboratory fees) to relieve the burden on the mentor’s grant while the student is not fully committed to research.

Prior to the start of recruitment season, typically beginning in September/October**,** each Program Director will poll Program training faculty to assess both their willingness to mentor a new Blazer Graduate Research Fellow and their capacity to financially support them in their research program using grant/contract funding or university startup funds for new faculty. This assessment will serve only as a guide for recruitment of an appropriate number of Blazer Graduate Research Fellows each year for that Program. Please note these fellowships are not awarded directly to specific faculty. Program directors will submit the Recruitment Assessment Form to the Graduate School documenting this capacity and provide evidence of financial support for the requested number of new Blazer Graduate Research Fellows by **12/15/21**. These forms must be signed by the Program Director and Department Chair for Programs housed in a single department or by a Program Director and School or College Associate Dean/Dean for Programs that are interdisciplinary and include faculty from different departments.

The Program Director, together with input from the admissions committee, should select their most outstanding applicants for the Blazer Graduate Research Fellowships, which can include international students, and submit their application packets to the Graduate School for their review. Only the Program Director can submit nominations to the Graduate School for these fellowships and the Graduate School will only respond to requests or inquiries from this individual regarding the approval status of their nominees. Program Directors are highly encouraged to submit their nominees for approval as early as possible (typically November-early March), so that these Fellowships can be offered to top applicants at the time of the admission offer. All nominees for Blazer Graduate Research Fellowships must be submitted to the Graduate School by **4/1/2022** or they will not be considered. The number of nominees for the Blazer Graduate Research Fellowships submitted for review should reflect historical success of matriculating students.

Only those candidates whose credentials indicate a high probability for success in research and scholarship will be considered. Admissions committee members are required to use a holistic approach when choosing their top applicants and these metrics should include undergraduate institution, GPA, prior research experience, presentations, authorship on peer-reviewed manuscripts, letters of recommendation, and personal statement. GRE scores may also be considered if required by the program, but should not be used as rejection criteria. *In addition, the Program Director or Admissions Committee must interview all nominees in person, by video conferencing, or by phone prior to the approved candidate receiving an offer letter for a Blazer Graduate Research Fellowship.*

All Programs must adhere to the **April 15** deadline for honoring offers of admission to Blazer Graduate Research Fellows as specified by the Council of Graduate Schools Resolution Regarding Graduate Scholars, Fellows, Trainees, and Assistants ([see http://cgsnet.org/april-15-resolution](file:///C:\Users\pike\Desktop\Blazer%20Graduate%20Research%20Fellowship%20Program%202018\see%20http:\cgsnet.org\april-15-resolution)). Copies of all signed Blazer Graduate Research Fellow offer letters must also be submitted to the Graduate School by **5/15/2022**.

**Mentor Selection Form:** At the time of selection of the research mentor, the Mentor Selection Form must be signed by the fellow, the Mentor, and the Chair of the department (where Mentors hold their primary appointment) and submitted to the Program Director and Graduate School. Signing the Mentor Selection Form confirms commitment of the mentor and/or department to provide full funding of stipend, tuition, and health insurance for the fellow throughout the training period up to defense of the PhD.

# Expectations of Blazer Graduate Fellows:

In addition to being committed to their successful progression in meeting Program requirements, all Blazer Graduate Fellows are highly encouraged to apply for individual fellowships from federal sources (e.g. NIH, NSF, NASA, etc.) or private foundations if eligible.

**Important Deadlines for the 2022/2023 Blazer Graduate Research Fellowship Program**

1. Graduate Program Recruitment Assessment Forms must be completed, signed, and turned into the Graduate School by **December 15, 2021.**
2. Nominations for Blazer Graduate Research Fellows can be submitted to the Graduate School as early as **December 1, 2021**, provided the Recruitment Assessment Form has been received and approved by the Graduate School.
3. New nominees for the Blazer Graduate Research Fellowships will not be considered after **April 1, 2022.**
4. All programs must adhere to the Council of Graduate Schools **April 15, 2022** deadline for honoring offers for admission (see: <http://cgsnet.org/ckfinder/userfiles/files/CGSResolution_Jan2017.pdf>)
5. Copies of the signed Blazer Graduate Research Fellow offer letters must be submitted to the Graduate School no later than **May 15, 2022**.
6. A copy of the signed Mentor Selection Form for each Blazer Graduate Research Fellow that matriculated in 2021 must be submitted to the Graduate School no later than **August 1, 2022**.

*Copies of all completed and signed forms and nominations for Blazer Graduate Research Fellowships should be e-mailed to Cyndi Ballinger (*[*cknight@uab.edu*](mailto:cknight@uab.edu)*) or Dylan Pugh (*[*dpugh95@uab.edu*](mailto:dpugh95@uab.edu)*).*