Graduate School
Matching Tuition and
Fees Awards (MTFA)
Program Guidelines
The Graduate School uses the Matching Tuition and Fees Awards program to make strategic investments in graduate education.

The MTFA Program is a pre-approval program designed to strategically leverage Ohio State University resources to enhance the likelihood for the successful funding of competitive external research grants, training grants, and fellowships that support graduate students along with other aspects of graduate education. The pre-approval of these competitive applications to external funding agencies represents investment in the form of fee matches.

Funds are limited. Not all requests can be approved. If a pre-approval request is approved by the Graduate School in the online Fee Match System, then once the grant/fellowship is successfully awarded, student specific requests can be entered into the online Fee Match System. Subsequently, the pre-approved fee matches will be applied to the specific student(s) accounts by the Graduate School.

**Eligibility Criteria for Grant/Agency**

Eligibility for Approval includes both of the following bullets:

- The funding grant/agency provides a graduate student stipend but does not pay tuition and fees. This must be confirmed in writing from official notice (on official letterhead) from the agency such as in the Request For Proposals (RFP) or public charter of a Foundation. Confirming materials must be entered into the nomination system at the time of the pre-approval request.

- Competitive awards must pay fellowship stipends above a minimum of $1,750.00 per month to be considered for a fee match from the Graduate School. The stipend minimum is based on the cost-of-living estimate for an individual living in the city of Columbus using their student benefits based on data from the Economic Policy Institute (http://epi.org). This minimum may be adjusted as the EPI updates their cost-of-living reports. Fellowship stipends are intended to fund 100% effort for a graduate student toward the progress of their degree. Students receiving a Fee Match from the Graduate School may not hold other employment or paid appointments. Some awards may include payment of partial tuition and the Graduate School would provide the percentage unfunded by the external agency with our Fee Match.

**NOTABLE VARIATIONS:** Currently, the United States Department of State Fulbright US Student Program is supported by a Fee Match from the Graduate School for US graduate students to study abroad. Currently, foreign graduate students that work through the Institute of International Education (IIE) Foreign Fulbright Academic Placement services and working with the US Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, may receive an award from their home country. These awards may be eligible for a Fee Match from the Graduate School only if tuition and fees are not provided in the Fulbright Foreign Student Program to the graduate student. Currently, some countries provide stipend and tuition and fee support and these graduate student awards are not eligible for a Graduate School Fee Match. In both these Fulbright Student programs, stipend amounts can fluctuate and may not fully meet a minimum of the Graduate School stipend of $1,750.00/mn. Supplemental pay for Foreign Fulbright graduate students is required to meet the Graduate School minimum stipend of $1,750.00 per month to receive a Fee Match from the Graduate School.

The reason for these variations in stipend is listed below. These programs still need to be pre-approved in the online system and the student specific requests must be entered once the Fulbright is awarded to the student.

- The Fulbright U.S. Student Program and the Fulbright Foreign Student program varies by appropriated funds and the U.S. Department of State reserves the right to alter, without notice, participating countries, numbers of awards, terms of agreement, and allowances. Fulbright awards provide additional support to students, such as travel and are one of the most prestigious awards granted to students and faculty at a university.
Eligibility Criteria for the Graduate Student entered as a student specific request in the Fee Match System

- Good academic standing in the Graduate School,
- Be enrolled full-time in a master’s or doctoral program; a minimum of 8 graduate credit hours during autumn and spring and 4 hours over summer as a master’s or pre-candidacy student, or 3 hours every semester as a post-candidacy student
- Be making satisfactory progress toward that degree
- Not have excessive credit hours (over 175 semester hours)
- Be engaged in a project that is relevant to their research and under the Principal Investigator of the grant/award in the Fee Match System.
- Cannot hold any other employment or paid appointment

An award may be terminated if a student does not continue to meet the above criteria or any other conditions specified by the Graduate School or by the funding agency.

Exclusion Criteria for Grant/Agency

A request will be denied with any one of the following criteria:

- The Graduate School does not provide Fee Match support for countries seeking matching funds to enhance international opportunities, including for graduate students. Countries have opportunities through international graduate cooperative degree agreements [hyperlink] and other arrangements through The Ohio State Gateway [hyperlink] for an arrangement with Ohio State that can include students. Scholarships/fellowships from foreign countries, including those to specific students, can be used by programs/colleges to provide partial support for international students, but are not eligible for the Fee Match.

- The grant/agency does not provide sufficient funds to meet our minimum stipend are ineligible for a Fee Match

- Grants/awards that have already received funding are ineligible for the Fee Match. Our Graduate School Fee Match is a pre-approval program and must be processed and approved prior to the submission of the grant.

- Internal grants/awards/development funds are ineligible for the Fee Match.

DEADLINES

For full consideration, pre-approval requests for Fee Match must be fully entered and completed in the system a minimum of two weeks prior to the deadline to submit the grant/award proposal to the agency. Student Specific Requests must be entered and completed prior to the Graduate School Deadlines [hyperlink].

MATERIALS REQUIRED
Please see our MTFA step-by-step process document to assist with placing a request into the online system.

- Colleges must submit a letter from the Dean or Associate Dean of Graduate Studies with a statement of support and level of priority. Some colleges prioritize external grants that have indirect costs, release time and other resources. Some do not support agencies that only provide an individual student stipend without any other resources to support the program, college of university.
- The official award/grant announcement (Request for Proposal/Fellowship Document) along with the exact page and quote to this effect stating that tuition and fees are not covered, must be entered into the online system.
- An MTFA budget to the Graduate School must accompany each request. This is NOT the budget for the grant/award although that is helpful. The MTFA budget must include the number of years of support requested that must not be more than the number of years of the grant/award, the total number of students, and the total number of semesters requested. The budget must be specific to the stipend dollar amount provided by the grant/award and the cost of tuition and fees for that program and degree sought by the students.

**NOTABLE CLARIFICATIONS (RESPONSE TO FAQs)**

- Incomplete proposal/nominations will NOT be reviewed.
- Student Specific Requests that are submitted without pre-approval in the online Fee Match System will not be funded.
- Late pre-approval requests that are after the 2-week deadline for nomination in the Fee Match online system, but before the grant/award submission deadline, are NOT guaranteed a review.
- A Fee Match through the Graduate School MTFA program may be approved for some prestigious federal or national grants that have stipend support that is less than our minimum Graduate School stipend, currently $1,750.00/mo. In these cases, an MOU must be completed and the stipend must be supplemented by the program/department or college to meet our minimum stipend. These arrangements will be uncommon, require an MOU, and fulfill a significant enhancement of Graduate Education for approval. Requests for graduate students on Fee Authorizations awarded by our MTFA will not be approved for other employment or additional paid appointments so there will not be a means for additional work. The additional stipend support can be processed as supplemental pay. This minimum provides the necessary support for graduate students to live in Columbus and dedicate full time effort toward their degree. This also supports the university goal of shortened time to degree and career development.
- It is recommended that graduate programs seeking a Matching Tuition and Fee Award should secure the Graduate School's approval as early as possible, ideally when the external funding proposals are first being developed, to ensure any delays due to additional information requested can be completed within the deadline.
- Funding for specific students are to be requested only after the grant/external funding proposal has been pre-approved by the Graduate School and, if applicable, the proposal has been approved by the funding source.
- Scholarships (partial funding of a stipend that does not meet our minimum stipend) will not receive a Fee Match. Combinations of External Scholarships may receive a Fee Match if all other criteria are met and would be determined on a case-by-case basis and availability of funding.
- Communication that occurs outside of the Graduate School MTFA on-line system will not be official communication as it relates to the approval or denial of a request. If your program has questions about whether an agency is eligible, the process is to submit the request for a full review and an official response.
- Students should not be notified or promised Fee Matches from the Graduate School without an approved pre-approval request through the MTFA online system.
The circumstances of each pre-approval can be varied and maybe complex. If you are concerned about an outcome, the Graduate School can be contacted for questions within a few weeks after the notice.

Requests for re-review of decisions made more than one semester prior will not be reviewed.

Comparisons to past approvals should not be used as a guide for approval of the next pre-approval request due to the variability in availability of funding and the existing list of active requests and their priority.

Grants/awards that were not funded and are resubmitted will need to resubmit the pre-approval request as a new proposal.

Agreements that the Graduate School may make or initiate between units to cost-share via Fee Matches, such as on large competitive externally funded research grants (to increase the quantity, quality or diversity of graduate students) or special circumstances such as the Graduate School Fee Match Extension of Degree Due to Covid Initiative, may be made outside of the MTFA program but may be administered and managed via the Fee Match online system. Research Grants requesting cost share via Fee matches must already be funding an expected number of graduate students fully (stipend and tuition and fees) based on the size of the grant, and be requesting the Fee Match for additional graduate students to add quantity, quality and/or diversity. Funds for cost-share are limited, discretionary and may be denied for many reasons.