Tennessee Fellowships for Graduate Excellence 2018–2019

The Tennessee Fellowship for Graduate Excellence (aka Tennessee Fellowship) is the signature graduate fellowship program at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The funds for this fellowship are designed to attract top doctoral students to our campus. These fellowships awarded by the Graduate School ($10,000 per year for 4 years) provide funds that are coupled with a graduate stipend and fee waiver to create a competitive financial package for exceptional doctoral students.

The inaugural class of Tennessee Fellows was welcomed to our campus in fall of 2017. In January of 2018, we will offer departments the opportunity to compete for 20 Tennessee Fellowships that will be available for PhD students starting their programs in fall 2018. An important advancement in this fellowship program is a partnership with the Office of Research and Engagement (ORE). For the fall 2018 Tennessee Fellows, ORE will provide a graduate research assistant (GRA) appointment with tuition waiver. This means that we will be adding 20 new positions for GRAs for fall 2018! This has the potential to greatly enhance the research capacity on our campus. Departments (or colleges) will be responsible for paying the GRA stipend at a level of other GRAs or graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) in the department. Thus, we have cost sharing on the part of the Graduate School, ORE and the department/college to welcome more PhD students to our campus. Like the previous Tennessee Fellowships, these awards will be for a total of 4 years. This program supports the Vol Vision 2020 goals of increasing PhD degrees awarded and increasing our research outputs.

Requirements

- Nominees must be prospective PhD students who have been approved for admission through the ADMIT system.
- Nominees must have an identified faculty member who will assist the student with beginning a research agenda.
• Departments (colleges) must provide a GRA stipend.
• Faculty mentors and Tennessee Fellows agree to work with ORE staff in pursuit of external funding support as appropriate (Fulbright applications, research grants, external fellowships, etc.).

Application Process
Applications will be made through the ADMIT system. Specific details will follow. The number of nominations allowed are determined by department PhD enrollments in fall 2017. Departments with 1-49 PhD students may submit 1 nominee; departments with 50-99 PhD students may submit 2 nominees; and departments with 100+ PhD students may submit up to 3 nominees.

Nominations must include:
• a letter of support from the faculty mentor to include the qualifications of the nominee, a brief description of the research area the student will explore upon arrival at UT, and a preliminary mentoring plan for the student
• an endorsement letter from the department head, including the level of stipend support committed to the student and any other resources available to the student (health insurance, travel support, etc.)
• a resume/CV of the student

Timeline
• January 17, 2018: Applications due in ADMIT.
• January 18–26, 2018: Nominations evaluated by a panel from ORE, the Graduate School and academic units.
• January 29, 2018: Awards announced.
• February 1, 2018: Offers made to awardees; these offers will be developed by the Graduate School, ORE and departments working together.
• April 15, 2018: Official deadline for nominees to accept offer. While we anticipate that many will accept the offer prior to this deadline, we are committed to honoring this nationally approved deadline for acceptance of graduate student support offers.