Tennessee Fellowships for Graduate Excellence 2020–2021

The Tennessee Fellowship for Graduate Excellence (aka Tennessee Fellowship or TFGE) is the signature graduate fellowship program at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The funds for this fellowship are designed to attract top PhD 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 PhD students.

In January of 2020, departments will have the opportunity to compete for 10 Tennessee Fellowships that will be available for PhD students starting their programs in fall 2020. For the fall 2020 Tennessee Fellows, departments (or colleges) will be responsible for supplying a 50% GTA/GRA stipend and providing a fee waiver. These awards will be for a total of 4 years.

Requirements

- Nominees must be prospective PhD students who have been approved for admission through the ADMIT system. Although priority is given to PhD students, the committee will consider graduate/professional students pursuing other degrees when the department is able to make a convincing case for how the addition of the nominee will make a distinctive difference to the department.

- Nominees must have a guaranteed 50% GTA or GRA position (9-month or 12-month) in the department (college) for four years. These can be internally or externally funded positions.

- Departments (colleges) must provide a competitive stipend.

- Departments will ensure early placement with a mentor to increase chances for success.
Application Process

Applications will be made through the ADMIT system. Specific instructions are in Appendix B. Questions can be sent to gradschooledean@utk.edu. The number of nominations allowed are determined by department PhD enrollments in fall 2019. Departments with 1-69 PhD students may submit 1 nominee; departments with 70+ PhD students may submit 2 nominees.

Nominations must include:

- an endorsement letter from either the Director of Graduate Studies or Faculty Mentor that includes:
  - a statement on the nominee’s qualifications (academic, experience, research, etc.) that make him/her an exceptional candidate for your PhD program
  - an indication of how this student will contribute to the quality of the program and how/if the student contributes to the diversity of the program
  - the faculty mentor or the plan for quickly pairing the candidate with a faculty mentor
- 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 27, 2020: Applications due in ADMIT.
- February 17, 2019: Offers made to awardees; the Graduate School and departments working together will develop these offers.
- April 15, 2020: 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.
Appendix A: Financial Aid

Fellowships will be disbursed to the awardee’s MyUTK (myutk.utk.edu) account together with any other financial aid and scholarships that the awardee may be receiving. If there are any unpaid charges at the time of disbursement, the fellowship will be applied towards those outstanding charges. If any excess funds are generated from this award, those monies will be made available to you approximately one week after the funds are disbursed. Being signed up for direct deposit in a MyUTK account can assist in avoiding any delays. The award may be combined with other financial aid up to UT’s full estimated cost of attendance, which includes standard amounts for tuition, fees, and averages for housing, food, books, and personal costs related to attending college. If the combined financial aid, including the fellowship, exceeds UT’s estimated costs, the amount of any other financial aid may be reduced because of the fellowship.

Please note that this fellowship will be reported on the awardee’s annual 1098-T form and may have tax implications. For more information, the awardee should consult with a tax preparer or visit www.irs.gov.

Appendix B: Nomination Process

In order to more efficiently process applications, the Graduate School is using the ADMIT component of the CollegeNet software we currently use for processing nominations for the Tennessee Fellowship for Graduate Excellence. We hope that this process will make nominating applicants easy and straightforward. The following steps will show you how to nominate an applicant.

Log Into ADMIT

Go to my.utk.edu, log in using your NetID and password, and select Graduate School Admissions (ADMIT) from the choices under Campus Services.
Find Your Student

On the left, you’ll see a folder for your department (called a pool). This is the same folder you look into to find graduate school applications to render decisions on. Select that folder to get the list of students/applicants.

Locate the student/applicant you would like to nominate. If you start typing the last name in the “Last Name” box, ADMIT will filter the list down to help you locate the desired student/applicant. Double-click the student you would like to nominate and the record for that student will open in a new tab.

Don’t see your student? See the Troubleshooting section on the next page.
Submit Materials

The form for submitting materials is on its own panel. Across the top of the student’s record are a number of tabs. To get to the nomination form, select the *TN Fellowship Graduate Excellence Nominees* tab.

This panel provides a space to upload the required materials (endorsement letter from the Department Head, faculty mentor support letter, and CV/Résumé). Click the “plus” icon to browse for the file on your computer and upload it. This file should be in PDF format.

Once you’ve uploaded all documents, be sure to click “Save”

As long as all three documents have been uploaded, the student has now been put into a pool for review.

**Important:** If you do not upload all three documents, the nomination will not be available to reviewers.

Troubleshooting

If you do not see the student you would like to nominate, there are two known reasons why that might be the case:

1. The student was entered into ADMIT in a previous year.
2. The student was not entered into ADMIT, because they were admitted before we began using the ADMIT system.
In both cases, the solution is the same. Contact Sean Hendricks at shendrick@utk.edu and let him know the situation. He can facilitate making that student available to you for nomination.

Still Having Trouble?
If you have any difficulties, or have any questions about the process, please contact Sean Hendricks (shendrick@utk.edu) he’ll be glad to assist you.