

FAQ for Dean's Graduate Assistantship for Engaged Scholarship and Research in Education

The Dean's Graduate Assistantship (DGA) provides four years of funding for students who show exceptional promise as researchers. The program offers incoming¹ University Park doctoral students unique opportunities to work in a close collaborative relationship with a faculty member on an established or new research project.

1. *How is the assistantship funded?*

Two years of support are funded centrally through the Dean's office, and two years are funded by the relevant Department Head's office using a combination of Department resources and resources coming from externally funded grants secured by the sponsoring faculty member.

2. *I have already nominated this prospective student for the University Graduate Fellowship (UGF) program. Should I nominate the same student for the DGA?*

Increasing the number of nominations for a prospective student may increase the likelihood that the student will receive an award. *Please keep in mind that the DGA has a primary focus on research*, which sets it apart from other funding opportunities. Students who may not be eligible for the UGF may still qualify for the DGA based on the strength of his/her research experience and potential. **Note: a student may only accept one award.**

3. *Who is on the committee and how are decisions made about the awards?*

The Graduate Studies and Research Policy Committee, a subcommittee of the Faculty Council that includes representation from each of the departments, reviews these nominations and ranks the nominees. Decisions are made based on the nominee's experiences and interests in conducting research, and the expressed commitment of a faculty member to mentor the student in a specific research project. The committee does consider GRE scores and prior GPAs, but the primary criterion considered is the student's capacity to engage research.

4. *Why must the adviser's vita be submitted with the student nomination materials?*

The adviser's vita provides information about his/her research agenda to the committee. This helps the committee to understand the research opportunities the nominee will have.

¹ An "incoming doctoral" student does not need to be "new" to the University, however they should be "new" to the doctoral program submitting the nomination.

5. *Should I tell the prospective student that he/she is nominated for this award?*

Yes. The student will appreciate knowing that you are seeking support for him/her, and this may help with your recruitment efforts.

6. *How many awards are made each year?*

Based on available funding, at least seven new students will receive this award each year. In any given year, there will be 14 DGA students.

7. *Should a program nominate more than one prospective student for this award?*

Yes. The awards are not allocated based on the department or program, but instead based on the strength of the nominee and his/her potential to conduct research with a faculty member. Programs may want to work collaboratively to make strategic decisions about the nominees for the UGF and DGA in order to improve recruiting and maximize the number of awards.

8. *What should be included in the nomination letter?*

The letter should clearly indicate how the student will be involved with the faculty member's ongoing research program. The letter should also indicate the potential the student has as a researcher and the unique strengths the student brings to the research.

9. *What if an adviser plans to be on sabbatical at the time the student is a DGA?*

Please discuss this situation with the Associate Dean for Undergraduate and Graduate Studies prior to submitting the nomination.