San Diego Match Fellowships - Requests & Nominations

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Background

The San Diego Match Fellowship program has been developed as a means of increasing campus diversity. The program is motivated by the campus' commitment to be fully inclusive and supportive of all students, and by the belief that a diverse graduate student body enhances the quality of all students' educational experience. With the approval of the Dean of the Division of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs, fellowships are provided as matching commitments to strengthen select extramural grant proposals that request support for significant numbers of graduate students. Proposals that have a formal matching requirement from the agency will have priority.

The San Diego Match Fellowship is a recruitment tool that provides fellowship support to students who merit admission into graduate programs at UC San Diego and whose presence would enhance diversity to the benefit of the entire campus community. Although the University seeks racial, ethnic, and gender diversity, California law prohibits preferential treatment of individuals or groups on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity or national origin. Consequently, selection of award recipients may not be based on these criteria. State law and Regental policy permit initiatives designed to encourage qualified students from all segments of society to attend UC San Diego.

Pre-Award (before grant application is submitted)

Requesting Matching Fellowship Support

When applying for large extramural research grants that support multiple UC San Diego graduate students (GSRs or trainees), Principal Investigators (PIs) may request San Diego Match Fellowships from the Division of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs (GEPA) to enhance the proposal and promote inclusive excellence. PI/PDs or Fund Managers should complete this online request form at least one month in advance of the submission deadline to allow adequate time for review.

Typically, the Division will offer a proportional match: for every 4 graduate students annually supported by the grant, 1 fellowship match slot is allocated. A fellowship includes a stipend, plus resident tuition/fees. The commitment amount is always contingent upon the proposal being fully funded at the level originally specified by the PI in the proposal. If the sponsor reduces the award, UC San Diego reserves the right to adjust the fellowship commitment. Please note, if applying for a multi-campus/institution grant, only the positions that support UC San Diego graduate students will be counted towards the minimum number needed for matching support.

If approved, information about the Division's commitment will be inserted into the Institutional Support Letter (for training grants) or program proposal and/or a separate internal fellowship commitment letter will be sent to the PI/PD requestor with instructions about how to proceed with fellowship nominations. Please note, if funding, this internal letter will need to be submitted along with the online nomination form once a student is identified for the fellowship. The relevant School Dean's Office(s) will also be copied on this email so they are aware of GEPA's commitment. If you have questions about the match request process, please contact Tamara Schaps at tschaps@ucsd.edu.

Matching fellowship support from the Division of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs is contingent upon the continued availability of funds and may shift at any time.

Post-Award (upon receiving a Notice of Award)

Upon Receiving a Notice of Award

Upon receiving a notice of award, please notify the Division of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs by emailing Tamara Schaps at tschaps@ucsd.edu and sharing the Kuali Award Number and anticipated program/project start date. The sooner we are made aware of a successful proposal, the sooner we can assist you with the next steps of nominating a fellow.

Nominating a Fellow

Identification

A principal investigator or research group that has been provided a San Diego Match Fellowship as a matching commitment should work with an appropriate graduate program/department to identify eligible fellows. In collaboration with GEPA, the graduate program should have a recruitment plan that outlines how a diverse applicant pool will be achieved. As the fellowship is a recruitment tool, only incoming and second-year UC San Diego graduate students are eligible for nomination. Before a fellowship offer can be made, nominees must:
1. (for incoming students) have been nominated for admission to graduate study and plan to enroll and register for classes at UC San Diego during the term of the fellowship;
2. (for second-year students) be in good academic standing and meet established departmental criteria for satisfactory academic progress toward the degree;
3. be assigned a faculty mentor.

Eligibility

- Nominees must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents.
- Nominees must either be incoming or second-year UC San Diego graduate students
- Nominees must have completed the "Additional Education Experiences" section of the admissions application, or complete the cover sheet and accompanying statement linked below in Step #4. Fellowships will be awarded based on applicants' eligibility (having social, educational or economic backgrounds that would add to the diversity of UC San Diego's graduate programs) and merit (based on academic preparation and potential). Nominating programs must provide a convincing explanation of how the nominee's presence would enhance diversity within the program or campus. The following are examples of how a student could enhance campus or program diversity:
  - Student has unique skills, talents, or experiences that would be of benefit to others and would enhance the program or campus.
  - Student has an interest in an innovative approach to or application of the discipline that would enhance diversity.
  - Student has a strong interest in undertaking research that would address issues of ethnic, social, or economic diversity.
  - Student has overcome significant educational, social, or economic disadvantage or adversity.

Currently enrolled or incoming graduate students at UC San Diego can be nominated in anticipation of the program/project start date (for example the NOA arrives in April, but the project does not start until July 1st; in this case, fellow nominations can be submitted starting in April). To nominate a graduate student for a San Diego Match Fellowship slot in support of inclusive excellence, please complete this online nomination form by preparing the items below and submitting all documents at one time via the online form. The nomination should be made at least one month in advance of the program/project start date to allow adequate time for review and approval.

1. Collect the original Fellowship Commitment Letter issued by the Division of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs at the time of proposal submission, which outlines the total dollar value of the commitment and submit via the online nomination form.
2. Write the faculty nomination letter and submit via the online nomination form.
3. Identify the student you would like to nominate and ask them to complete this Cover Sheet and Accompanying Statement. This completed document should be attached to the Google Form and submitted at time of nomination.
4. Work with the student nominee's home academic department graduate coordinator (listed here, SSO required) to discuss and align all sources of support for the nominee. Please keep funding requests contained to one academic year.

Division staff will approve the fellow nomination as quickly as possible and will reach out if more information is needed. If you have questions about the nomination process or eligibility criteria, contact April Bjornsen at abjornsen@ucsd.edu. If you have a question about a current fellow that has already been selected or questions about remaining fellowship slots for future years, contact Flo Torralba by emailing gradfellowships@ucsd.edu to open a ticket in the Services & Support portal.

Frequently Asked Questions

**Award Eligibility**

**Question:** Can a student be nominated for more than one year of SDF Match support?

**Answer:** The SDF Match award is intended as a one year award. Nominations for a second year of support may be submitted but are not guaranteed to be approved. A student cannot be supported for more than two years of SDF Match support.

**Question:** Can a student be supported by SDF Match if they are on the final year of their program?

**Answer:** No. The award is intended to enrich the early- to mid-academic experience.

**Award Financial Support Information**
Question: What is the maximum stipend level that can be awarded to a student through the SDF Match?

Answer: The SDF Match is intended to support a student for one support year. Therefore, the maximum stipend that can be awarded per month is total stipend level divided by a 9 month disbursement schedule.

Retroactive Requests

Question: I just found out about this matching opportunity but already was awarded the grant, can matching fellowships be awarded retroactively?

Answer: No. All our matching commitments are made during the proposal phase, before the grant is submitted, as a way to strengthen the application and to increase the likelihood it is selected for funding. We do not make retroactive matching commitments to already submitted/awarded grant applications. The next time your grant is up for renewal, consider requesting a match at that time.

Questions: I hired a graduate student as a GSR but now I want to retroactively use a SD Match Fellowship slot for the student.

Answer: No. If a student was serving in the role of a GSR, it is not appropriate to retroactively remove employment support (salary and/or fee remission) and replace it with fellowship support (stipend and/or fee payment). Doing so would be a hiring violation and there could be possible tax implications for the student.

Question: We meant to award a match fellowship slot earlier this year but forgot to do so, instead we paid the student a stipend from our block grant. Is it possible to retroactively switch the fund source?

Answer: Possibly, we will work through these types of questions on a case-by-case basis with the department. First, complete the nomination form above and note the situation in the Comments/Questions field. Next, email gradfellowships@ucsd.edu to open a ticket in the Services & Support portal explaining the situation in detail and attaching documentation (copies of the ledger) showing how the student was supported and what fund source was utilized.

Moving Slots/Budgets to Different Years

Question: Can our department use an unfilled slot from a past or future SDF Match support year to award a student in the current support year?

Answer: No. slots cannot be moved across years. The slots per year mentioned in the commitment letter are fixed.

Question: Does the support from an awarded SDF Match slot have to be contained to one support year?

Answer: No. As long as the maximum annual cost per fellow as mentioned on the award letter is not exceeded, the SDF Match slot that is awarded to a student does not have to be contained to one support year.

Question: I have unused funds from a previously awarded student. Can I use these funds to increase the award of another student?

Answer: No. Unused funds from an awarded slot cannot be used to increase the award of another student.

Question: The grad student I was supporting through one of the match slots left mid-year. Can I use the remaining funds/partial slot to fund a different graduate student for the remainder of the year?

Answer: No. However, the original awardee may resume their SDF Match award upon their return. Departments must submit a new nomination and note the original awarded date for review.