



## Director of Graduate Studies Handbook

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### Frequently Asked Questions

#### General

- 1. What are SMU’s expectations of a Director of Graduate Studies?** As a DGS, you are a leader in your graduate program in areas of recruitment, admissions, curriculum, student support, and strategic planning. You also advise graduate students in your program and provide administrative approvals on behalf of the program. In addition, you are responsible for working with your colleagues to ensure that the program meets SMU standards and follows SMU policies laid out in the [Graduate Catalog](#). The resources in this handbook are designed to help you fulfill these responsibilities, and the staff of the Moody School Dean’s Office are available to assist you and answer questions you may have.
- 2. How do we know what kinds of issues to bring to the Moody School versus our own school’s dean’s office?** Issues involving personnel matters (e.g. faculty or staff behavior) should always be brought to the school dean’s office. In addition, the Moody School does not handle tuition or tuition waivers, decisions regarding research or teaching assistantships, or curricular changes, so matters in those areas should also be brought to the school dean’s office.

#### The Moody School:

- provides professional development, career, student life, and fellowship support and services for graduate students
- manages the PhD Health Insurance Program
- oversees PhD admissions decisions
- supports recruitment for PhD, MFA, and Dedman College master’s programs
- handles enrollment and graduation issues for Dedman College programs

- f. provides Dean's Office approvals for timeline extensions, leaves of absence, committee composition, etc., for Dedman College programs.

Issues in all those areas should be brought to the Moody School Dean's Office's attention.

### Admissions and Orientation

- 3. **Can the application fee be waived?** Application fees provide funding for the Slate application system as well as recruitment support on behalf of graduate programs. They can be waived in circumstances of exceptional need and merit. For Dedman College programs, the Moody School Dean's Office provides approval of any application fee waivers—please contact the Director of Graduate Recruitment and Admissions to request a fee waiver. In other schools, the school dean's office provides approval for application fee waivers.
- 4. **In reviewing applicants for admission, what information is useful to enter into Slate,** ~~7 1 a.t 71ae wt id.9 (u).8 (~~

- g. Health Center
- h. Counseling Services
- i. SMU Safety
- j. Student Conduct
- k. Student Support
- l. Institution Access & Equity
- m. Bias Education and Response Team
- n. Advice from Faculty
- o. Advice from Current Students
- p. International Student & Scholar Services

### Academic Progress, Academic Standing, and Grades

7. **What does “good standing” in a graduate program mean?** Graduate students must maintain a GPA of 3.00 or above to be in good standing in their program. Some programs have other specific requirements for good standing, e.g. not receiving two grades below a B-. PhD and MFA programs are also expected to evaluate each student on an annual basis, based on the student’s academic performance, research and teaching responsibilities, and professionalism. Usually students found to need improvement in any area in annual reviews are provided with a remediation plan to allow them to achieve satisfactory performance in this area. In some cases, though, where a student’s performance is marked as unsatisfactory on annual reviews, they may be considered not in good standing. Students who are not in good standing may be considered for re-admission on a probationary basis. Students who are not in good standing may be considered for re-admission on a probationary basis. Students who are not in good standing may be considered for re-admission on a probationary basis.



satisfactory resolution, the student may address their complaint to the school dean's office. If the school dean is unable to provide satisfactory resolution, the student may address their complaint to the provost's office.

Students with questions or concerns about the ethics of an individual's conduct of research (e.g., questions of authorship assignment, IRB or IACUC matters, other ethical matters), should bring those questions to the attention of the department chair and the Office of Research for clarification and guidance.

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one semester or a full academic year, but, in the case of a leave as the result of a medical withdrawal, can be for as much as two years.

- 18. How is a medical withdrawal different from a leave of absence?** Medical withdrawal is an option for students who, for reasons related to health issues, are unable to continue in their enrolled courses in a given semester and must withdraw from all courses. Medical withdrawal requests are reviewed by the Office of Student Advocacy and support. In order to request a medical withdrawal, students should complete and submit a [CCC submission form](#).

premiums of the SMU Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP). In advance of the fall and spring terms, the Moody School reaches out to all departments for a list of their eligible students and confirms that list by checking financial aid and other records. For more information about the awards: [PhD Health Insurance](#). For more information about SHIP: [Student Health Insurance Plan](#).

- 23. How can a student apply for a Dean's Dissertation or Moody Dissertation Fellowship? Who is eligible for these fellowships?** Dean's Dissertation and Moody Dissertation Fellowships provide support for up to one academic year (fall and spring) for students who are on place to defend their dissertations in the fellowship year. They are awarded only to students who are nominated by their department or program. Nominations open in March and are due in mid-April. Awards are announced in early May. Nominations include a letter of support from the department chair or director of graduate studies and a timeline outlining the steps remaining to completion of the dissertation to be signed by the student and their advisor. Departments may nominate multiple students, but are asked to provide a ranking of their nominees.
- 24. What kind of fellowships does the Moody School offer for incoming students? How can I nominate an applicant for these fellowships?** The Moody School offers three kinds of fellowships for applicants who show great potential for academic success as well as potential to enhance the diversity of their programs and fields:
- a. University Ph.D. Fellowships, which are topping up awards that supplement the departmental offer to make that offer competitive with top programs;
  - b. Mustang Fellowships, diversity awards which replace the departmental stipend and provide \$30,000/yr; and
  - c. Moody Graduate Fellowships, which also replace the departmental stipend and provide \$30,000/yr.

All of these awards provide support for up to five years. Nominations open in January and close the first week of February; the first round of awards are generally made by the end of February. You will receive a call for nominations when nominations open. Nominations are made through an online form in the Slate application system.

- 25. What support is there for students to travel to conferences?** Each school has its own Graduate Student Council or [Graduate Student Assembly](#). These organizations typically provide funding for graduate students to travel to conferences. In addition, the Moody School provides travel grants of up to \$750 for travel to present research or creative work at a conference. Graduate students are eligible to receive a travel grant once per year. Funds from the Graduate Student Council/Assembly and the Moody School can be combined to fully fund a conference travel trip, and they can also be combined with funds from the department or from the professional organization that is organizing the conference.
- 26. When can graduate students get travel reimbursement through Concur and when must they submit paper forms requesting reimbursement?** In general, students must book their travel for University business outside of Concur and seek reimbursement. Only SMU faculty and staff have access to Concur.

27. **How do we know when to have student stipend payments processed through payroll versus accounts payable?** Any activities that require the student to perform work for the university must be processed through payroll. Funds provided to students that do not entail any work requirements whatsoever must be processed through accounts payable. Students can have their funding split across payroll and accounts payable, if some of the funding is depending upon work and some is not. Payment for teaching assistants and research assistants must be paid through payroll, as it is compensation for work. Fellowships that are not contingent on completion of work activities, should be paid through accounts payable.
28. **How do external fellowships and awards impact a student’s funding from SMU?** Some fellowships and awards from external funding sources provide a stipend intended to cover the student’s living expenses. Stipends from external sources that are equivalent to or exceed the total amount a student would usually receive from their SMU assistantship and/or fellowship will replace funding for living expenses from SMU sources. Some fellowships and awards provide stipends that are less than what a student would otherwise receive from SMU. In that case, if a student is funded by a Moody School fellowship, their external award will be supplemented to match the total stipend amount they would have received had they not won the external award. For example, if a Moody Graduate Fellow (\$30,000/yr stipend) wins an external award for \$20,000, the Moody School will supplement that award for \$10,000 for a total stipend amount of \$30,000. DGSs should be aware that each fellowship and award has different rules about how the award is to function in conjunction with their internal or external funding. Please contact the Director of Graduate Fellowships and Awards with any external fellowships and awards questions.
29. **Where should I direct a student experiencing distress?** If you are concerned about a student’s health, safety, or financial well-being, you are encouraged to refer them to the [Caring Community Connections \(CCC\) Program](#). In addition, if you become aware that a student is experiencing a crisis, please contact the Crisis Center at 817-257-1104 or 11.04 108 331.32 Tm(e)-6 (d)-(o)-6.6 (f Grad)2.2 (u)2.3 (at)7.9 (e)-3 ( F



## Calendar of Moody School Events and Deadlines

This calendar is intended to

**March:**

- First round of fellowship offers made: early March
- Admitted Student Visit Day: mid-March
- Research and Innovation Week (keynote talk, graduate poster session, faculty panels, fellowships celebration): end of March

**April:**

- Dean's Dissertation and Moody Dissertation Fellowship nominations due: mid-April
- Initial deadline for acceptance of Ph.D. admissions offers: April 15

**May:**

- Dean's Dissertation and Moody Dissertation Fellowship recipients announced: early May
- Doctoral graduate recognition dinner: Friday before May Commencement
- Fellowships Boot Camp: late May

## Moody School Dean's Office Contact List

Robin Poston      Dean a