

# GA-TOPS Graduate Assistant Tuition Online Processing System

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## GA-TOPS

**GRADUATE ASSISTANT TUITION ONLINE  
PROCESSING SYSTEM**

### Welcome!

...to the Graduate Assistant Tuition Online Processing System, or “GA-TOPS”!

This web based online system eliminates all paperwork and forms which were used previously for awarding, approving, and processing graduate assistant tuition scholarships.

This system also enables you to process the GA health benefits at the same time as the tuition, and just as easily! See section 7 for processing GA health benefits.

Also, for any contract & grant funded award you now have a very special additional function whereby you can upload a scanned copy of the signed PA form as part of the input process on this system! As always there are very easy help screens at each stage of the process.

If you have any questions regarding the system itself, your access to it, or any hardware or software questions please contact the UA Help Desk.

If you have any questions regarding the awards themselves and which category they fall under please contact me at the address and phone number below.

Remember, this system is for GRADUATE student awards only, please do not try to use this to post undergraduate awards or any person who is NOT admitted as a graduate student in a degree-seeking program!!!

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## **1. Awards Processed Under This System**

Basically, any tuition award of a set amount or in relation to an assistantship where there is an FTE or a fellowship where a tuition scholarship is included in the benefits and that award is in effect similar to an assistantship award. The policy regarding these awards requires that (a) the award is in direct proportion to the FTE or work load of the assistantship, (b) the dollar value is limited to a maximum amount, and (c) the award cannot be combined with others without limit.

The following types of awards ONLY may be processed under this system:

- Tuition scholarships for all permanently budgeted graduate assistantships
- Tuition scholarships for all other departmental funded graduate assistantships
- Tuition scholarships for all contract and grant funded graduate assistantships
- Tuition scholarships for some special permanent awards e.g. Law School, MINT, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Graduate School
- Tuition scholarships for some special awards funded by the provost through Academic Affairs as supplemental permanent awards, and
- Tuition scholarships for graduate fellowships which are approved by Academic Affairs for processing on this system and which include tuition benefit. Please contact John Chambers in order to determine if your fellowship is in this category.

## **2. Some Important Definitions**

### **a. FTE**

This is the ratio of the work load or effort of an assignment to a regular full time employee position, which is 1.0. The FTE of an assistantship determines the amount of any associated benefits including tuition scholarships. You will need to have the FTE for each assistantship where you are processing a tuition award.

### **b. Assistantship**

A graduate assistantship is defined as an arrangement where the student is required to perform work or service in direct proportion and value to the amount of the assistantship FTE and rate of pay. Typically, a full assistantship is

for a 20 hour per week assignment or 0.50 FTE. Half assistantship would be for 10 hours per week or 0.25 FTE.

**c. Fellowship**

A graduate fellowship is defined as an arrangement where the student is NOT required to perform any work or service in direct proportion and value to any assignment. In effect, it is a “zero FTE” assistantship.

**d. In and Out of State Tuition**

Depending upon a student’s Alabama residency status, Banner charges two rates of tuition per registered hour. All students pay the Base or in state rate; non-Alabama residents pay an additional Surcharge or out of state rate.

**e. Permanently Budgeted**

This is an assistantship which is funded by Academic Affairs on a permanent line basis. Funds are given each year to the academic unit or non-academic division and may be distributed by deans to departments. This includes any assistantships funded in part by permanent budget funds e.g. those where funding is split with external contracts or grants. If you are not sure if your assistantships are permanently funded please contact your financial manager or budget administrator.

**f. Contracts & Grants Funds**

This is an assistantship funded by external contract or grant awards.

**g. Departmental Funds (Non-permanently Budgeted)**

Basically, this refers to any other assistantship funded by departments out of their own non-permanent funds. All assistantships qualify for tuition scholarships based on their FTE but the funding of the tuition scholarship follows the funding source for the assistantship stipend.

**h. Qualifying Students**

- Hourly or bi-weekly paid assignments do NOT qualify for any tuition award.

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- Student must be formally admitted to a graduate or professional degree-seeking program.
- Student must be appointed to and take up the assistantship for which the tuition award is made at the same rate i.e. FTE AND for the same semester.
- Students who are academically suspended may not receive tuition scholarships.

### **3. Summer Terms**

Generally, where a student is appointed to an assistantship which qualifies for tuition and health benefits for the summer then the tuition award is processed in exactly the same manner as for the fall and spring semesters, depending on the type of funded assistantship. Remember, that the health insurance plans for GA's cover two 6-month periods and therefore any GA who receives the insurance with a spring assistantship has coverage through the summer and therefore NO health insurance postings are required for the summer

However, see below (Section 7) for more information about processing summer GA health benefits.

Remember, the vast majority of GA stipends are permanently budgeted as 9 month appointments. Therefore, in state tuition budget is NOT AVAILABLE for GA awards in the summer. However, where a college has permanently budgeted GA lines as 12 month appointments you may enter those awards through this system. All other summer in state tuition charges must be funded by each college just like any other GA line that is not permanently funded.

If you are simply giving tuition scholarships and the student does NOT have a graduate assistantship appointment then you must follow the Student Payment Policy procedures for Graduate Student Scholarships (see: <http://studentreceivables.ua.edu/studentpaymentpolicy.html>).

The special tuition break for students in the summer where they held an assistantship in the previous spring semester which gives the student an award which pays the out of state tuition premium for him or her (previously the "Special Out of State Tuition

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Award”) will for summer 2010 and onwards be processed automatically by Student Receivables based on the final report from GA-TOPS for spring tuition awards. ***You do not need to post anything on this system or fill in any forms!***

#### **4. Awards EXCLUDED From Processing Under This System**

Basically, the only awards that cannot be processed through this system are those that are not tuition charges or where the recipient is not yet or is no longer a currently enrolled graduate student. This includes but is not limited to the following exclusions:

- Course fees
- Equipment fees
- International student fees
- Text book awards
- Assistantship and fellowship stipends
- Student is not yet formally admitted to the Graduate School
- Student has graduated or left
- Student is not in a graduate degree-seeking program
- Any athletic department awards, including tuition (these are processed through a separate system).

#### **5. Graduate Fellowships Tuition Scholarships**

Although by definition a fellowship is not an assistantship you are permitted to process certain graduate student tuition awards associated with fellowships through this system. This ensures that tuition awards are properly and timely processed and will prevent duplication of or excess awards from being processed on a student’s account.

Simply process the award under the “Non-permanent” category and insert an FTE which equates the value of the fellowship stipend to an assistantship stipend. Thus, a fellowship award of \$11,448 or more (the minimum UA stipend value, 2010/2011) will be processed as a 0.50FTE award, a fellowship of \$5,724 as a 0.25 award.

#### **6. Graduate Student Supplemental Awards from the Provost**

Where the Provost gives special approval for a supplemental award from Academic Affairs to a department or unit and that award is to be treated as “permanent” for

the current semester with regard to tuition and health benefits, please contact John Chambers who will advise you on the processing of these awards through the system.

### **7. Graduate Student Health Benefits**

Remember, graduate assistantship awards include tuition and health benefits for the students based on the FTE of their assignment. Generally, the cost of the benefits will be charged to the same funding source as the main assistantship.

#### **(1) Permanent Assistantships**

Student Receivables and Student Health Center will receive reports from this system which will be their notice for permanent graduate assistantships' health benefit awards, based on the FTE of the tuition award. You do NOT need to do anything for the permanent GA recipients as their health benefit award will be based directly on their tuition award as processed by you on this system. You will see a new Step 5 before you confirm the tuition award which tells you that the student automatically qualifies for the health insurance, you do NOT need to do anything else.

#### **(2) Non-permanent Departmental Assistantships**

Similarly, GA health benefits for non-permanent awards will be reported from this system. When you input the tuition awards there is a new Step 5 here where you will be asked to either (a) award the health insurance benefit and charge the same FOAPAL as the in state tuition, or (b) award the health insurance benefit but charge a different FOAPAL than the tuition or (c) you do NOT award the health insurance. If you pay the award from a different FOAPAL you will be asked to enter that information before proceeding.

#### **(3) Contract & Grant Assistantships**

The Office for Sponsored Programs Financial Services will process the health benefit awards for contract & grant assistantships and fellowships at the same time as the tuition. A new Step 5 will ask you to approve or decline the health benefit award, but Contract & Grant Accounting will then identify and insert the appropriate FOAPAL.

#### **(4) Summer GA Health Insurance Benefits**

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Remember, no permanent GA appointments in the summer and therefore there is nothing to process for health insurance. GA's have insurance coverage started with their spring assistantships which run through the summer.

However, non-permanent and sponsored GA's may have separate summer appointments. We can have the following situations:

- Where a student has not held a benefits qualifying assistantship previously and is assigned a new benefits qualifying assistantship for the first time for the summer, or
- Where a student is incoming newly admitted graduate student for the summer and is being appointed to a benefits qualifying assistantship, or
- Where a student held a non-benefits-qualifying assistantship for the spring and who is now appointed to a benefits-qualifying assistantship for the summer.

You do NOT process the health insurance awards through the GA TOPS system. Under these situations the student will complete a United Health Care "Voluntary Enrollment Form For Domestic Students and Their Dependents" (NOT the GA enrollment form) and take the completed form to the UA department which is paying the insurance cost. The form can be downloaded from the UA SHC web site at: <http://cchs.ua.edu/shc/files/2010/07/UHC-2010-2011-Enrollment-Form-for-Domestic-Students-and-Dependents.pdf>.

The department will then complete a DTA Form with the appropriate FOAPAL and send both to Geneva Dove in Student Receivables, Box 870120. SR will prepare a disbursement payment and send the payment to UHC.

### **8. Deadlines and Semester Awards**

The main driver for deadlines for submission of students' awards comes from Student Receivables. In turn, they are held to deadlines by students who wish to register for classes as early as possible and therefore who wish to have their tuition credits processed as soon as possible.

For fall semester awards the key dates are driven by the last day for students to confirm/pay their class schedules without dropping classes, and this is usually around the end of the first week of August. All tuition awards should be posted on this



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system no later than the date when fall student bills are posted to student accounts, which is usually around the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> week in July. Ideally, you must aim to have your awards entered before this date in order for Student Receivables to review and process the awards onto the student accounts, so we usually set a deadline of ten days prior to the student bills posting date.

Because Student Receivables and others have deadlines for processing and reconciling tuition awards, this system (GA-TOPS) will only be open at certain times for inputting awards to set semesters. This means that only a current semester's awards may be processed whilst that semester is open and active. Semesters will remain open from the first day to register for classes for that semester through the end of the enrollment period.

If you have any tuition awards that you need to make retrospectively to a prior semester then you will need to contact John Chambers in the Graduate School to process these awards.

### **9. Semester to Semester Rollover**

Provision has been made in this system to provide users with the function which enables them to extract the final listing of one semester's awards and then either edit the FTE or delete those whose assistantship carries through to the next semester before adding new awards. This will probably be most useful for the rollover of appointments from fall to spring each academic year.

### **10. General Description of The System**

#### **a. Web based online**

This system may be accessed anywhere that you have access to the internet 24/7 except when maintenance work is being carried out. There may be some software conflicts which affect the performance, for problems of this type please contact Jason Phillips. So, even when you are sick and at home you may still input your tuition awards!

#### **b. What you input**

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The amount of keying required depends on the type of the award or funding and the residency status of the student. Basically, you select which funding type, input the student's CWID, confirm the student ID and check key qualifying data from Banner, select FTE from the standard levels options or calculate your own where more than one fund is splitting the support of an award, enter FOAPAL information, check, and confirm.

You will need to identify the CWID for each student you wish to input to the system prior to starting the process. Whilst this system is linked to Banner for verification of key data there is no search capability. However, this system will verify the CWID you input and ask you to confirm that it is the student you wish to award.

### c. Two Levels of Use

- *User/Data Input* – You have permission to input awards to a fixed list of Banner orgs but not approve them.
- *Approver* – You have authority to approve awards for a fixed list of Banner orgs only.

### **11. Accessing The System**

Access is only permitted through secure sign on screen and only for regular employees who are recognized by Banner. You must have formal approval from your supervisor to access the system as either a user or an approver AND have been approved by the Graduate School and the system administrator. You will ONLY be permitted to access Banner orgs previously identified for your ID as the user or approver. The live system can be found at: <https://ua-app01.ua.edu/gatops>

Easy and immediate access is available directly by simply going to either the OIR web page or – better still – the Graduate School's Faculty & Staff web page (<http://www.graduate.ua.edu/faculty-staff/>) and on either location simply clicking on the link button on the left side of the page.

### **12. Logging Into The System**

You use your Bama ID for login to the GA-TOPS system and then you will be able to select from a list of Banner orgs which are linked to your name and CWID in Banner.

## GA-TOPS Graduate Assistant Tuition Online Processing System

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If you believe that you have incorrect orgs linked to your name or there are some which are missing please contact Jason Phillips to resolve. Currently, your orgs assigned to you have been identified and approved by your supervisor and/or dean's office. Again, if you believe you need to change anything in your hierarchy of orgs please contact the appropriate dean or director.

Here is what the log in screen looks like:

(Next page)

Office of Institutional Research & Assessment

THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**ALABAMA**

## Graduate Tuition Award System

The Graduate Tuition Award System allows for the entry, approval, and management of graduate tuition awards, and has been developed for the Graduate School by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment.

If you have been assigned to use this system, you may log in using your Bama credentials. Please contact John Chambers with any enquiries.

- [The Graduate School](#)
- [Departments Guide to Graduate Assistantships](#)
- [Additional Documents](#)

### Please Log In

Username:

Password:

Login

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## GA-TOPS Graduate Assistant Tuition Online Processing System

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Once you log in the system recalls your name and id details and the orgs for which you are approved for input. Here is an example of what that looks like:

Office of Institutional Research & Assessment



## Graduate Assistantship System

Welcome to the Graduate Assistantship System. To enter new awards, select **New** from the left sidebar. In order to manage your awards, check their approval status, or add Out-of-State funding, click **Reports** then select **List**.

Your login information:

Bama ID	tnperkins
Email	tnperkins@sa.ua.edu
Orgs	<b>820401</b> Residential Life Admin, Student Affairs <b>800201</b> Student Affairs Assessment, Student Affairs <b>800110</b> Student Affairs Communications, Student Affairs

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## 13. Entering Awards

At the welcome screen you will see a panel slide out on the left side of the screen. Use this to navigate between functions – Home: Select this option to return to the welcome screen. New: Select this option to input a new tuition award. Reports: Select this option for your preformed reports. Logout: This will take you out of the system when you have completed your batch input.

### New Award

#### **Step 1**

When you go to this screen you will be asked to select the semester for which the award applies. Only certain semesters will be open at certain times. If the semester you wish to select is not available please contact John Chambers for instructions on how to make an award for a closed semester.

Next, you will select the type of award you wish to make:

- Assistantship (Permanently funded)
- Assistantship (Non-permanently funded)
- Contracts & Grants

***TIP: There is no search function in this system; you must go to Banner Student Records to get the correct CWID.***

After that you will select the Banner org for which the batch of awards is being made. Remember, only those orgs for which you have been given access may be used at this stage.

#### **Step 2**

The next step is to enter the CWID for the first student receiving an award in this org under this assistantship type. Then press “Add” and the system will recover the student’s details from Banner and you will be asked to verify that it is the student you wish to award. Press “Confirm Student” or “Cancel” to continue. If the student is not enrolled, or it is an invalid CWID, then the system returns an error message to that effect.

You will then be asked to select the FTE for the assistantship. The options are 0.125, 0.250, 0.375, and 0.500, or there is an option called “other”. This gives you the

## GA-TOPS Graduate Assistant Tuition Online Processing System

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option to calculate an FTE based on a percentage allocation for example where an award is split between award types or with contract & grant funds. Select this option and a calculation table is opened up, then follow the on-screen instructions.

Press either “Continue” if this is the only student for this org or “Add Another Student” to add another student for the same org.

***TIP: Batch your awards by Banner org before you start to speed the process!***

At this point, the actions differ depending on the type of assistantship.

### **a. Permanent Assistants Tuition Awards**

#### **Step 3**

For permanently budgeted assistantships the Banner FOAPAL has been pre-loaded for the in state tuition base charge.

#### **Step 4**

The system automatically identifies the non-residents and, again, the Banner FOAPAL has been pre-loaded for the out of state tuition surcharge.

#### **Step 5**

The system will indicate that health insurance will be assigned automatically for all permanent awards.

You will be asked to “Continue to Confirmation”.

You will then have 3 options for confirmation (see below, section 14).

The next page shows you what a permanent assistant tuition award looks like up to this point:

(See next page)



## New Award

### BASIC INFORMATION

#### Step 1

Year and Term  (?)

Award Type  Assistantship (Permanently funded)  
 Assistantship (Non-permanently funded)  
 Contracts and Grants  
 Other Award

Banner Org No  (?)

### ENTER STUDENTS

#### Step 2

CWID	Name	Banner Major	Residency	FTE
11260144	Sarah Alhouti	GCB-MKT -PHD	Non-resident	<input type="text" value=".500"/>

### FOAPAL INFORMATION

#### Step 3

This award will be charged automatically to the appropriate FOAPAL and does not require you to input any additional funding information.

### OUT-OF-STATE FUNDING

#### Step 4

• You have entered 1 student(s) who are non-residents.

For permanently-funded assistantships, your non-resident students will have out-of-state funding assigned automatically. No further action is required.

### HEALTH INSURANCE

#### Step 5

Health insurance funding will be assigned automatically for all permanent awards.

Please note that health insurance would be assigned in the same proportion as the FTE value of the award.

## **b. Departmental Assistants (non-permanent) Tuition Awards**

### **Step 3**

For non-permanently budgeted assistantships you will next have to input the appropriate Banner FOAPAL for charging the in state base charge and enter the amount of the tuition award to charge to this FOAPAL – in most cases, this will be 100% except where the award is split between two or more funds. In that case, enter each FOAPAL and percentage split separately. Then, press “Continue”.

*TIP: Only valid Banner FOAPALS can be used – if the system does not recognize the FOAPAL or it is not valid you cannot proceed.*

### **Step 4**

You will then have options for charging out of state tuition surcharges for those non-resident students, usually the first option will apply i.e. charge the out of state to the same FOAPAL as the in state.

If you believe that the Graduate School should be covering the cost of the out of state tuition surcharge for your non-permanent award please do not enter here but complete the Special Out of State Tuition Request form available from the Graduate School’s web site and forward to John Chambers for evaluation and, where appropriate, approval.

### **Step 5**

You have the option of awarding your non-permanent GA’s the health insurance benefit and at this step you will be asked to select from 3 options:

- Charge the In-state FOAPALS with the health insurance, or
- Enter a different FOAPAL for the health insurance charge, or
- Do NOT award health insurance.

You will be asked to “Continue to Confirmation”.

You will then have 3 options for confirmation (see below).

Here is an example of a non-permanent assistantship tuition award:  
(See next two pages)

# GA-TOPS Graduate Assistant Tuition Online Processing System

GA Tuition Online Processing System | New Award

<http://uaops1.ua.edu/gatops/new>



## New Award

### BASIC INFORMATION

Step 1

Year and Term:  ?

Award Type: ?  
 Assistantship (Permanently funded)  
 Assistantship (Non-permanently funded)  
 Contracts and Grants  
 Other Award

Banner Org No:  ?

### ENTER STUDENTS

Step 2

CWD	Name	Banner Major	Residency	FTE
11260144	Sarah Alhouti	GCB-MKT -PHD	Non-resident	<input type="text" value=".500"/>

### FOAPAL INFORMATION

Step 3

COA	Fund	Org	Account	Prog	% of Award	
<input type="text" value="A"/>	<input type="text" value="11000"/>	<input type="text" value="215102"/>	<input type="text" value="605541"/>	<input type="text" value="800"/>	<input type="text" value="100"/>	<input type="button" value="clear"/>

Operations - E&G | Scholarships and Fellowships

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# GA-TOPS Graduate Assistant Tuition Online Processing System

## OUT-OF-STATE FUNDING

### Step 4

- You have entered 1 student(s) who are non-residents:

11260144 - Sarah Alhouti

You may assign Out-of-State funding to these students now by entering FOAPAL information below. If you skip this step for now, you may add it later for any individual student by editing the award.

- Charge the In-State FOAPALs above for Out-of-State funding for the non-resident students.
- Enter different Out-of-State FOAPAL information for the non-resident students now.
- Skip this step.

COA	Fund	Org	Account	Prog	% of Award	
A	11002	215107	605541	800	100	clear

Operations - Scholarships | Scholarships and Fellowships

enter additional FOAPAL    Continue to Next Step    ?

## HEALTH INSURANCE

### Step 5

You may assign health insurance funding to these students now by entering FOAPAL information below. If you skip this step for now, you may add it later for any individual student by editing the award.

Please note that health insurance would be assigned in the same proportion as the FTE value of the award.

- Charge the In-State FOAPALs above for health insurance.
- Enter different FOAPAL information for the health insurance funding.
- Skip this step and do not assign funding for health insurance.

COA	Fund	Org	Account	Prog	% of Award	
A	11000	215101	605440	800	100	clear

Operations - E&G | Scholarships and Fellowships

enter additional FOAPAL    Continue to Confirmation    ?

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### c. **Contract & Grant Assistants Tuition Awards**

You follow the same steps as for the non-permanent departmental awards - you enter the appropriate FTE (**Step 2**) and then you must use a valid C & G FOAPAL (**Step 3**).

#### **Step 4**

For the non-resident students the system automatically identifies them and reports to Contract & Grant Accounting for processing the out of state tuition surcharge.

#### **Step 5**

For the health insurance benefit you will be asked to select either NO award for health insurance or YES to fund the award, then Contract & Grant Accounting will take care of identifying and adding the appropriate FOAPAL.

REMEMBER: in order for C & G Accounting to approve the tuition and health insurance your C & G accountant **MUST** receive by fax or email scan a copy of the signed approved PA form for the student's appointment.

So, to help you with this important part of the approval process we have added a function which invites you to simply upload a PDF of the PA form once it has been signed by the PI!

This option appears automatically as part of the submission after Step 5 and you simply follow the onscreen instructions to browse, select, and upload a PDF for each student.

Here is what the completed screen looks like for a New Award for an assistantship funded by a grant:

(See next page)

# GA-TOPS Graduate Assistant Tuition Online Processing System

Office of Institutional Research & Assessment

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

## New Award

### BASIC INFORMATION

Step 1

Year and Term  ?

Award Type ?  
 Assistantship (Permanently funded)  
 Assistantship (Non-permanently funded)  
 Contracts and Grants  
 Other Award

Banner Org No  ?

### ENTER STUDENTS

Step 2

CWD	Name	Banner Major	Residency	FTE
11260144	Sarah Alhouti	GCB-MKT -PHD	Non-resident	<input type="text" value=".500"/>

### FOAPAL INFORMATION

Step 3

COA	Fund	Org	Account	Prog	
<input type="text" value="A"/>	<input type="text" value="22547"/>	<input type="text" value="215101"/>	<input type="text" value="605541"/>	<input type="text" value="300"/>	<input type="button" value="clear"/>

Opening the Schoolhouse Door: A Men | Public Service

?

### OUT-OF-STATE FUNDING

Step 4

• You have entered 1 student(s) who are non-residents.

For Contracts and Grants, your non-resident students will have out-of-state funding assigned automatically by OSPFS upon approval. No further action is required.

# GA-TOPS Graduate Assistant Tuition Online Processing System

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## HEALTH INSURANCE

### Step 5

For Contracts and Grants, you may designate whether the award should or should not include health insurance. The relevant FOAPAL will be assigned automatically.

- Fund health insurance for this award.
- Do not include health insurance as part of this award.

[Continue to Confirmation](#)

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### **14. Confirming Awards**

When you get to the Confirmation screen you will see a summary of the awards you have made and are about to enter, you will have an option to simply print the summary screen, and you will have 3 options:

- (1) Submit Award – This will accept the awards you have made and send them to the registered approver.
- (2) Submit and Continue – This will allow you to submit the awards shown in the summary and then continue to add more awards.
- (3) Cancel – Clears the form and starts over.

### **15. Adjustments and Changes**

Adjustments and changes to awards already entered are made by selecting Reports from the user menu on the left of the screen. Highlight the line where you wish to make changes and left click on the student's FTE in that line. The system will recall the data previously entered and give you the option to either edit the entry or cancel the award, select as appropriate. Make the changes you need to do and continue to confirm the award. The change will be updated by Student Receivables as part of the next batch of input.

The system permits two types of adjustment: edit or cancel. Use edit to change the FTE of an award, use cancel to remove the student or award completely.

Where tuition rates change after you have entered awards Student Receivables will automatically update the dollar amount of each award.

### **16. Termination of Assistantship During a Semester**

When an assistantship is cancelled before the start of the semester the student is not entitled to any benefits and the tuition and health insurance awards posted in GA TOPS should be cancelled in full.

However, where a student's assistantship is cancelled after the start of the semester – either voluntarily through withdrawal or through termination by the department – this impacts the amount of tuition scholarship that the student is entitled to receive. The calculation of that amount depends on the timing of the withdrawal/termination.



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For each semester, Student Receivables sets withdrawal deadlines for the amount of tuition credit that a student may receive from the original tuition charge. These deadlines are published in the academic calendar each year and can be viewed on the Student Receivables' web pages.

If a student withdraws between the first and fourth weeks of the semester then the student will receive 75% credit back on the original charge and he will owe just 25% of the original charge. If withdrawal occurs between the fifth and eighth weeks, then the credit is 50% and he owes 50%; after the eighth week the student does not receive any credit and is liable for the full charge.

The very same timetable and % return applies for the tuition scholarship associated with an assistantship withdrawal or termination.

So, if the student withdraws between the first and fourth week of the semester he will receive 25% of his tuition scholarship (matching the tuition charge). If he withdraws between the fifth and eighth weeks of the semester the tuition scholarship is reduced to 50% of the original award. If he withdraws after the eighth week then he still receives the full tuition scholarship.

What does this mean for GA TOPS?

Well, you need to know the date of withdrawal or termination of the assistantship and based on which week of the semester that occurs you simply make the following changes to the student's original award in GA TOPS:

Withdrawal/termination between week 1 and week 4	Change to 25% of the original FTE or percentage award
Withdrawal/termination between week 5 and week 8	Change to 50% of the original FTE or percentage award

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Withdrawal/termination after week 8	No change to original award
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So, for example, let's say you have a permanent GA award with a 0.500 FTE and he decides to resign from the assistantship in the third week of the semester. You simply go into GA TOPS and select the Edit/Change/Cancel option. His original FTE was 0.500, according to the table above he is entitled to receive 25% of the original award, therefore you change the FTE from 0.500 to  $0.500 \times 25\%$ , or 0.125.

In the same example, if the GA has an original FTE award of 0.250 then you change the FTE from 0.250 to  $0.250 \times 25\%$ , or 0.062.

In a second example, the student has a 0.500 FTE and is terminated from his position in week 6 of the semester. He will receive 50% of the original award, so you change the FTE from 0.500 to  $0.500 \times 50\%$ , or 0.250.

And so on...

Remember, you can use the calculation function in GA TOPS when calculating the revised FTE. Simply take the original FTE and use the appropriate percentage from the above table based on the withdrawal week number.

### **17. Checking Your Work**

**Remember:** the FTE of the tuition award MUST match exactly with the FTE of the assistantship to which the student is finally appointed. If that changes between the tuition award and the assistantship assignment you MUST reflect that change through the GA-TOPS system. Also, when a student is terminated early from an assistantship or leaves before the completion of the term of appointment, you must delete that award out of the system as soon as you receive the notice of cessation.

Overload Warning: There is an additional warning screen which opens up where you select a student who already has tuition awards entered into the system either by you or by another department. This lists all of the awards currently posted and warns you about exceeding maximum award limits. The note directs you to communicate with the other departments to determine the correct allocation of the awards.

### **18.Reports**

Each user and approver has an option to simply print the screen he or she is reviewing or to access a list of pre-formatted reports in order to provide a check and permanent copy of what was processed. Click the Reports title in the left side action panel.

On the report listing there are several functions available to you, such as:

- Rolling your mouse over the Org column will uncover the name of the person who entered that award.
- Rolling your mouse over the student name will uncover the CIWD.
- Click on a column heading and where appropriate the column contents will be sorted differently.
- You may filter the report contents using the drop down menus at the top of the report.
- Clicking on a student name will give you the same window into window when you entered the student originally and will show you the latest Banner information for GPA and degree and registration status.
- Click on the percentage or FTE and the “edit/change” functions will open.
- For all awards other than permanent, click on the Health column and a dialog box will open at the bottom of the screen and which shows you the FOAPAL where the health insurance will be charged.
- Click on the entry in the Approved column and a dialog box will open at the bottom of the screen which tells you who needs to approve the award. If already approved, this function tells you by whom and when it was approved.

### **19.Posting Awards to Student Accounts**

As part of the daily routines Student Receivables will access output from this system and post the awards to student accounts and to your Banner FOAPAL as appropriate.

## **20. Approving Awards**

All approvers are identified from Banner and from the GA-TOPS master list of approvers. Each time an award is entered into the system with an org number for which they have approval rights, he or she will receive an automated email sent to their Bama email address and which tells them that they have awards to approve and how to access the system to record their approval or rejection.

They will not receive an email for every single award entered! They will receive an email the first time a new award is entered since the time of their latest approval access. So, for example where a department enters a batch of 10 awards for the same org, the approver will receive an email telling him or her that awards need their approval. If before that approval is entered the department enters another batch of 10 awards the approver does NOT receive a second email, however when he or she signs in to do the approval they will see the full list of 20 items to approve.

Here is the email they will receive:

### **THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA GRADUATE SCHOOL**

On June 4th, the Graduate School of the University of Alabama launched a new process for assigning tuition awards to students with a graduate assistantship: the Graduate Assistant Tuition Online Processing System (GA-TOPS). You are receiving this message because a tuition award has been entered for a student(s) into the new system that requires your approval. You may enter the system using the directions below, or contact John Chambers (8-8282 or [jchamber@ua.edu](mailto:jchamber@ua.edu)) for assistance. It is the intention of the Graduate School that this new system will be easier to use and hopefully simplify the process of making tuition awards to graduate assistants.

### **Notice: New Award(s) Requiring Approval**

A new graduate award has been entered and will require your approval before it may go into effect. Please log in to [The Graduate Assistant Tuition Online Processing System](#) in order to view and then approve or reject this award, as well as any other outstanding awards requiring your attention. You will use your Bama ID and password in order to log in.

All questions should be directed to John Chambers of The Graduate School - [john.chambers@ua.edu](mailto:john.chambers@ua.edu)  
The University of Alabama | Via the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment | July 7, 2009, 9:56 am

## **21. Logout**

To exit the system, simply click on the Logout option on the user menu on the left of the screen.

## **22. Important Links**

- a. Sponsored Programs Financial Services <http://osp.ua.edu/>
- b. Student Payment Policy  
<http://studentreceivables.ua.edu/studentpaymentpolicy.html>
- c. Graduate Assistantship Tuition Policy  
<https://graduate.ua.edu/faculty-staff/graduate-student-employee-administration/graduate-assistant-tuition-policy/>
- d. UA Cost of Attendance <http://cost.ua.edu/graduate-08-09.html>
- e. GA –TOPS Manual  
[http://services.graduate.ua.edu/admin/gatops\\_manual.pdf](http://services.graduate.ua.edu/admin/gatops_manual.pdf)