

DATE: May 17, 2016

TO: Deans, Chairs, Head Graduate Advisors, Graduate Student Affairs Officers  
of Departments eligible for the DCF

FROM: Fiona M. Doyle, Dean of the Graduate Division  
John Battles, Chair, Graduate Council, Academic Senate



RE: Doctoral Completion Fellowship (DCF)

At the request of Graduate Division Dean Fiona Doyle, a subcommittee of the Graduate Council conducted a thorough review of concerns expressed by faculty and graduate students about the current policy governing the Doctoral Completion Fellowship (DCF). The Graduate Council approved the following revisions at its meeting of May 2, 2016. The two revisions change the consequences of taking the DCF and add a condition to eligibility requirements.

In the [Guide to Graduate Policy, section F3.1](#):

1) Under the heading “Consequences of Using the DCF,” the following paragraph will replace the current first paragraph:

Filing of the dissertation is expected to occur before the end of one year past Normative Time to Degree, at the latest. Subsequently, no university fellowship funding can be awarded to a student who has activated the DCF beyond one year past Normative Time to Degree (Normative Time plus one year grace period).[1] The DCF does not in any way affect the eligibility of students for university employment, access to loans, or use of outside funding to continue after one year past Normative Time to Degree.

[1] University fellowship funding is defined as funding awarded or controlled by the Graduate Division or UC Berkeley. This includes departmental block grants, Graduate Division Conference Travel Grants and Summer Grants, Berkeley Connect, and Hellman Graduate Awards. Exceptions include awards from departmentally restricted funds, reimbursement for travel and conferences from non-fellowship funds, student parent grants, FLAS stipends used to pay non-Berkeley fees, and awards for meritorious service (e.g., Teaching Effectiveness Awards for GSIs, Outstanding GSI Awards). For more information, contact [gradfell@berkeley.edu](mailto:gradfell@berkeley.edu).

The revision will take effect on May 23, 2016. All graduate students who were admitted under the current version of the DCF (Fall 2010 and after) will be governed by the conditions of the revised policy, whether or not they have taken the DCF yet.

This revised provision will be enacted as a three-year pilot program, and the Graduate Council will work with the Graduate Division to assess the effects of the revision after three years. As part of its assessment, the Graduate Council will investigate whether there is an increase in the number of eligible students who accept the DCF, and whether the change has had any appreciable effect on time-to-degree in DCF-eligible departments.

2) Under the heading “Eligibility for the DCF,” the following will be added as a fifth bullet point:

Students must apply for at least one external fellowship in order to be eligible for the DCF. DCF eligibility is not contingent upon winning an external fellowship, nor would the receipt of external funding in any way affect a student’s eligibility for a DCF. This requirement is intended to enhance students’ intellectual and professional development by making them aware of funding opportunities and working with their advisors to prepare application materials. International students are exempt from this condition, however, because there typically are very few external fellowships for which international students are eligible.

This condition will go into effect in Fall 2017, as there may not be an external fellowship to which students can apply between now and when they have to decide whether to take the DCF in AY 2016-2017.