

Date: October 28, 2016

To: Chairs; Faculty

cc: Graduate Student Affairs Officers

From: Fiona M. Doyle, Dean of the Graduate Division

Re: **Policy Clarification on Filing Fee and University Funds**

This statement is adapted from a personalized response I made to several Department Chairs who wrote concerning my message of August 31, 2016, regarding policies governing the awarding of funds to students on Filing Fee status.

My communication of August 31 about restrictions on university funds to support students on Filing Fee had not considered the title codes for which student registration is not required, e.g. Readers/Tutors, and Specialists. This was an oversight on my part. Being on Filing Fee should not, indeed, prohibit employment of an individual in a non-student title code. Hence I retract the prohibition on hiring students on Filing Fee in non-student titles, provided that the individual meets all employment eligibility requirements and receives all attendant employee benefits for the position.

Regarding other financial support of students on Filing Fee, I do understand that recent enforcement of long-standing policies related to enrollment and student financial support due to the implementation of the SIS has required some adjustment to common practice in some academic units. For this reason, I have granted exceptions for Fall 2016 awards, for students holding written assurance of such support.

Going forward, it is incumbent on the Graduate Division to adhere to long-standing policies that treat the Filing Fee semester as a non-registration status for the sole purpose of filing the dissertation (or sitting for the comprehensive exam), a status that allows minimal access to campus and student services. These policies are similar to other UC campuses; in all cases, students are not allowed to accept any funding restricted to registered students, whether in the form of fellowships, stipends, or employment in student title codes. Some campuses do not allow students on Filing Fee to conduct further research, while other campuses expect students on Filing Fee to have submitted draft versions of their dissertation to their committees. For a few examples, follow the links to: [UC Davis](#) [UCLA](#) [UCSF](#)

Because the Graduate Division's support of graduate students through fellowships, block grants, NRST awards, conference travel, etc., is dependent on Return-to-Aid from tuition, students using Filing Fee before they are academically ready, or as a form of less expensive departmental support near the end of a student's doctoral degree, directly impact the university, the Graduate Division, and ultimately the departments through reduced resources. It also means that Filing Fee is not available to students at the time when they really need it, when they are putting the finishing touches on their dissertations.

Our aim is not to hinder students at the cusp of their academic achievements; quite the opposite. However, both Graduate Council intentions and available resources for the larger graduate community must be considered when analyzing graduate policy.

Below are concerns expressed by some faculty, followed by my responses (*in italics*):

1. Faculty would like to know what policy document defines the restriction on all types of university funding. It appears that the spirit and intention of the original Filing Fee regulations (April 2002) did not restrict student employment or receipt of university funds. This was revised in May 2002 when the second type of filing fee was found to be contrary to University employment policy for academic appointments, which requires that students be registered and enrolled. FAQ #9 clearly states that some forms of university funding (reader & tutor) are actually acceptable (which seems at odds with the new interpretation of FAQ #17). Please clarify these discrepancies.
  - *One (#9) refers to Academic Student Employees (ASE) positions covered by collective bargaining that do not require student status for eligibility; the other (#17) refers to fellowships, grants, and other forms of financial support reserved for registered students.*
2. Many faculty are part of programs pursuing scientific discoveries, hence the writing of the dissertation consists of chapters that also serve to describe new results for publication in scientific journals. Thus, this writing per se is equivalent to such writings in the previous years of graduate research that are published in such journals. Scientific publications form the basis for faculty to successfully apply for research funding from federal agencies. Thus, you may wish to consider that students on filing fee should be able to receive support from federal grants, as their work is generally performed under the research goals of such grants. Faculty wish to be able to provide salary support for students on Filing Fee status on par with other continuing graduate students in our programs.

- *As noted above, researchers with grants that permit hiring of Specialists, a title that does not require registration, may indeed hire students on Filing Fee status, provided that they are qualified for that Specialist position (see #6 response).*
3. Doctoral students face many challenges and hardships; notable issues are food security, housing, and Berkeley's cost of living. Restricting the number of graduate students finishing writing their dissertation by universally restricting possible funding is undesirable. Students need support even while writing and, in the sciences, obtaining a new full-time job is generally not feasible during this period.
- *We share agreement on the need to support our students throughout their graduate careers. For the purposes that you mention, the Specialist title appears appropriate. This title is governed by APM 330 ([http://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programs/\\_files/apm/apm-330.pdf](http://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programs/_files/apm/apm-330.pdf)). The qualifications listed for the different appointment levels, in conjunction with the current salary scale ([http://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programs/\\_files/1617/t24.pdf](http://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programs/_files/1617/t24.pdf)) provide significant flexibility for appropriate remuneration of students on Filing Fee. Please note that under the Department of Labor's new overtime rule, the University of California has reclassified all Junior Specialists and Assistant Specialists I & II as non-exempt, effective November 20, 2016.*
4. Faculty would like to have the ability to pay for a student's Filing Fee so long as our contracts, grants and gifts terms allow for this. See note above.
- *For students on Filing Fee who are not employees, any reimbursement/payment of Filing Fee would be limited by state and federal laws, university policies, and grant limitations as they pertain to individuals who are neither students nor employees. Please consult with the Controller's Office.*
  - *The benefits of students on Filing Fee who are employed in non-student title codes are also determined by state and federal laws, university policies, and grant limitations. Since student-related benefits such as payment of tuition and/or Filing Fee would not be provided for a non-student employee, they cannot be provided as an extra benefit for an employee who is a student on Filing Fee. However, subject to grant restrictions and APM 330, the salary rate for students on Filing Fee status in Specialist roles could be set at a rate that allows the employee to pay the Filing Fee for themselves.*

5. Faculty would like to have the ability to pay for a student's health insurance program (SHIP) fee so long as our contracts, grants and gifts allow for this and the student is eligible for SHIP.
  - *See #3. Researchers with funds that allow for the hire of students on Filing Fee status in Specialist or other non-student titles should pay applicable benefits, including health insurance. Individuals employed in non-student title codes cannot be provided with health benefits that are restricted to students.*
6. Faculty would like to consider any person meeting Junior Specialist appointment eligibility criteria to be able to hold this position, including students on filing fee status. Jr. Specialist positions do not require that appointees be "registered students."
  - *Yes; since Specialist (including Junior Specialist) and Reader/Tutor titles do not require the holder of the title to be a registered student, they may be held by students during their Filing Fee semester as long as all applicable employment laws and hiring policies are met. Please note that many doctoral students on Filing Fee status would be eligible for appointment as Assistant or Associate Specialist, under the guidelines in APM 330-11.*

I hope that this clarifies the reasons for the enforcement of longstanding policies related to student support while on Filing Fee. I thank all faculty for your commitment to the well-being of your graduate students.