

Date: October 9, 2018

To: Deans, Department and Group Chairs, Graduate Advisers, Chairs of Graduate Admission Committees, Equity Advisers, Graduate Student Affairs Officers

From: Fiona M. Doyle, Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and Dean of the Graduate Division
Oscar Dubón, Vice Chancellor of Equity and Inclusion

Re: **Updated Information Regarding Undocumented Applicants for Graduate Admission and Fellowships and Current Undocumented Graduate Students**

As the 2018–2019 academic year proceeds, we wish to share important information regarding the undocumented graduate student community, both prospective applicants and current students.

We ask that you share this memo with all faculty and staff in your departments.

I. Background

Currently, we estimate that approximately 30 undocumented graduate students are enrolled in various disciplines and degree programs across the campus. However, in the coming years, we anticipate more undocumented applicants and admits due to the success of earlier legislation that increased undocumented students' access to graduate study.

It is important for academic programs to understand that not all undocumented students have the same legal status and that their specific legal status determines their individual eligibility for funding and/or employment. Financial aid, awards, and employment must all be consistent with the student's legal status.

II. Funding for Undocumented Graduate Students

The funding available to undocumented graduate students depends upon both their DACA status and their AB 540 status as summarized in the attached grid, which also has links to additional information about the different eligibility categories. In brief, DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) is a **federal** program that provides a work permit for certain undocumented people. If a student has DACA status, they are eligible for GSI and GSR positions. AB 540 status is available to some nonresidents who attended high school and/or community college in **California**. AB 540 status confers eligibility for university fellowship support, whether this takes the form of Graduate Division fellowships, block grant awards, or awards made from departmentally-held endowments and funds.

Unfortunately, neither DACA nor AB 540 status confers eligibility for federal loans and work-study appointments. Students who have neither DACA nor AB 540 status are currently not eligible for any kind of financial support from the university.

While one should not presume by their status that undocumented people are unable to pay for their education, it is essential that programs are forthright with prospective

undocumented students about the reality of limited funding at Berkeley as one would be with any person for whom funding is not obviously available. Regardless of how excited we may be to recruit brilliant scholars, it is inappropriate to encourage any prospective student to attend Berkeley if we cannot provide adequate support, particularly if we are legally forbidden to do so. Communicating the financial reality with prospective students affords them the opportunity to make an informed decision as to which institution to attend. Private schools may not have the same legal restrictions on disbursement of fellowship funds that we have. While we hope that future legal changes will give us more opportunities to support this important and increasing segment of our graduate student population, for the time being it may be more beneficial for such students to attend another school where they can be properly supported.

Finally, please remember that departments that have AB 540 applicants can request an application fee waiver by contacting Graduate Admissions.

III. GSI Requirements

Many academic programs require that graduate students serve as GSIs to gain useful teaching experience as part of their education. Teaching expertise is crucial for future faculty and extremely useful for many other professions, and we support these experiences. However, an undocumented graduate student who does not have a work permit through DACA is not eligible for employment as a GSI. We ask that departments maintain flexibility with this requirement on a case-by-case basis and provide such students other opportunities to gain a teaching experience that would fulfill the teaching requirement, such as taking a pedagogy class and participating in some of the workshops provided by the Graduate Division's GSI Teaching & Resource Center, which any graduate student can take to develop their teaching skill set. <https://gsi.berkeley.edu/>

For hands-on teaching experience, undocumented students who do not have a work permit *are* eligible to lead DeCal courses. Teaching DeCal courses afford students the experience of syllabus development, creating reading assignments, delivering class lectures and activities, mentoring, evaluation and general curriculum design. <https://decal.berkeley.edu/about/decal-program>

IV. Campus Resources

As a reminder, we have many resources on campus to assist the undocumented graduate student community; these are also useful resources for faculty and staff:

1. Graduate Student Fellowships and Awards
<https://grad.berkeley.edu/financial/fellowships/>
2. Office for Graduate Diversity (OGD)—specific support for graduate students and closely coordinates with the Undocumented Student Program (USP)
<https://diversity.berkeley.edu/programs-services/graduate/office-graduate-diversity>
3. Undocumented Student Program (USP)
<https://undocu.berkeley.edu/haas-dreamers-resource-center/meet-our-staff/>

OGD and USP provide links to information regarding mental health support and legal services.

In closing, we are committed to supporting undocumented students, current and prospective, to the fullest legally permissible extent. Thank you for all that you do for these valuable members of our graduate community. Please do not hesitate to contact any of the above offices with any questions.