

CMIX Graduate Admission and GTA Funding Policy

CMIX Graduate Committee

February 16, 2017

1 Admission and GTA support

A student admitted to the MS or PhD program can defer his or her admission for up to one year by notifying the graduate school. However, since budget constraints cannot be predicted, GTA support cannot be deferred.

Because of federal visa regulations, an international student must earn regular (as opposed to conditional) admission to be considered for GTA support.

1.1 Admission to the MS program

The student is expected to meet the minimum requirements imposed by the graduate school. A student is also expected to have appropriate background including a minimum of two semesters of calculus and the equivalent of CMPS 260-261, CMPS 340, and CMPS 351. The intent is to ensure that admitted applicants have sufficient background to pass the prerequisite classes: CMPS 430, CMPS 450, CMPS 455, and CMPS 460.

1.2 Admission to the PhD program

Admission to the PhD program includes the requirements above plus the following.

1. Generally, an applicant must have an MS degree in a related field to be admitted to the doctoral program. In cases where an advisor can fully fund a student on an RA for at least two years, an applicant with only a bachelors degree can be admitted directly to the PhD program. In other cases, applicants will be admitted to the MS program with option to reapply to the PhD program after two semesters of residence.
2. It is expected that the applicant has demonstrated some achievement in research before entering the PhD program.

2 Duration of GTA support and GTA responsibilities

1. Pending satisfactory progress towards the degree, a PhD student is normally funded for up to eight semesters on a GTA, but may be funded for one to two additional semesters if needed to teach or assist with a particular class.
2. An MS student in good standing can receive GTA support for up to three semesters.
3. If a student on GTA support accepts an RA, that student may resume GTA support when the RA ends. The support on the RA does not count towards the 8 semesters. Advisors whose funding is coming to an end should notify the graduate coordinator as soon as possible so that we can plan for the budget appropriately.
4. If a GTA student in good standing accepts an internship or CPT, the student can continue GTA support upon returning to CMIX, if funds are available. The student is expected to inform CMIX in a timely fashion.
5. Fellowship funding of a student counts as if it were RA funding.
6. GTA's are required to devote an average of 16 hours per week to their GTA duties for the duration of the semesters. In addition, they are expected to assist their advisor on research. This time period is specified on the applicant's offer letter.

3 Satisfactory progress towards PhD while on a GTA

1. Each GTA must submit an annual report and undergo an annual performance review. Minimal requirements for satisfactory progress are the following.
 - (a) Be a full-time student taking at least 9 hours per semester.
 - (b) Maintain a GPA of at least 3.5 for each semester.
 - (c) Demonstrate research progress every semester.
 - (d) Pass the comprehensive exam by the end of the second year in the program.
 - (e) Pass the prospectus exam by the end of the third year in the program.
 - (f) Have a designated doctoral advisor at all times.

In addition to the above items, the annual report should include publications and other research activities.
2. An advisor may not be satisfied with the student's research progress. In this case, the student's record will be evaluated by the graduate committee. Depending on the outcome of the evaluation, the student will be given one of two options:
 - (a) the student's GTA funding may be terminated.
 - (b) the student may be allowed to find a new advisor who is willing to accept the student.

4 Faculty eligibility to supervise a thesis or dissertation

1. To supervise a masters thesis student, a faculty member must have Level I status on the graduate faculty.
2. To supervise a doctoral student, a faculty member must have Level II status on the graduate faculty.

5 GTA selection process

The CMIX Director is responsible for managing the GTA budget. The Director, in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator, signs offer letters and takes responsibility for overspending or underspending the GTA budget.

A subcommittee of the CMIX grad committee will create a prioritized short-list of recommended GTA offers. The GTA subcommittee consists of the CMIX graduate committee except for the Graduate Coordinator(s). The committee meets during March for fall semester admissions and early October for spring semester admissions. The list will be long enough to spend the budget allocated for the semester. This is submitted to the Director to make the final offer decisions, subject to constraints on the budget.

5.1 Ranking GTA applicants

Potential advisors may nominate applicants that they wish to support as GTAs. The GTA subcommittee will have to screen and rank competing requests. The factors below shall be taken into account in a holistic, rule of thumb fashion. That is, exceptions are allowed to be made.

- High standardized test scores, with emphasis on the TOEFL/IELTS and GRE-quantitative. For international students, the TOEFL should be at least 90.
- Evidence of prior publications such as conference papers or journal papers.
- Quality of writing and thought in the personal research statement.
- Level of and quality of prior training.
- Any special achievements such as placing in a national-level programming or mathematics competition.

5.2 The GTA Allocation Policy

The GTA subcommittee provides the GTA short-list. The responsibility of the GTA subcommittee is to provide fair access to and management of the GTA resource pool. Assuming sufficient GTA resources are available, access to the GTA pool is prioritized in the order listed below.

1. Level II advisors who have funds to hire an RA have the option to look at the pool before any of the applicants are ranked for GTAs.
2. Level II advisors who currently do not have GTA supported students have first access to the remaining pool.
3. The next round of GTA access goes to level II advisors who satisfy the following constraint. The GRA and GTA numbers for that advisor must be satisfied: $\#GTAs - \#GRAs \leq 3$. This will be known as the advisor's GTA quota. Eligible students must have 'doctoral level' qualifications in regard to research achievement, standardized test scores, GPA, and motivation to pursue a PhD. **Note: In the case that item 3 of section 3 conflicts with this item, item 3 of section 3 takes precedence.** That is, the advisor's GTA quota will not be used to prevent a student returning to a GTA after the student's RA support ends.
4. Some of the remaining open GTA positions will be allocated on the basis of teaching needs of CMIX. Preference will be given to applicants who hold a bachelors in computer science from UL.
5. The rest of of the GTA positions will be allocated competitively based on the quality of applicant and a good match to an advisor. In general, preference will be given to strong PhD applicants.
6. Faculty who accept students who have lost their advisors through no fault of their own are not penalized in their access to the graduate student pool for one year. Specifically, the faculty member's GTA number defined in item 3 is increased by one for one year for each student he or she takes on. The motivation is to protect the student who lost the advisor and to encourage the faculty member to mentor an unplanned-for student.