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Financial Support Terms **For a VEF Fellowship Recipient Admitted to a U.S. Graduate School**

The Vietnam Education Foundation (VEF) is an independent U.S. Federal Government agency created to strengthen the relationship between the United States and Vietnam through educational exchange. VEF brings the best Vietnamese scholars to top U.S. graduate schools and thus assists in training a new generation of scientists, educators, and professionals for Vietnam in the disciplines of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medicine.

UPDATE! In accordance with the legislation governing the operations, VEF has a sunset of 2018. Thus, VEF will be awarding the final cohort of Fellowships for Fellows to begin study in fall 2016.

VEF will serve as the immigration sponsor during the first two years of the Fellow's graduate study in the United States, but will not be able to sponsor a Fellow beyond the first 2 years. If the Fellow requires more time to complete the graduate program, s/he will have to continue with the immigration sponsorship of the university (F-1 or J-1). VEF will work closely with the university to assure a smooth transfer or transition of immigration sponsorship.

Please note that according to the regulations governing the U.S. J-1 Exchange Visitor Program, all Fellows are subject to a two-year home-country physical residence requirement after the completion of their academic programs.

The financial terms of the VEF Fellowship are described below. VEF will provide a Fellowship only if the student is granted full acceptance to the university's graduate program without any contingencies, and if the university agrees to the cost-sharing terms required by VEF. Agreement must be confirmed by completing a [VEF Financial Agreement Form](#) that is signed by an authorized university official. The university should provide this form to the student by March 28, 2016.

VEF provides funding directly to the university. The university may use this grant as it chooses, but must meet the requirements below. **The university must withhold and report on all VEF funds for tax purposes, and must issue any income statements or other tax paperwork to the Fellowship recipient each year.** Hence, all the funds described below are gross funds and the applicable state and federal taxes must be withheld and reported.

1. Fellowship Grant to the University (Years 1 and 2). During the Fellow's first and second years of study at the U.S. University, VEF provides an annual grant of \$27,000, paid directly to the University, to help support the VEF Fellow. These grant monies are provided in lieu of the following, which must be supplemented each year by the University:

- All required deposits
- School orientation fees
- Required tuition and fees for the academic year and summer sessions
- Medical and health insurance required of international students for the academic year and summer sessions

- Required books and educational equipment; and
- A stipend for 12 calendar months, at least equivalent to the amount provided to other graduate students in the Fellow's department.

If there is a financial shortfall, the U.S. University is expected to provide additional funds to supplement the two VEF grants for the first two years because the Fellow has no other financial resources available. After the initial two years, Fellows of the 2016 cohort that continue in a Ph.D. program will need to transfer to the funding and immigration sponsorship of the U.S. university.

2. Professional Development Grant (PDG) to the Fellow.

VEF will pay \$1,000 through the Fellow's U.S. host university at the beginning of each of the first two years of study.

3. Settling-In Allowance for the First Year. VEF will provide a \$580 Settling-In Allowance to the Fellow through the University in the first year. The university must provide these funds to the VEF Fellow as soon as possible after arrival in the United States since the Fellow will have very limited resources at the start of graduate studies.

4. Payment of Funds to the University and Tax Issues. The Fellowship Grant to the University (\$27,000/year for the first two years), the PDG (\$1,000/year for two years), and the Settling-In Allowance (\$580 for first year only) will be electronically transferred to the University by the beginning of the Academic Year, usually in July or early August. The university must provide these funds to the Fellow and also withhold and report applicable state and federal taxes.

5. Stipend. VEF requests that universities provide the first month's stipend or a partial payment of the stipend as soon as the Fellow arrives on campus, but at the very least, during the first month of study.

6. Other Financial Support. VEF also pays for the following:

- Required Pre-Departure Orientation program conducted in Vietnam by VEF.
- Physical exam and inoculations required by the university prior to departure to the United States.
- Economy-class airfare from Vietnam to the United States at the start of the academic program, and from the United States to Vietnam at the end of the second year or earlier (if program is completed earlier). Fellows, who continue their studies in an M.S./Ph.D. or Ph.D. program, and who require a transfer to the U.S. university's J immigration sponsorship, must waive their right to a return ticket to Vietnam when the transfer is completed. If these transferred students return to Vietnam or travel overseas during their study, they must apply for a new visa from the U.S. embassy or consulate overseas.
- When funds permit, VEF organizes an Annual Conference in the United States. VEF pays for a round-trip economy class airfare, lodging, and most of the meals at the conference. Since these conferences promote networking and career development, we appreciate the cooperation of the university in encouraging the Fellow to attend.

For questions, please contact:

Ms. Sandarshi Gunawardena, VEF Senior Program Officer, in the VEF U.S. Headquarters, at 703-351-5053 (within the United States) or 001-703-351-5053 (from outside of the United States) or email: sandarshigunawardena@vef.gov.