

External Fellowships-FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

- **What are external fellowships?**

External fellowships are awarded by private or public agencies outside of FIU. Some of the most widely known agencies that award fellowships are the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Fulbright Commission, the Department of Energy (DOE), and the Department of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Most of your questions regarding the fellowship you received are answered in the award letter from the agency. Below are questions, however, you may have that are not included in your letter.

- **How will I receive my fellowship stipend?**

There are many different options on how you can receive your stipend (it depends on your funding agency); please first check with your Principal Investigator (PI) on the process. Most fellowships are administered by the Division of Research (DOR); in which case, you will receive a monthly stipend through Student Financials (Cashier's/Bursar's) via direct deposit into your bank account. See below for instructions on setting up direct deposit in PantherSoft.

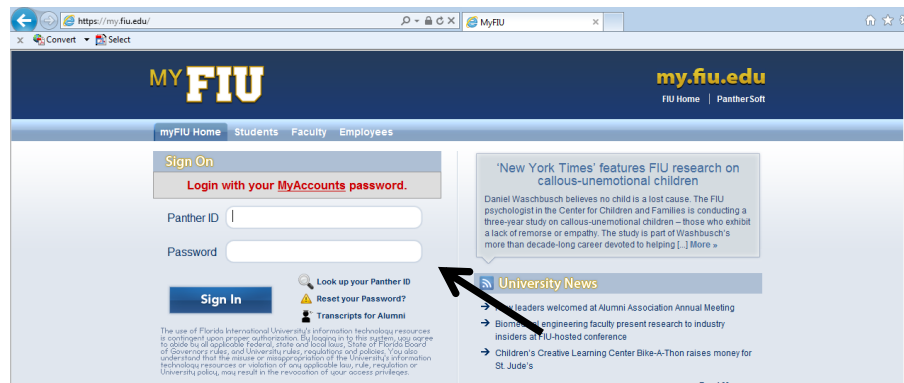
- **Will my financial aid be affected by my fellowship?**

In most cases, the answer is "Yes." If you are receiving financial aid and/or student loans, your current financial aid package will be adjusted based on the funding you are receiving through the fellowship. Often the total amount of financial aid will be reduced since the fellowship is considered additional income. It is important that you contact the Office of Financial Aid as soon as possible for information on your particular situation. Tel. (305) 348-7272

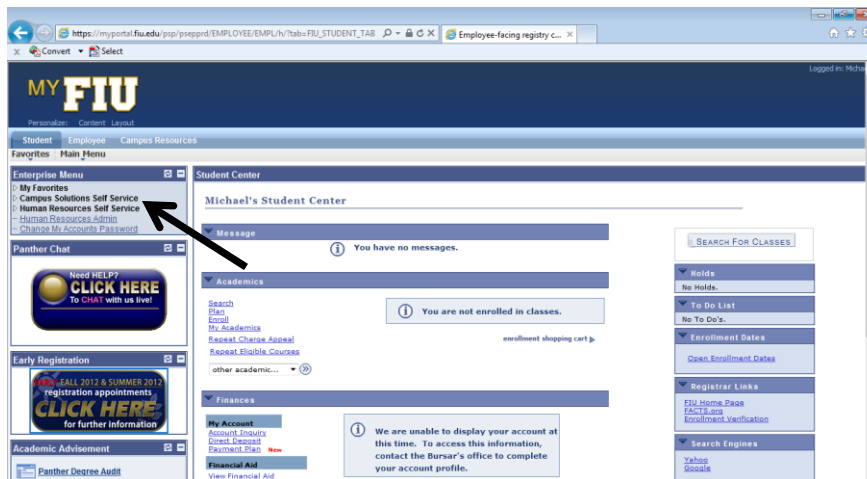
- **How do I set up direct deposit?**

You will need to set up **direct deposit** with Student Financials as soon as possible. To set up direct deposit, please follow the instructions below. (Note: If direct deposit is not set up before the first payment, a paper check will be mailed to your local address. Please make sure that your local mailing address is up to date in PantherSoft.)

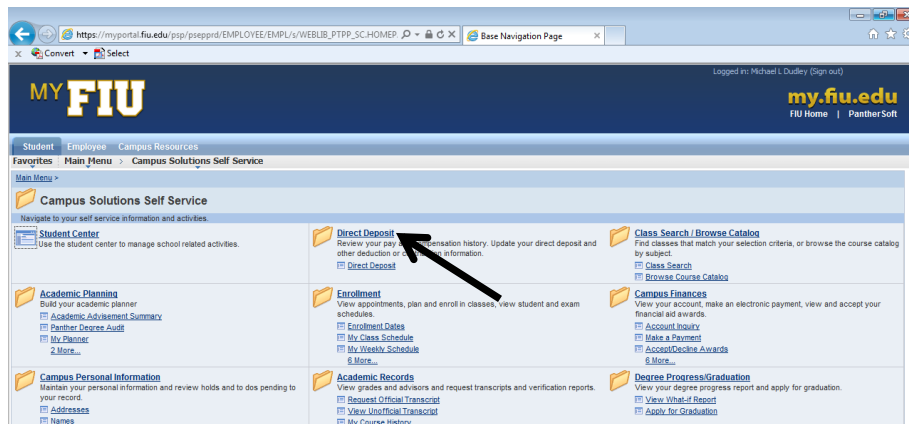
1. Log on to my.fiu.edu.



- Go to the main menu and click on **Campus Solutions Self Service**.



- Once there, click on the **Direct Deposit** button.



- What do I need to do if I am currently on a Graduate Assistantship and am transitioning into an external fellowship?**

You will need to set up direct deposit with Student Financials. As a GA/TA/RA, you are paid through Human Resources (HR); as a fellow, however, you will receive your stipend via Student Financials. Even though you signed up for direct deposit through HR payroll, you must still sign up for direct deposit with Student Financials. See above for instructions on setting up direct deposit for Student Financials.

You must transfer and/or backup the email from your employee account to your student account. When your TA/GA/RA contract ends, you are no longer considered an employee. As such your employee status and employee email account will be terminated. **Therefore, you must clear out your employee FIU email account before you transition to being a fellow.**

You should also check on your health insurance coverage to see when your coverage from the assistantship ends and make arrangements for further coverage under the fellowship.

- **What can I do if my employee email from my graduate assistantship has been terminated?**

If you find yourself needing to retrieve documents off your employee email, you must fill out the Person of Interest Form (POI) and return it to Human Resources (HR). In order to avoid having to fill out the POI, please retrieve your email documents off of your employee email before your last day as a TA/GA/RA. To find out more info on the POI form, please click here: <http://it.fiu.edu/accounts/poi.shtml>

- **Does my fellowship award provide health insurance?**

Once again, please check with your Principal Investigator (PI) on the whether your fellowship provides health insurance. If your fellowship doesn't provide health insurance, UGS may provide health insurance as a match. To be considered for the matching health insurance, please provide your external fellowship award letter to dudleym@fiu.edu. The insurance premium for this plan is paid 100% by the University Graduate School while receiving your fellowship stipend. For more information on the plan and benefits, please visit <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/documents/insurance-brochure.pdf>

- **How is travel reimbursement handled while I am an external fellow?**

Please check with your department as to how to handle the travel reimbursement process while you are on the fellowship. Please keep in mind, there are special conditions for international travel depending on the country you are travelling to. The Office of Study Abroad works with students who want to travel to countries with travel warnings from the US Department of State. The Office of Study Abroad process for such cases is as follows:

The student will need to submit a brief proposal including the following:

- 1) Anticipated dates of travel
- 2) Program location
- 3) Host Institution
- 4) Description of on-site support
- 5) Phone/email for the contact person/coordinator at the Host Institution
- 6) Emergency procedure and safety measures for the Host Institution, if available (you may want to ask your contact there for this information)
- 7) How the program will address/ensure your safety and specific safety measures as indicated by the State Department in the Country Notes and Travel Warning for the country:
http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html
- 8) Rationale for why you must go to this location instead of another that is not on a travel warning
- 9) Steps that you will take to minimize your risk while on site/in country

The proposal is then reviewed the university's Travel Warning Committee, which then makes a recommendation to the Provost.

The proposal should be as informative as possible as this is what will help the committee make decisions. The committee is comprised of Legal Counsel, Risk Management, our Senior International Officer, who was also a member of the US Foreign Service for 20+ years, and our Vice Provost of Academic Affairs.

- **Will I need to pay taxes?**

Yes, any portion of a scholarship used for living expenses is subject to U.S. taxes.

The interpretation and implementation of the tax laws is the domain of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The UGS takes no position on the status of a particular taxpayer, nor does it have the authority to dispense tax advice. Fellows should consult a tax expert for advice. That being said, modest guidance on stipend taxability is provided below.

Part of the payment (stipends that are used for meals, lodging, non-mandatory medical insurance, travel, personal living expenses, or other non-course related expenses) made to a fellow is taxable income. Other parts of the payment (portions used for tuition and fees required for enrollment or attendance at the University and/or other mandatory fees, such as books, supplies, and equipment required to be used by all students in a particular course of study) are not taxable.

1) U.S. Citizens

- According to the IRS, a portion of fellowship payments may be subject to income tax.
- Students who are pursuing a degree may exclude from taxable income the part of the fellowship applied to tuition and fees required for enrollment or attendance or for the purchase of books, supplies, and equipment required for courses.
- The portion of the fellowship used for room and board or personal items must be reported as taxable income.
- The IRS does not allow the University to withhold income tax on fellowships; therefore, a Form W-2, Wage and Tax Statement, will not be issued at year end. Consequently, taxes may be owed when a tax return is filed.
- Additional information about the taxability of fellowships is provided in [Internal Revenue Service Publication 970, Tax Benefits for Education](#) .

2) International Students (Please be aware that this information pertains to the Non-Qualified portion of the scholarship or fellowship [the one that covers their housing, living expenses, health fee etc.]. The qualified portion of the scholarship that pays only tuition and qualified fees is not taxable.)

- According to the IRS, the University must withhold a portion of federal income tax from fellowship payments, unless the student is exempt from tax because of a treaty between his or her country of residence and the United States.
- International students will receive a 1042-S form. FIU will send to your local address Parts B and C of IRS Form 1042S. This form will list all disbursements and the amount of Federal Income Taxes withheld.
- A nonresident alien is required to complete Form 1040NR and return it to the IRS, even if his or her fellowship is exempt from tax.
- More information about the taxability of fellowship payments to nonresident aliens is provided in [IRS Publication #519, U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens](#).

- **Who do I contact for general questions about my external fellowship?**

Please contact your advisor/Principal Investigator for questions about your fellowship if it is handled through the DOR.