

Graduate Assistant Policy  
7/13/06

**1. Appointment Criteria and Categories for Awarding Assistantships**

Students must have the permission of their degree program to hold an assistantship. In addition, they cannot exceed their program's limitation on the number of hours to be worked.

Students must be eligible to work in the United States and cannot exceed any hourly limitations placed on them by a visa.

**Graduate Laboratory Assistant (GLA)**

**Graduate Research Assistant (GRA)**

Any student accepted into a graduate degree program may be appointed depending on credentials, such as (1) admission test scores, (2) grade point averages in previous course work or in the degree program, (3) previous experience, and (4) the nature of the work for which the assistantship is funded.

**Graduate Teaching Assistant, Level A (GTAA)**

Students appointed as a GTA Level A must have a baccalaureate degree and be enrolled in a graduate program. Students holding GTAA appointments may not have a primary responsibility for a course, but they may serve as discussion leaders in breakout sections, grade papers, or assist the primary instructor of a course in other ways. GTAAs will normally have completed less than 18 hours of graduate course credits in the appropriate discipline. The department chair or division director shall determine that the credentials of a student qualify the individual to undertake the work assignment.

**Graduate Teaching Assistant, Level B (GTAB)**

Students appointed as a GTA Level B must have a baccalaureate degree and be enrolled in a graduate program, and will have completed more than 18 hours of graduate course credit in the appropriate discipline. GTABs must be under the general supervision of regular faculty members, and there must be a mentoring process in the department or division to assist them in their teaching activities. GTABs require Board of Regents approval prior to assignment as the instructor of record for a course. The department chair or division director shall determine that the credentials of a student qualify the individual to undertake the work assignment.

**2. Types of assistantships**

A graduate student may be appointed as a graduate assistant on a semester by semester basis or on a month-to-month basis (annual).

A semester by semester appointment begins on the first day of classes and ends on the last day of exams.

Graduate assistants who are employed on a month-to-month (annual) basis can begin work on any business day during the month. If a student is appointed on any day other than the 1<sup>st</sup> working day of the month, the monthly stipend amount will be pro-rated.

**3. Employment Classification:**

All graduate assistants are classified as exempt from the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Exempt work is performed by either (a) executives/administrators; or b) professionals, and is paid on a salaried basis regardless of the specific number of hours worked in a given week. Graduate Assistants perform work at the professional level, utilizing content knowledge that requires at least a bachelor's

degree, and as a result are paid as exempt professionals. Graduate Assistants may not be engaged in work that is primarily or materially clerical, service/maintenance, trades/skilled crafts, or technical/paraprofessional, since such work must be classified as non-exempt under the FLSA and must be paid on an hourly basis for all hours worked, including overtime, if applicable.

A graduate assistant may not work or be paid as any other employment classification during the same month in which they either worked or were paid as a graduate assistant (i.e. student assistant, fee based).

**4. Multiple Assistantships**

Students generally may hold the equivalent of up to 50% FTE (approximately 20 hours per week). With the written approval of the student’s dean, a student (except foreign national students) may be permitted to hold more than a 50% FTE. If a student consistently works at more than 50% FTE, they could be considered a benefit eligible employee, and at a later date, and the department could be obligated to pay retroactive benefits.

**5. Effort Commitment**

One graduate assistantship is considered equivalent to 20% of a fulltime standard workweek. Please reference the scale below in order to determine the appropriate FTE:

FTE	Average # hours/week	Total Number of Hours for Month-Month Graduate Assistants per Pay Block	Total # hours for Semester by Semester Graduate Assistant per Pay Block
20%	8	140	120
25%	10	175	150
30%	12	210	180
35%	14	245	210
40%	16	280	240
45%	18	315	270
50%	20	350	300

Graduate assistant positions are exempt level work, work hours can vary per week depending on the needs of the position without affecting the graduate assistant’s FTE. This table should be used as a guide to determine the appropriate FTE. Under no circumstances should a student on an F-1 or J-1 visa work more than 20 hours per week (50% FTE).

**6. Workload**

Each full GRA and GLA appointment—as well as each GTAA appointment—corresponds to 20% FTE. The appointing department will arrange the specific work schedule for each appointment.

A GTAB appointment may range between 20% and 30% FTE, depending on the size of the class, the course requirements, and other factors. The college or academic unit will determine the commitment of effort associated with teaching a given (normally 3 semester hour) course.

## 7. Non-Resident Alien Students

Foreign national students may not exceed 50 % FTE appointments **and must not work more than 20 hours per week**. In order to comply with federal immigration laws, the university has defined a 20% FTE as 8 hours of work commitment for each week.

## 8. Course Enrollment

Students receiving assistantships for a given term generally must be enrolled at least half time during that term. Half-time enrollment means that the student must maintain at least a 6 credit hour enrollment during that term. The terms are Fall, Spring, and Summer (including Maymester). See section on Tuition Waiver for information concerning minimum enrollment to receive either a partial or full tuition waiver

With approval of the dean, a department may set higher credit hour enrollment minima in accordance with the discipline. The dean may approve exceptions for lower credit enrollment; however, enrollment of at least half time is required in order for students to claim student FICA exemption.

## 9. Pay Ranges

Pay rates may vary by student experience, funding source, discipline, and responsibilities specific of the appointment. Each semester a student can work no more than 2.5 appointments with a total earning for each semester not to exceed \$12,000. Departments and/or colleges should establish fair pay scales. Units should monitor their pay practices for consistency across the unit to ensure that individuals are paid in accordance with that pay scale and that there is no disparate impact on individuals based on protected factors such as age, race, or gender.

## 10. Additional Compensation

In order for the university to track the work effort of graduate assistants, all work performed should be exempt level work and should be included in the FTE of graduate assistant appointments. If a graduate assistant performs work outside their regular duties, the college should determine the work effort (FTE) for the additional duties and process as graduate assistant pay. In no case should a graduate assistant exceed 50% FTE without written approval from the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled.

## 11. Pay Schedule

Each Semester will consist of 4 pay blocks for both the monthly (annual) and the semester by semester graduate assistantships.

<u>Pay Block</u>	<u>Pay Dates—Last Business Day of</u>
Fall	September, October, November and December
Spring	January, February, March and April
Summer	May, June, July, and August

In order for the student to receive payment, all information related to their appointment must be received by HR by the 18<sup>th</sup> of each month (or the last working day before the 18<sup>th</sup>). Paperwork received between 18<sup>th</sup> and the end of the month will be processed on a special check run that will be issued on the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month. No other special check runs will be initiated for payments due to late paperwork.

## 12. Reduced Tuition

**Full tuition waiver:**

To be eligible for a full tuition waiver, a student must:

- Have an appointment total of at least 20% FTE
- Meet a fulltime enrollment minimum (9 credit hours each for fall and spring semesters; 6 credit hours for summer)
- Total earnings of at least the minimum graduate assistant stipend (\$2,000 each for fall and spring semesters; \$1,000 for summer; or \$5,000 per calendar year)
- Minimum stipends can be accomplished through appointments in more than one unit
- Enroll in mandatory health insurance program or provide proof of insurance

**Partial (50%) tuition waiver:**

To be eligible for a partial tuition waiver, a student must:

- Have an appointment total of at least a 20% FTE
- Meet a part-time enrollment minimum (6 credit hours per academic term)
- Earn at least the minimum graduate assistant stipend of \$1,000 per fall and/or spring semester or \$2,500 per calendar year or \$500 in summer session

**Graduate Assistant tuition waivers can not be applied to the student's record after the following dates:**

- Fall: September 25 (or last business day before September 25)
- Spring: January 31 (or last business day before January 31)
- Summer: June 30 (or last business day before June 30)