

## Graduate Assistantships Policy and Procedures

These policies apply to the following graduate assistantships: those for which tuition is waived; graduate assistantships in which tuition is covered through scholarship; and salaried graduate student assistants with graduate status whose tuition is neither waived nor defrayed by scholarship, but who are hired at an appropriate salary as warranted by the position and use salary to defray tuition costs.

A student holding an appointment as a graduate assistant must be fully admitted to a graduate degree, diploma or certificate program, be in good academic standing (GPA  $\geq 3.0$ ), and be enrolled in a minimum of nine semester hours (6 in the summer semester) of graduate course work (or required prerequisites) during the period in which the assistantship is held (tuition waiver pertains to a maximum of ten hours). Work assignments are equal to and cannot exceed 19 hours per week. (Under this policy, part time assistantships may be awarded with the approval of the Office of the Provost.) Students interested in seeking an assistantship should contact the program chair, department chair, and/or dean of the college offering the graduate program in which they are enrolled. Students granted full assistantships are not permitted to reduce their course load to less than 9 hours and retain the assistantship.

Revised from: [http://academics.columbusstate.edu/catalogs/current/acaregs\\_grad.php#asstship](http://academics.columbusstate.edu/catalogs/current/acaregs_grad.php#asstship)

***Guiding Principles for the Allocation of Graduate Assistants*** (including those for which tuition is waived; graduate assistantships in which tuition is covered through scholarship; and salaried graduate student assistants with graduate status whose tuition is neither waived nor defrayed by scholarship)

Graduate assistants should satisfy one or more of the following principles:

1. Graduate assistantships should attract students who would not have otherwise attended CSU and who have choices to attend universities at or above CSU's level in the Board of Regents classification of institutions;
2. Graduate assistants should fill a critical role which enhances the academic or administrative program and without the assistant, the department would be forced to hire personnel;
3. Graduate assistants should have an academic record of distinction and admission test scores or should have special talents/skills associated with the academic discipline;
4. Graduate assistants should advance a goal of the university (i.e. recruitment of international students);
5. Graduate assistants should do work that requires graduate-level knowledge skills and dispositions.

### ***Graduate Assistantship Policy***

CSU's graduate assistantships are designed to promote the research, teaching, and service responsibilities of the University and to provide students with valuable professional development opportunities while earning a graduate degree. The graduate assistantship involves the dual

responsibilities of maintaining a satisfactory academic performance and of successfully performing the assigned teaching, research, or other responsibilities.

In return for performing research, teaching or service, all or part of the graduate assistant's tuition may be waived and only student fees are assessed. This is the case for both in-state and out-of-state students with exceptions identified in the following paragraph. In addition, the graduate assistant will receive a stipend for work performed.

Each discipline (see Appendix for list of graduate disciplines) may grant tuition waivers of up to 10% of the graduate enrollment in that discipline (example: enrollment of 10 students = 1 tuition waiver, waivers being defined as comprising base graduate tuition only without any tuition differential associated with premium and/or online programs). Other graduate students may work as assistants if (1) their tuition is covered by scholarship or other third party, or (2) they work for a stipend and pay the cost of their tuition. Graduate assistants whose tuition is waived, graduate students whose tuition is covered through scholarship, and graduate student assistants whose tuition is neither waived nor defrayed by scholarship are required to pay all fees applicable to their programs and all tuition above the base graduate tuition. Graduate students enrolled in consortium programs may have only the CSU portion of their tuition waived.

The Office of the Provost will approve all graduate assistantships whose tuition is waived, graduate assistants who perform work for the university whose tuition is defrayed by scholarship, and graduate student assistants whose tuition is neither waived nor defrayed by scholarship (graduate student assistants will pay full tuition and fees) following approval by program coordinator, chair, and dean. The Office of the Provost will monitor numbers of graduate assistants whose tuition is waived, numbers of graduate assistants whose tuition is defrayed by scholarship, and numbers of salaried graduate student assistants whose tuition is neither waived nor defrayed by scholarship, but who are hired at an appropriate salary as warranted by the position and use salary to defray tuition costs (graduate student assistants will pay full tuition). Stipends will be paid at the department, college, or division level.

### **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

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1. The student must be accepted as **"Regular"** in an approved graduate degree, diploma, or certificate program at CSU. **Students classified as "Provisional" or "Non-Degree" or who are on Probation are not eligible for an assistantship.**
2. For the second year student, satisfactory progress toward the degree must be evidenced by the completion of a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours (9 hours minimum per term) with at least a 3.0 cumulative graduate grade-point average in his/her current degree program.
3. Graduate Teaching Assistants who will have the primary responsibility of teaching a course and assigning final grades must have earned at least 18 graduate semester hours in their teaching discipline.
4. Students must be eligible to work in the United States and cannot exceed any hourly limitations placed on them by a visa.

### **ASSISTANTSHIP APPOINTMENT PROCEDURES**

1. The dean, department head or other employing authority will contact the appropriate graduate program coordinator to solicit graduate students eligible for assistantships.

2. The dean, department head or other employing authority will complete the request form for graduate assistantship, which is housed in the Human Resources Department or can be found at <http://hr.columbusstate.edu/>, obtain all the appropriate signatures (from the employing department and the college in which the student's discipline resides), have the graduate assistant sign the form, and forward the request to the Office of the Provost. The Office of the Provost will review the request to ensure compliance with policies outline in this document before forwarding to Enrollment Services. The Graduate Assistantship Appointment Form contains information such as starting and ending dates, stipend, payment dates, and required duties. Enrollment services personnel will verify student eligibility, assess fees at the reduced rate, apply graduate assistant status in the student record and forward the form to Human Resources.
3. Human resources arranges with the student to complete the hiring process to include employment orientation.
4. Assistantship appointments may be made for up to two semesters and require a renewed application if the student is to be rehired for the following year. A request to extend the graduate assistantship for an additional semester in an academic year must be made to the Office of the Provost. An application must be completed for each academic year an assistantship is requested.

### **ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITIES**

The GRADUATE ASSISTANT is expected to enroll and earn credit for a minimum of nine (9) graduate semester hours each term in which the assistantship is held; an academic load of more than 10 hours must be approved by the appropriate dean and the graduate director. Graduate assistantships during the summer term will require enrollment for a minimum of six (6) graduate semester hours. An overall grade-point average of 3.0 must be maintained in order to continue as a graduate assistant.

### **APPOINTMENT CRITERIA AND CATEGORIES FOR AWARDING ASSISTANTSHIPS**

Any student accepted in 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 Research Assistant (GRA)**

The duties assigned for Graduate Research Assistantships should be relevant and add value to the student's major field of study, area of interest or expertise. The research is usually a component of the faculty advisors research that is directly supported by external funding. GRAs are generally expected to carry out a specific research project that often forms the basis for a thesis or dissertation.

General duties include:

- Performing experiments, calculations, and analyzing the results and disseminating new knowledge orally or in written publications
- Reflecting on the state of the field and proposing new research problems
- Attending conferences to present results and collaborate with other researchers
- Training and supervising less experienced research personnel.

## **Health Insurance**

The University System of Georgia offers Graduate Research Assistants (GRA's) employer sponsored health coverage in addition to the institutional sponsored health coverage option available. The reason for this health care offering is to ensure compliance with the Affordable Care Act. Enrollment in the GRA Health Option is on an annual basis and premiums will be deducted from the GRA stipend. Enrollment options will be mailed to the GRA's home address. Students with questions regarding the GRA Health Insurance Option should contact Human Resources.

## **Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA)**

Graduate Instructors are those graduate students who are involved in instruction, usually of undergraduates. Qualified GTAs perform instructional duties in an area of their expertise, most often within their home departments, although qualified GTAs may perform teaching duties outside their departments. Students appointed as a GTA must have a baccalaureate degree and be enrolled in a graduate program. GTAs who are primarily responsible for teaching a course for credit and/or assigning final grades for such a course must have earned at least 18 credit hours of graduate coursework in the teaching discipline prior to their appointment, be under direct supervision of a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, receive regular in service training, and be evaluated regularly.

All GTAs teaching online courses must complete the D2L Faculty Training Course and complete the Faculty Needs Assessment for Online course Design and Delivery. Information for online courses can be found at the DLDD (Distance Learning Design and Delivery) home page (<http://dl.columbusstate.edu/index.php>).

## **Graduate Faculty Assistant (GFA)**

Students holding GFA appointments may not have a primary responsibility for a course, but they may assist in laboratory sessions, help to prepare lectures, grade papers, keep class records, conduct discussion groups, conducting tutorials, hold student conferences, or assist the instructor of the course in other ways. GFA's do not need to meet the 18 credit hour requirement. The department chair or division director shall determine that the credentials of a student qualify the individual to undertake the work assignment.

## **Graduate Program Assistant (GPA)**

Students in this role assist in the program that requires graduate-level knowledge skills and dispositions and should not be doing clerical work that could be done by work study students .

## **Graduate Student Assistant (GSA)**

Graduate students appointed as Graduate Student Assistants may be involved in instruction and/or research usually in their area of expertise. GSAs assist faculty, departments, or other units in a variety of activities that are closely related to the student's area of academic study and interest. Specific duties of GSAs may be similar or identical to GTAs and GRAs.

## **Doctoral Fellows**

Doctoral fellows will typically be assigned responsibilities that overlap those of Graduate Research Assistants and Graduate Teaching Assistants. They are frequently engaged in research and may be assigned to work with one or more faculty members in the program.

### **Special Fellowships**

Under limited conditions and in support of awarded grants, students on fellowships may be considered Graduate Assistants without having to comply with policies on the minimum number of hours worked , payment of stipends, and limited course loads.

### **Length of Appointments**

A graduate student may be appointed as a graduate assistant for up to two semesters (Fall and Spring), or on a semester by semester basis.

### **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.

### **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. A graduate assistant works nineteen (19) hours per week. Partial assistantships of 10 hours per week must be approved by the Office of the Provost.
2. The employing department supervisor sets the student's schedule.
3. The employing department will provide specific duties and responsibilities.
4. Graduate assistants will accurately report the number of hours worked each week.

### **STIPEND AND PAY SCHEDULES**

The stipend for all graduate assistantships is stipulated in the Graduate Assistantship Appointment Form. Payment is made monthly. Graduate assistantships are considered part-time employees; therefore, they are ineligible for employment benefits. No annual or sick leave is accrued.

### **Pay Ranges**

Pay rates may vary by student experience, funding source, discipline, and responsibilities specific of the appointment. 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. Graduate School and Human Resources should monitor for consistency across the university. For each term, Fall and Spring, Graduate Assistants are to be paid a minimum of \$2,000 per term. Because the summer term is shorter and GAs may work a variable number of weeks, the GA stipend should generally be at the same rate of pay rather than the same total pay for the term.

### **TUITION RATES FOR GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS**

The graduate assistantship program allows full-time graduate assistants to pay a flat, per-semester tuition rate of \$25.00 - *this is applicable to both in-state and out-of-state students!* The student also pays the various fees as presented in CSU's fee schedule. These fees include the Health, Health Insurance, Athletic, Student Activity, Campus Access, Parking Deck, and Technology fees in addition to the \$25.00.

The number of allowable tuition waivers may not exceed 10% of the enrollment in a discipline (see Appendix for definitions related to disciplines) except as approved by the Office of the Provost.

**Full tuition waiver:**

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

- Have an appointment total of 19 hours / week; fewer hours may be approved only by the provost
- 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 (minimum stipend is to be established by the Graduate Council.)
- Enroll in mandatory health insurance program or provide proof of insurance

**Partial (50%) tuition waiver (awarded only with approval by the Office of the Provost):**

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

- Have an appointment total of 10 hours/week; any variation from this number of hours must also be approved by the provost.
- Meet a part-time enrollment minimum (6 credit hours per academic term)
- Earn at least the minimum graduate assistant stipend (minimum stipend is to be established by the Graduate Council.)
- Enroll in mandatory health insurance program or provide proof of insurance

**Graduate Assistant tuition waivers cannot 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)

**RESIGNATION**

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A graduate assistant choosing to resign or terminate his/her employment must submit a letter of resignation to the departmental supervisor. **A termination Personnel Action Request form must be submitted to Human Resources by the supervisor to avoid overpayment.**

**TERMINATION**

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1. Failure to perform satisfactorily the duties assigned by the supervisor could result in the termination of the assistantship.
2. If a student's grade point average falls below 3.0 (academic probation) but remains high enough to return to 3.0 or better in the following semester, the student will have one semester to

improve and return to good academic standing before the assistantship is terminated. Should a student fail to return to good academic standing after one semester, or should a student receive academic exclusion and be dismissed from the degree program, the assistantship would be terminated at once.

Students, who do not meet the academic requirements or the requirements of the job, may be terminated.

A termination Personnel Action Request form must be submitted to Human Resources by the supervisor to avoid overpayment.

Compensation will cease upon termination of the contract.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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Please contact the appropriate dean and/or the Graduate School for more information. For graduate assistantship information related to employment, please contact Human Resources. For graduate information related to tuition rates or enrollment, please contact enrollment services.

Approved 1-14

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