



Standard Administrative Policy and Procedure

Subject: Graduate Fellowships and Assistantships

Number: UW SAP 2-122.1

I. PURPOSE

This policy and its procedures designate the standards applicable to Graduate Fellowships and Assistantships to ensure conformity with University of Wyoming Regulations and Policies and state and federal law.

Graduate Assistantships and Fellowships are intended to recruit and support quality graduate students at the University of Wyoming and provide academically-related employment for eligible graduate students. While Graduate Assistantships are positions of employment with required job duties, Graduate Fellowships are funding awards that have no employment requirements.

This policy supersedes all departmental, division, school, and college policies pertaining to Graduate Fellowships and Graduate Assistantships.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Graduate Fellowship.** A Graduate Fellowship is a financial award provided to a graduate student by the University or administered by the University for an external agency to aid a student's education. Graduate fellowships do not carry work expectations.
- B. Graduate Assistantship.** A Graduate Assistantship is a financial award provided to a student by the university or administered by the university to aid a student's education. Unlike Graduate Fellowships, Graduate Assistantships always carry a work expectation. There are three types of graduate assistantships. These assistantships are in the areas of teaching, research and administrative service. A graduate student may have duties that fall into more than one area. Graduate assistantships may fall into any one of these categories or may be a combination of one or more of the assistantship types.
- 1. *Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA):*** A graduate student whose primary duties are teaching, tutoring, instructing or lecturing in the activity of imparting knowledge. Graduate teaching assistants are exempt under the "teaching professional" exemption of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA); therefore, graduate teaching assistants are not subject to the minimum wage and overtime provisions of the FLSA. IRS Tax Code, 26 U.S. § 117(d)(5) allows the

University to provide GTAs with tax-free tuition waivers, coverage of fees, and the cost of student health insurance.

- a. *GTA – Instructor*: A GTA whose primary duty is as the instructor-of-record (with majority of responsibility) for classes. GTA – Instructors engage in direct teaching of lecture, seminar, field, and/or laboratory courses. Faculty or Department/Unit Head supervision and mentoring is expected.
 - b. *GTA – Instructional Support*. A GTA – Instructional Support individual serves in an instructional support role to the instructor or lead faculty in a team teaching situation. This individual may be responsible for duties such as grading exams and assignments, proctoring exams, preparation of course materials, lab set-up, and teaching of lab/discussion sections under the direct supervision of the instructor-of-record for a course. A GTA – Instructional Support individual may *infrequently* serve as a temporary replacement instructor for the primary instructor or lead faculty.
2. Graduate Research Assistant (GRA): A graduate student who is engaged in research under a faculty member’s supervision in the course of obtaining a degree. The federal Department of Labor (DOL) considers such students as being in an educational relationship with the University and does not assert an employment relationship under the FLSA. IRS Tax Code Section 117(d)(5) allows the University to provide GRAs with tax-free tuition waivers, coverage of fees, and the cost of student health insurance.
 3. Graduate Administrative Assistant (GAA): A graduate student employed to assist faculty or staff members with administrative functions within a University unit, and not performing research or teaching responsibilities as outlined above. Graduate administrative assistantships must provide graduate students with the opportunity to supplement course work with practical experience related to the student’s field of study. IRS Tax Code, U.S. Code 26, § 127 provides that students who are hired as the GAAs can receive non-taxed tuition remission of \$5,250 per calendar year; amounts in excess of \$5,250 per calendar year are taxable. Request for a graduate administrative assistantship must be approved in advance by the Dean of the student’s academic college and the AVP for Graduate Education.

III. POLICY

A. Graduate Fellowships. Graduate Fellowships do not carry work expectations.

1. **Minimum Award.** The minimum for a graduate fellowship is a stipend that is at least half of a full-time graduate assistantship and at least half tuition, fees and benefits for pre-candidate students. Fellowships for candidate students may fund less than half tuition and fees assuming that these students qualify for the Optional Student Fee Package. Awards less than this minimum shall be classified as scholarships. Like fellowships, scholarships do not carry work expectations.

2. **Memorandum of Agreement for Externally Funded Graduate Fellowships.** Unless managed by the UW Foundation, each externally-funded Graduate Fellowship program shall have a memorandum of agreement between the University of Wyoming and the funder stating the terms of the fellowship.

B. Graduate Assistantships. Graduate Assistantships carry work expectations.

1. **Eligibility.** To be considered for a graduate assistantship a student must meet the following eligibility requirements:
 - a. Accepted into a graduate degree program;
 - b. Possess the necessary qualifications and experience for the position;
 - c. Be in good academic standing and maintain a cumulative overall minimum grade point average (GPA) and a cumulative degree program GPA of 3.0;
 - d. Enrolled full time during the semester(s) appointed as a graduate assistant. Full-time enrollment is considered 9 graduate credit hours;
 - 1) If a graduate assistant is enrolled in the last semester of his/her graduate program of study or if a graduate assistant has qualified for the Optional Fee Package, the number of registered semester hours may be less than the full-time requirement;
 - 2) Graduate assistants may not be enrolled in Continuous Registration 5920 and 5940.
 - e. Demonstrate proficiency in English if in a Graduate Teaching Assistant position;
 - f. Graduate Assistants may work no more than an average of 20 hours per week (full-time) or 10 hours per week (half-time) as part of their positions**;
 - 1) **This limit does not preclude faculty advisors, graduate committees and graduate programs from requiring additional, significant effort, including time present on-campus, if this additional time is directly related to a student's education and progress through the degree program

Exceptions to any of the above Graduate Assistantship Eligibility requirements (1.) must be approved by the AVP for Graduate Education.

2. **Selection.** Eligible students apply for assistantships through the department or unit that is offering the positions. Selections are made on a competitive basis and appointments are contingent on the availability of funds. Selection criteria include standardized test scores, GPAs, recommendations, experience, past performance as a GA (if relevant), collegiality and suitability for the position. Reappointment is contingent on eligibility (see above), satisfactory performance, and availability of funding.
3. **Evaluation.** Graduate assistants shall be evaluated on at least an annual basis. Evaluations shall be based on the performance of duties as specified in the GA's

appointment letter and hiring forms. Failure to perform to expectations may be grounds for termination of graduate assistantships.

4. Graduate Assistantship Work-Load Expectations.

- a. Graduate Assistantships may be full-, $\frac{3}{4}$ - or half-time:
 - 1) The work expectation for a full-time graduate assistant is an average of 20 hours per week;
 - 2) The work expectation for a $\frac{3}{4}$ -time graduate assistant is an average of 15 hours per week;
 - 3) The work expectation for a half-time graduate assistant is an average of 10 hours per week.
 - 4) Graduate assistants may not exceed the appropriate hours per week as averaged over the period of appointment (e.g., semester or academic year).

- b. Graduate Teaching Assistant - Instructor work-load
 - 1) Instruction of a single, 3 credit hour Group 1 class constitutes a minimum of 10 hours/week. Thus, a full-time (20 hours/week) GTA - Instructor may not be the instructor-of-record for more than 6 credit hours in a single semester.
 - 2) Lab or discussion section instruction. Teaching of two lab/discussion sections constitutes a minimum of 10 hours of work-load. In cases where a GTA – Instructor is significantly involved in lab/discussion design and content *and/or* creation and grading of lab/discussion student assessments, the teaching of two lab/discussion sections may be counted as more than 10 hours of work-load.
 - 3) Work-loads for GA instructional roles not given in #1 or #2, above, must be developed by relevant units and must be approved by the Associate Vice Provost for Graduate Education.

- c. Graduate Teaching Assistant – Instructional Support work-load
 - 1) Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that GTA – Instructional Support personnel do not work more than the maximum weekly average.

- d. Graduate Research Assistant work-load
 - 1) Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that GRA personnel do not work more than the maximum weekly average.

- e. Graduate Administrative Assistant work-load
 - 1) Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that GAA personnel do not work more than the maximum weekly average. Given FLSA requirements, supervisors must keep a record of hours worked for GAA personnel.

- f. In extraordinary circumstances, exceptions to the Graduate Assistant Work-Load Expectations may be granted by the Associate Vice Provost for Graduate Education.

5. Stipends and Tuition and Fees Benefits.

- a. Stipends. Stipends for graduate assistantships must be at least the minimum required by the university. See: <http://www.uwyo.edu/uwgrad/enrolled-students/financial-assistance/assistantship-funding.html>. Stipends may not exceed more than 175% of the minimum within a single semester without permission from the AVP for Graduate Education.
- b. Tuition and fees benefits. Graduate assistantships are accompanied by tuition and fee benefits. Full-time graduate assistantships come with full tuition and fees, while half-time graduate assistantships come with half tuition and fees. See: http://www.uwyo.edu/uwgrad/_files/docs/ga_t_and_f_calculation.pdf.
 - 1) As stipulated in the University of Wyoming Fee Book (<http://www.uwyo.edu/administration/feebook/index.html>), non-resident students who are employed as Graduate Assistants will be assessed tuition at the resident rate for each term semester during which they are so employed. Graduate students qualifying for resident tuition in both the fall and spring semesters will be assessed resident tuition for the immediately following summer term.

6. Additional Employment with the University. Employment in excess of 20 hours per week can be a hindrance to timely completion of a graduate assistant's degree.

- a. As a general recommendation, full-time graduate assistants should not accept additional employment with the university, and half-time graduate assistants should not accept more than 10 additional hours of employment with the university.
- b. Graduate assistants, who accept additional employment at the university that results in the individual working more than 20 hours per week for the university, must inform in writing their department/unit head, their secondary university employer(s), and the Associate Vice Provost for Graduate Education prior to beginning additional employment.
 - 1) The secondary university employer(s) assumes full responsibility for paying for any benefits required beyond those provided as part of the graduate assistantship.
 - 2) Failure to notify the department/unit head, the secondary university employer and/or the Associate Vice Provost for Graduate Education may result in the termination of the individual's graduate assistantship.

7. **State-Funded Graduate Teaching Assistantships.** Unless specified otherwise, all graduate assistantship funding provided by the Office of Graduate Education must be used for Graduate Teaching Assistantships (see http://www.uwyo.edu/uwgrad/_files/docs/ga_job_description_time_limits.pdf).
8. **Graduate Student Employment Unrelated to a Student's Field of Study.** It is expected that graduate students who are hired into positions not substantially related to their field of study will be hired into student employment positions through the Department of Human Resources.

Responsible Division/Unit: Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Source: None

Links: <http://www.uwyo.edu/regs-policies>; <http://www.uwyo.edu/uwgrad/enrolled-students/financial-assistance/assistantship-funding.html>

Associated Regulations, Policies, and Forms: University of Wyoming Fee Book; GA Job Descriptions and Time Limits; GA Tuition and Fees Calculations;

Approved: 5/28/2018