

Graduate Assistantships

Graduate assistantships offer valuable paraprofessional experience and financial support. The graduate assistant should be regarded as a qualified graduate student providing service as a part of a learning program; that is, a graduate student's program of study is primary; her or his role as an employee is secondary. Graduate assistants are assigned to roles in instruction, professional service, research, creative production or University service.

Graduate assistantships are available in most programs offering a master's degree curriculum. The number of assistantships, their assignment to particular programs and the amount of the stipend is dependent upon the availability of funds. Interested students should apply directly to the graduate coordinator for the program to which they are seeking admission or have been admitted. Application forms may be obtained from the Graduate School and should be submitted to the program as early as possible following application for admission. For full consideration, applications should be submitted no later than Feb. 15.

Application and Determination of Qualifications

In order to qualify for graduate assistantships, students must be admitted to the Graduate School in good standing. The applicants must meet all general admission requirements and have an acceptable (3.00) undergraduate or graduate GPA. Applicants must identify the degree they wish to pursue and meet all the specific requirements for that program. They must also be admitted to the program by the program graduate faculty.

Under certain circumstances, a first-semester graduate student who is classified as conditional may be granted a one semester graduate assistantship if the graduate faculty of the program so recommend after reviewing the student's undergraduate subject area GPA, relevant work experience and/or other evidence of the student's potential to succeed in graduate work, and the student has at least a 2.75 undergraduate cumulative GPA. In order to get an assistantship for subsequent semesters, a conditional student must achieve regular standing by the end of the first semester at the University.

The Workload

The workload for a full-time graduate assistant during a regular semester is 20 hours per week. If the assistant has been given a teaching assignment, the workload is six credit hours per semester during the regular academic year. Departments have the discretion to offer less than full-time appointments and may choose to make appointments on a semester by semester basis. A limited number of assistantships are available during the summer session and require 10 hours of work per week or teaching one three-credit-hour course. Full-time graduate assistants desiring outside employment must seek prior approval of the graduate dean.

The Stipend

For the current amount of the stipend, consult either the Graduate School or the graduate coordinator for the program. The University waives out-of-state tuition for non-resident graduate assistants, but they must pay resident tuition and fees.

Enrollment for Graduate Assistants

In order to be appointed as a graduate assistant, a student who receives a full-time assistantship must enroll for at least nine hours of graduate coursework each semester unless the graduate dean determines that the student has an appropriate academic load not reflected in the student credit hour load. Up to six hours of the mandatory nine semester hours may include leveling work detailed on a student's degree plan. A part-time graduate assistant must enroll for at least five hours of graduate coursework each semester. A summer student who receives a graduate assistantship must enroll in a minimum of three graduate credit hours. A full-time graduate assistant may not register for more than nine hours without the permission of the student's graduate advisor, graduate coordinator and graduate dean.

Continuation as a Graduate Assistant

Graduate assistantships are usually granted for a designated period of appointment. Appointments are offered in the form of contracts for a maximum of nine months (a full academic year), although under certain circumstances programs may make appointments of one semester with reappointment conditional upon such matters as satisfactory academic and work performance. Academic year assistantships are subject to review for qualification and performance at the end of the first semester. In any event, the specific terms of a particular assistantship will be spelled out in the "Assistantship Recommendation and Contract." Ordinarily, appointments as graduate assistants are not granted to the same student for more than two years of full-time assistantship equivalency.

Resignation

Should a graduate assistant choose to resign and/or to totally withdraw from coursework for any reason, written notification must be submitted to the graduate coordinator, graduate advisor, college dean and the graduate dean immediately.

Termination of the Assistantship by the University Dismissal Due to Lack or Loss of Eligibility

The graduate dean may terminate, without appeal, an assistantship at any time in the event that the graduate student becomes ineligible for any of the following reasons:

1. completion of degree requirements,
2. unsatisfactory academic performance (including academic dishonesty or allowing the cumulative GPA to fall below 3.00), or
3. reduction of the course load below the minimum requirements without approval of the graduate dean.

Dismissal Due to Performance or Absenteeism

The faculty in a graduate program may recommend to the graduate dean through the college dean, termination of an assistantship for the following reasons:

1. unsatisfactory performance in carrying out the duties of the appointment in the judgment of the graduate coordinator, faculty supervisor or department chair; or
2. unjustified absenteeism from duties more than five working days in any given semester.

If such reasons exist, the graduate dean shall notify the appointee in writing of the departmental recommendation to terminate the assistantship and ask the appointee to respond in writing within five working days of intent either to accept or to appeal the termination.

The Appeal Process

If the appointee chooses to appeal a dismissal due to absenteeism or performance, a written appeal and the resolution sought should be submitted to the graduate dean within five University working days.

Upon receipt of the written appeal, the graduate dean will convene the Graduate Student Academic Appeals Committee to act on the appeal. This committee shall hear the appeal and make a recommendation to the graduate dean about the disposition of the appeal. The graduate dean shall then consider the appeal and make the final decision about the termination of the appointee.