

**University of Georgia**  
**GRADUATE ASSISTANT POLICY (effective 07.01.2016)**  
**(revised 06.01.2020)**

The purpose of this policy is to document rules and regulations on awarding and administration of graduate assistantships at the University of Georgia. This policy adheres to the relevant policies of the University of Georgia, the University System of Georgia Board of Regents and Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges that are referenced below. The policy was developed and approved by the Graduate School, which also assumes responsibility for maintaining the policy and effecting any modifications that become necessary.

**I. Definition of Graduate Assistant:** A Graduate Assistant is any individual who serves in a support role at the university while completing his/ her graduate studies. These individuals serve in a variety of roles, as outlined below (see Section III). Graduate Assistants are employees of the university and are appointed at 13-20 hours/ week.

**II. Eligibility for Assistantship:** Graduate Assistants must be eligible to work in the United States and cannot exceed any hourly limitations placed on them by a visa. Students cannot hold an assistantship(s) that requires more than one-half time service (a maximum of 20 hours of work each week). Graduate Assistants must be full-time students for the duration of their assignments. Full-time status requires enrollment for at least twelve hours during spring and fall semesters and nine hours during summer semester. Exceptions to the required course load may be obtained with written approval of the major professor and the dean of the Graduate School. *Students will not be permitted to hold Graduate School assistantships if they have been placed on academic probation by the Graduate School.*

**III. Types of Assistantships:** Academic and administrative units of the university may employ graduate students in five types of graduate assistantships: **Graduate Teaching Assistantship**, **Graduate Laboratory Assistantship**, **Graduate Research Assistantship**, **Graduate Research Fellow Assistantship**, and **General Graduate Assistantship**. The type of assistantship offered to a student depends on the needs of the academic or administrative unit and the qualifications of the individual student. Whenever possible, the duties assigned to a graduate assistant should be relevant to the graduate program and the professional goals of the student.

Under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), exempt work is performed by: (a) executives/administrators; and (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. As such, Graduate Assistants may not be engaged in work that would be classified as non-exempt under the FLSA.

The following are descriptions and responsibilities of each type of graduate assistantship:

**Graduate Teaching Assistantship.** Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) are assigned instructional responsibilities in an academic course. Specific instructional responsibilities may vary according to the assignment. All GTAs are required to fulfill the requirements set forth in the **TA/LA Policy**, including attendance at the TA/LA Orientation, completion of GRSC 7770 or equivalent course, and demonstration of language requirement

(international students). GTAs should work under the supervision of experienced faculty members as a means of developing teaching skills in the academic discipline and meet the qualifications set out in the [University System of Georgia Board of Regents Policy 8.3.5.2](#).

GTAs who meet the [SACSCOC credential guidelines](#) and the requirements defined in [UGA Academic Affairs Policy 4.07-13 Instructor of Record](#) may be assigned as Instructor of Record for a course or a section of a course (e.g., a discussion section). In keeping with [UGA Policy 4.07-13 Instructor of Record](#), GTAs may have autonomy for conducting the day-to-day classroom/instructional activities and assigning grades. Departments are responsible for verification of academic credentials and language requirements for GTAs assigned as Instructors of Record.

GTAs are employees of the university and are appointed at 13-20 hours/week. It is the responsibility of each dean or director to set the annual rate for GTAs within his/her unit. This rate must be equivalent to or higher than the minimum set by the provost. The Graduate School collects and publishes this information annually.

**Graduate Laboratory Assistantship.** Graduate Laboratory Assistants (GLAs) are assigned instructional responsibilities in a laboratory course. Specific instructional responsibilities may vary according to the assignment. All GLAs are required to fulfill the requirements set forth in the [TA/LA Policy](#), including attendance at the TA/LA Orientation, completion of GRSC 7770 or equivalent course, and demonstration of language requirement (international students). GLAs should work under the supervision of experienced faculty members as a means of developing teaching skills in the academic discipline.

GLAs who meet the [SACSCOC credential guidelines](#) and the requirements defined in [UGA Academic Affairs Policy 4.07-13 Instructor of Record](#) may be assigned as Instructor of Record for a course or a section of a laboratory course. In keeping with [UGA Policy 4.07-13 Instructor of Record](#), GLAs may have autonomy for conducting the day-to-day classroom/instructional activities and assigning grades. Departments are responsible for verification of academic credentials and language requirements for GLAs assigned as Instructors of Record. GLAs should work under the supervision of experienced faculty members as a means of developing teaching skills in the academic discipline and meet the qualifications set out in the [University System of Georgia Board of Regents Policy 8.3.5.2](#).

GLAs are employees of the university and are appointed at 13-20 hours/week. In no case should a GLA exceed 20 hours/week. It is the responsibility of each dean or director to set the annual rate for GLAs within his/her unit. The Graduate School collects and publishes this information annually.

**Graduate Research Assistantship.** Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs) are students enrolled in the Graduate School who are assigned to assist one or more faculty members in the conduct of research. In most instances, research assistants are assigned duties such as literature searches and laboratory experiments under the close supervision of faculty mentors. Per [UGA Policy 4.07-13 Instructor of Record](#), GRAs cannot be assigned as an Instructor of Record and cannot have instructional duties. [Presidential Graduate Fellowships \(first two years\)](#), and [Graduate School Assistantships](#) are classified as Graduate Research Assistantships.

GRAs are employees of the university and are appointed at 13-20 hours/week. In no case should a GRA exceed 20 hours/week. It is the responsibility of each dean or director to set the annual rate for GRAs within his/her unit. This rate must be equivalent to or higher than the minimum set by the provost. The Graduate School collects and publishes this information annually.

**Graduate Research Fellow Assistantship.** Graduate Research Fellow Assistants (GRFAs) are typically students who are recipients of external fellowships that *do not* provide tuition benefits. *Students are eligible for GRFA support if their external support is equivalent to a 20 hours/week assistantship at the minimum rate set by the dean of the Graduate School.* Like GRAs, GRFA students are enrolled in the Graduate School and are supervised by one or more faculty members in the conduct of research. In most instances, research assistants are assigned duties such as literature searches and laboratory experiments under the close supervision of faculty mentors. Students must provide documentation that their sponsoring agency allows them to accept paid work at UGA while on the fellowship and are subject to the same conditions of employment as other UGA Graduate Assistants. Per [UGA Policy 4.07-13 Instructor of Record](#), GRAs cannot be assigned as an Instructor of Record and cannot have instructional duties.

GRFAs are employees of the university and must be appointed at 20 hours/week. The dean of the Graduate School sets the annual rate for this category of assistantship. This rate is different from the minimum set by the provost. The Graduate School publishes this information annually.

**General Graduate Assistantship.** Graduate Assistants (GAs) are all other students enrolled in the Graduate School who receive assistantships that are not specifically designated for teaching or research. Duties assigned to this category of graduate assistants may include assisting faculty with a variety of academic tasks, including but not limited to: providing technical support for courses taught by faculty; working on grant funded projects related to program development, evaluations, outreach, among others; gathering, organizing, and analyzing data for faculty; or working in a non-academic unit of the university, such as Student Affairs. Per [UGA and Regents Policy 4.07-13 Instructor of Record](#), GAs can assist faculty with instructional duties but an approved and valid faculty member must be listed as the Instructor of Record in the Course Offerings Data Base and must be responsible for all aspects of the course.

GAs are employees of the university and are appointed at 13-20 hours/week. In no case should a GA exceed 20 hours/week. It is the responsibility of each dean or director to set the annual rate for GAs within his/her unit. The Graduate School collects and publishes this information annually.

**IV. Multiple Assistantships:** Graduate students may hold multiple assistantship positions simultaneously, including positions of more than one type. The combination of the graduate assistantship(s), at any University System of Georgia institution, and departmental supplement cannot exceed 20 hours of work per week. All work should be FLSA-exempt level work and should be included in the FTE of the graduate assistant. If a graduate assistant performs work outside their regular duties, the college should determine the FTE for the additional duties and process as graduate assistant pay. In no case should any graduate assistant exceed 20 hours/week.

**V. Non-Resident Alien Students:** F-1 and J-1 international students attending UGA, who have an I-20 form (F-1 student) or a DS-2019 form (J-1 student) issued by UGA, can be appointed as graduate assistants on any UGA campus. F-1 status students do not need any special authorization or documentation, as long as they maintain legal status in the U.S, but J-1 status students must have written authorization from an International Scholar, Students and Immigration Services advisor at UGA prior to accepting on-campus employment. Foreign national students must not work more than 20 hours per week.

**VI. Appointments, Work Schedules, and Compensation:** A graduate student is appointed as a graduate assistant for the fiscal year. Graduate

assistants who are employed on a fiscal year basis can begin work on any business day during the month. If a student is appointed on any day other than the 1st working day of the month, the monthly stipend amount will be pro-rated.

Graduate teaching assistants, graduate laboratory assistants, graduate research assistants, and general graduate assistants must be appointed at 13-20 hours/ week, and in no case, can any of these assistants be appointed at more than 20 hours/week. Graduate research fellow assistants (GRFA) must be appointed at 20 hours/week. The student's department/ program is expected to cover the salary for the GRFA.

The appointing department will arrange the specific work schedule for each graduate assistant. As graduate assistants are professionals, performing FLSA-exempt level work, work hours can vary per week depending on the needs of the position without affecting the graduate assistant's hours/week.

A salary guide for graduate assistants is distributed annually by the Graduate School. Compensation may vary by funding source, discipline, and responsibilities specific to the appointment. Academic units will establish fair pay scales and monitor their pay practices 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.

**VII. Enrollment requirements:** Graduate assistants must be full-time students for the duration of their assignments. Full-time status requires enrollment for at least twelve hours during spring and fall semesters and nine hours during summer semester. Exceptions to the required course load may be obtained with written approval of the major professor and the dean of the Graduate School.

**VIII. Health Insurance requirements:** Graduate assistants are required to have health insurance and will be AUTOMATICALLY ENROLLED in the Mandatory Plan unless a waiver is requested/granted. A portion of the premium for the University System's health insurance plan is paid by the University of Georgia. Information about the Graduate School Health Insurance Program, coverage information, and the waiver process can be found on the University Human Resources website located at <http://www.hr.uga.edu/students>.

**IX. Reduced Tuition:** In accordance with the [University System of Georgia Board of Regents Policy 7.3.1.2](#), graduate assistants may be eligible for a tuition waiver. Graduate Assistants on a  $\geq 13$  hours/week appointment will qualify for a reduction of tuition to \$25 per semester. Graduate Assistants receiving a tuition waiver are expected to work for the entire semester and maintain full-time registration (12 graduate credit hours). Failure to work for the period of time covered by your program's semester or failure to maintain 12 graduate credit hours will result in the removal of the tuition waiver and reversal of the tuition reduction. Ensuring that the student works the required number of hours associated with their assistantship and maintains full-time enrollment is the shared responsibility of the academic program, the hiring unit, and the student. If a student is unable to complete the time commitment required by their assistantship for a justifiable reason, the graduate coordinator may file a request for exemption with the Graduate School. The Graduate School will conduct audits to ensure that academic programs comply with this policy. The academic program or the unit employing students that violate this policy may be required to reimburse tuition waivers. However, if it is determined that the student is responsible for failing to meet the work or enrollment expectation, then the student may be required to pay the tuition. Receipt of a graduate assistantship affects student financial aid eligibility. See <http://osfa.uga.edu/gradinfo.html> for more information.