

GRADUATE ASSISTANTS - DUTIES AND TIME COMMITMENT

A graduate assistantship is an academic appointment not involving academic tenure. The assigned duties of a graduate assistant are consistent with the aims and objectives of the teaching and research missions of the University. An appointment of 20 hours per week is considered a full-time assistantship. An appointment of 10 hours per week is considered a half-time assistantship. The responsibilities assigned to a graduate assistant should take into account what may be reasonably expected given the graduate assistant's education and experience. (In what follows below, it is assumed that the assistant is full time; the time commitment information should be adjusted according to the nominal number of hours per week of the graduate assistantship.)

Assignments for graduate assistants are to be devised so that their work assignments average no more than 20 hours per week over the course of the semester, and that chronic and significant increases in the hours necessary for required duties do not occur. However, there may be times when graduate assistants may be asked to put in more hours to meet certain peak work periods.

Graduate assistants will receive offer letters that indicate responsibilities for the period of their employment, and, if necessary, indicate the approximate times when the graduate assistant may be required to work above the average number of hours and the estimated maximum number of hours per week that is expected.

Graduate assistants who find that their assigned time commitment is not consistent with the above policy may seek to remedy the situation by communicating with their supervisor, department chair, or program chair. The Office of the Dean of the Graduate School is also available to resolve graduate assistant problems, including those arising from excessive assigned time commitments.

Graduate Teaching Assistants:

Duties: The specific duties of graduate teaching assistants (TAs) vary from department to department. For the majority of teaching assistants, however, assignments and responsibilities are typically:

- assuming teaching responsibility of a laboratory or discussion session of a course;
- assuming teaching responsibility for a classroom section of a multi-sectional course, under the close supervision of the director(s) of the course;
- assisting a faculty member in the grading, advising, and administrative duties necessary for a course;
- academic advising of undergraduate students.

Within a department, the particular assignment depends on the department's needs and the experience and academic qualifications of the assistant.

All graduate TAs serving in any capacity must be under the direction and supervision of a member of the faculty.

Time Commitment: Graduate TAs may be required to come to campus prior to the beginning of classes to assist with orientation and class-preparation duties. Their responsibilities usually end

with the submission of final grades. The number of hours that TAs are expected to work as well as their assignments may vary from week to week. The distribution of hours spent in preparation, classroom or laboratory time, and grading may vary from discipline to discipline and course supervisor to course supervisor. However, full-time teaching assistants are expected to average no more than 20 work hours per week.

Graduate Research Assistants:

Duties: The duties of graduate research assistants (RAs) vary according to the nature of the research project in which they participate. RAs may be asked occasionally to conduct some work at home or to do their research at times when classes are not officially in session. The duties of RAs are performed under the direction and supervision of a member of the faculty.

Time Commitment: Graduate students working on research projects funded by grants are often also working on material that is directly related to their own research projects, theses, or dissertations. It is not unusual in such cases for grant work and personal scholarly work to merge and for the work time to consume more than the usual 20 hours per week. Work on a grant that is not related to the student's personal scholarly work may not average more than 20 hours per week.

Graduate Administrative Assistants:

Duties: A number of administrative offices employ graduate assistants. Graduate administrative assistants (AAs) usually perform administrative support functions in an office setting. Some administrative appointments are for less than one academic year.

Time Commitment: Like all graduate assistants, AAs may not be required to work more than an average of 20 hours per week. AAs may request that they be allowed to take time off to finish a paper or study for an exam and to make up the hours later. Such arrangements are allowed and encouraged. These arrangements must be agreed to by the AA's immediate supervisor.

Graduate AAs follow the staff holiday and vacation schedule. When the campus is closed (for any reason) for regular staff, AAs who would normally work those days will receive the appropriate compensation and will not be required to make up the hours missed.