

Graduate Assistantship Appointment Procedures for Supervisors & Departments

Effective with FY 2014 Appointments

Contact

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Graduate Assistantship Web Site

<http://www.wku.edu/graduate/aid/ga/>

Graduate Assistant Appointments

Types of Assistantships

Research Assistantship (RA): A Graduate Research Assistant is employed by the university to perform duties related to a scholarly project or program of research under the guidance and direction of faculty members. The duties of a research assistant involve applying and mastering conceptual and theoretical ideas, practices, or methods of scholarship. Research Assistants may be employed outside their academic department in a capacity in which the assistant brings knowledge or skills related to their program of study.

Teaching Assistantship (TA): A Graduate Teaching Assistant is employed by the university to provide direct support for the teaching mission of the unit. Teaching Assistants do not have primary responsibility for a course, but they may serve as discussion leaders, graders, leaders of laboratory sections, or may assist in capacities such as preparation of assignments, and other administrative duties necessary for a course.

Assistant Instructor (AI): A Graduate Assistant Instructor supports the teaching mission of the unit in a more advanced capacity than a teaching assistant by serving as instructor of record for a course or courses. Please note that Assistant Instructors were formerly referred to as Graduate Teaching Associates.

General Assistantship (GA): A General Graduate Assistant is employed by the university in a capacity related to their program of study, but they are *not* engaged in activities directly related to research or teaching.

These appointments include a stipend for service. For graduate assistants receiving a Graduate Tuition Scholarship Waiver (see below), the Office of Graduate Studies will establish minimum graduate assistantship stipends on a yearly basis.

Tuition Waivers

Graduate Assistant Nonresident Tuition Waiver: A Graduate Assistant Nonresident Tuition Waiver is awarded by Graduate Studies and Research in conjunction with a graduate assistantship and brings the graduate assistant's tuition rate down to resident levels.

Graduate Assistant Tuition Waiver: A Graduate Assistant Tuition Waiver may be awarded to a student appointed as an RA, TA, or AI to cover all, or a portion, of the resident tuition for eligible courses. The amount of the award will be determined by the awarding unit.

A limited number of tuition waivers may be awarded irrespective of a student's employment status. Requests for such support must be made directly to the Office of Graduate Studies and Research.

Supplemental Graduate Assistantships (Super GAs)

Supplemental graduate assistantships funds provided by the Office of the Provost ("Super" GAs) may be allocated to the college by the Office of Graduate Studies and Research. If such funds have been allocated, they will provide a full stipend for an RA, TA, or AI along with a full time (9 hour) tuition waiver. Super GA funds will be distributed to the college after the students have been identified to Graduate Studies (see below under *GA Agreement Form*).

Hiring Graduate Assistants

Hiring Steps Overview

1. Advertise position (if necessary).
2. Select student to fulfill the appointment.
3. Complete the Graduate Assistantship Contract, including required signatures.
4. Initiate EPAF and background check **AT LEAST 10 DAYS BEFORE START DATE** (HR will initiate electronic I-9).
5. Submit the completed Graduate Assistantship Agreement to Graduate Studies and Research with EPAF number(s).
6. Verification of eligibility by the Office of Graduate Studies and Research.
7. New hires must go to Human Resources on or before the first day of employment with original verifying documents to complete the I-9, tax forms, and direct deposits.
8. International graduate assistants must first report to the Office of International Scholar and Student Services (ISSS) with immigration documents and instructions for receiving a social security number.

Position Advertisement

Although students typically seek assistantships through their academic department, the Office of Graduate Studies and Research will maintain a website for position openings. Units seeking graduate assistants are encouraged to post openings on the web site for at least a week. To advertise position openings, please contact Graduate Studies and Research (graduate.studies@wku.edu) and submit a description of the position with the following information:

- Job Title (50 characters or less)
- Deadline (Date)
- Job Description (200 words or less)
- Qualifications (100 words or less)
- Department
- Application Materials Requested (*if any*)
- Contact Person, e-mail, and phone number.

Student Selection

The hiring department will create and collect any documents (for example, application, resume, reference letters, etc.) that are deemed necessary for the application process. To be eligible for an assistantship, the candidate must be a full-time, degree-seeking student accepted into a graduate program. Current students must be enrolled full-time and be in good standing. Any semester in which a graduate assistant is enrolled less than full-time will be treated as their last semester for the purpose of graduate assistantship appointments.

Additional requirements may be found on the Graduate Studies web page (<http://www.wku.edu/graduate/aid/ga/details.php>)

Graduate Assistantship Agreement Form

When a student is to be offered an assistantship position, the Graduate Assistantship Agreement Form must be completed. The agreement form is available at <http://www.wku.edu/graduate/documents/> . Important points to note about this form:

WKU ID: All students are assigned a WKU ID# when they apply to WKU.

Appointments: Appointments may be split across assistantship types. Appointments may differ across terms.

Stipends: Stipend amounts may differ across terms. However different EPAFs will be required.

Departmental requirements and duties: The hiring department is encouraged to provide details regarding the assistantship duties. These details are **REQUIRED** for assistants being paid from “Super GA” funds. Additional pages may be used if necessary.

Source of funds: The account and index number of the funding source should be indicated in the “office use only” section. Programs that wish to fund a graduate assistant from the supplemental graduate assistantship (“Super GA”) fund should indicate “Super GA” in the office use only section of the graduate assistant agreement form. Graduate Studies will make a budget transfer to the unit for these assistantships.

A new EPAF and Graduate Assistantship Agreement are required if any changes occur after the initial agreement is signed (e.g., pay rate change).

Appointment of Graduate Assistant Instructors

In addition to the Graduate Assistant Agreement form, Graduate Assistant Instructors must submit a curriculum vita, the Graduate Assistant Instructor application and have completed one of the following:

- The Basic Skills in College Teaching Program (BSCT) offered by the [Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching \(FaCET\)](#),
- Any appropriate departmental teacher training programs
- A full semester course in teaching resulting in at least one earned graduate credit

The Office of Graduate Studies, in consultation with the Office of the Vice Provost, will verify the student’s eligibility to serve as instructor of record. Students who do not have 18 graduate hours in the teaching discipline will need to submit alternate credentials to the Office of the Vice Provost.

According to the policy approved by the Graduate Council in December 2008, Graduate Assistant Instructors will receive an additional stipend bonus of \$100/credit hour taught per semester up to a maximum of \$700 per semester. The stipend bonus will be provided by the hiring unit from their assistantship allocation.

For more information about Graduate Assistant Instructors, please see the policy on the Graduate Studies webpage (URL to be determined).

Schedules and Due Dates

<u>Appointment term</u>	<u>GA Agreement Due to GSR:</u>
Fall Semester	July 2
Spring Semester	November 15
Summer Semester	April 2

Graduate Assistantship contracts may be accepted after the above posted dates, but the stipend payments and tuition waiver posting to the student's bill will be delayed. Students must have an I-9 on file with payroll before beginning work. It may take up to 3-4 weeks to activate the position in the payroll system for students who have no previous job data at WKU. It generally takes between 2 and 4 weeks for the tuition waiver to be adjusted and posted on the student's tuition account.

Stipends may be prorated for students who start their assistantship late.

Work Obligations

All graduate assistants are required to work a maximum of 20 hours per week for a half-time appointment (typical appointment) or 10 hours per week for a quarter-time appointment. However, graduate assistants' academic development is primary and supervisors should be mindful of graduate assistants' academic demands. Graduate assistants are discouraged from additional employment during the dates of the appointment. Graduate assistants may not be employed in a second job on campus.

Graduate assistants' term of appointment is typically concurrent with the academic term. However, due to the demands associated with particular projects or assignments (e.g., class preparation) the supervisor and student should negotiate the exact start and end dates as well as expectations during holidays and breaks.

Termination of Assistantship

If an assistant is terminated before the previously designated date of the assistantship, whether because of funding problems or because of the inability of the assistant to perform duties adequately, the graduate assistant will be notified by letter no later than two weeks prior to termination. A copy of the letter describing the reasons for dismissal will be submitted to the appropriate college dean and the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research.

If a graduate assistant chooses to terminate the assistantship, they must notify the supervisor. A letter of resignation must be submitted to the department head, the departmental graduate advisor, the college dean and the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research no later than two weeks before leaving the position unless emergency conditions exist.

When termination occurs prior to the end of the appointment period, the department is responsible for stopping the stipend payment and recouping any stipend payment made in error, due to a late notice of termination. If the student is receiving a tuition waiver, the waiver will be forfeited and the student will be responsible for payment in full of tuition charges.

All policies and procedures in this document are subject to change. For the most current policies, please see the Graduate Studies web page (www.wku.edu/graduate).