



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL FOR GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

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PHILOSOPHY

A University with a sound assistantship policy should be able to improve the educational experience for undergraduate and graduate students alike, as well as enhance the research potential of its graduate programs. Students, departments, and the University as a whole are beneficiaries of quality graduate assistantship programs when such programs are well-conceived and executed.

The primary goal of an assistantship is to augment the student's educational objectives and to assist in the prompt and successful completion of the student's degree program. The student and the department share a central responsibility in the student's education. The graduate assistant is clearly a student who, while making progress in the degree program, has special opportunities to receive experience in a profession under the supervision of a faculty mentor. Although such students serve the University of Central Arkansas with teaching, research, and/or administrative duties, they are considered students, and not employees, of the University, and the tasks assigned to them must be clearly and justifiably consistent with the student's educational and career objectives. It is essential that graduate assistants be given assignments and supervision in such a way that their graduate studies and assistantship responsibilities reinforce one another. The assistant/mentor relationship is vital, and the best assistantship experience will evolve from careful planning and monitoring. In this way, both the students and the University benefit from the relationship.

CATEGORIES OF GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

Graduate Teaching Assistantship A teaching assistant may work with undergraduate students in small groups, lead group discussions, monitor examinations and grade papers, help to prepare lectures, conduct laboratory sessions, or can be responsible for selected teaching assignments under the close supervision of the faculty. The teaching assistant concurrently develops teaching skills and a deeper understanding of the discipline.

Graduate Research Assistantship A research assistant may be appointed in a department through the Graduate School budget or by the principal investigator of a funded research project. In either case, the student is assigned a range of duties such as library searches, fieldwork, laboratory experiences, and preparation of research proposals and grants so as to gain professional skills in research which complement the student's graduate education. Again, close supervision by a faculty mentor is essential to the student's development as a researcher and scholar.

Administrative Graduate Assistantship A graduate assistant performs other duties that are not primarily teaching or research. These may include clinical or administrative responsibilities which are inherently related to the student's education and professional development.

Funding Sources and Types of Assistantships

Various funding sources exist for the above types of assistantships. These sources include grants, gifts, contracts, community service agencies, the Graduate School, or various University departments, divisions, or centers.

QUALIFICATIONS OF ASSISTANTS

To qualify for an assistantship, the student should have achieved an excellent academic record and completed substantial coursework in the major field. The student must have been admitted with full

qualifications in accordance with the admission policies and procedures of the Graduate School. A Graduate Assistant (GA) is expected to maintain a cumulative and program GPA of 3.0 or higher. If a GA does not meet these conditions, the GA is allowed one semester to continue as a GA while on probation. If at the end of the additional semester the GA is still on probation, the assistantship will be terminated. To be appointed as a full-time Graduate Assistant (20 hours), the student must be enrolled as a full-time graduate student (minimum of 9 hours). Graduate Assistants who are in their last 12 hours have the option to take two semesters of six hours each, instead of nine hours in the first semester and three hours in the second semester.

GOOD ACADEMIC STANDING

The student must have been admitted with full qualifications in accordance with the admission policies and procedures of the Graduate School and the selected department, as outlined in the Graduate Bulletin. A Graduate Assistant (GA) is expected to maintain a cumulative and program GPA of 3.0 or higher. If a GA does not meet these conditions, the GA is allowed one semester to continue as a GA while on probation.

by the part of the semester remaining after the resignation or termination.

Scholarship hours awarded in conjunction with a graduate appointment can only be awarded during the period of appointment. For example, a student awarded an assistantship for fall and spring cannot use the accompanying tuition scholarship during the Summer Session prior to or following the award period.

- (1) description of the responsibilities and expectations associated with each Graduate School funded assistantship;
- (2) description of orientation, training, and mentoring activities for assistants;
- (3) an evaluation of the assistant by the supervisor;
- (4) timesheet records for Administrative graduate assistants.

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Departments are expected to design an evaluation plan consistent with Section IX, Item 3 above. Evaluation should be an ongoing process of communication between the graduate assistant and the