Section IX—Graduate Associates

Graduate associate appointments must conform to the following Graduate School rules. Additional information may be obtained from the student’s appointing unit, the Graduate Studies Committee, or the Office of Human Resources. Each office participates in the formulation of GA rules.

General Information IX.1

A graduate student’s principal objective is to earn a graduate degree. Appointment as a GA contributes to that objective by providing an apprenticeship experience along with financial support. This apprenticeship complements formal instruction and gives the student practical, personal experience that can be gained only by performing instructional, research, or administrative activities. It is expected that GA responsibilities will not interfere with a student’s reasonable progress toward completion of the graduate degree.

Graduate Associates appointed by the Department of Educational Studies will be assigned to specific positions with supervision provided for orientation, training, and performance feedback and evaluation.

Titles. The three graduate associate titles are: Graduate Administrative Associate (GAA), Graduate Research Associate (GRA), and Graduate Teaching Associate (GTA).

Responsibilities. Specific GA responsibilities are determined by the appointing units. These may include teaching classes, recitations, and labs; advising and counseling students; grading papers; gathering and analyzing data; writing reports; and assisting faculty members and administrators.

All supervisors will provide preliminary written job descriptions prior to the start of the GA appointment. Aspects of the job descriptions may be added or negotiated after the job starts. Final job descriptions are approved by the Chair of the Department.

Graduate Research Associates will be responsible for work on research or study projects under the supervision of the principal investigator or research advisor. Graduate Research Associates are expected to work 20 hours per week.

Graduate Teaching Associates have complete responsibility for the courses they are assigned to teach, but they are accountable to their faculty supervisor, and must adapt syllabi to meet requirements set forth by supervisors. The syllabus for a class should follow guidelines as described in the Curriculum committee documents. Teaching loads typically range from five to seven credit hours.

Time off during semester breaks is dependent upon the type of appointment and is arranged with the supervisor. Some graduate associate appointments may require no work during semester breaks, whereas other appointments may require 20 hours of work per week during semester breaks. Graduate Associates are not expected to work on University holidays.
Eligibility. To hold a GA appointment, a student must satisfy the following eligibility requirements. The student:

1. must be pursuing a graduate degree at this university

   All graduate students holding an appointment funded by College resources must have achieved the following scores on the GRE:

   a. For students applying for admission in fall 2014: 151 Verbal (49th percentile) and 147 Quantitative (29th percentile)

   b. For students applying for admission in fall 2015: 151 Verbal (49th percentile) and 150 Quantitative (41st percentile)

   c. For students applying for admission for fall 2016: 152 Verbal (53rd percentile) and 153 Quantitative (53rd percentile)

2. must meet minimum Graduate School registration requirements:

   a. eight credit hours during each semester a 50 percent or greater GA appointment is held, except during the summer term, when the minimum is four

   b. four credit hours during each semester a 25 percent appointment is held

   c. for doctoral students who have passed the candidacy examination, three credit hours each semester a 50 percent GA appointment is held, including summer term

   d. Audited courses do not count toward these requirements.

Effective Autumn Quarter 2007, all GAs in the Department of Educational Studies are strongly urged to enroll for a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester during which a Department tuition fee payment authorization is utilized. GAs should meet with their advisors to discuss semester course schedules. To reach the 12 credit hours, GAs may choose to enroll in 8189 Field Experience with your advisor or supervisor. These enrollments are intended not to increase academic assignments, but to reflect the mentoring and learning that GAs obtain in the course of the assistantship. Enrollment in the course may be listed under the supervisor of the assistantship, the student’s advisor or the Department Chair.

3. must be in good standing in the Graduate School when the appointment or reappointment becomes effective

   A letter of exception for initial appointment can be requested of the Graduate Studies Committee by the admitting unit so student can hold a GA position.

4. must maintain reasonable progress toward a graduate degree. It is the responsibility of each Graduate Studies Committee to determine what constitutes reasonable progress in its degree programs.

   Satisfactory progress will be defined by the Department as:
a. for PhD students already holding a Master’s Degree – on track to graduate within 5 years.

b. for PhD students without a Master’s Degree – on track to graduate within 6 years.

c. for MA students – on track to graduate within 2 years

d. a minimum 3.0 grade point average

e. satisfactory evaluation by advisor that courses taken are reasonable for the degree sought

5. must certify proficiency in spoken English before assuming GTA duties involving direct student contact (applies only to international non-English speaking graduate students)

6. must satisfy other requirements published by the Graduate Studies Committee or appointing unit

Students must also satisfy other requirements stipulated by the Graduate Studies Committee of the Department of Educational Studies, the Chair’s Office of the Department, or the College of Education and Human Ecology.

7. must, if enrolled in a bachelor’s/master’s combined program, hold only a GA appointment that does not involve teaching of other students

**Monitoring.** Monitoring of Graduate Associate’s eligibility for appointment or reappointment is delegated to the Director of the Office of Student Services and the student’s advisor.

**Terms of Appointment, Reappointment or Termination IX.2**

**Offer of Appointment.** Any student accepting a GA appointment must be provided with a Graduate Associate Appointment form stating the terms of the appointment. This form is signed by the student and the head of the appointing unit or his/her designee(s).

**Time of Offer.** The following timetable is suggested for the offer and acceptance of appointments and reappointments by appointing units and students. This timetable provides adequate time for students to make course scheduling and other necessary decisions. This university adheres to the Council of Graduate Schools’ resolution regarding graduate associates as summarized below.

In those instances in which a student accepts an offer before April 15 and subsequently desires to withdraw that acceptance, the student may submit in writing a resignation of the appointment at any time through April 15. However, an acceptance given or left in force after April 15 commits the student not to accept another offer without first obtaining a written release from the institution to which the commitment has been made.

Those appointing units offering initial appointments after April 15 must make offers as early as possible during the spring semester and summer session.
If possible, offers of appointment and reappointment should be made prior to April 15 with a response date for acceptance or non-acceptance of April 15.

If possible, TA course assignments should be made at least one semester in advance in order that the TA have time to organize and plan the course, and to get copyright clearance for course materials, if necessary.

**Period of Appointment.** A typical GA appointment is for autumn and spring semesters; however, work patterns are determined locally and may vary due to the May session. For example, a unit may hire a 50 percent time GTA to teach for autumn semester and for May session, with no expectation that the GTA will teach during the spring semester. The student will remain on appointment as a GTA for spring semester so that the student will receive a fee authorization, stipend, and benefits for spring as well as eligibility for a summer fee authorization. Summer session GA appointments are sometimes available but usually as separate appointments. There may be instances when an appointing unit needs to fill a one semester or session appointment. Students who have held such short-term appointments and have performed satisfactorily must be considered along with all other eligible candidates for two semester associateship appointments for the following year. A GA may not be appointed for less than one semester or session except with the approval of the Graduate School.

1. The period of appointment will be specified on the appointment form as well as starting and termination dates. Typical appointments are for nine months.
2. Appointments of shorter duration are determined by the Department Chair.
3. Availability of summer appointments is based on need and availability of funding. Offers for summer appointments are only for summer term and will typically be made early in spring semester.

**Percent Time.** The majority of GAs are appointed at 50 percent time with an average load of 20 hours per week over the duration of the appointment period. Appointments that routinely require more than 20 hours per week must be made at the appropriate percentage level. (For instance, an appointment regularly requiring 22 hours per week must be made at the 55 percent level and be paid accordingly.) A GA may not hold an appointment for more than 75 percent time, whether as a single appointment or combination of appointments.

International students may not be appointed for more than 50 percent time either as a single or a combined appointment.

GAs may be appointed for less than 50 percent (partial appointment). With the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School, GAs may be appointed at 25 percent time, averaging 10 hours per week; however, only one half of their fees will be authorized.

Generally, the guidelines below are desired; however, the Chair of the Department will set final, actual conditions in line with the needs of the Department. The Chair also sets enrollment limits for TA classes based on Department needs.
1. a 25% appointment is one 3-hour class per semester
2. a 50% appointment is two 3-hour classes per semester
3. a 75% appointment is three 3-hour classes per semester

**Stipend.** This university establishes a minimum stipend for GAs. The current minimum stipend is $13,500 for a nine-month 50 percent GA appointment or $1,500 per month. Appointing units determine stipend levels above the minimum within university stipend policies. Levels of responsibility, years of experience, progress toward a graduate degree, and performance as a GA are the most common factors used by appointing units to determine stipend levels.

Stipend levels are set by the Chair of the Department and are aligned with minimum requirements set by the Graduate School. Currently, stipend levels are determined by degree and progress toward degree. All Master's degree students' receive the same stipend amount. Doctoral degree students' stipend levels will be based on the pre- or post-candidacy status of the students. Graduate Associates should let the Director of Student Services (122 Ramseyer Hall) and the Director of Human Resources (160 Ramseyer Hall) know when the candidacy exam has been successfully completed so that post-candidacy pay increases can be posted.

**Reappointments.** Academic performance and prior GA performance are among the criteria for reappointment. If a reappointment is not made, the appointing unit must notify the GA as soon as possible. Reasons for non-reappointment must be stated in writing. For two weeks after the date of the non-reappointment notice, a GA has the right to initiate an appeal to the head of the appointing unit.

Appointments and reappointments are initiated by the person responsible for overseeing and supervising the GA position for the term of appointment and are approved and assigned by the Department Chair’s office.

All GA appointments and reappointments are subject to University and Department funding.

Reappointment is based on the following criteria:

1. GA appointments are normally made for two academic terms/semesters with the possibility of a third term of support. PhD students are normally eligible for reappointment up to three academic years unless otherwise stipulated in their letter of offer of admission or appointment. MA students are normally eligible for reappointment up to two academic years unless otherwise stipulated in their letters of offer of admission or appointment.
2. Maintaining a 3.0 grade point average.
3. Satisfactory evaluation by advisor that courses are reasonable for the degree sought.
4. Satisfactory evaluation by supervisor(s) of positions held.
5. Final employment decisions rest with the Department Chair. Contracts for appointment or reappointment are issued from the Department Chair’s office.
Termination Criteria. GA appointments may be terminated prior to the end of the appointment period only with the written approval of the Graduate School. A GA appointment is terminated prior to the end of the appointment period for any of the following reasons:

1. the GA is no longer enrolled in the Graduate School
2. the GA is registered for fewer than the number of credit hours required for a GA appointment or fewer than three credit hours for a doctoral student who has passed the candidacy examination
3. performance as a GA is determined to be unsatisfactory by the employing unit
4. the GA graduates
5. the appointing unit has insufficient funds
6. unsatisfactory academic performance

Volunteer GAs. Under no circumstances should graduate students serve as “volunteer” GAs where they are expected to provide service with no stipend, at a stipend not commensurate with the expected load, or without an appropriate payment of tuition and fees. Course credit cannot be awarded to a student performing in the role of a GA in lieu of a stipend. Circumstances that may warrant an exception to this policy must be approved in advance by the Graduate School on a case-by-case basis.

GAs Teaching Graduate Students. Graduate associates may not be assigned to teach courses in which graduate students are enrolled for graduate credit. Circumstances that may warrant an exception to this policy must be approved in advance by Graduate School.

Outside Employment. The Department of Educational Studies does not encourage outside employment of Graduate Associate appointees during the time of their appointment. Students, advisors and GA supervisors must work in consultation with one another to insure that academic progress and GA responsibilities are not compromised by outside employment. This consultation should occur annually. Failure to disclose outside employment could result in the loss of assistantship.

Appointing Unit Responsibilities IX.3

Within the above-stated rules, each unit appointing GAs must develop, publish, and make available its GA rules, processes, and procedures. In addition, all GAs should be informed in writing of the person or persons from whom they should seek guidance and advice about their GA responsibilities. Each unit appointing GAs must provide the following information or direct students to a publication where it is located:

1. copies of Section IX of the Graduate School Handbook
2. local criteria and procedures for selecting GAs
   a. Candidates for GA positions are currently recommended to the Chair of the Department by faculty and/or staff. Final employment decisions rest with the Chair.
3. local criteria and procedures for reappointing GAs
a. See reappointment criteria published in Section IX.2
4. period of appointment
5. availability of summer term appointments
6. stipend levels
   a. Current department stipend levels are available from the Department’s Fiscal Officer.
7. dates for notifying students of appointments and for receiving acceptances or refusals
8. a completed Graduate Associate Appointment Document, including a statement of duties and responsibilities
9. criteria and procedures for evaluating and reporting GA performance, including information about the Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEI) form and other student evaluations
   a. The main purpose of positive and corrective performance feedback is to improve competence and performance of the GA.
   b. If termination during the term of appointment or disqualification for reappointment is the judgment to be made, the supervisor shall justify the recommendation in writing to the Chair, advisor, and GA. The Chair shall make the final decision.
10. criteria and procedures for terminating GA appointments
11. grievance procedures within the appointing unit
12. appropriate space and facilities necessary to carry out GA teaching, research, or administrative duties

Grievance Procedures IX.4

It is generally preferable for problems related to GA appointments to be settled at the local level. Regular, clear communication between graduate associates and their advisors and supervisors is key to establishing and maintaining an effective work environment. However, if talking to an advisor or immediate supervisor does not resolve a problem or potential grievance, graduate associates are encouraged to consult program handbooks and other materials provided by the appointing unit to ascertain grievance guidelines that may be in place. Graduate program chairs and heads of appointing units can also provide information about such guidelines. The staff of the Graduate School is also available to provide consultation with graduate students about problems or potential grievances. There may be instances in which recourse to these persons does not provide resolution. The Graduate Council has established grievance procedures (see Appendix D).

If the above informal discussions do not result in a resolution and before the formal procedure of Appendix C in the Graduate School Handbook, GAs with a grievance are referred to the Chair of
the Department. The Chair will seek information from parties concerned in the grievance and render a formal decision on the grievance.

If the Chair is a party concerned in the grievance, the grievance is referred to the Graduate Studies Committee. The Graduate Studies Committee will seek information from parties concerned in the grievance and render a formal decision on the grievance to the Graduate School.

Benefits Information IX.5

Fee Authorization. Every graduate associate (GTA, GRA, and GAA) appointed for at least 50 percent of full time receives a full tuition and fee authorization. Students holding GA appointments receive fee authorizations that include Instructional and General fees and nonresident fees. Other fees, including parking and late penalties as well as the student activity fee and the mandatory COTA fee, must generally be paid by the student. GAs appointed on various grants and special projects also receive a fee authorization, although in their case the fees may be charged back to the grant or appointing unit through a complex formula that takes into account indirect costs to the university. Notice of fee authorizations appears on the student’s Statement of Account. A GA on a 50 percent appointment who holds a concurrent appointment at 25 percent or less receives the fee authorization from the unit supporting the 50 percent appointment. Fee authorizations for concurrent appointments of equal FTE (e.g., two 25 percent appointments) are split equally between appointing units. A GA may not be denied a fee authorization. This is an entitlement that accompanies the title of GA. By the same token, no graduate student may receive a fee authorization who is not on appointment as a GA (except for various fellows, trainees, and those receiving a summer session fee authorization).

Summer Session Fee Authorization. Graduate students holding a 50 percent or greater GA appointment for two consecutive semesters are entitled to a full fee authorization during the immediately following summer session without being on appointment. Students holding a 25 percent or less GA appointment for two consecutive semesters are entitled to a summer session fee authorization at half the full fee authorization rate. Students using the summer fee authorization must be registered for at least four hours of credit. Post-candidacy doctoral students must register for at least three hours of credit. A graduate student who elects not to enroll during the summer session may not defer the use of the summer fee authorization.

Students on a summer fee authorization may hold a 25 percent or less GA appointment. They may also be appointed to various other appointment titles, including student associate, student assistant, lecturer, fellow, and clinical instructor with no FTE limitations.

GAs must inform the Educational Studies Human Resource Generalist of their intent to use a summer fee authorization.

Time Off. GAs do not accrue vacation or sick leave. Rules regarding time off during semester or session breaks or other times are determined by the GA’s appointing unit. GAs must check with their appointing units to determine when they are expected to be on duty. GAs are not required to work on legal holidays noted on the university calendar. When university offices are required to maintain services on certain holidays and GAs are scheduled to work on a holiday, they must be given an alternate day off.

GAs are expected to work during semester/ breaks unless released by their supervisors.
Short-Term Absences and Leaves of Absence. The university has formalized a set of practices to be used by academic and administrative units at Ohio State to support GAs, fellows, and trainees during instances of personal and/or family illness, bereavement, childbirth, and adoption. Each situation will be individually addressed according to the specific research, teaching, or administrative context the student is in and the individual’s reason for requesting the leave.

All GAs, fellows, and trainees who are in good academic standing, making reasonable progress toward their degrees, and are paid through the Ohio State payroll system, regardless of appointment length, type or FTE, are eligible to request a short-term absence to recover from a personal illness or to bereave the death of an immediate family member. A “short-term” absence is generally considered to be a period of one to three days. In rare instances, it might be up to two weeks and should always be proportionate to the needs of the situation.

Eligible funded graduate and professional students may request a leave of absence up to six weeks to manage a serious illness, childbirth, or adoption. All requests must be proportionate to the needs of the individual situation. To be eligible for a leave of absence, a graduate student must have completed two consecutive semesters or a consecutive semester and summer session on fellowship, traineeship or associateship appointments of at least 50 percent FTE (or combined concurrent appointments of at least 50 percent FTE) paid through the Ohio State payroll system. A funded graduate or professional student must also hold a qualifying appointment as described above at the time of the leave, be in good academic standing, be making satisfactory progress toward the degree, and be registered full time.

In some cases it may be appropriate for a student to take an academic leave of absence (e.g., a leave from both appointment duties and academic enrollment). See Appendix E for the Guidelines for Short-Term Absences and Leaves of Absence for Graduate Students Appointed as GAs, Fellows, and Trainees.

In the Educational Studies, a six-week leave of absence must normally be taken consecutively.

Military Leave. GAs who are members of the Ohio National Guard or any other reserve component of the United States Armed Forces or who are ordered involuntarily to extended United States military service are granted leave without pay. The GA is required to submit to the supervisor a copy of military orders or other statement in writing from the appropriate military authority as evidence of the call for training or duty. Within 90 days from the date of honorable discharge or completion of training or active duty, the GA will be returned to the former position or its equivalent, without loss of seniority, upon application for such a position and reenrollment as a graduate student.

Parking Permits. Graduate associates and fellows are permitted to purchase “C” student or “B” staff parking permits, either for Central or West Campus. If the B permit is requested, written verification of the associateship or fellowship must be submitted to Transportation and Parking Services at the time of purchase. Daytime garage permits are available. For C garage permits, students are selected by Transportation and Parking Services via a lottery system. B garage permits are sold on a first-come, first-served basis.
Change in Status. Whenever there is a change in the GA’s status that affects the tax deduction, name, or W-2 Tax mailing address, the GA must fill out a W-4 form available in the employing unit or on the Office of Human Resources’ website.

Health Insurance. Students who are enrolled at least half-time are required to carry health insurance as a condition of enrollment. The university provides a health subsidy for graduate and professional students with fellowship, traineeship, or with 50 percent or greater associateship appointments paid through the Ohio State payroll system. Graduate students with 50 percent or greater associateship appointments for autumn and spring semesters are entitled to a health subsidy for the immediately following summer session without being on appointment. To qualify, students must be registered for at least four hours during summer session. Post-candidacy students must be registered for at least three hours of credit.

The university subsidy is 85 percent of the Student Health Insurance (SHI) premium for eligible funded graduate and professional students enrolled in single coverage. The university also provides a subsidy of 85 percent of the SHI premium for enrolled dependents of eligible funded graduate and professional students.

Graduate and professional students on associateship appointments at any appointment level (not trainees or fellows) paid through the Ohio State payroll system receive additional premium savings through pre-tax healthcare premium deductions. Additional information on GA health benefits is available from the Office of Human Resources.

Workers’ Compensation. GAs are protected by the provisions of the Ohio Workers’ Compensation Law. The provisions cover expenses for medical care, as well as certain benefits for loss of salary, which are paid through the Bureau of Workers’ Compensation for injuries or diseases which arise out of or within the course of employment. The benefits for loss of salary are payable only after the disability and resulting loss of salary extends beyond seven days.

Retirement. All GAs are eligible to participate in the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS). GTAs who have established membership with the State Teachers Retirement System of Ohio (STRS), based on other Ohio teaching service, may elect either to continue contributions to that system or to request STRS membership exemption. Exemptions from either system must be made within 31 days of the first day of the appointment. All GAs are also eligible to contribute to voluntary 403(b) or 457 retirement accounts, which allow additional retirement dollars to be contributed on a pretax basis.

Unemployment Compensation. Because a graduate associateship is viewed as a student position by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, GAs are ineligible for unemployment benefits when their appointment ends (between academic terms or after leaving the university).