Office of the Graduate School

## Graduate Assistantship Appointment Procedures for Supervisors & Departments

### Contact

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### Graduate Assistantship Web Site

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

### Graduate Appointments (Assistantship Types):

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.

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.

Appointments may be split across assistantship types.

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

### Graduate Tuition Scholarship Waiver:

* A Graduate Assistant Nonresident Tuition Scholarship is awarded by the Graduate School in conjunction with a graduate assistantship and covers the difference between non-resident and resident tuition.

### A Graduate Tuition Scholarship 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. This dollar amount is to be determined by the unit awarding the Graduate Assistantship.

*Please note:* 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 Graduate School Office.

### Position Advertisement:

The Graduate School 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 the Graduate School (graduate.school@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.

### Hiring Graduate Assistants

Your College Dean or Divisional Budget Officer first must grant approval for the graduate assistantship position. You then can advertise and interview prospective candidates for the assistantship position.

The department will create and collect any documents (i.e.: 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.

After the student has been selected to fulfill the assistantship position, you are to complete the Graduate Assistantship Contract that is available on the Graduate Assistantship web site under **GA Request Form** *(for Department use only).* Complete all sections of the GA Contract, obtain the necessary signatures and submit it to the Graduate School Office. The department is responsible for notifying the student about completing the I-9 form and new employee paperwork (i.e.: background check).

Graduate Assistantship Contracts are completed after the EPAF is generated. A new EPAF and Graduate Assistantship Contracts are required if any changes occur after the initial contract is created (i.e.: pay rate change).

When hiring students who are non-resident aliens, additional procedures must be followed. Direct these students to the International Student and Scholar Services office (ISSS) for procedures related to work hour requirements, social security procurement, and class registration requirements. These steps must be completed before students who are non-resident aliens can begin their graduate assistantship.

### Work Schedule and Due Dates for the Graduate Assistantship Contracts

### Work Schedule Contract Due to GSR:

Fall Semester July 2nd

Spring Semester November 15st

Summer Semester April 2nd

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 2-4 weeks for the tuition waiver to be adjusted and posted on the student’s tuition account.

*Please Note:* 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. Each academic term has more weeks than needed to meet the total hours required for the assistantship. Thus, the supervisor and student can negotiate the exact start and end date. Stipends may be prorated for those students who start their assistantship late.

**Hiring Steps:**

1. Position Advertisement (if necessary)
2. Decide which student to fulfill the appointment
3. Submit the EPAF (to flow thorough the decision making bodies)
4. Complete the Graduate Assistantship Contract and have the student sign
5. Submit the complete Graduate Assistantship Contracts to the Graduate School.
6. The staff in the Graduate School will make sure the student maintains his/her eligibility.

### Work Obligations

All graduate assistants are required to work a maximum of 20 hours per week for a half-time appointment (typical appointment) or minimum of 10 hours per week for a quarter-time appointment.

* Graduate assistants are strongly advised to have set schedules to ensure that the hours are met.
* 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. Assistants do not have to make up scheduled hours missed if the University closes with administrative leave.
* Graduate assistants do not have to work during the December break, the Spring Break, or the Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of Thanksgiving holiday when the University is closed. Supervisors should be mindful of the assistants’ academic demands and should be reasonably flexible to changes in their schedules. Assistants do not get sick leave, and are to make up time missed for illness.

**Appointment of Graduate Assistant Instructors**

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

* The GATI program offered by the Center for Faculty Development
* Any appropriate departmental teacher training programs
* A full semester course in teaching resulting in at least one earned graduate credit.

The Graduate School 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.

### Termination of Assistantship

If an assistant is terminated before the previously designated date of the assistantship, the graduate assistant will be notified by letter/email no later than two weeks prior to termination. A copy of the letter/email describing the reasons for dismissal will be submitted to the appropriate college dean and the Graduate School Office.

Any graduate assistant whose GPA falls below a 3.0 will not be able to continue the assistantship for the next academic term.

If a graduate assistant chooses to **terminate** the assistantship, they must notify the supervisor. A letter/email of resignation must be submitted to the department head, the departmental graduate advisor, the college dean and the Graduate School office 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. It is also the department’s responsibility to notify the Graduate School office of removing any tuition waiver that was awarded to the student.