



University of  
**West Florida**

**OFFICE MANAGER HANDBOOK FOR  
GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP APPOINTMENTS**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This handbook identifies and clarifies the policies and procedures governing a graduate student's position as a Graduate Assistant. The goal is to answer a number of frequently asked questions for office managers about assistantships, including the types of assistantships available at UWF, the general requirements governing assistantships, the policies structuring payment and tuition waivers associated with assistantships, and the student obligations for maintaining a graduate assistantship. This document parallels the Graduate Assistant Handbook available from the Graduate School to assist Graduate Assistants in adapting to their new positions of responsibility.

After a graduate student's official appointment as a Graduate Assistant, the department should provide the student with information about the position. This information might be provided in a conversation with the faculty or administrative supervisor or documents specific to the graduate student's program.

The graduate student's official letter of appointment should specify the duties associated with the assistantship. See the [Sample Graduate Assistantship Award Letter](#) provided in Appendix A. The department or office should inform the student that it is the student's responsibility to contact the department or office to formally accept the offer of a graduate assistantship. The Sample Graduate Assistantship Award Letter provides a general overview of the questions that should be answered by a faculty or administrative supervisor at the beginning of the appointment. The letter should specify the parameters of the assistantship, including classification title and code, FTE allocation, period of appointment, job description, and supervising faculty. There are different types of assistantships. This document should help clarify the policies and procedures concerning graduate assistantships.

## 2. ASSISTANTSHIPS

In general, Graduate Assistants at the University of West Florida are admitted masters-level, specialist-level, or doctoral-level students employed on a part-time basis for the primary purpose of assisting in classroom or laboratory instruction or in the conduct of research.

Graduate Assistants serve a vital function for the University. They support departments, programs, faculty, and personnel across the campus community. They also forward the professional development of graduate students. For this reason, the duties performed by a graduate student serving in an assistantship capacity must directly contribute to his or her program of study. It is the responsibility of the academic unit to ensure the duties complement the student's degree program.

All Graduate Assistants regardless of classification must meet the following requirements.

- The student must meet the eligibility requirements set by the Graduate School (refer to the General Requirements section of this handbook).
- The student must meet any special qualifications added to the eligibility requirements as determined by and communicated at the department, college, or office level.

Unless otherwise stated, all Graduate Assistants regardless of classification must meet the following guidelines:

- The student is responsible for assisting faculty members or UWF staff with appropriate duties.
- Specific duties and roles are to be determined by the department or office, and it is the responsibility of that department or office to make the student aware of these duties.
- The student should be employed for at least 10 hours per week (0.25 FTE) but no more than 20 hours per week (0.5 FTE), except for Resident Hall Directors who can be employed for 30 hours per week. Though a student may have more than one assistantship, the cumulative hours of employment should not exceed 20 hours per week.
- The student is subject to select office or department employee guidelines in addition to assistantship guidelines.
- The minimum pay is \$10.25 per hour.

### **2.1. Types of Assistantships**

There are six distinct classifications of Graduate Assistantships. Four of these classifications relate to Graduate Assistants and two to resident hall directors. Each of these appointments has a unique employment code with UWF Human Resources. This code allows academic departments and other employers of Graduate Assistants to fill out student Personnel Action Forms specifying the type of appointment held and the work completed by the graduate student. One of the key distinctions among these classifications concerns whether the position is hourly or salaried.

These six classifications are as follows:

#### **2.1.1. Graduate Assistant (9186)**

Graduate Assistants (GAs) are admitted masters-level, specialist-level, or doctoral-level students providing support for academic departments, programs, faculty, or personnel. Compensation for students employed under this designation is hourly. A Graduate Assistant appointed under the 9186 designation must fill out a time sheet on a bi-weekly basis reporting the hours and work completed. In addition, the supervisor must provide close supervision of students classified as Graduate Assistants and review and sign the bi-weekly time sheet.

Graduate Assistants may be employed in colleges or department offices that perform professional or service duties outside of teaching or research. In the case that a Graduate Assistant is assigned to a non-academic university office, the student's duties are not required to correspond directly to his or her graduate program.

Department heads and supervising faculty are responsible for assuring that Graduate Assistants receive ample opportunities to make continuing progress toward degree completion.

#### **2.1.2. Graduate Research Assistant (9182)**

Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs) are admitted masters-level, specialist-level, or doctoral-level students assigned to research duties. A Graduate Assistant (9186) may assist with research related clerical activities but it is expected that a Graduate Research Assistant has a higher level of knowledge and skill than that required of a Graduate Assistant. The IPEDS defines Graduate Research Assistants as those whose "specific assignments are for the purpose of conducting

research, regardless of academic discipline, by performing duties such as preparing and conducting scientific research or engaging in original scholarship/scholarly inquiry under the supervision and mentorship of a faculty member or senior researcher."

Compensation for students employed under this designation is hourly. A Graduate Research Assistant appointed under the 9182 designation must fill out a time sheet on a bi-weekly basis reporting the hours and work completed. This time sheet is reviewed and signed by the supervisor.

A student appointed as a Graduate Research Assistant works under direct supervision. Research assistantships may be financed through funds from gifts, grants, contracts, state appropriations designated for research, or through the University's internally sponsored programs. Department heads and supervising faculty are responsible for assuring that Graduate Research Assistants receive ample opportunities to make continuing progress toward degree completion.

In addition to the general guidelines for Graduate Assistants, students employed under these designations are subject to the following unique guidelines.

- The student must perform research duties under the supervision of an appropriate faculty member or administrator of UWF. Such research duties may include, but are not limited to, assisting in lab research, reviewing and summarizing scholarship, assisting in community-based research activities, developing research and evaluation surveys, collecting data, analyzing data using software analyses programs, presenting presentation, and/or writing draft research reports.
- The student is responsible for assisting faculty members with research related to his or her academic program.

### **2.1.3. Graduate Teaching Assistant (9184)**

Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) are admitted masters-level, specialist-level, or doctoral-level students assigned to teaching or **teaching related** duties. They may be assigned as classroom assistants, lab assistants, or other roles directly related to classroom instruction. According to the IPEDS, Graduate Teaching Assistants assist faculty or other instructional staff in postsecondary institutions by performing teaching or teaching-related duties, such as developing teaching materials, giving examinations, and grading examinations or papers. Most Graduate Teaching Assistants are employed and paid by academic departments. A Graduate Teaching Assistant appointed under the 9184 designation assists the Instructor of Record and must fill out a time sheet on a bi-weekly basis reporting the hours and work completed. The time sheet is reviewed and signed by the supervisor.

GTAs must be supervised by at least one faculty member experienced in the discipline. Department heads and supervising faculty are responsible for assuring that Graduate Teaching Assistants receive ample opportunities to make continuing progress toward degree completion.

### **2.1.4. Graduate Teaching Assistant - Instructor of Record (9185)**

Graduate Teaching Assistants at the 9185 level are assigned as undergraduate classroom teachers. The primary difference between this classification and the 9184 classification is that the Graduate Teaching Assistant employed at the 9185 level is **salaried** as an Instructor of

Record, whereas the Graduate Teaching Assistant employed at the 9184 level assists the Instructor of Record and is paid hourly.

Graduate Teaching Assistants (9185) may not be assigned to teach graduate courses unless they hold the terminal or a highly-related degree in the teaching field. For clarification, see the memorandum on the use of GTAs as Instructors of Record provided in Appendix B.

Prior to teaching undergraduate courses, each prospective Graduate Teaching Assistant (9185) will be required to submit to the department a curriculum vita, two letters of recommendation from department professors, and a Statement of Teaching (which includes, but is not limited to, the student's short-term goals as a Graduate Teaching Assistant as well as the relevance of the experience to the student's long-term goals). In addition, GTAs must submit syllabi prior to the first day of instruction (see the documents required of all instructors for university accreditation). Departments might require additional materials, so GTAs should contact the supervising chair or program coordinator.

Department heads and supervising faculty are responsible for assuring that Graduate Teaching Assistants receive ample opportunities to make continuing progress toward degree completion.

In addition to the minimum requirements expected of all Graduate Assistants regardless of classification, GTAs who serve as Instructors of Record must meet the following requirements.

- The student must have completed at least 18 graduate semester credits in the teaching field. See the University memorandum concerning the use of GTAs as Instructors of Record presented in Appendix B.
- In the case of lecture courses and laboratory sections, GTAs who do not hold a master's degree will be assigned as Instructors of Record to lower-level, and in most cases, to freshman-level courses.
- In cases where conditions dictate the need to assign a GTA who does not hold a master's degree to an upper-level laboratory course, the following stipulations apply:
  - The college dean or designee must be informed prior to the assignment.
  - The laboratory section must be associated with a lecture course that is taught by a faculty member who meets the University's faculty credentials requirements.
  - The faculty member must provide direct supervision of the GTA.
  - The syllabus for the laboratory section must include information about the related lecture course and include contact information for the faculty member teaching the lecture course.
- In the case of supervision of undergraduate practicum and internships, which tend to be junior- and senior-level courses, it is expected that the GTA hold the master's degree in the field related to the practicum or internship, or hold a master's degree with at least 18 graduate semester hour credits in the teaching field related to the practicum or internship, and meet any other qualifications for supervision of practicum and internships specified by the profession.
- International students for whom English is a second language must meet the minimum requirements for admission to graduate studies at UWF, as well as the minimum requirements for individual departments offering graduate programs. International students expecting to receive appointments as Graduate Teaching Assistants also are required by Florida law to pass a test of spoken English. Before receiving a Graduate Teaching Assistantship, the student must submit a

minimum TOEFL iBT Listening/Comprehension score of 23. Contact the Office of Diversity and International Education and Programs for more information. See the admissions criteria provided on the Graduate School's [website](#) for a list of the English proficiency tests UWF recognizes as well as the scores required for demonstration of competency and proficiency.

In addition to the general guidelines for Graduate Assistants, students employed under this designation are subject to the following unique guidelines.

- The student is responsible to perform all the duties regularly performed by an Instructor of Record. It is the responsibility of the department or office to make the student aware of these duties.
- The student must sign the appointment form in the award letter prior to beginning the assistantship. This form will indicate the student's acknowledgement of the department's/office's expectations.
- The student should expect to be evaluated by the department chair, program coordinator, or supervising faculty mentor. This evaluation should consist of a one-on-one meeting with the supervisor to gauge the student's pedagogical experience and the quality of instruction provided by the student during the course.
- This classification is salaried.

#### **2.1.5. Resident Hall Director (9188 & 9189)**

Resident Hall Directors (HDs) are master's-level students who have primary responsibility for the operation of a University resident hall or cluster of resident halls. Department heads and supervising faculty are responsible for assuring that Resident Assistants/Directors receive ample opportunities to make continuing progress toward degree completion. The minimum pay for the 9188 classification is \$10.25 per hour, and the 9189 classification is salaried with an on-campus apartment and meal plan.

### **2.2. Graduate Teaching Assistant Training and Evaluations**

Each Graduate Assistant who is interested in teaching undergraduate courses while pursuing graduate work at UWF is required to take part in Graduate Teaching Assistant training. Because training necessarily depends on the type of instruction to be provided, teacher orientation may be done at the department, college, and/or University level. Students may participate in teacher training and/or hold a Graduate Teaching Assistantship (9184) with an experienced instructor prior to teaching.

It is the responsibility of the supervising department to ensure that the Graduate Teaching Assistant has received the training necessary to perform instructional duties. The training style of the department could range anywhere from off-hour workshops to required coursework to one-on-one shadowing/meeting with an experienced instructor. Because teaching for each department requires different skills, knowledge, rubrics, etc., each department will be responsible for the development, organization, and execution of training sessions.

At the end of each semester, Graduate Teaching Assistants (9185) are subject to two different types of evaluations. At the University level, Graduate Teaching Assistants (9185) will be evaluated by a Student Assessment of Instruction (SAI) administered to students at the end of each semester through MyUWF. At the department level, Graduate Teaching Assistants (9185)

will be evaluated by their department chair, program coordinator, or faculty mentor. This evaluation may take the form of a one-on-one meeting to gauge the GTA's pedagogical experience and the quality of instruction offered by the GTA in the classroom.

### **2.2.1. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) places certain restrictions on the kinds of information about students that can be shared without explicit permission from the student. FERPA permits information sharing for emergencies and in other situations where help is needed. The U.S. Department of Education provides an overview of FERPA on its website: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>. The department or office should make the graduate student aware of the importance of complying with FERPA.

## **3. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ASSISTANTSHIPS**

The following section outlines the requirements for a graduate student to be eligible to receive an assistantship. Additionally, it specifies those policies governing the use of Graduate Assistants for whom English is a second language under the GTA 9185 designation. The final section outlines expectations concerning time limits on assistantships and the appropriate number of assistantships for students to hold simultaneously.

### **3.1. Eligibility for Assistantship**

To be considered for a graduate assistantship, the student must contact the department in which he or she is seeking an appointment. To be eligible for an assistantship, the student must meet the following minimum requirements:

- 1) The student must be an admitted, degree-seeking student at UWF.
- 2) The student must be enrolled in at least 6 hours of graduate coursework during fall and spring semesters and in at least 3 hours of graduate coursework in the summer semester. Continuing education courses do not count toward the minimum number of graduate hours required for eligibility for assistantship unless the courses count toward degree requirements. Continuing education courses are not eligible for waivers. If the student has fewer than the minimum required credit hours for assistantship eligibility remaining in his or her degree plan or has only thesis or dissertation hours remaining, then this policy does not apply.<sup>1</sup>
- 3) The student must be in good academic standing (maintain a 3.0 graduate GPA and not be on probation).

Additional documents, such as letters of recommendation, a CV or resume, or writing sample, may be required at the department or office's request.

Note that the eligibility requirements for financial aid and for a graduate assistantship might differ. Students interested in receiving financial aid during the fall and spring semesters must meet the minimum enrollment requirements of the federal assistance program. See section 5 on tuition waivers and status requirements for receiving aid. Contact the Office of Financial Aid for more information (<http://uwf.edu/finaid/index.cfm>).

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<sup>1</sup> Note that Graduate Assistants at the thesis/dissertation stage of their programs must maintain continuous enrollment by registering for at least one hour each semester.



### **3.2. English as a Second Language**

Students who wish to serve as Graduate Teaching Assistants (9185), but whose first language is not English, will be required to demonstrate English proficiency. Beyond meeting the minimum requirements for admission to graduate studies at UWF, as well as the minimum requirements for individual departments offering graduate programs, GTAs serving as Instructors of Record must obtain and report a minimum TOEFL iBT Listening/Comprehension score of 23 to the Graduate School. Written English proficiency training is available through the [UWF Writing Lab](#). Spoken English proficiency training is available through the [Office of Diversity and International Education and Programs](#).

### **3.3. Time Limit and Number of Assistantships**

The time limit on assistantships depends on the type of assistantship as well as the department or office for which the student works. Although each assistantship is subject to termination at the end of the semester, students may continue the same assistantship for multiple semesters as long as the department or office has a position and appropriate funds. A new award letter does not have to be submitted for an assistantship that carries over from fall to spring semesters. Summer will require a new offer letter and Student Personnel Action Form.

UWF recognizes the increasing expense of graduate study and, therefore, makes conscientious attempts to provide financial assistance to graduate students. With that in mind, the University encourages colleges and departments to allocate no more than 20 hours per week (0.50 FTE) to a single Graduate Assistant. Exceptions may be made, and Graduate Assistants who wish to obtain Graduate Assistant positions from one or multiple offices that total more than 0.50 FTE (20 hours per week) must also obtain authorization from the Dean of the college over the student's major academic department and the Graduate School. The form to request such authorization is available on MyUWF, Graduate School Forms, Authorization for GA Appointments Exceeding 0.50 FTE. Permission to exceed 0.50 FTE is only granted in exceptional circumstances. All Graduate Assistant appointments combined across all units, must not exceed 0.75 FTE.

## **4. PAYMENT**

### **4.1. Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Explanations**

Full-time assistantships (0.50 FTE) require students to perform assistantship assignments for 20 hours per week during the period of the assignment. Half-time assistantships (0.25 FTE) require students to work 10 hours per week during the period of assignment. The minimum required for an initial appointment is 0.25 FTE. Graduate students with initial appointments of less than 10 hours per week should be classified as OPS-Student Assistant (9190 code). They cannot be classified as Graduate Assistants and are not eligible for tuition waivers. All Graduate Assistant appointments combined across all units must not exceed 0.75 FTE.

#### **4.2. Stipend Minimums and Waivers**

The minimum hourly pay for Graduate Assistantships is \$10.25 per hour. This payment may be generated in a bi-weekly paycheck for which the student submits an electronic timesheet every two weeks to be approved by his or her department chair or office supervisor. For GTAs – Instructor of Record this payment is generated through a semester stipend at the equivalent of \$10.25 per hour. For Graduate Assistants receiving a stipend, the money will be dispersed evenly throughout the weeks of the semester. No electronic timesheet is required in this case.

Part of the financial package for Graduate Assistants working a combination of 0.25 FTE or greater (10 hours or more per week) is eligibility for a matriculation waiver of the in-state portion of graduate basic tuition, excluding fees, (current as of Fall, 2012). Out-of-state students will also qualify for a waiver for the out-of-state portion of tuition.

The department or office granting the assistantship will initiate a request for tuition waiver through the college dean's office in which the student is enrolled (see section 7.2).

It is not uncommon for a graduate student to have multiple assistantship appointments simultaneously. However, the total in-state waiver for a student in this situation still may not exceed 50% of the student's tuition. For more information on tuition and fees, see the catalog available at: <http://catalog.uwf.edu/graduate/tuitionandfees/>

#### **4.3. Tax Obligations**

All students must obtain a Social Security Number in order to receive payments from the University, including fellowships, assistantships, and tuition support. Students are responsible for determining their tax obligations.

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) excludes certain types of student wages from the IRS definition of "employment" for purposes of FICA tax withholding. The Internal Revenue Code (IRC) 3121[b][10][B] provides that wages paid by a University to one of its student employees who is enrolled at least half-time and regularly attending classes are exempt from the FICA tax withholding. The University has the sole discretion to determine whether a student's employment at the University of West Florida is exempt from FICA withholding taxes.

Students not exempt from Social Security/Medicare are automatically enrolled in the Retirement Plan for OPS employees. Employees enrolled in the plan contribute 7.5% of their pay, pre-tax, into an investment account in their name. They are not subject to the Social Security tax of 6.2%, but are subject to the Medicare tax of 1.45%. Departments are responsible for the matching of the 1.45% Medicare tax. See the Human Resources [website](#) for more information.

### **5. TUITION WAIVERS AND STATUS REQUIREMENTS FOR RECEIVING AID**

The following section outlines the requirements for students to receive and maintain tuition waivers and financial aid. Departments should make students aware that the status requirements for waivers and financial aid are different. Those differences are highlighted in section 5.1.

### 5.1. Status Requirements for Receiving Financial Aid

Graduate students seeking or holding an assistantship should be aware of their student status for three separate reasons, including eligibility for an assistantship, eligibility for a tuition waiver, and qualification for financial aid. According to University policy, a graduate student is considered full-time when taking at least 6 semester hours in fall, spring, and summer semesters.

The University of West Florida reports enrollment status based on the definitions listed below:

<u>Status</u>	<u>Fall, Spring, &amp; Summer</u>
Full-time	6 SH or more
Half-time	3 SH
Less than half-time	1-2 SH

The following sections provide details concerning status requirements for assistantships, waivers, and financial aid.

### 5.2. Qualifying for a Matriculation Waiver

To qualify for a graduate assistantship, the student must be:

- fully matriculated in (admitted into) a graduate program at UWF as a degree-seeking student,
- be enrolled in at least 6 credit hours in the fall and spring semesters and 3 credit hours in the summer
- work at least 0.25 FTE (or 10 hours), and
- be paid a stipend of at least \$10.25 per hour.

The cost of graduate education is composed of two separate elements: tuition and fees. See the [Schedule of Tuition and Fees](#) for the University of West Florida for a full presentation of the current cost of graduate education per credit hour. The cost of graduate education at the University of West Florida is composed of basic tuition, differentials for out-of-state residents, and student fees. The Florida Legislature, the Florida Board of Governors, and the UWF Board of Trustees periodically review tuition and fees, so these figures are subject to adjustment. In addition, certain academic programs may require additional differential tuition to cover unique programmatic costs. Students should contact the [Office of the Registrar](#) for the most current figures.

All graduate students with qualifying graduate assistantships may be eligible to receive a matriculation waiver for a portion of the in-state tuition as part of their financial aid package with the University. In addition, non-Florida residents receiving a graduate assistantship will receive a full waiver of the out-of-state differential of tuition. Continuing education courses are not eligible for fee waivers. Program chairs and advisers should make students aware of this exclusion. **Note that all graduate students are required to pay student fees.** A tuition waiver does not cover student fees.

Students who begin work as Graduate Assistants after the beginning of the term receive a pro-rated waiver for the length of the term remaining.

For a student who has multiple assistantships, the dean's office in the college in which the student is fully and regularly admitted and matriculated is responsible for processing the student's tuition waivers. Additionally, for a student who has an assistantship that takes place outside his or her academic department (i.e. in a non-academic, administrative office) the major department is still responsible for processing the student's tuition waivers. Departments and divisions outside Academic Affairs (excluding Student Affairs which has its own waiver allocation) who use E&G funds to appoint a graduate assistant must request prior approval from the Graduate School for any matriculation waiver they intend to award to the graduate assistant. A student receiving an assistantship in a non-academic department who meets all the requirements for a fee waiver must contact his or her supervisor. It is the responsibility of the non-academic department offering the assistantship to contact the student's academic department to process the fee waiver request.

The awarding of waivers is subject to school or college approval. Note that a student on assistantship in his or her last semester and having applied for graduation with fewer than 6 semester hours of required coursework for degree completion is still eligible for fee waivers.

### **5.3. Qualifying for an Out-of-State Tuition Waiver**

To qualify for an out-of-state waiver, a graduate student must be awarded a graduate assistantship. Out-of-state fees for Graduate Assistants will be waived if the GA is:

- Matriculated in a UWF graduate degree program
- Appointed at a 0.25 FTE or greater, and
- Enrolled in at least 6 graduate level credits during the fall/spring semester in which they are appointed as a Graduate Assistant. For summer GA appointments, enrollment in at least 3 graduate level credits is required.
- Graduate Assistants at the thesis/dissertation stage of their programs who have only thesis or dissertation hours remaining must maintain continuous enrollment by registering for at least one hour each semester to qualify for the out-of-state waiver.

These waivers apply only to out-of-state tuition. Out-of-state students will also receive the in-state matriculation waiver and be responsible for the balance of in-state tuition and fees. Out-of-state and matriculation fee waivers are processed through the student's academic department, program, or college.

Note that a waiver is not a scholarship and cannot result in a refund of dollars back to the student.

For more information on funding opportunities, contact the [Graduate School](#).

### **5.4. Courses Covered by a Tuition Waiver**

Waivers may be used to cover courses related to the student's academic degree program, including internships, thesis, and dissertation hours.

Note that continuing education courses do not count as credit hours for purposes of receiving a tuition waiver.

### **5.5. Changes in Status Affecting a Tuition Waiver**

If a student drops or withdraws from a course for which a tuition waiver has been received and falls below the required number of credit hours for waiver qualification as a result (under 6 credit hours in the fall and spring and under 3 in the summer), then the tuition waiver will be removed, and the student must pay for tuition. Holds on student records will prevent students from registering for classes, receiving transcripts, or receiving grade reports until payment is received by the Cashier's Office.

If a student drops or withdraws from a course for which a tuition waiver has been received, the student must pay a pro-rated amount for the remainder of the course tuition for the semester.<sup>2</sup> Note that a student does have the right to appeal the fee that may be assessed, but only for the amount he or she actually paid for tuition. The student cannot appeal the amount of the waiver.

A student with a tuition waiver who is dismissed from the University or resigns from a Graduate Assistantship at any point during the term will have his or her tuition waivers removed and the student must repay the tuition.

## **6. CAUSES FOR ASSISTANTSHIP DISMISSAL**

University policy requires that graduate students maintain good academic standing in order to keep their Graduate Assistantships. Being placed on academic probation is cause for dismissal of a Graduate Assistantship.

### **6.1. Maintenance of Academic Standing**

All Graduate Assistants must maintain a good academic standing with a cumulative graduate GPA of 3.0 or higher each term. Inability to maintain good academic standing with the University may result in academic dismissal.

If a Graduate Assistant's overall GPA falls out of good academic standing, he or she will automatically be placed on academic probation and be ineligible to maintain or renew the assistantship. Exceptions to this policy will be made in only very rare circumstances on a case-by-case basis, with final approval made by the Graduate School.

All Graduate Assistants must make satisfactory progress to their degree. Satisfactory progress is determined on a case-by-case basis by the Graduate Assistant's program director or coordinator.

If it is determined that satisfactory progress is not being made, even if the student is meeting other minimum requirements (i.e., GPA and continuous enrollment status), the Graduate Assistant may lose his or her assistantship.

### **6.2. Policy for Grades of Incomplete ("I")**

If a student is placed on academic probation as a result of an "I" grade, he or she will not be eligible for a Graduate Assistantship. It is imperative that faculty and Graduate Assistants are aware of the policies regarding the consequences of not resolving "I" grades, and take measures

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<sup>2</sup> See the attached [spreadsheet](#) for the pro-rated repayment schedule.

to resolve incompletes before they convert to a “F.” An “I” grade may adversely affect the Graduate Assistant’s GPA and may result in ineligibility for the assistantship.

For more information, see the Office of the Registrar’s policy on [Incomplete Grades](#).

### **6.3. Departmental Policy Concerning Dismissal**

In addition, departments reserve discretion over the reappointment of Graduate Assistantships. Each department or office offering Graduate Assistantships should provide the following information to graduate students receiving assistantship offers, whether through the letter of appointment, a separate document, or a departmental orientation session:

- Evaluation procedures
- Procedures and criteria for reappointment
- Conditions under which an assistantship could be terminated

Every department or office is responsible for forming its own guidelines for Graduate Assistants. These guidelines may include, but are not limited to, dress code, absence/tardy policy, and causes for dismissal. See Appendix C for a sample GA evaluation form.

## **7. PROCESSING GRADUATE ASSISTANT PAPERWORK**

Departments and offices utilizing Graduate Assistants must process a number of documents related to human resources (student Personnel Action Forms) and financial aid (waivers and scholarships). The following section outlines the basic processes governing these office responsibilities. Please contact Human Resources for further information on student Personnel Action Forms and the college dean’s office for further information on waivers and scholarships.

### **7.1. Graduate Assistant Action Forms**

New student employees, including Graduate Assistants, must be documented with Human Resources. Human Resources has prepared a useful guide for understanding the basics of student employment at the University. <http://uwf.edu/offices/human-resources/hr-forms-and-resources/student-employment-forms/>.

Office managers are responsible for processing Graduate Assistant action forms. This form must be opened in Internet Explorer. Here is the link to the UWF Student Personnel Action Form: <http://uwf.edu/media/university-of-west-florida/offices/hr/forms/Student-Action-Sheet-2017.pdf>

### **Processing Graduate Assistant Action Forms**

The following table shows the codes used for these and other appointments:

<b>Code</b>	<b>Assistantship Type</b>	<b>Payment</b>
9182	Graduate Research Assistant	Student Hourly
9184	Graduate Teaching Assistant	Student Hourly

9185	Graduate Teaching Assistant – Exempt	Student Salaried
9186	Graduate Assistant	Student Hourly
9188	Resident Assistant	Student Hourly
9189	Resident Assistant – Exempt	Student Salaried

All hourly GA appointments require a student Personnel Action Form to be processed each academic year with a start date no earlier than one pay period prior to the first day of the fall semester. The first day of the fall semester is the day notated on page 6 of the Financial Services [annual payroll calendar](#) for adjuncts and Graduate Assistants. Graduate Teaching Assistants - Instructor of Record (9185) that are FLSA exempt and paid on a salaried basis must follow the dates of the academic term and the model used for adjuncts.

All hourly GA appointments must also have an ending date on the student Personnel Action Form at time of appointment. Academic Departments have the option of submitting one Personnel Action Form for both the Fall and Spring semester or one per semester. Regardless of start date, the ending date is no later than the last day of the spring semester. The last day of the spring semester is the day notated on page 6 of the Financial Services [annual payroll calendar](#) for adjuncts and Graduate Assistants. Appointments ending in the Fall should have an ending date of no later than the day before the Spring semester begins.

A separate student Personnel Action Form should be processed for summer appointments. The beginning and end dates should be the dates notated in the payroll calendar for adjuncts and Graduate Assistants. However, summer appointments can begin as early as the next day following the last day of the spring semester and can extend as late as the day before the first day of the fall semester. The dates are notated on page 6 of the Financial Services [annual payroll calendar](#) for adjuncts and Graduate Assistants.

Hourly GA appointments on external grants should use the beginning and ending dates for the grant.

Student Personnel Action Forms should be processed to end an appointment immediately upon notification that the GA is no longer providing GA services to the University or no longer meets the requirements for GA eligibility.

The hiring department will initiate the Student Personnel Action Form for each Graduate Assistant. Next, it will go to the college dean's office for signature from the business manager. If the student is on a grant, the form will need to be signed by a representative in Research and Sponsored Programs. Then they will need to be sent to Graduate School for processing and approval. Graduate School will send all processed forms to HR.

## **7.2. Graduate Assistant Matriculation Fee Waivers**

For recordkeeping purposes, the college deans' offices supervise the processing of graduate matriculation and out-of-state waivers allocated to Graduate Assistants. The following section outlines the workflow as well as the basic checklist for keeping track of waiver awards. Please contact the college dean's office for further information, questions, or concerns.



## Processing Graduate Matriculation and Out-of-State Waivers for CASSH, CEPS, COH, and HMCSE

The responsibility for coordinating assistantship allocations rests in the college deans' offices.

Graduate Assistantship App

<https://confluence.uwf.edu/display/BPL/Graduate+Assistantship+App>

1. Adding a New Assistantship
  - <https://confluence.uwf.edu/display/BPL/Adding+a+new+assistantship>
2. Editing an Existing Offer
  - <https://confluence.uwf.edu/display/BPL/Editing+an+Existing+Offer>
3. Managing Division/College Level Allocations
  - <https://confluence.uwf.edu/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=30671180>
4. Managing High Level Allocations
  - <https://confluence.uwf.edu/display/BPL/Managing+High+Level+Allocations>
5. Viewing Assistantship Offers
  - <https://confluence.uwf.edu/display/BPL/Viewing+Assistantship+Offers>

### 7.3. Graduate Pace and Merit Scholarships

For recordkeeping purposes, the college deans' offices supervise the allocation and processing of graduate Pace and Merit scholarships awarded to Graduate Assistants. The following section outlines the workflow as well as the basic checklist for keeping track of these scholarship awards. Please contact the college dean's office for further information, questions, or concerns.

## Processing Graduate Pace & Merit Scholarships for CASSH, COEPS, and COSEH

- I. The college deans' offices receive total Pace and Merit allocation from the Graduate School.
- II. The college deans' offices verify amounts to allocate to graduate departments using FTE or enrollment growth totals.
- III. The college deans' offices distribute allocations to graduate department chairs in memo format. Note: scholarship awards may be used in combination with each other and with other sources of financial assistance, (out-of-state waivers, in-state waivers and other Foundation funds). All students awarded MUST have a 3.0 GPA (newly admitted



graduate students must have an undergraduate GPA of 3.0) and not be on probation to be eligible for the scholarship.

- IV. Departments populate the columns in the college spreadsheet with the following information:
  1. Department name
  2. Allocation amount
  3. Student name
  4. Student UWF ID#
  5. Number of graduate credit hours enrolled
    - a. Pace – must be enrolled for minimum 6 graduate hours for Fall/Spring
    - b. Merit – must be enrolled for a minimum 6 graduate hours for Fall/Spring/Summer
    - c. Amount of award per semester
- V. Departments send offer letter to student and request written acceptance by student. A template for the offer letter is provided in Appendix D. Departments record acceptance in college spreadsheet.
- VI. Departments send populated spreadsheets back to the college deans' offices by the beginning of the week prior to the start of the semester in which the award is made.
- VII. The college deans' offices will verify student course information and confirm that scholarships have been applied in Banner.
  1. To verify courses and hours – SFAREGQ
  2. To verify payment – TSICSRV
- VIII. The college deans' offices forward the spreadsheet with information to the Financial Aid and Cashier's offices, **highlighting only the scholarships to apply each day**. This spreadsheet will be sent daily as tabbed worksheets on the Matriculation Waiver Spreadsheet. Students who have paid their fees will receive the balance of funds **on their Higher One card**. All scholarships must be awarded **prior to the deadline date noted on the allocation memo from the Graduate School**.
- IX. At the end of the semester, each college's final spreadsheet is forwarded to the Graduate School by the college deans' offices.

## Processing Graduate Pace & Merit Scholarships for COB

- I. The COB Dean's office receives total Pace and Merit allocation memo from the Graduate School and forwards memo to MBA Program Office Assistant Director and M.Acc. Graduate Advisor. **Note:** scholarship awards may be used in combination with each other and with other sources of financial assistance, (out-of-state waivers, in-state waivers and other Foundation funds). All students awarded **MUST** have a 3.0 GPA (newly admitted graduate students must have an undergraduate GPA of 3.0) and not be on probation to be eligible for the scholarship.
- II. The MBA Program Office Assistant Director, in conjunction with the M.Acc. Graduate Advisor, allocates amounts using FTE or enrollment growth totals. The MBA Program Office Assistant Director populates the columns in the college spreadsheet with the following information:
  1. Student name
  2. Student UWF ID #
  3. Program Name (MBA or M.Acc.)
  4. GPA
  5. GMAT/GRE Score
  6. Number of graduate credit hours enrolled
    - a. Pace - must be enrolled for minimum 6 graduate hours for Fall/Spring
    - b. Merit - must be enrolled for minimum 6 graduate hours for Fall/Spring/Summer
  7. Recommended award amount per semester
- III. The MBA Program Office Assistant Director sends populated spreadsheet to the Administrative Specialist in the COB Dean's office by mid-June.
- IV. The Administrative Specialist in the COB Dean's office verifies the student course information in Banner using SFAREGQ and prepares and sends letters to scholarship award recipients. Letters reiterate eligibility criteria and require recipients to return a signed copy of the letter indicating their acceptance of the award within 10 business days.
- V. The Administrative Specialist in the COB Dean's office forwards the spreadsheet to the Foundation, Financial Aid, and Cashier's offices. Additional scholarship awards beyond the initial spreadsheet submission will be highlighted and submitted daily. This spreadsheet will be a separate submission from the Graduate Matriculation Waiver spreadsheet. Students who have paid their fees will receive the balance of funds on their Higher One card. **Scholarships MUST BE AWARDED prior to the deadline date noted on the allocation memo from the Graduate School.**
- VI. After the drop/add deadline in the fall and spring semesters, the Administrative Specialist in the COB Dean's office will review the spreadsheet to determine which students did not enroll or who no longer meets the scholarship eligibility requirements and will work with the Assistant Director of the MBA Program Office and the M.Acc. Program Graduate Advisor to reallocate unused funds.
- VII. At the end of the semester, COB's final spreadsheet is forwarded to the Graduate School by the Administrative Specialist.

**APPENDIX A: SAMPLE GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP AWARD LETTER**

<<INSERT DATE>>

<<INSERT ADDRESS BLOCK>>

Dear <<INSERT NAME>>:

Congratulations! You have been selected to receive a graduate assistantship position for <<INSERT SEMESTER and YEAR>>. Your conditions of appointment as a Graduate Assistant are as follows.

- You must be admitted to and enrolled in a UWF College of <<INSERT COLLEGE NAME>> graduate program.
- You must be enrolled in a minimum of six semester hours of graduate courses if this appointment is for Fall and/or Spring semesters or three semester hours if this appointment is for Summer semester.
- You are appointed at a <<INSERT FTE'S>> FTE for the <<INSERT SEMESTER(S)>> (an average of <<INSERT NUMBER OF HOURS>> hours per week).
- Your pay rate will be \$<<INSERT PAY RATE>>.
- You must adhere to the following payroll processes. Failure to do so will prevent you from receiving payment for your work.
  - You must enter your hours worked each pay period into the UWF web-based time reporting system.
  - You must have your immediate supervisor approve/verify the hours worked during each pay period. If you are working directly for a faculty member, then you must email your faculty member with a brief description of the work you have done for each time that you submit a time report. Follow up with the faculty member to be sure that he/she has forwarded his/her approval to the departmental office manager.

<<INSERT IF STUDENT WILL RECEIVE MATRICULATION WAIVER>> You will also receive a Graduate Assistant Matriculation Waiver that will waive <<INSERT NUMBER OF CREDIT HOURS >> of your in-state basic tuition (excludes fees) for the semester during which you are a Graduate Assistant working a minimum of 10 hours per week. The matriculation fee waiver will be directly applied to your tuition through the cashier's office. You must work a minimum of 10 hours per week to qualify for the matriculation fee waiver. Multiple assignments cannot exceed 20 hours per week without approval of the college dean. If you decide to withdraw from any courses, please be aware that you will be required to return a pro-rated portion of the matriculation waiver (and out-of-state waiver, if applicable) to the University.

Reappointment for additional terms as a Graduate Assistant will be based on a satisfactory performance evaluation submitted at the end of each semester by your immediate supervisor, continued good academic standing in the graduate program, and available funding. Good academic standing means earning a graduate GPA of 3.0 or better.

You have been assigned to work as an assistant for Dr. <<INSERT SUPERVISOR'S NAME>>, <<INSERT DEPARTMENT NAME>>.

Please contact as soon as possible, the Office Administrator in the department or office to which you have been assigned and the faculty member to which you have been assigned in order to

arrange your work schedule. I also encourage you to consult the online Graduate Assistant Handbook that further details graduate assistantship policies and procedures.

This assistantship will cease on the date indicated. No further notice of cessation of employment is required.

Please acknowledge your acceptance of the position and its requirements by signing in the space provided on this letter and returning it to <<INSERT CONTACT PERSON'S NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER>> by <<INSERT DEADLINE>>.

Again, congratulations on your selection as a Graduate Assistant and best of luck to you with your graduate studies.

Sincerely,

<<INSERT NAME>>

<<INSERT TITLE>>

I accept the Graduate Assistant position offer and agree to the required conditions. I am aware that if I withdraw from a course(s), I will be required to return a pro-rated portion of any waivers I have received to the University.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **APPENDIX B: MEMORANDUM ON THE USE OF GTAs**

### **Graduate Teaching Assistants as Instructors of Record**

Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) play an important role as Instructors of Record in several academic departments. The following guidelines are intended to aid department chairs in determining when it is appropriate to assign GTAs as Instructors of Record. In all cases where questions arise concerning GTA qualifications, the chair should consult with the dean's office.

While this statement addresses GTAs assigned as Instructors of Record, departments must provide appropriate training, supervision, and evaluation of all GTAs whether they are Instructors of Record, lab monitors, or faculty assistants.

The statement below is an excerpt from the Faculty Handbook:

**The following policy statement identifies the minimum academic preparation requirements and required documentation for personnel who teach University of West Florida credit courses and noncredit degree program components. The policy statement was endorsed by the Faculty Senate in June 2003 and pertains to all instructional personnel including, but not limited to, regular line full- and part-time faculty, visiting faculty, adjuncts, and nonacademic staff assigned to occasional teaching. *The policy also identifies the minimum academic preparation for Graduate Teaching Assistants.***

***Graduate Teaching Assistants: Graduate Teaching Assistants must hold a bachelor's degree and have successfully completed at least 18 graduate semester hour credits in the teaching field. Graduate Teaching Assistants may not teach graduate courses unless they hold the terminal or a highly-related degree in the teaching field.***

In order to answer questions arising with the increased use of GTAs, the Provost, Academic Deans, and Dean of the Graduate School offer these clarifications regarding the use of GTAs.

- Prior to being designated an Instructor of Record, a GTA must have successfully completed at least 18 graduate semester hour credits in the teaching field.
- In the case of lecture courses, GTAs who do not hold a master's degree will be assigned as Instructors of Record to lower-level, and in most cases, to freshmen-level courses.
- In the case of laboratory sections, GTAs who do not hold a master's degree will be assigned as Instructors of Record for lower-level, and in most cases, to freshman-level courses. In cases where conditions dictate the need to assign a GTA who does not hold a master's degree to an upper-level laboratory course, the following stipulations apply:
  - The college dean or designee must be informed prior to the assignment
  - The laboratory section must be associated with a lecture course that is taught by a faculty member who meets the University's faculty credentials requirements
  - The faculty member must provide direct supervision of the GTA
  - The syllabus for the laboratory section must include information about the related lecture course and include contact information for the faculty member teaching the lecture course.
- In the case of supervision of undergraduate practicum and internships, which tend to be junior- and senior-level courses, it is expected that the GTA hold the master's degree in the field related to the practicum or internship, or hold a master's degree with at least 18

graduate semester hour credits in the teaching field related to the practicum or internship, and meet any other qualifications for supervision of practicum and internships specified by the profession.

8-16-10

Source: [http://uwf.edu/academic/policies/GTAs as Instructors of Record 08 26 10.pdf](http://uwf.edu/academic/policies/GTAs%20as%20Instructors%20of%20Record%2008%2026%2010.pdf)

**APPENDIX C: SAMPLE GRADUATE ASSISTANT EVALUATION FORM**

**SAMPLE GRADUATE ASSISTANT EVALUATION FORM**

Name of Graduate Assistant: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Rate the performance of the Graduate Assistant using the following scale:

Numerical Rating	Performance
1	Far Below Expectations
2	Below Expectations
3	Meets Expectations
4	Exceeds Expectations
5	Far Exceeds Expectations
N/A	Not Applicable

- 1) Attendance at regularly scheduled meetings. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Timeliness at regularly scheduled meetings. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Preparedness at regularly scheduled meetings. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Self-initiative in seeking work to be completed. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Promptness in delivering work assignments. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) Thoroughness in work assignments. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) Quality and accuracy in work assignments. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) Ingenuity in problem solving and task completion. \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) Respectfulness in meetings with supervisor. \_\_\_\_\_
- 10) Professionalism in meetings with supervisor. \_\_\_\_\_
- 11) Responsiveness to constructive criticism. \_\_\_\_\_
- 12) Focus in communication of work and project management. \_\_\_\_\_
- 13) Helpfulness demonstrated through interaction with students. \_\_\_\_\_
- 14) Overall evaluation: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX D: SAMPLE PACE AND MERIT SCHOLARSHIP OFFER LETTER**

&lt;&lt;INSERT DATE&gt;&gt;

&lt;&lt;INSERT ADDRESS BLOCK&gt;&gt;

Dear &lt;&lt;INSERT NAME&gt;&gt;:

I am pleased to offer you a <<INSERT AWARD NAME>> Graduate Scholarship in the amount of <<INSERT AMOUNT>> for the <<INSERT SEMESTER(S)>> semester(s) and <<INSERT AMOUNT>> for the <<INSERT SEMESTER(S)>> semester(s). To receive this scholarship, you must enroll in a minimum of six (6) semester hours (sh) of graduate course work as a degree-seeking student during the semester(s) of the award. A cumulative graduate GPA of 3.0 is required to receive this scholarship and must be maintained to retain the scholarship.

Please note that if you fall below 6 sh of graduate course work, you will be required to reimburse the University in full for the amount of the scholarship award. Failure to repay the award will result in a hold being placed on your record.

It is possible that if you are receiving financial assistance from the Office of Student Financial Aid that this scholarship may reduce that assistance. You are advised to contact one of the counselors in that office if you believe this statement applies to you.

Please indicate your acceptance of this award and your understanding of the eligibility requirements by completing the information below and returning the signed original to me **within five working days**. If you accept, the award will be **posted to your UWF Higher One card**. The copy of this letter is for your files. Failure to return the letter within five working days may result in cancellation of this scholarship.

If you need additional information, I can be reached at <<INSERT PHONE NUMBER>>, or by e-mail, at <<INSERT E-MAIL ADDRESS>>.

Sincerely,

&lt;&lt;INSERT NAME&gt;&gt;

&lt;&lt;INSERT TITLE&gt;&gt;

I accept this scholarship as specified above:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I will enroll in \_\_\_\_\_ graduate hours during the fall semester, &lt;&lt;INSERT YEAR&gt;&gt;.

I will enroll in \_\_\_\_\_ graduate hours during the spring semester, &lt;&lt;INSERT YEAR&gt;&gt;.

My anticipated graduation date is: Semester \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_