

Graduate Assistantship Appointments

Commonly Asked Questions

Two parallel handbooks identify and clarify the policies and procedures that govern a graduate student's position as a graduate assistant at UWF. The [Graduate Assistant Handbook](#) is intended to help graduate students understand the policies and procedures that structure their appointment as a graduate assistant. The goal of the [Office Manager Handbook](#) is to answer frequently asked questions for office managers about assistantships, including the types of assistantships available, the general requirements governing assistantships, the policies structuring payment and tuition waivers associated with assistantships, and the student obligations for maintaining a graduate assistantship. Nevertheless, some uncertainties about the specifics of graduate assistantship appointments still exist. In an effort to further facilitate the efficient processing of graduate assistantship appointments this document addresses some of the remaining questions.

Note: When not capitalized, the term "graduate assistant" in this document refers to all graduate assistants in general. When capitalized, "Graduate Assistant" refers to the one specific type of graduate assistant that is identified with HR employment code 9186.

1. If a student has met the requirement of at least a 0.25 FTE graduate assistant position, is that student allowed to have another concurrent position as a graduate assistant for less than 0.25 FTE?
 - Yes, this is acceptable. All graduate assistants at UWF should be employed for at least 10 hours per week (0.25 FTE) ([Office Manager Handbook](#), section 2) but if a student has already met the requirement of at least a 0.25 FTE graduate assistant position an additional appointment can be granted for less than 0.25 FTE. The student would still only be eligible for one matriculation waiver, regardless of the number of appointments.

2. Can Graduate Teaching Assistants be paid on a salaried basis?
 - Graduate Teaching Assistants can only be classified as Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) exempt and paid on a salaried basis if they are instructor of record on a course ([Office Manager Handbook](#), section 2.1.4). Graduate Teaching Assistants - Instructor of Record are appointed under HR employment code 9185. The name and section number of the course that the Graduate Teaching Assistant - Instructor of Record is teaching must be listed by departments in Box #17 of the Student Action Form. All other Graduate Teaching Assistants (employment code 9184) have to be paid on an hourly basis and must submit bi-weekly time sheets.

3. To be considered for a graduate assistantship: “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 summer semesters. . . . 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” ([Office Manager Handbook](#), section 3.1). How does a department that initiates an appointment inform other units that the graduate student has less than 6 or 3 semester hours of coursework remaining in their program or has only thesis/dissertation hours left?
 - When a graduate assistant does not meet the minimum credit hour requirement (6 ch in Fall or Spring, 3 ch in Summer) the department must indicate in Box #17 of the Student Action Form if the credit hour requirement is not met due to: a) the graduate assistant having less than the required hours remaining in his/her program, or b) the graduate assistant being in the thesis/dissertation stage.
4. Are hourly paid graduate assistants allowed to start prior to the beginning of the academic term for training or to assist faculty with course preparation?
 - Appointments of all *hourly* paid graduate assistants are allowed to start one pay period prior to the start of classes. Graduate Teaching Assistants - Instructor of Record (9185) and Graduate Research Assistants (9183) that are FLSA exempt and paid on a salaried basis must follow the dates of the academic term and the model used for adjuncts.
5. Are Graduate Assistant and Graduate Research Assistant positions paid by a grant allowed to cross over multiple semesters?
 - Yes, this is an acceptable practice. Grant funded graduate assistant appointments can begin and end based on the dates of the grant.
6. Can all Graduate Research Assistants be paid on a salaried basis (9183 designation)?
 - No, only Graduate Research Assistants funded by grants can be paid on a salaried basis. All other Graduate Research Assistants must be appointed under the 9182 (hourly) designation. The supervising unit should identify the appropriate code for the assistantship at the time of appointment.
7. Are graduate assistants allowed to have appointments (multiple or single) that exceed 0.50 FTE?
 - All graduate assistant appointments combined across all units that a graduate assistant holds are limited to 0.50 FTE. Authorization to exceed the 0.50 FTE limit can be requested with a form available at <http://uwf.edu/graduate/tuition-funding/assistantships/> and in MyUWF. Authorization to exceed 0.50FTE is only granted in exceptional circumstances. Even if authorization to exceed 0.50 FTE is granted, all graduate assistant appointments combined across all units must not

exceed 0.75 FTE. Appointment at 0.75 may obligate the appointing department to pay health insurance.

8. Can adjuncts have a supplemental appointment as a graduate assistant?
 - Adjuncts can not also be appointed as graduate assistants. Departments should determine the most appropriate appointment type (adjunct or graduate assistant) and follow the procedures for the selected appointment type.

9. Can graduate assistants be awarded a graduate fellowship?
 - Currently, UWF does not have a classification entitled "graduate fellowship". A graduate assistant who is paid for services rendered should not be referred to as receiving a fellowship. All graduate assistant positions should be developed based on the eligibility requirements and guidelines provided in the [Office Manager Handbook](#).

10. Is it important that graduate assistants are classified in the proper graduate assistant category when initiating the processing of graduate assistant appointments?
 - Yes, it is important that all graduate students with assistantships are classified accurately. A common error is to classify graduate assistants with teaching-related duties as Graduate Assistant (code 9186) while Graduate Teaching Assistant (code 9184) is the correct classification. Another error is to use the Graduate Research Assistant classification when the student is not actively involved in the research, but is only assisting the faculty member with data entry or clerical activities. The proper classification for this situation is Graduate Assistant (code 9186). All graduate assistant categories are defined in section 2.1 of the [Office Manager Handbook](#). It is important that departments properly classify assistants using these definitions so that our reporting to IPEDS and the BOG is accurate.