

Minnesota State University, Mankato University Policy

Policy Name: Graduate Assistantship	Effective Date of Last Revision July 1, 2019
Custodian of Policy: Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs	Date of Last Review September 2018
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Policy

All graduate assistantships throughout the University are expected to elevate the quality and scope of graduate education by attracting high quality students into our graduate programs; providing full-time graduate students with valuable educational and professional experiences related to their degree program to enhance their graduate education; and providing faculty and staff assistance in carrying out special projects or other assignments that require the advanced discipline skills of graduate students. Three types of graduate assistantships are available, based upon the primary (>50%) responsibilities: teaching, research, or program assistance; as follows:

- Teaching Assistants (TAs) assist faculty with teaching his/her courses, or may be an instructor of record, under faculty mentorship and supervision. Generally, TAs are appointed by academic departments and perform academic instructional services.
- Research Assistants (RAs) assist faculty with research or scholarly activities, and are typically funded by external funding sources, such as grants or contracts.
- Program Assistants (PAs) assist faculty and staff throughout the broader University on academic, academic support, or other programs.

Graduate assistantships are expected to be competitive awards open to full-time graduate students admitted to a graduate degree program and in good academic standing. Graduate assistantships may be internally or externally funded, and must comply with all applicable laws and regulations. Graduate assistant stipends will be reviewed every three years to ensure that graduate assistants are compensated adequately and competitively. In addition to providing financial support to graduate students, graduate assistantships are to be considered an award and honor.

Terms and Conditions

The graduate assistantship award package includes a stipend and a tuition waiver. For full-time, academic year graduate assistantships supported through the University's general fund, and commencing with fiscal year 2019, the stipend is set at a minimum of \$5,000 per semester (fall, spring), for part-time paid work (specifically 20 hours per week of instructional, research, or related programmatic activities), commencing with the first Monday before the start of classes and ending with the last day of final exams. Assistantships which begin and end after these dates require additional compensation. The tuition waiver is for 18 graduate credits per academic year, flexible between the fall and spring semesters (except for work-study graduate assistantships). The tuition waiver may not be applied to undergraduate credits.

Graduate assistants may allocate unused credits of their tuition waiver from the academic year toward credits taken during the summer terms immediately following the academic year appointment. All graduate assistant positions, regardless of funding source, are to be compensated at the University minimum stipend level or higher, and must include a tuition waiver that adheres to policy.

Part-time graduate assistantships are permitted with proration in the stipend, hours per week of work, and tuition waiver. For example, a 0.50 graduate assistant would include a minimum \$2,500 stipend per semester for 10 hours per week of work and 9 graduate credits of tuition waiver per academic year.

Summer graduate assistantships are permitted and, if the hiring unit wishes to pay for it, may offer a full or partial waiver of tuition. Summer GAs employed throughout the full 10-week term should be paid a full semester's stipend (\$5,000, at minimum, during the 2018-2019 academic year). GAs working less than the full 10-week term should be paid, at minimum, the hourly summer GA rate of \$25 per hour. Appointments beginning prior to and/or extending after summer terms should be paid at least the academic year hourly rate (\$15.63) for those periods of time which fall outside the 10-week summer term. Summer graduate assistants must be enrolled for a minimum of 1 graduate credit over the course of the summer sessions.

A graduate student may hold multiple, concurrent graduate assistantships, as long as the total of all appointments does not exceed 20 hours of work per week. The maximum length of appointment is limited to the normal length of time for completing the degree, in most cases two to three years for a master's degree program and three to four years for a terminal or doctoral degree program.

Graduate assistants may not be employed concurrently as an adjunct faculty member.

Graduate assistant tuition waivers must be entered into the student payroll record system no later than the tenth (10th) instructional day of the semester or session in which the appointment is effective. Late entrances of tuition waivers will not be accepted. Adding or dropping of courses must be in compliance with the University's published dates; graduate assistants will be responsible for tuition charges as a result of changes in course registrations and in accordance with the University's published dates.

Graduate assistants who resign or who are released from an appointment prior to the mid-point of a semester will lose the tuition waiver and be responsible for applicable tuition charges.

Responsibilities and Standards of Performance

Graduate assistants are expected to fulfill the responsibilities of the position, as outlined in the announcement, and meet the duties and standards of performance described by their faculty or staff supervisor during orientation. Graduate assistants also must maintain satisfactory academic progress. Unsatisfactory performance of duties and responsibilities or failure to meet the standards of performance, or academic progress can lead to termination of the graduate assistantship award. Failure to perform responsibilities or serious misconduct may result in immediate termination. Procedures for communicating and responding to unsatisfactory performance of responsibilities or failure to meet standards of performance include providing written notice (with a two-week provisional period) followed by a review and if necessary, written notice of release from the assistantship effective immediately.

Both written notice of warning and termination of the assistantship may be appealed. To appeal, the graduate student will send to the department chair or respective unit director a copy of the written notice with a letter stating the basis of the appeal (errors of fact or interpretation) within seven business days. The department chair or director will review and investigate the appeal and deliver a written response within 7 business days during the academic semester/session. If not resolved, the student may appeal in writing to the next level, either the respective College Dean or Vice President, who will consult with the Associate Vice President for Research & Dean of Graduate Education, and respond within 14 business days. This decision shall be final. Initiation of an appeal does not extend the probationary period or date of termination.

Announcement of Opportunities and Application

Announcements of Graduate Assistant opportunities are available on the University's Human Resources website. Application information is available on each announcement.

Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) Resolution

Minnesota State University, Mankato adheres to the long-standing resolution established by the Council of Graduate Schools which states that a student does not have to commit to an assistantship offer prior to April 15th. The Council of Graduate Schools resolution is posted on the Council of Graduate Schools Website. In instances in which a student accepts an offer before April 15th, and subsequently desires to withdraw that acceptance, the student may submit in writing a resignation of the appointment up to and through April 15th. However, an acceptance given or left in force after April 15th, commits the student not to accept another offer without first obtaining a written release from the institution to which the commitment has been made. Similarly, an offer by an institution after April 15th is conditional on presentation by the student of the written release from any previously accepted offer.

Rationale

Graduate assistantships are a long and proud tradition in graduate education, bringing benefit to the institutional mission and the student. The purpose of the Graduate Assistantship program at Minnesota State University, Mankato is to: (1) improve the overall quality and scope of graduate education by attracting high quality students into our graduate programs, (2) provide full-time graduate students with valuable educational and professional experiences related to their degree program, to enhance their graduate education, and often, to contribute to the education of undergraduate students and (3) provide faculty and staff assistance in carrying out special projects or other assignments that require the advanced discipline skills of graduate students. In addition to providing financial support to graduate students, graduate assistantships are considered an award and honor.