

Graduate Assistantships – Sponsored Projects

- Student must be currently enrolled in graduate study as fully admitted, degree-seeking student.
- Student must be enrolled in credit hours while on an assistantship.
- Appointment must be 25% or higher to incur fee waiver.
- A student must be enrolled in at least 9 hours in order to be eligible for federal financial aid, even if the student has an assistantship.
- Length of time allowed in assistantship: 3 years for Master's, 5 years for PhD, or 8 years for PhD student who entered with BS only. Greater lengths of time need approval from the Graduate School.
- It is important to make appointments and notify students in a timely manner (at least one month before appointment begins) so that stipends and tuition can be processed correctly and on time.
- "Requirements for Assistantship Letters" is attached. If the student is receiving more than one appointment, such as a split appointment as discussed below, include all appointments in one letter to the student.
- **Associated costs** - Business Managers have this information if needed:
 - [Minimum stipend scale](#)
 - [Student health fee](#)
 - [Tuition](#)
- **Types of appointments:**
 - 25% (10 hours per week), 33% (15 hours per week), and 50% (20 hours per week).
 - Students must be enrolled in classes or dissertation hours to receive tuition coverage. Failure to register for dissertation hours or classes, and then being retroactively enrolled, will result in charges to the department or student.
 - A 25% appointment or higher must include coverage for full tuition and health insurance.
 - 12-month appointment and 9-month appointment – these describe a type of appointment, not the length of appointment
 - A 12-month appointment can be started and terminated at any time and it matches the provision of benefits, such as tuition and health fees, to provided effort. This is an ideal fiscal management approach for a sponsored project.
 - There is no required length of time of employment for a 12-month appointment.
 - With a 12-month appointment, if the sponsored project ends or begins in the middle of a semester, the costs for tuition and health fee are pro-rated.
 - For a 12-month appointment, a waiver of fees for the summer semester requires an appointment that encompasses effort over the summer semester in its entirety. If the student chooses to not engage in effort on the sponsored project over the course of the summer semester in its entirety, the appointment should be suspended or terminated in the payroll system and then restarted when effort incurs again.
 - Split Appointments
 - The department may choose to offer a split appointment, such as 25% GTA stipend with a centrally funded waiver and 25% GRA stipend and health insurance on a sponsored project.
 - The stipend and health insurance for the GRA appointment will be allocated to the sponsored project but the central waiver position will cover the tuition for the student with no tuition charges on the grant.
 - The department may choose to provide a 25% GTA stipend with a centrally funded waiver and health insurance, and allow additional hourly pay, up to 10 hrs/week, on a sponsored project, if the effort on the sponsored project is sporadic. If the effort is on a consistent basis, a position should be added instead.

- The department may choose to offer a split appointment, such as a 25% GRA stipend with half of the tuition and health insurance on the sponsored project and a 25% GTA stipend with half of the tuition and health insurance covered by the department.
- **Timesheets**
 - Timesheets are not required and should not be kept by the student nor by the department.
 - A work log of research or completed duties may be kept, however no time should be recorded on this log.
- **Termination at end of appointment**
 - Typically, students in 12-month assistantship positions should be terminated on their graduation date.
 - The appointment can be extended through the end of the calendar month, UNLESS the student is an international student.
 - The student can be moved to a temporary position after graduation, UNLESS the student is an international student.
 - See the [Center on Global Engagement \(CGE\)](#) for more information about international students.
- **Termination for gross misconduct or inadequate job performance -**
<https://gradschool.utk.edu/documents/2019/03/termination-of-graduate-student-on-assistantship.pdf/>
 - GRA/GTA/GA is considered a contract employee and their contract may be terminated for gross misconduct or inadequate job performance.
 - Supervisor should seek agreement from Department Head.
 - Contact Graduate School to inform them of decision to terminate.
 - Graduate School will inform the appropriate Vice Chancellor and the VC will notify the student.
- **Additional pay request for graduate students on assistantships -**
<https://gradschool.utk.edu/documents/2019/04/additional-pay-request-for-graduate-students-on-assistantships.pdf/>
 - This form should be used when making requests for students to work in excess of 20 hours per week, excluding summer.
 - Such requests must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.
 - **No approval is needed for graduate students to receive additional pay for work in excess of 20 hours per week done during winter and summer breaks.**
 - Additional pay for **international students** also requires approval from CGE because they can only work more than 20 hours during weeks when there are no classes during fall and spring semesters. For example, they could work more than 20 hours during spring break or holiday breaks in the fall.
 - The student is expected to work for the number of their appointed hours for the course of their appointment. This includes 10, 15, or 20 hours per week during breaks and between semesters. If they work over their appointed number of hours, they are eligible for additional pay.