Graduate Assistantship Appointments

Training for 2010

04/06/10

**What is an assistantship appointment?**

A graduate assistantship appointment is the agreement between the graduate student and department/university. The agreement form is originated at the department, signed by the student and final approval given by the Division of Graduate Education. The purpose of Graduate Assistantships is to: (1) Enhance the learning opportunities for graduate students as an integral and required part of their degree program; (2) Provide an award for outstanding scholarship for students enrolled in graduate degree programs; (3) Provide an introduction to university teaching as a career development opportunity (GTAs); and (4) Increase graduate student’s knowledge and skills in research in their chosen discipline (GRAs).

**What is a stipend?**

A stipend is a monthly amount to support for a degree seeking graduate student who is compensated for activities that both benefit the student’s educational program and the department in the student’s academic area of study. This payment is typically a set amount each month and is not based on tracking actual hours worked. Full- time graduate assistants are expected to work 20 hours per week during the academic year.

**Why six credits?**

IRS and BOR requirements – IRS states that a student can be exempt from FICA/Medicare taxes if the employment at their school is incident to and for the purpose of pursuing a course of study. BOR defines the exemption begins with half-time (6 credits or more).

**Types of assistantships** – All assistantship appointments are paid with a stipend

* **GTA – Graduate Teaching Assistant** (need to be enrolled in six or more credits – FICA/Medicare tax exempt)
* **GRA – Graduate Research Assistant** (need to be enrolled in six or more credits – FICA/Medicare tax exempt)
* **GSA – Graduate Student Assistant** (need to be enrolled in 3-5 credits/0-5 credits cont. smr student – subject to FICA/Medicare taxes, can be teaching or doing research)

**GTA Requirements for International Graduate Students**

* The student must earn the minimum scores outlined below,
* The department also must certify that it has evaluated each student's ability to successfully carry out teaching assignments.
* *Minimum Scores*
* International students must also meet the minimum score requirements for the TOEFL or IELTS as listed below:
  + Classroom teaching in charge of a class or section:
    - 580 TOEFL paper-based test or;
    - 237 TOEFL computer-based test or;
    - 93 TOEFL internet based test or;
    - 7.0 IELTS total band score.
  + Lab assistant or discussion leader with another qualified GTA, or with a regular faculty member present in the classroom:
    - 565 TOEFL paper-based test or;
    - 225 TOEFL computer-based test or;
    - 86 TOEFL internet based test or;
    - 7.0 IELTS total band score
  + Test/paper grader, assisting with lab set up, or other non-student contact duties:
    - 550 TOEFL paper-based test or;
    - 213 TOEFL computer-based test or;
    - 80 TOEFL internet based test or;
    - 7.0 IELTS total band score
* International students must meet minimum English speaking scores:
  + Classroom teacher in charge of a class/section; lab assistant or discussion leader with another qualified GTA, or regular faculty member present in the classroom:
    - 50 TSE/SPEAK score or;
    - 26 TOEFL internet based speaking score or;
    - 7.0 IELTS speaking score.
  + Test/paper grader or performance of other non-student contact duties:
    - 45 TSE/SPEAK score or;
    - 26 TOEFL internet based test or;
    - 7.0 IELTS speaking score.

**New Graduate Assistantship Appointment Agreement form**

* Not through Access database
* Available on the DGE website in the Forms section
* Can fill out online and print out – downloadable form.
* Tuition Waivers need to be on a separate line than the GRA/GRA or GSA stipends.
* Needs both student and departmental signature

**EPAF and Graduate Assistantship Appointment Title**

* The title on the EPAF needs to match the type of appointment listed on the agreement form
* Titles are listed with ‘GTA’,’ GRA’ or ‘GSA’, dash ‘-‘, # of hours with no spaces (Example: GTA-20)

**What if a student changes their credits?**

* + The EPAF title and agreement form needs to be corrected if a student is changing above or below 6 credits.
  + The new agreement is also needed so the student understands that there is a change in tax status.
  + Use the ‘Change Grad Title-hrs (ex; GRA-8 GTA-10) EPAF A new agreement form signed by the student if they are dropping below six credits so the student has verification their tax status has changed.

**What if a student has a split assistantship appointment?**

* We need to have the EPAF title state both types of appointments. Example: GRA-10 GTA-10 (use a space between the two appointment types)
* Agreement form needs to have both appointment types listed and must match EPAF

**WHO CHECKS WHAT?**

* **What OSP checks for?**
  + Is this expenditure appropriate for the grant budget?
  + Is this expenditure appropriate for the start and end date of the grant?
  + Is this expenditure appropriate for the amount of funds remaining in the grant?
* **What DGE checks for?**
  + Is this a graduate assistantship appointment (EPAF, waiver, etc.)
  + Is this student enrolled for the correct amount of credits for a GTA/GRA or GSA?
  + Does the EPAF match the signed agreement?
  + Does the appointment have the correct start and end dates?
  + Is the EPAF title correct? Does it match the description and account code?
  + Does the appointment meet the minimum 10 hrs per week and not exceed 20 hrs combined appointments?
  + Does the stipend meet the minimum wage criteria of $240/month ($8.00/hr) for a 15 week semester?
  + Is the student a degree seeking graduate student?
  + Does an International student meet the minimum English requirements to be a TA?
  + Is the student in good academic standing? Student may not be eligible for an appointment if they are on academic probation.
* **What HR checks for?**
  + Appointment type – matches credits, employee status (student/temp)
  + Funding index/account code
  + Proper approvals for funding, appointment type
  + Comments- need to have job description (workers comp. rate)
  + Other active positions, possible conflict between appointments
  + Taxes (based on credits/employee type)
  + Job and suffix number correct
  + Query/Jobs Effective/Labor Distribution/End dates correct
  + Correct levels of approval in routing queue
  + Spring A.Y appts. May be terminated if not at appropriate credits

**Reminders:**

* Tuition Waivers: Watch for deadlines and authorized budgets
* Appointment dates:
  + Fall – 8/1/10 – 12/31/10
  + Spring - 1/1/10 - 5/31/10
  + A/Y – 8/1/10-5/31/10
  + Summer, flexible between 5/1/10-8/31/10, can overlap with Fall or Spring appts.
* Minimum GTA/GRA/GSA appointments are 10 hrs/week
* Maximum GRA/GRA/GSA appointments are 20 hrs/week A/Y, summer is 40 hrs/week
* EPAF and agreement forms must match
* Need signature from student (can be faxed)
* Need departmental signature
* If anything on the agreement form is changed, we need an updated signed and electronic agreement form.
* Check for comments on the EPAFs
* Changes to EPAF/agreements
  + Changes to the stipend amount, duties, hours or title – we need a new EPAF, and signed agreement form sent to DGE
* Changes to appointment of tuition waivers
  + Send new signed agreement form to DGE
* Special Approvals
  + Dependent on special situation and DGE approval

**Dates and Deadlines for Summer 2010**

**For Graduate Agreements/EPAFs/Waivers**

* April 30th – Priority deadline to our office for all summer agreement forms and EPAFs
* May 14th – Deadline for all summer agreement forms and EPAFs to be submitted to DGE
* May 17th – First Day of Summer Classes
* May 19th – Deadline to confirm summer attendance

**Dates and Deadlines for Fall 2010**

**For Graduate Agreements/EPAFs/Waivers**

* April 6th – Graduate Assistantship training for 2010-2011
* July 1st – Priority deadline to our office for all agreement forms
* July 30th – Deadline for all fall agreement forms and EPAFs to be submitted to DGE
* August 30th – First Day of Classes
* August 13th – Priority deadline to confirm attendance to get aid in place ($40 late fee for students registered before 8/1/10)
* September 3rd – Deadline – all students receiving tuition waivers and stipends need to be registered and confirmed (students may lose their waivers if not confirmed by this date - $40 late fee for all student who registered on or after 8/1/10)
* September 20th – Drop date – all students who have not confirmed their attendance will be dropped (late fee will be charged)

**Late starts and early terminations?**

* GTA late start (add section, additional funds become available) – still appoint for full semester, may need to be back dated, student will get larger first check if student missed the first paycheck of the semester.
* GTA early termination – (if student is unable to fulfill the GTA position duties – need to have approval by DGE)
* GRA late start – may be approved if there is appropriate documentation of a new grant starting mid-semester.
* GRA early termination – must be approved by DGE for special circumstances only

**FINAL TIP**

DOUBLE CHECK all of your information as you go.

**Contact Information for DGE:**

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