

PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE ASSISTANT TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

ELIGIBILITY

To qualify for a graduate assistant (GA) appointment, a student must be admitted to a graduate degree program at PSU with either Regular status or Department Conditional Status and must be in good academic standing. (A student with University Conditional status is not eligible to hold an assistantship). In order to maintain eligibility, all GAs (regardless of funding source) must satisfactorily complete a minimum of 9 graduate credits each term the assistantship is in effect (except Summer Term), with term and cumulative GPAs of 3.00 or higher, and show satisfactory academic progress in fulfilling the requirements of the degree program. Satisfactory completion of a course at the graduate level is demonstrated with grades of A through B-, P, or IP (In Progress). Grades of C+ through F, NP, I, W, X, M, and AU are not satisfactory completion of a course at the graduate level. All GAs will also automatically be registered for assistantship-related Practicum or Research credits each term (IST 501A/601A or IST 509A/609A.) These credits cannot apply toward any degree, do not generate tuition charges, and cannot count toward the 9-credit enrollment requirement.

There are two scenarios under which a GA can potentially register for fewer than 9 graduate credits in a term. First, a maximum 4 of the 9 required credits can be undergraduate credits if these undergraduate courses are needed as prerequisites or are important for the student's program of study. Second, with advance approval from the Office of Graduate Studies, a GA can register for as few as 5 graduate credits in the final term before graduation.

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

Levels of appointment may be between 0.15 and 0.49 FTE per term. The typical full-time assistantship is 0.30 FTE. Students appointed for an academic year (9 months) receive a salary each month during the academic year; students appointed for 12 months receive a salary each month of the year. Appointments for fiscal quarters essentially parallel the academic terms for which the instruction fee portion of the tuition is remitted. The carry over of a week or two from one fiscal quarter to another does not provide instructional fee remission for both academic quarters.

Under no circumstances can a graduate assistant hold a regular university position (unclassified or classified) concurrent with a graduate assistantship. If a GA also earns student wages or other graduate assistant wages, a maximum of .49 FTE (approximately 254 hours of work total per term) is allowed from all PSU appointments during each term the assistantship is in effect. For example, a graduate assistant with a 0.30 FTE appointment could work a maximum of 0.19 additional FTE in that term in any other PSU student positions. 1.0 FTE for 13 weeks is approximately 520 hours of work; 0.19 FTE (98 hours) maximum is available in that term for other student work at PSU.

SALARY AND HOURS

All graduate assistantships must be for appointments between .15 and .49 FTE (inclusive) and must include both salary and tuition remission equivalent to at least the minimum established by the tuition remission schedule set each academic year (instructional costs only, at resident rates). Tuition remission will be applied directly to a GA's student account at the beginning of the term provided the student is properly registered. (PE courses can never be covered with a GA remission.) GAs are responsible for notifying their employing department if their tuition remission has not been applied to their account by the beginning of the third week of the term. Nonresident graduate assistants are charged resident tuition rates for the terms of their graduate assistantship only. No vacation, medical, dental, or retirement benefits are paid, and no time toward tenure is accrued.

A GA is provided a salary on a monthly basis as compensation for the service that has been provided. The salary is not directly dependent on the actual number of hours worked each month, but rather is paid for satisfactory performance of professional responsibilities as required by the Department Chair or program Director. However, as a guideline, the following formula can be used. Each term is 13 weeks. 13 weeks/term x 40 hours/week x .3 FTE = approximately 156 hours/term. If students are teaching assistants and do not work during vacation, they would work about 15 hours per week; if they work the entire term, they would work about 12 hours per week (156 hours/13 weeks = 12 hours per week). Term dates are defined as follows: Fall term, September 16 – December 15; Winter term, December 16 – March 15; Spring term, March 16 – June 15; Summer term, June 15 – September 15.

TERMINATION OF APPOINTMENT

All appointments are made for a specific period of time (e.g., one term, 9 months, 12 months). Reappointment is not automatic, must be considered on a competitive basis, and is based upon an evaluation of the student's academic progress and performance as a graduate assistant. An appointment may be terminated at any time if the services provided by the GA are judged unsatisfactory or unnecessary. Termination of the appointment is not subject to the administrative rules of the Oregon State Board of Higher Education and/or Portland State University.

A GA who has been terminated by the Department may petition the Dean of the appropriate School/College for review of the termination action. After review, the Dean of the appropriate School/College will confirm the termination or reinstate the appointment.

A GA who did not satisfactorily complete 9 graduate credits in a term, but who 1) has a term GPA below 3.0 and has no grade below a B- and is not on academic probation, 2) has 4 credits or fewer of grades in the C range (C+, C, C-) and has a term GPA of 3.0 or above, or 3) has 4 credits or fewer of Incomplete and has a term GPA of 3.0 or above, qualifies for Warning Status. The GA's employing unit must request Warning Status. If Warning Status is granted, the student may continue as a GA despite not satisfactorily completing 9 graduate credits in a term. However, if the student fails to meet the requirement of satisfactorily completing 9 graduate credits in a term for a second time, the assistantship will be terminated and the student will not be allowed to serve as a GA in the future.

A GA who had been terminated for failure to satisfactorily complete 9 graduate credits in a term, without first going on Warning Status, may potentially hold a graduate assistantship again. A minimum of one term after termination of the assistantship, the employing unit can request reinstatement. The decision whether to continue the termination or allow reinstatement will be determined after reviewing the student's academic history, including after the assistantship was terminated. If reinstatement is granted, and the student fails to satisfactorily complete 9 graduate credits in a term for a second time, the assistantship will be terminated again and the student will not be allowed to serve as a GA in the future.