



| Graduate Assistant Handbook |  
(GTA/GRA/GSA)

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# 1 Graduate Assistantship Types and Duties

### 1.3 Graduate Staff Assistant (GSA)

The primary function of a graduate staff assistant (GSA) is to assist teaching and nonresearch activities. Specific duties of the GSA vary widely depending on the administrative or academic unit to which they are assigned, but should be at a level to make use of their education and abilities. Although GSAs may assist in various offices, their function is to perform more than the usual receptionist/secretary duties. Computer data entry, record maintenance, reports and survey preparation, correlating data, answering specific questions, are some of the duties GSAs will typically perform. Some GSAs may have musical performance as their principal assignment. GSA responsibilities may also include interacting with students, faculty, administrators, alumni, and visitors to the University. For this reason GSAs have the latitude to make decisions involving judgment and/or discretionary choices in accomplishing these duties.

## 2 Graduate Assistant Eligibility Requirements

### 2.1 Eligibility for Appointment

Academic Requirements during the Academic Year:

To be eligible for a graduate assistantship during the academic year, graduate students must:

- Be admitted to or have current status in a degree and Graduate program with an overall GPA of 2.75 or higher. Note that a justification from the program is required for students with a GPA of less than 3.00.
- Enroll as a fulltime student (nine credit hours in fall or spring) during each semester of appointment. Some departments allow a graduate assistant with a full appointment (20 hours) to be enrolled in 6-8 hours during the fall or spring semester. Students will only need an exception from the Graduate School if they wish to enroll in less than 6 hours (please refer to section 7).

Academic Requirements for Summer:

To be eligible for a graduate assistantship during the summer, graduate students must:

- Be admitted to or have good academic standing in a degree program.
- Be enrolled in at least three credit hours. Enrollment may be waived if the graduate student held an assistantship during the preceding spring semester.

Departments/units may have additional criteria and summer appointments not be available. The criteria listed here is the Graduate School's minimum requirement. Please check with your coordinator or hiring personnel for more information as to the specific norms in your area.

### Non-compliance:

Failure to maintain enrollment or to comply with academic requirements will result in termination of appointment. The Graduate School is responsible for monitoring the student's compliance with enrollment and academic requirements and will terminate the appointment at the end of the period in which it becomes known enrollment or academic requirements have not been maintained.

## 2.2 Spoken English Certification

All graduate assistants, whether native or nonnative speakers of English, who have teaching responsibilities, as defined by the Board of Regents, must have their spoken English evaluated by a departmental assessment committee. The committee will be appointed by the department chair or director and will be composed of at least three members: two faculty members and one student. The committee will judge the graduate assistant's spoken English according to the Spoken English Screening Form (SESF) scale 4.1. A rating of 1 or 2 indicates competency in spoken English helitil6-0 (16-

introduction to various resources and techniques that will assist GTAs with their teaching. Individual graduate programs may also have orientations and/or courses that are required of GTAs.

### 3 Important Title IX Information

#### 3.1 Prohibiting Sexual Harassment

In addition to being illegal, sexual harassment runs counter to the objectives of a State University. When people, whether student, faculty, staff, or visitor, feel coerced, threatened, intimidated, or otherwise pressured by others, their academic and work performance is likely to suffer. In addition, such actions violate not only the dignity of the individual but also the integrity of the University as an institution for learning. Academic freedom flourishes when all are free to pursue ideas in a non-threatening, non-coercive atmosphere of mutual respect.

Sexual harassment in all of its forms is thus harmful not only to persons involved but also the entire University community. The university has a comprehensive policy on sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, relationship violence and stalking policy in their policies and procedures. The Graduate School fully supports this policy and maintains a zero-tolerance policy with respect to these issues. Please refer to [Section 3.06](#) of the WSU Policies and Procedures Manual for a full understanding of these issues (Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Harassment, Relationship Violence and Stalking Policy for Employees and Visitors). It is your responsibility to read and understand section 3.06 before you begin your assistantship.

#### 3.2 Inappropriate Relationships

Whether you are assisting or a direct GTA it is not acceptable to have any type of intimate, sexual or inappropriate contact with your students. This is true even if both parties consent to the relationship. As a teacher, you are in a position of authority (power differential) with your students; therefore, it is never acceptable. Never. In addition to the fact that this is covered under the previously mentioned university policy (Section 3.06), the Graduate School also has a zero-tolerance policy. Such breaches of behavior will not only lead to the revocation of your assistantship, but due to the breach of professional ethics, which is an integral part of graduate studies, you may be dismissed from your academic program.

Please note, in addition to the aforementioned policy, [Section 3.16](#) of the WSU Policies and Procedures Manual outlines protections for you within the University. We are committed to preventing all sexual misconduct, relationship violence, and stalking within the University community. Please consult this very important policy if you ever feel uncomfortable. Resources are listed within that policy for you.

## 4 GTA Duties and FERPA

### 4.1 GTA Assignment Duties

GTAs (both direct and assisting) must use caution in the exercise of their duties. In general, GTAs should not be in a position to evaluate their peers course work nor provide instruction without proper background training or academic accomplishments.

The following Graduate School rules govern the assignments of GTAs duties:

- f* GTAs (working on their master's degree) are qualified to assist with or teach undergraduate courses (regular and lab).
- f* GTAs (working on their master's degree) are qualified to assist with or teach graduate lab courses (master's level) when they have already completed the lab themselves and are in the final stages of their master's program.
- f* GTAs (working on their doctoral degree) are qualified to assist with or teach master's level graduate courses (courses numbered 700 or below; regular or lab)
- f* GTAs (working on their doctoral degree) are qualified to assist with or teach lab courses at the 800 and 900 levels when they have completed the lab themselves and are in the final stages of their doctoral program

All of the above statements assume that:

- f* The student has the academic preparation necessary to teach a particular course.
- f* The student is NOT enrolled in the course (regular or lab) in which they are assisting in or teaching.
- f* The student, who is assisting in courses (regular or lab) in which their program peers are enrolled, is NOT evaluating and grading their peers in that course.





- b. Leaving a pile of graded papers, with the names and grades easily discernible, on a table or chair for students to pick up on their own whenever they can.
- c. Responding to a parent's questions about their child (your student). If this is ever an

per week worked), are eligible, pursuant to regulations promulgated by the Kansas Board of Regents, for waiver of nonresident tuition to resident tuition. This tuition waiver is for the actual semester of appointment and does not include student fees. Graduate assistants must provide service from the 20<sup>th</sup> day of the semester through the remainder of the semester to be eligible for ~~resident~~ to resident tuition waiver. Graduate students who ~~were~~ granted a waiver of nonresident tuition to resident tuition in the preceding spring semester will

## 5.4 Univer



## 7 Graduate Assistant Regulations and Exceptions

### 7.1 Minimum Enrollment Hours

Regulation: Required enrollment in at least 9 graduate semester hours taken for credit during fall/spring semesters (some units may reduce this to as low as 6 credit hours for assistants, with the approval by the chair of the degree seeking program).

Justification:

Justification:The Graduate School does not want the assistantship to hinder the student's progress toward degree completion. Given the academic work load of a typical graduate student (at least 3 hours of work for every 1 credit hour taken, totaling 36 academic work hours for a 9 hour enrollment) combined with their assistantship work hours, most graduate assistants put in 40 to 60 hours of combined academic and assistantship hours. The Graduate School, therefore, places a limit of 20 hours for an assistantship appointment.

Student may request additional hours by filing an exception (available under [Forms & Publications](#) at the Graduate School's website). The maximum work hours allowed for domestic students is 30 hours per week. When such exceptions are approved, normally the following conditions have been met:

- f* the additional work hours are tied to academic studies/success
- f* the exception form has the proper signatures and approval from the advisor/chair of the program
- f* an approved plan of study is on file
- f* an application for degree has been filed and is the last semester of coursework for the degree
- f* It is also helpful for your advisor to include a memo of support or to send an email to the Associate Dean or his/her assistant (once the exception is filed)

Other conditions that may qualify for an exception are practicum/internship hours associated with some professional and doctoral programs.

International students are prohibited from working more than 20 hours per week by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (check with the International Programs Office for exceptions to this requirement)

### 7.3 Grade Point Average (GPA)

One of the primary responsibilities of the Graduate School is to assure that students maintain good academic standing and make progress toward their degree. Therefore, all GAs are expected to maintain a cumulative graduate GPA of 3.00 or higher. Failure to maintain academic standing may result in forfeiture of the GA appointment. Students with a GPA between 2.75 and 3.00 may have an assistantship providing an appropriate justification from the program is provided. However, there is also an expectation that these students have a legitimate path to a GPA of at least 3.00, which is a universal graduation requirement of the Graduate School.

## 8 Important Graduate School Forms & Deadlines

### 8.1 Plan of Study

The Plan of Study documents the required course work, degree option, and credit hours required to complete a degree program. You are required to have an approved Plan of Study on file in the

Graduate School to graduate and in many cases to be eligible for your exceptions to Graduate School Regulations to be evaluated. It also serves as a guide to your course work and a contractual agreement between you and your program since the filing of the Plan of Study triggers the year for your degree requirements.

Accordingly, the Graduate School encourages graduate students who are seeking a degree to file a Plan of Study as early as possible, no later than the end of the semester of enrollment for master's students and at least by the end of the semester of completion of qualifying examinations for doctoral students.

Students may make changes to the Plan of Study by submitting a revision to the Plan of Study form available at the Graduate School or Graduate School web page. However, the plan must be approved no later than the 20<sup>th</sup> day of the fall or spring semester, or the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the eight-week summer term, during the semester of graduation.

Failure to meet the deadline for filing an acceptable Plan of Study may result in a delay in graduation or loss of credit planned for use in the program.

## 8.2 Application for Degree and Exit Survey

The Application for Degree/Exit Survey notifies the Graduate School of your intention to complete your degree requirements. With this, the following is put into motion: an audit of your Plan of Study; course work completed or in process; and your academic standing. It also provides the name that will appear on your diploma and address information.

An Application for Degree/Exit Survey and \$25 filing fee must be submitted online within four weeks (20 class days) after the beginning of any fall or spring semester in which students plan to finish all requirements for the degree. Students planning to graduate at the end of the summer session must file an Application for Degree/Exit Survey and \$25 filing fee within two weeks (10 days) after the beginning of the regular eight-week session even if they plan to enroll for the second week session only. If a student fails to complete degree requirements for the semester of a filed Application for Degree, a new Application for Degree and filing fee must be submitted.

Failure to meet the deadlines for the Application for Degree will result in a delay of graduation and in the awarding of the diploma.

The Application for Degree/Exit Survey is accessed through the myWSU Locate the Graduation Links channel in the portal, and click on the Application for Degree link.

You will be directed to a payment page AFTER you have completed the application for degree and the exit survey.

\*\*\*If your payment is not processed then you have NOT completed the application for degree and you will not be able to graduate. \*\*\*