SUMMER 2012 GRADUATE STUDENT ASSISTANTSHIP GUIDELINES

Overview

Graduate assistantships serve as the primary means of support for many graduate students, enabling them to work toward their degrees and grow professionally while providing the University the benefit of high-quality services at reasonable cost. The graduate assistant is both student and employee, and is expected to perform well academically and to meet teaching, research, and/or service obligations.

Eligibility

To be eligible for an assistantship, students must be admitted to a graduate program at MSU, have a valid M #, have earned a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0, and must be enrolled for a minimum of six hours of graduate coursework each semester they hold an assistantship (3 for the summer sessions). An assistant may not enroll in more than 13 credit hours during the semester. No course overloads will be approved for graduate assistants. Any student who is in their last semester of graduate study may be permitted to hold an assistantship with only three hours of coursework if a statement from the department accompanies the GA-PA. Non-resident graduate assistants receive the equivalent of in-state tuition during the semesters in which they are actively on a graduate assistantship.

Working Dates and Hours

All graduate assistants should be classified as 'exempt' status and work 20 hours per week. A graduate assistant may hold an hourly on-campus job in addition to their graduate assistantship, but, the two assignments combined should not exceed 30 hours per week. International students cannot hold any other on-campus job while on an assistantship per federal guidelines. No graduate student may hold an assistantship for more than four semesters (excluding summers).

Summer GA-PA's should be processed as follows:

Session I:	May 14 - June 30, 2012	(7 Weeks)
Session II:	July 1 – August 17, 2012	(7 Weeks)

The GA-PA for any student graduating in August must indicate July 31 as the last day of work. Degrees are conferred on August 3; students are not allowed to work past their date of graduation.

Grant funded graduate assistantship assignments and subsequent GA-PAs should reflect the dates of the grant. Any GA resignation or termination should be immediately processed on a PA and the University Graduate Coordinator should be notified immediately in order to stop GA payments. The department is responsible for initiating the termination papers and is also responsible for the payment of the GA if the termination papers are delayed. Please be sure the line for resignation/termination is clearly identified.

Assistantship Categories:

The University has four categories of graduate assistantships: Teaching, Research, Academic, and Public Service (mark Administrative on current PA). Each GA should be required to perform a level of work consistent with that of a graduate student.

- Teaching Assistants who qualify are responsible for the primary instruction of a course or lab as well as the responsibilities that accompany that primary assignment such as grading papers, meeting with students, etc. All TA's should be full assistantships (20 hours per week).

  All GA's categorized as Teaching Assistants must be shown as class/lab instructor of record, and have the following submitted with the PA: a schedule correction showing the course/lab, a resume, and a transcript or MAP report showing at least 18 graduate hours completed in the discipline of instruction.
- Research Assistants assist professors in academic research, while perhaps also conducting their own projects.
- Academic Assistants assist in the duties of an academic area which may include assisting a faculty member in a course, helping to grade papers or proctor tests, preparing materials for classes, meeting with students, assisting or conducting projects and workshops, etc.
- Public Service Assistants assist campus personnel in a particular area of expertise in providing a service to the public (i.e., local, regional, or state; economic, civic, non-profit, regional outreach, or campus based).

Compensation

The compensation of a graduate assistant will vary from department to department depending on funds available. All assistantships should be no less than the minimums shown below.

In addition to the department funding a graduate assistant, the university centrally provides "Graduate Advancement Funds" appropriated by the Office of the Provost to enhance GA salaries on a first come first serve basis each year. Graduate Advancement Funds do not follow the GA line for next fiscal year budgeting. They must be reallocated by the University Graduate Coordinator each fiscal year. Funds will be allocated based on the amount of salary paid each semester from the departmental/college/ school accounts as noted in the following schedule and will be applied by BTR to the FOAPAL given on the PA at a later date. If a student is receiving money from the Office of the Provost for teaching or other special circumstances, please indicate that in the "remarks" section of the GA-PA. A student may be receiving a tuition scholarship or another award determined by the University Graduate Coordinator.

Funding Provided by the Dept./College/School	GAF Added by the Provost	Total Stipend/Semester
Summer Session I GA - $1,250 (Minimum per session)	$325	$1,575 ($11.25 HR)
Summer Session II GA - $1,250 (Minimum per session)	$325	$1,575 ($11.25 HR)

Departments/colleges/schools may pay a graduate assistant more than the minimum per semester qualifying the GA for more Graduate Advancement Funds. These floors/minimums do not apply to non-university privately funded GA's. However, if privately funded positions are being cost shared (C.S.) with any university funds, then the university C.S. portion of the grant would be eligible for a percentage of "Graduate Advancement Funds" as a supplement.

African-American Graduate Assistantships (60/40 Program)
If your unit has an African-American graduate student who is a qualified resident from the regional area, and the unit would like to share in the cost of a GA with the Office of the Provost, please contact Amber DuVentre at 809-5304.

Listing of Graduate Students Interested in an Assistantship
Occasionally, the Office of the Provost receives resumes of graduate students seeking assistantships. If your department is seeking a graduate assistant and you are unable to identify an individual as a candidate, please contact Amber DuVentre at 809-5304 to review a list of applications.

GA-PA Checklist for Completion:

___1. All GA-PA's should be processed as soon as possible in compliance with the University exempt payroll calendar. GA-PAs should be hand delivered to the Office of the Provost for signature by the University Graduate Coordinator and processing.

___2. Ensure that the GA-PA has been signed by both the Dean/Director and the direct supervisor of the student.

___3. In order to process a GA-PA, the student must have a valid M-number and be registered for at least three (3) hours of coursework during the summer.

___4. An I9 Form and a Background Check must be completed and on file in Student Employment **prior to the beginning of work**. A student should not be allowed to work until you receive notification from Student Employment (the effective date of action on the PA should reflect this authorization).

__5. Please confirm the student's GPA prior to submitting a PA. This will enable you to prepare a written request of a waiver of GPA requirement (if you wish to make that request). A waiver of the GPA requirement is necessary for any graduate student who has a GPA below 3.0. If at all possible, departments should give preference to students who meet MSU's requirements.

___6. If a student resides out of state, or is international, please mark "out of state" on the GA-PA. The marking of "out of state" allows us to know which students need adjustments to their bills.

___ 7. Please remember to include the position number on the GA-PA. This is needed to BTR any funds to your department's account from Academic Affairs. Accounting assigns these numbers.

GA-PA Processing

GA-PA's should be originated in the departmental/collegiate/school office and hand delivered to the Office of the Provost c/o Donna Miller for approval and processing by the University Graduate Coordinator. Make sure GA-PA's are complete and signed by the department chair/supervisor and dean/director. Incomplete GA-PA's will require additional processing time and may result in a later start/pay date.

Questions may be directed to Graduate Education c/o Donna Miller at 809-3567.