GRADUATE ASSISTANTS
Policy Manual

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Introduction

It is the purpose of this policy manual to set forth University-wide policy governing the employment of graduate assistants. Topics include:

Definitions
Qualifications
Selection and Hiring
Duties and Responsibilities
Evaluation
Appointment and Reappointment Remuneration
Graduate Assistant Matriculation Fee Waivers

Definitions/Types of Graduate Assistantship

Within the limits of available funding, graduate assistantships are available to qualified graduate students for service in the following categories:

Graduate Assistant: principal assignment is to provide general assistance to a department (or other unit) or to a faculty member in support of instruction, creative and scholarly activities, university governance, public service, academic administration, and/or student services.

Graduate Teaching Assistant: principal assignment is primary or substantial responsibility for instruction and/or for assigning final grades for one or more scheduled courses.

Graduate Research Assistant: principal assignment is to provide research-related assistance to a department or sponsored research project.

Qualifications

All graduate assistants must meet the following qualifications:

1. Matriculated (i.e., provisionally or fully admitted) in a graduate program offered at The University of West Florida.

2. Enrolled in graduate study during the period of appointment.
(3) Maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale (i.e., is in good academic standing).

**Graduate Teaching Assistants** must meet the following additional qualifications:

(1) Have successfully completed at least 18sh of graduate level coursework in the field in which the Graduate Teaching Assistant will be instructing. They must be under the direct supervision of a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, receive regular in-service training, and be evaluated regularly.

**Graduate Research Assistants** must meet the following additional qualifications:

(1) Possess the skills and knowledge to carry out the research-related support associated with the research assistantship.

Additional qualifications for a given graduate assistantship may be established by hiring departments depending upon the special skills and knowledge required to carry out the responsibilities associated with the particular assistantship. Such additional criteria will be established in writing and will be available on file in departmental offices.

**Selection and Hiring Procedures**

Authority to select and hire graduate assistants rests with academic departments upon approval by the Dean of the College through which the graduate assistant is to be paid. The hiring of graduate assistants outside of the Colleges requires the approval of the Associate Vice Provost for Graduate Studies.

The availability of graduate assistantships is to be made known to all graduate students in the hiring program through posting of announcements in departmental offices. Announcements are to identify:

(1) The hiring unit and supervisor
(2) The type of assistantship
(3) Duties and responsibilities
(4) Qualifications
(5) Period of appointment Remuneration
(6) Application deadline

Graduate assistantships shall be offered to the best qualified among the applicant pool.
**Duties and Responsibilities**

Each graduate assistant position shall have a written position description which includes specification of duties and responsibilities.

Upon hiring, each graduate assistant shall be provided with a copy of the duties and responsibilities associated with the assistantship.

**Evaluation**

Each graduate assistantship shall have a written set of standards for evaluation of performance associated with the position's duties and responsibilities.

Each graduate assistant shall be provided with a copy of the standards for evaluation at the time of hiring.

Each graduate assistant will be provided a written performance evaluation at least once in each academic year. The graduate assistant will be provided opportunity to discuss the performance evaluation with the individual rendering the evaluation.

**Appointment and Reappointment**

Appointment of graduate assistants shall be on the basis of qualifications and availability of funding.

Reappointment of graduate assistants shall be on the basis of continuing qualification, satisfactory performance evaluations, and continued availability of funding.

The period of appointment for a graduate assistant will normally be for the duration of a semester defined as the first day of classes through the last day of exams. The minimum appointment will normally be 0.25 FTE (10 hours per week).

To activate the appointment, a properly executed Student OPS Action Sheet with accompanying documentation must be filed with the Office of Human Resources and the Payroll Office.

**Remuneration**

Two options for remuneration are available:

1. Semester-based salary: A fixed total salary and FTE for the semester (or appointment period) is established. The graduate assistant will be paid a bi-weekly salary based on the fixed total salary, FTE, and appointment period. The hiring unit will
Graduate Assistant Policy Manual
Page 5

certify that the graduate assistant has performed duties and carried out responsibilities on a bi-weekly basis.

(2) Hourly rate: An hourly rate is established for the graduate assistantship. The graduate assistant files a time sheet indicating actual hours worked. The hiring unit certifies that the graduate assistant worked the hours reported.

Minimum salaries for graduate assistants are set forth in the University's Student OPS Classification and Pay Plan.

Graduate assistants are required to file 1-9 and W-4 forms. Salary earned will be reported to the Internal Revenue Service since graduate assistantship remuneration is considered compensation for work performed.

**Graduate Assistant Matriculation Fee Waivers**

Each graduate assistant with at least a 0.25 FTE appointment and who is in good academic standing is entitled to a Graduate Assistant Matriculation Fee Waiver which is applicable toward in-state tuition for coursework in the graduate assistant's approved program of study (i.e., degree plan). Graduate Assistant Matriculation Fee Waivers may not be used for coursework not on the approved degree plan.

The per-credit hour value of Graduate Assistant Matriculation Fee Waivers varies from semester to semester depending upon the number of graduate assistants expected to be hired and the average number of credits in which the graduate assistants are expected to enroll. Different per-credit hour values are established for graduate and undergraduate coursework.

Graduate assistants are entitled to Graduate Assistant Matriculation Fee Waivers regardless of the funding source for the assistantship.

**Complaints and Grievances**

Complaints and grievances on the part of a graduate assistant related to the assistantship will be processed using the procedures for Student Complaints and Grievances detailed in the University's Student Handbook.

**Other Considerations**

Graduate Assistant appointments are subject to all applicable statutes, rules, and policies of the United States, State of Florida, State University System of Florida, and The University of West Florida.