Guidelines for Supervising Graduate Assistants

Eligibility

Graduate students are eligible for assistantships if:

1. They are enrolled in a graduate degree program. Graduate students enrolled in certificate and post-baccalaureate programs are not eligible.
2. They are in good academic standing.

Awarding Graduate Assistantships

1. Official notification of a graduate assistantship offer must be sent from The Graduate School.
2. Each student will receive a contract that must be signed and returned to secure the assistantship.
3. Students may reject a graduate assistantship contract after signing. They can also switch assistantships before the semester starts if they receive multiple offers.
4. Graduate assistantships cannot be offered to undergraduate students in accelerated degree programs. They must graduate with the undergraduate degree before being offered an assistantship.

Onboarding

1. Graduate assistants must sign and return a contract to The Graduate School.
2. Graduate assistants must complete and submit payroll paperwork and identification documents, including a Social Security card, to the Payroll Office before they can work.
3. Graduate assistants must complete FBI fingerprinting and child abuse clearances within 90 days of signing their contracts. If their position involves working with minors (excluding WCU students), they must complete clearances before they can begin working.
4. Supervisors should contact their assigned graduate assistants during the first week of each semester to set a work schedule and outline required work and expectations.
5. Supervisors should communicate with their graduate assistants on a regular basis to make sure work is on track.

Timekeeping

1. Graduate assistants are not required to submit timesheets or enter hours worked into e-time. However, supervisors and graduate assistants are strongly encouraged to keep a written record of all hours worked in case discrepancies arise.
2. Graduate assistants are expected to work all required hours and must make up any hours they miss due to other obligations or circumstances. They are not eligible for paid leave.
3. Graduate assistants are not required to work or make up any hours during University-sanctioned breaks such as Fall Break, Thanksgiving Break, or Spring Break, unless their job descriptions stipulate it.

4. Graduate assistants are not required to work or make up hours missed due to University closures for inclement weather if they cannot complete work responsibilities remotely.
5. Graduate assistants should only work the number of hours per week that are listed on their contracts. They should not be asked or expected to work additional hours unless they are banking or making up missed hours.

Work Responsibilities

1. Graduate assistantships are educational work opportunities. Graduate assistants should be assigned work that will advance their knowledge, skillsets, and professional growth.
2. Graduate assistants are not permitted to regularly perform work classified as AFSCME bargaining unit work such as clerical or receptionist work.
3. Graduate assistants can work remotely based on departmental needs.
4. Graduate assistants are students first and should not be expected to work during regularly scheduled class meeting times.
5. Supervisors are encouraged to be as flexible with graduate assistants' work schedules to accommodate work and personal time commitments.
6. **Per the APSCUF CBA Article 7.C:** Graduate Assistants may be assigned to regular faculty members to assist in research, instruction, and other professional duties. At no time shall graduate assistants instruct lectures or laboratories unless the faculty member assigned to teach the course is present in the classroom or laboratory.
7. Examples of appropriate graduate assistantship work responsibilities include:
    - Conducting research.
    - Working on a publication or research project with a faculty member.
    - Tutoring undergraduate students.
    - Providing student support in student service offices.
    - Planning and executing campus events.
    - Managing social media accounts.

Stipends

1. Graduate assistantship stipends are paid in 8 installments throughout each semester. They are paid on the PASSHE pay as employees are paid.
2. Stipend payments are subject to federal, state, and local taxation.
3. Graduate assistants are strongly encouraged to sign up for direct deposit, as paper checks are mailed and will take longer to arrive.
4. Stipend payments are automatically paid on the assumption that graduate assistants are working.

Tuition Waiver Usage

1. Graduate assistants can save tuition waiver credits for a future term such as Winter session or the first 7-week summer session as long as it is in the same fiscal year.

Leftover tuition waiver credits cannot be applied to second 7-week summer session classes.

2. Graduate students cannot use tuition waiver credits before the work hours have been completed. For example, a graduate assistant could not use spring tuition waiver credits to cover tuition for a winter class.
3. Tuition waiver credits are applicable to graduate degree classes.
4. Tuition waiver credits only cover the tuition portion of student charges. Graduate assistants must pay all student fees.

Terminating a Graduate Assistantship

1. If issues arise with a graduate assistant's work, the supervisor should first try to remediate the issue internally.
2. If the issue cannot be resolved internally, the supervisor should contact The Graduate School to initiate the Graduate Assistantship Termination Policy. The policy provides a process to resolve issues before taking seeking to terminate an assistantship.
3. The Graduate Dean will determine the best resolution for each situation and may meet with the supervisor(s), graduate assistant(s), and others as needed.

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