

Graduate Assistant

Handbook and Policy Manual

AUGUST 1, 2024



UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
GREEN BAY

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Graduate Assistantships at UW-Green Bay

Preface

“Graduate Assistant” is a formal Job Title that is part of the Student Assistant Job Family in the UW Title and Total Compensation framework. This title is used primarily to designate a graduate student who has been assigned responsibilities in an instructional department.

Funding for most Graduate Assistants (GA) comes from the Office of Graduate Studies, which requires hiring units to abide by all Graduate Studies, UW-Green Bay, UW, State of Wisconsin, and federal policies, guidelines, and laws.

A primary goal of a GA is to aid in the prompt, successful completion of a graduate degree program. Graduate Assistantships enable graduate students to enroll full-time in a graduate degree program, so they may complete their degree more quickly and participate in the benefits of full-time involvement in study and academically-related pursuits at the University.

At UW-Green Bay, graduate students can also be employed in student employee positions, which hold different Job Titles than Graduate Assistants.

GA Positions

The GA is both a student and an employee. Guidelines for determining work assignments for GAs are:

- GAs should not detract nor distract graduate students from their graduate education.
- Assignments should enhance the graduate student’s education by:
 - Exposing them to advanced professional activities and concerns of their discipline
 - Involving them in university activities related to their academic and professional interests
 - Giving them opportunities to work closely with faculty and other university professionals
- Routine receptionist, administrative, secretarial, and clerical work are not to be assigned to GAs

Possible GA Assignments

The following list provides examples of appropriate GA responsibilities. The list is not all-inclusive, and a single graduate assistant position does not include all of these responsibilities. Duties vary by department.

- Laboratory preparation and assistance
- Development and testing of laboratory experiments and instruments

- Assist faculty with research projects, e.g., literature reviews, library research, data collection, coding, data entry, analysis, interpretation, qualitative methods
- Assist faculty with in-class simulations, laboratory, or discussion sessions
- Proctor exams
- Prepare materials for courses, funding agencies, foundations, or partnerships
- Tutor individual or small groups of students
- Assist faculty with the grading of homework or exams
- Facilitate graduate program alumni relations, including annual surveys
- Coordinate a graduate program's communications (newsletter or social media)
- Write reports or design conference presentations

Eligibility for GAs

Financial need is not the basis for hiring decisions for Graduate Assistantships. To be eligible, a graduate student must satisfy all minimum requirements and conditions listed below. Graduate Assistantships are competitive in that hiring decisions are based on meeting the minimum requirements and a history of professional and/or academic experience in the field.

Minimum Requirements

- Admitted in good academic standing into a UW-Green Bay graduate degree program (i.e. the graduate degree is conferred by UW-Green Bay). If a student is on academic probation or admitted provisionally, they are not eligible for a GA appointment.
- Enrolled in a minimum of 6 graduate degree credits per semester, and 15 credits per academic year of employment.
- Has no more than two N and/or I grades on their graduate transcript.
- Does not have any N and/or I grades for more than three semesters, excluding summer.
- Is within the length of time to degree for the graduate program.
 - Masters degree programs must be completed within 5 years
 - Doctorate degree programs must be completed within 7 years

Conditions of Employment

- Applied online for a GA position each academic year the student is interested in employment.
- Cannot work more than a total of 20 hours per week for any one or more GA contracts.
- May not hold an assistantship in an academic department in which they were denied admission for a graduate program.
- May not have GA responsibilities pertaining to a course in which they are enrolled. The exception to this is laboratory preparation. GAs are allowed to prepare laboratory samples, instructions, and other materials for courses in which they are currently enrolled.

Additional Conditions of Employment for International GAs

International GAs may work a maximum of 20 hours per week in any combination of on-campus jobs. It is important that international students complete their I-20 and Visa paperwork by June 1 when admitted for fall, and October 1 when admitted for spring, regardless of GA employment. International students should not wait for a GA hire to begin this process.

Ongoing Eligibility Requirements

Each semester, Graduate Studies staff will review all GA enrollment, grades, and academic standing to confirm eligibility for continued employment. Contracts may be terminated for GAs no longer meeting the following minimum eligibility requirements:

- Maintains full academic standing in their UW-Green Bay graduate degree program (a minimum cumulative graduate grade point average of 3.0).
- Enrolls for a minimum of six graduate credits each semester, and a minimum of 15 graduate credits each academic year. The following apply:
 - Undergraduate course credit does not apply toward GA eligibility
 - All coursework must be within the parameters of their graduate degree program.
- Shows satisfactory progress toward degree completion, as defined by the graduate program.
- Performs GA duties satisfactorily, as determined by the immediate supervisor or department and position description.
- Comes to work as scheduled and abides by the requirements of the work schedule.
- Maintains proper standards of academic conduct.
- Honors all terms of the contract and agreement.

Contracting a GA

Applications

Applications open on January 1 for the following academic year, and they will continue to be accepted through December 31 for positions beginning in spring. Interviews typically begin in April of each year, so it is recommended that students apply by March 15. The online application is available on the [Graduate Studies website](#).

Applications remain in the pool until the graduate student has received an assistantship or until the end of the academic year. To ensure that all eligibility requirements are met before a new contract is issued, graduate students are required to reapply for a position each academic year they are seeking employment.

Interviewing

Applications are reviewed by hiring units according to job qualifications and criteria such as academic records, experience, time available to work by applicants, relationship of GA work to the student's

program, and special abilities of the student (e.g., operating research equipment). Hiring units coordinate the interview process for their positions, and determine whether to contact references. Applicants who are interviewed will be officially notified of the hiring decision by the hiring unit.

Job Offer

The hiring unit will offer a position to the applicant of their choice. Once the applicant has accepted, the hiring supervisor notifies the Graduate Studies Office who they selected. Graduate Studies will coordinate paperwork with HR. When an offer letter is ready, Graduate Studies will email it to the student, copying their supervisor.

Contract Overview

Contracts specify the dates of employment, hours per week, hourly rate of pay, and the name of the supervisor. Applicants must sign and return contracts to the Office of Graduate Studies by the deadline listed in the letter.

While Graduate Studies verifies academic eligibility, Human Resources (HR; <https://www.uwgb.edu/human-resources/>) verifies employment eligibility. A criminal background check (CBC) will be done on all new GAs or continuing GAs who previously may not have had a CBC done. If a GA does not pass the CBC, HR will inform Graduate Studies and the supervisor; further review will be needed before a hire can be finalized.

Job Classification

GAs fall under the Student Assistant Job Family within the UW System Job Library. GAs are employed under a fixed term terminal contract and are subject to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)

Funding

GAs are funded through the Graduate Studies Office, colleges, departments, campus divisions, or through external grants. Employment is contingent upon availability of funds.

Compensation and Paychecks

UW-Green Bay sets the pay rate for all GA positions, which is reviewed annually. GAs are paid an hourly rate and must report hours worked on a biweekly timesheet following the payroll schedule. GAs compensation is considered wages and must be reported as taxable income.

W-4 Form

UW-Green Bay is required to withhold FICA, state, and federal income taxes based on the GA's IRS form W-4 calculations. A W-4 form must be submitted online through the [My UW Portal](#) within your first week of employment.

Direct Deposit

The Universities of Wisconsin uses ACH (Automated Clearing House), or direct deposit, to pay employees. This service, which is mandatory, electronically deposits your pay to the financial institution and account of your choice, and is made available to you on payday. Direct deposit information must be set-up online through the [My UW Portal](#) within your first week of employment.

Earning Statements

Earning statements are available on the [My UW Portal](#) at least two days before your pay date (payments not available until the actual pay date). Statements are kept online for the current year, plus two prior years.

Fringe Benefits

The Universities of Wisconsin offers an excellent benefits package to meet the diverse needs of employees. GAs must work a minimum of 13.5 hours per week for a minimum of one full semester of employment to be eligible for the following benefits. Late hires may affect insurance eligibility, and a benefits summary can be found on the [UWSA website](#).

Insurance

Health, vision, and dental insurance are available for GAs who meet the above minimum criteria. Coverage is effective the first of the month following the eligibility date or hire date. Premiums are deducted from the paycheck. UW System Benefits Counseling provides information about premiums and enrollment to GAs at the beginning of each contract.

To keep insurance coverage over the summer months while not under contract, a GA can pre-pay for coverage during their final three months of spring term employment. Students must also be rehired for the following academic year to be eligible for this benefit.

Time Off/Unemployment

GAs are considered a student, first, then employee. Therefore, they are ineligible for unemployment benefits, sick leave, personal holiday, or vacation time.

GAs observe the same official holidays as other employees. If their assistance is required by supervisors during such periods, arrangements should be made to compensate them by reducing hours from duties during other paid, slower times.

GAs who need to take leave, and cannot make up the time during their contract period should notify HR.

Tuition Remission

Non-resident GAs qualify for a waiver of the non-resident portion of their tuition during their contract period if their contract is for at least 13.5 hours per week and a minimum of one full semester. Non-

resident tuition remissions are considered tuition scholarships and are also taxable income. GA tuition remissions replace Phoenix Scholar Awards awarded at the time of admission. Students are not eligible for both.

Work Schedule

GAs are contracted during the 9-month academic year. Contracts can be for the full academic year, fall semester only, or spring semester only. Summer GA contracts are not available.

The maximum number of hours per week a GA can work is 20, but with no minimum. To be eligible for fringe benefits that include medical insurance, GAs must work a minimum of 13.5 hours per week.

The specific work schedule is at the discretion of the immediate supervisor. Work schedules should be arranged at the beginning of the semester so there are no conflicts with the GAs class schedule.

Study Abroad

GAs enrolled in study abroad courses are not entitled to salary during study abroad activity, except when (1) students join a study abroad activity as a faculty research assistant, but does not register for the coursework, or (2) students register for the course and make up for the missed time within the dates of the contract period and at the discretion of the supervisor.

Changes to Contracts

If any aspect of the contract changes, the supervisor must notify the Office of Graduate Studies at gradstu@uwgb.edu. Graduate Studies will complete a PA form to update the applicant's record and will notify HR.

Responsibilities of the GA

GAs are responsible for learning applicable departmental, college, and institutional regulations as they pertain to employees and students following them consistently.

Regardless of the work assignment, GAs are obligated to maintain standards of academic and employee confidentiality, honesty, and integrity and to report violations of these to their supervisor (See FERPA General Guidance for Students: Disclosure of Education Records).

GAs are employees of UW-Green Bay, and the following standards were established to advise GAs and supervisors, but not to restrict the rights of the employee. The following are the Graduate Studies' expectations for acceptable personal conduct. Departments and divisions may have other expectations based on the needs of the position. GAs are expected to:

- Carry out their instructions, duties, and responsibilities as directed by those with authority to assign the work.
- Conduct personal business unrelated to their positions on their own time.

- Respect university resources, property, and equipment, and to use it only for appropriate university purposes.
- Use care in guarding university keys and not to lend, borrow, duplicate, or use them for inappropriate purposes. University keys are required to be returned at the end of the contract period.
- GAs are expected to perform their duties without impairment and/or the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

Responsibilities of the Hiring Unit

GAs are to work under the supervision of faculty or professional staff who are experienced and knowledgeable in their field. Supervision of GAs includes providing appropriate training during the GAs employment. The immediate supervisor for each GA should be identified as early as possible. If there is more than one supervisor for a GA, the specific tasks to be performed for each and the role each supervisor will assume should be clearly identified.

Whenever possible, each hiring unit should provide an orientation and in-service training for GAs. CATL also offers trainings and resources, and supervisors are encouraged to allow GAs to attend them during paid time. Supervisors should assist GAs in securing access to applicable resources and facilities. The hiring unit must also follow all health and safety laws and regulations and educate the GA about them.

The hiring unit is responsible for ensuring the assigned workload is appropriate to the GAs academic load. Academic credit is not awarded for GA assignments or any work or service performed as part of the assigned duties. GAs should not be assigned responsibilities for courses in which they are enrolled, except for laboratory preparation.

Hiring units will provide information about responsibilities, expectations, workspace, and support services, etc. GAs should be aware that they may be terminated prior to expiration of their contract if the terms of the appointment are not met.

Performance Evaluation

Work performance should be an ongoing process of communication between the GA and supervisor. The hiring unit and direct supervisor(s) are responsible for any evaluation(s) that are conducted. Performance evaluations are not done by HR or Graduate Studies, however, these offices recommend having an established performance review process for all GAs. Evaluation forms may be retained in the student's official employee record in HR.

Any employment inquiries about GAs should be directed to UW-Green Bay's Human Resources Office. If HR cannot respond to the inquiry, they will refer contractual information requests to Graduate Studies, and refer performance inquiries to the Hiring Unit. Graduate Studies can provide contract period and eligibility information, but cannot speak knowingly about a GA's work performance.

Termination

During the Contract Period

Contact HR whenever a contract is terminated before the completion date. HR will notify Graduate Studies to remove any academic benefits to GA employment, including non-resident tuition remissions.

Voluntary Termination

If a GA resigns from their position before the end of the contract period, they should provide sufficient notice in writing to the hiring unit (two weeks or more is the preferred standard). The GA submits an email of resignation to the hiring unit and copies Graduate Studies (gradstu@uwgb.edu). The letter should include the GA's last day of work. Resigning from a GA may affect continuation of a nonresident tuition waiver and/or fringe benefits. Graduate Studies will update the students academic record and notify HR.

Termination by Graduate Studies

GAs are automatically terminated when the student is placed on academic probation, suspension, found guilty of academic misconduct, and in some cases, non-academic misconduct. Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to:

- Plagiarism (turning in work of another person or AI, or not giving them credit)
- Stealing an exam and course materials
- Copying another student's homework, paper, or exam
- Cheating on an exam
- Falsifying academic documents

For more information about misconduct, please see the Dean of Students websites:

- [Academic Misconduct Policies](#)
- [Non-academic Misconduct Policies](#)

Termination by the Hiring Unit

GAs may be terminated by the hiring unit for the following reasons:

- Failure to report to work on the starting date specified in the contract constitutes grounds for immediate termination at the discretion of the supervisor, and with no remuneration.
- Absence from duties for one week or more without cause shall constitute grounds for immediate termination of the assistantship as of the date of the start of the unexcused absence.
- In the opinion of the supervisor, continuation of the GA in that assignment poses a threat to the safety or well-being of the GA or others

- The GA may be reassigned to other duties if another appropriate assignment exists within the hiring unit, or if not, may be given notice of termination.
- Work performance continues to be unsatisfactory after the hiring unit has notified and worked with the GA on improving their performance.

Unsatisfactory Work Performance

Before termination for unsatisfactory performance, GAs must receive from their immediate supervisor a notice of specific deficiencies in performance, as well as detailed suggestions for improvement. GAs should receive at least two warnings with time in between to improve performance.

If, in the judgement of the supervisor, the GA fails to show sufficient improvement over the period allowed for remediation, the supervisor may give the GA and Graduate Studies notice of termination. Assessment of the quality of work performance is the sole responsibility of the hiring unit and is an academic and professional judgement.

This notification of termination must be in writing/email, should indicate reason(s) for termination, and must be submitted simultaneously to the GA and to Graduate Studies. The notice must indicate the effective date of the termination, which may not be more than 14 calendar days from the date upon which the notice is emailed to the GA's campus email address.

The GA may dispute any facts or procedures relating to the termination. GAs may appeal against the termination through appropriate departmental and/or College personnel procedures.

Reappointment

After a contract has completed, GAs may be considered for another contract in the same or another department. GAs are not automatically rehired for another contract in the next academic year, even if they meet the minimum criteria (See Student Assistants and Employees in Training).

Reappointment decisions are based on the GAs skills and qualifications, previous performance, department needs, financial resources, and the effort to provide as many graduate students as possible with assistantship opportunities. GAs should receive sufficient notice of reappointment or non-renewal and be informed of necessary procedures to respond in either case.

Graduate Assistantship Policies

Council of Graduate School Resolution

UW-Green Bay supports the Council of Graduate School Resolution, a national agreement establishing a policy regarding acceptance of GA offers at UW-Green Bay and other institutions. Based on this resolution, a graduate student who has already accepted a GA offer from UW-Green Bay on or after April 15 for the following academic year must obtain written release from UW-Green Bay before accepting a different assistantship offer at another institution.

Federal Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA)

The Federal Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 mandates that any GA employed by UW-Green Bay after November 6, 1986, must either be a United States Citizen or possess current employment authorization from U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). According to federal law, the GA must present original documentation of the U.S. citizenship or employment authorization within three days of the start of duties (the reporting date) or risk cancellation of the assistantship.

FERPA General Guidance for Students: Disclosure of Education Records

The Family Education Right to Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law designed to protect the education records of students from kindergarten to graduate school. FERPA affords students certain rights with respect to their education records within a university setting, regardless of age. The are:

- The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the date UW-Green Bay receives a request for access.
- The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes are inaccurate or misleading.
- The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the University to comply with the requirements of FERPA.
- The University may disclose Directory Information without a student's prior written consent.
- Students may restrict the release of Directory Information, except to school officials with legitimate educational interests and others as indicated in point #3 above.

To learn more about FERPA, please visit: <https://www.uwgb.edu/ferpa/>

Residency for Tuition Purposes

Non-resident GAs qualify for a waiver of the non-resident portion of their tuition if their contract is for at least 13.5 hours per week and for one full semester. Non-resident tuition waivers are contingent on funding. Non-resident refers to the portion of tuition over and above resident tuition. All students are responsible for paying the resident portion of tuition for which they are billed unless otherwise stated in their contract or offer letter. This is in addition to all other fees and expenses charged. Please review the following for more information:

- Wisconsin § 36.27: <http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/36/27> “Tuition”
- Wisconsin Administrative Code Chapter UWS 20: http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/20 “Nonresident Tuition Determination Procedures and Appeals”

Sexual Harassment Policy

UW-Green Bay is committed to providing and maintaining an environment that respects and protects the rights of all its members. As both a student and an employee, GAs are offered protection and recourse through multiple policies. Any form of violence, harassment, or discrimination has no place in an educational or any other community and will not be tolerated at UW-Green Bay.

- Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity: <https://www.uwgb.edu/human-resources/workforce-diversity/aa-eeo/>
- Sexual Assault – Sexual Misconduct Policy: <https://www.uwgb.edu/dean-of-students/sexual-assault-title-ix/sexual-assault/>
- Title IX: <https://www.uwgb.edu/dean-of-students/sexual-assault-title-ix/title-ix/>

Student Conduct

UW-Green Bay’s student conduct system supports a campus community which is welcoming, safe, and supportive of academic and personal growth. The student conduct system accomplishes this by making students aware of campus expectations, addressing complaints and holding students accountable for their actions.

- Student Conduct Mission and Objectives: <https://www.uwgb.edu/dean-of-students/student-conduct/>
- Academic Misconduct: <https://www.uwgb.edu/dean-of-students/student-conduct/academic-misconduct-policies/>
- Non-academic Conduct: <https://www.uwgb.edu/dean-of-students/student-conduct/non-academic-conduct-policies/>