

**Effective:** November 13, 1990

**Human Resources Policy  
GRADUATE ASSISTANT EMPLOYMENT**

**Approved:** November 13, 1990

President's Advisory Council

Revised: October 12, 1993, President's Advisory Council

Revised: December 1, 2009, President's Cabinet

This policy applies to the employment of graduate assistants at Millersville University and provides a comprehensive statement regarding expected workloads, rates of compensation and tuition waivers for graduate assistants. It is designed to encourage an acceptable balance between employment workload and academic workload. All graduate assistants are selected by departments and appointed by the College of Graduate and Professional Studies.

The policy outlined herein is consistent with the regulations established by the Board of Governors of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education.

**Definitions**

Graduate Assistantships are awarded on a competitive basis, usually for a nine-month period (fall and spring semesters). Assistantships may be renewed for a second year at the discretion of the Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies. In rare instances, a third-year assistantship may be awarded upon written justification from the department and approval of the Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies. Graduate assistantship assignments vary but may include instructional assistance, research and administrative responsibilities. No assistantships will be awarded until the applicant has been fully admitted into a graduate degree program. While summer graduate assistantships will not be awarded, the employment of graduate students during the summer will be handled through regular student payroll at pay rates commensurate with responsibilities.

**Procedures**

The work schedule for graduate assistants may be appointed by the College of Graduate and Professional Studies as full-time or half-time. Full-time graduate assistants are expected to work 300 hours per semester, with a typical work schedule being 20 hours per week over a fifteen-week semester. In cases where graduate assistants are assigned to work outside of the GA policy during semester breaks, etc., they must follow the policy for Student Employment. Half-time graduate assistants are expected to work 150 hours per semester, typically representing 10 hours per week during the regular academic semester of fifteen weeks. Flexibility in scheduling full and half-time graduate assistants is permitted, as long as the total expected work hours outlined above are realized.

During the period of their assistantship, graduate assistants are not permitted to work for the University as regular employees, through temporary help agencies, or on a contract basis (e.g., honoraria). Half-time and full-time graduate assistants may also work on the regular student payroll, but combined employment should not generally exceed 30 hours per week during academic sessions or 40 hours per week during breaks. Foreign students (on student visas – F1, J-1) will not be permitted to work beyond the 20 hours per week in an assistantship, except during semester breaks and summers.

Full-time graduate assistants must enroll for a minimum of six (6) graduate credits to a maximum of 12 graduate credits for the fall and spring semesters each. Half-time graduate assistants must enroll for a minimum of six (6) graduate credits per semester. Foreign students are expected to pursue a minimum of nine (9) graduate credits per semester. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) require foreign students to carry nine (9) credit hours per semester to be considered full-time.)

Graduate assistants are paid on a stipend basis. The stipend is based on working 600 hours during 15 weeks per semester. The stipend is distributed in bi-weekly payments during the fall and spring semesters. The half-time graduate assistant stipend is calculated by dividing the full-time stipend by two (2).

Rates of compensation for graduate assistants are determined by the President within the guidelines established by the Board of Governors. In cases where graduate assistants are appointed after the beginning of the semester, or resign, or are dismissed before the end of the semester, compensation will be reduced proportionate to the number of hours worked. Such determinations will be made by the College of Graduate and Professional Studies in conjunction with the departmental supervisor. Tuition waivers will be proportionately adjusted at the same percentage as the stipend.

### **Tuition Waiver**

Full-time graduate assistants are entitled to a waiver of tuition (no other fees are waived) for 12 credits per semester worked. Full-time graduate assistants employed during an entire academic year; therefore, receive a tuition waiver of 24 credits. If the 12 credits in the fall semester are not fully utilized, they may be carried into the winter session and/or the spring semester. If the full 24 credits are not utilized by the end of the spring semester, they may be carried into the following summer session, provided the student does not graduate in May.

Half-time graduate assistants earn six (6) credits of tuition waiver per semester worked.

After a graduate assistant completes the graduate degree any remaining tuition waiver is forfeited.

Tuition waivers cannot be used prior to the starting date of the assistantship.

Waivers cannot be used after the ending date of the assistantship except as noted above.

Waivers are limited to graduate credits. Courses taken for audit or Educator Workshops (EDW) are not eligible for a tuition waiver.

The Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies is responsible for the assignment and discontinuation of an assistantship. Departmental supervisors may request an alternative assignment of a graduate assistant; however, the College of Graduate and Professional Studies cannot guarantee a replacement or reassignment. If a supervisor believes a graduate assistant is not fulfilling his/her work obligation as outlined in this policy statement, the supervisor must submit written justification for dismissal to the Dean.

Upon receipt of the supervisor's letter, the Dean reviews the circumstance, and if deemed appropriate, calls a dismissal hearing. If the situation cannot be resolved satisfactorily, the Dean determines the appropriate course of action, i.e., dismissal or reassignment.

Any exception to this policy must be recommended by the Dean and approved by the Provost and the Vice President for Finance and Administration.

## **Responsibilities**

### **Graduate Assistant**

A graduate assistant must complete the graduate assistant application process including admission to the master's degree program.

Graduate assistantship obligation must be fulfilled as outlined in this document. He/she must perform all work assignments as per the Learning Opportunities Statement for the position and be aware of fees not covered by tuition waiver.

A graduate assistant must immediately notify the department supervisor and the College of Graduate and Professional Studies in writing, of any change precluding the fulfillment of the assistantship.

### **The College of Graduate and Professional Studies**

The College of Graduate and Professional Studies receives and processes graduate assistant applications including campus-wide notification of receipted applications.

The College of Graduate and Professional Studies ensures that graduate assistantship appointments are within the authorized complement level for graduate positions.

Upon receipt of the department's "letter of intent" to hire, the College of Graduate and Professional Studies completes the appointment process and notifies the Bursar and Student Payroll of the appointments including name, student identification number, and amount of tuition waiver and stipend.

The College of Graduate and Professional Studies monitors courses taken to ensure that they qualify for tuition waiver.

The College of Graduate and Professional Studies notifies the Bursar, Financial Aid and Student Payroll of changes in the status of assistantships (e.g., resignation).

The College of Graduate and Professional Studies maintains all pertinent information regarding graduate assistants, including name, student identification number, rate of

compensation, and work and academic requirements, etc. The College of Graduate and Professional Studies, upon notification by a department of a graduate assistant's failure to meet the work or time obligation, takes appropriate corrective or termination action.

### **Department**

The department reviews applications, interviews and selects applicants, then notifies the College of Graduate and Professional Studies following procedures established by that office.

The department provides constructive and sufficient work assignments for graduate assistants that demonstrate an ability to perform high level work relating to the assistant's academic and professional goals.

The department notifies the College of Graduate and Professional Studies, in writing, of changes in the status of a graduate assistant (such as resignation or any other situation where an assistant fails to meet their work or time obligation).

The department verifies Graduate Assistant hours on a biweekly basis with the Payroll Office.

### **Bursar**

Upon notification from the College of Graduate and Professional Studies, the Bursar is responsible for appropriately adjusting the graduate assistant accounts for any waiver granted or rescinded.

The Bursar will send adjusted billing statements and any past due statements necessary and collect the payment of fees not covered by the tuition waiver.

The Bursar will place "holds" on grades/transcripts of graduate assistants who have not fulfilled their financial obligation.

### **Student Payroll**

Upon written notification from the College of Graduate and Professional Studies, necessary information of the graduate assistant is entered into the Student Payroll System.

Student Payroll will ensure prompt payment of stipends.