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SECTION: Academic Affairs

SUBJECT: Graduate Assistantships

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Policy for: All Campuses
Procedure for: All Campuses
Authorized by: Mark P. Becker, Provost
Issued by: Graduate School

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I. Policy

A. Definition

1. A graduate assistant is a student enrolled in the Graduate School who assists, under faculty supervision, in the conduct of the University's total education program by providing teaching, research or other services. The categories for appointment are as follows: Graduate Staff Assistant—provides administrative assistance; Graduate Research Assistant—assists faculty or staff in conducting research; Graduate Instructional Assistant—assists with instruction, but cannot be listed as the instructor of record and must have attended a series of workshops for Graduate Teaching Assistants and Graduate Instructional Assistants sponsored by the Graduate School; Graduate Teaching Assistant—functions as an instructor of record, must attend a series of workshops for Graduate Teaching Assistants and Graduate Instructional Assistants and have completed 18 semester hours of graduate course work in the discipline to be taught.

2. In addition to fulfilling functions that would otherwise be performed by regular faculty and staff members, graduate assistants also receive valuable practical experience as they prepare for future teaching, research, or administrative responsibilities.

3. Graduate assistants are students who are special part-time employees of the University and are paid by the University's Payroll Department. In addition to receiving a stipend, non-South Carolina residents who are graduate assistants are assessed the in-state rate for tuition purposes.[1] For the Fall and Spring terms, graduate assistants providing the above-mentioned services to the University will have a portion or all of their tuition paid by their hiring units. The tuition portion of a graduate assistant's compensation will be

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[1] The Moore School of Business master's-level students are not included.

established by the hiring unit as a credit with the Bursar's Office against which tuition will be charged each semester. Students are responsible for any portion of their tuition and fees not covered by the employing unit and/or by their home department.

4. The Dean of the Graduate School is responsible for the implementation of these policies and regulations, and any deviations must have the Dean's prior written approval. These regulations apply to all graduate assistantships, regardless of funding source.

B. Hours and Fees

1. The minimum number of hours of work required per week is ten, and the maximum is twenty. The minimum and maximum stipends will be published annually by the Graduate School. A graduate assistant's salary should be appropriate to the total number of hours being worked. The minimum enrollment requirement is six graduate hours per semester and the maximum is the number set by the student's college.

2. Different stipend regulations apply to summer graduate assistantships. Non-South Carolina residents who are graduate assistants during the preceding Spring term will be charged in-state tuition rates. Graduate assistants must enroll for at least one hour during the summer term(s) in which they are appointed.

3. Fee structures for graduate assistants vary among colleges as approved by the Board of Trustees. The current tuition for each college is available from the Office of the Bursar on the University web (http://www.sc.edu/bursar/studentfees.html). Fee structures are published by the Bursar's Office annually when changes occur.

4. Graduate assistants who are appointed after the first 20 days of a semester or after the first ten days of a Summer term (dates published annually by the Graduate School) will not be coded as such for tuition or other purposes during the term of appointment. Non-South Carolina residents who receive timely appointments as graduate assistants, but whose duties terminate before the midterm date of the term appointed, will be billed as out-of-state for tuition purposes.

C. Fellowships or Traineeships

1. In some instances, service as a Graduate Teaching Assistant may be required of a holder of a fellowship or a traineeship. Such service, which might involve teaching one course each semester, should be to the benefit of the graduate student's academic objective and not unduly delay the student's graduation.

2. The holder of an assistantship may receive additional aid in the form of a fellowship or traineeship requiring no additional duties.

D. Outside Employment

Graduate assistants are expected to devote full-time effort to their studies and their assistantship responsibilities. They are, therefore, discouraged from having additional employment on or off campus, during the term(s) for which they are appointed. In addition, regular University employees are not eligible for assistantships.

E. Outside Funding

Graduate assistantships funded by nonprofit organizations or State agencies other than USC are subject to approval by the Dean of the Graduate School. Students appointed to such positions will work for the sponsoring organizations, but will be under the general supervision of their departmental or college faculty, and their duties should be related to their academic programs. These appointments must be approved in advance. Graduate assistantships funded by organizations external to the University are considered to be grants and are administered by the Office of Sponsored Awards Management (SAM). Consistent with I.A.3 above, externally-funded assistantships must include funds to cover a portion of, or all, of a student's tuition. Any portion of the tuition not covered by the external sponsoring agency must be paid by the student's academic unit or by the student.

F. MD/JD/PharmD Students

Students in the MD program are not eligible for graduate assistantships. JD students are eligible for appointments as research assistants or staff assistants in the School of Law. JD students enrolled in dual degree programs may be eligible for appointment as graduate assistants in schools or colleges other than the School of Law. JD students who are not South Carolina residents and who are appointed as research assistants or staff assistants are eligible for in-state Law School tuition rates if approved by the Law School Dean. Subject to the approval of the Executive Dean of the South Carolina College of Pharmacy, students in the PharmD program may be appointed as research assistants, staff assistants, teaching assistants, or instructional assistants. PharmD students appointed as teaching or instructional assistants must complete workshops sponsored by the Graduate School.

II. Procedures

A. Admission Status

To be eligible for appointment as a graduate assistant, a student must be fully or conditionally admitted to a degree program.

B. Employment Regulations

1. A graduate assistant's stipend must be offered for the academic year, semester, or summer term, rather than an hourly basis. The academic year begins August 16th and ends May 15th.

2. Summer research or staff appointments may begin May 16th and may continue until August 15th, but summer teaching or instructional assistantships are normally coterminous with session dates of the summer terms.

3. It is the responsibility of the department to discuss work schedules with graduate assistants when they are appointed. Normally, graduate assistants are not expected to work during examination periods and school holidays. Graduate assistants who fail to perform their duties may be terminated from their appointment.

4. Graduate assistants do not accrue sick leave, so work missed due to illness should be made up.