

# Graduate Assistant Hiring Guidelines

## 2024 - 2025

Graduate Assistant (GA) regulations are documented as [ACAF 4.00](#) in the USC Policies and Procedures Manual.

1. Graduate Assistants (GA) must be hired (and processed) by day 20 of Fall and Spring semesters to receive financial credits to their Bursar account. If terminated before the midpoint of the semester, students will lose these credits and be billed for full tuition.
  - a. **Non-Residents** receive Tuition Abatement that are credits on their Bursar Accounts to cover the non-resident portion of their tuition. Non-residents who are Graduate Assistants in the Spring semester will also receive tuition abatements in the Summer term, even if not hired as a GA for Summer.
  - b. **Residents and Non-Residents** are awarded [health insurance subsidies](#) (Fall 2024: \$1355.29, Spring 2025: \$1849.71) if purchasing mandatory health insurance through the university. Students may [waive](#) the mandatory insurance by providing proof of insurance before the published deadline in September/January.

2. The categories and requirements for appointment as Graduate Assistants are listed in ACAF 4.00 (see [Student Employment Job Codes](#))

*Note: Data reporting for national surveys is based on HR codes and funding sources. Federal grant funding is usually restricted to Research Assistantships. Use separate slots for students with multiple types of GA positions (ie. Research and Teaching).*

- a. **Graduate Athletics Assistant (PeopleSoft Code SGAA-salary)** - assistants with practice, training, and coaching responsibilities associated with student athletes and athletics programs,
- b. **Graduate Instructional Assistant (PeopleSoft Code SGIA-salary)** - assists with instruction, but cannot be listed as the instructor of record:
  - i. All Instructional Assistants must attend [TA/IA Orientation and GRAD 701](#), a series of workshops for Teaching Assistants and Instructional Assistants sponsored by the Graduate School.
  - ii. All International Instructional Assistants must successfully complete the [International Teaching Assistant \(ITA\) Workshop and Assessment](#) to determine if their English skills meet requirements to be appointed as an Instructional Assistant.
- c. **Graduate Teaching Assistant (PeopleSoft Code SGTA-salary)** - functions as an Instructor of Record.
  - i. All Teaching Assistants are required to have completed 18 semester hours of graduate course work in the discipline to be taught.
  - ii. In accordance with University Policy [ACAF 1.20](#) Credential Verification for Instructors of Record, a Graduate Teaching Assistant who does not hold a graduate degree in the teaching discipline must be periodically evaluated by his or her faculty supervisor or other faculty member in the discipline.
  - iii. All Teaching Assistants must attend [TA/IA Orientation and GRAD 701](#), a series of workshops for Teaching Assistants and Instructional Assistants sponsored by the Graduate School.
  - iv. All International Teaching Assistants must complete the [International Teaching Assistant \(ITA\) Workshop and Assessment](#) to determine if their English skills meet requirements to be appointed as a Teaching Assistant.
- d. **Graduate Research Assistant (PeopleSoft Code SGRA-salary)** - assists faculty or staff in conducting research.
- e. **Graduate Residence/Housing Assistant (PeopleSoft Code SGRH-salary)** – works in campus housing.
- f. **Graduate Staff Assistant (PeopleSoft Code SGST-hourly)** - provides administrative assistance. A graduate staff assistant must be hired on an hourly basis, is covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and is subject to both the minimum wage and overtime requirements of the law.

3. **NON-GA POSITIONS: Graduate Student – No Assistantship positions** Payment is based on hours entered weekly in ITAMS. ACA, IRS and FSLA implications for each student’s cumulative hours/week must be considered by hiring departments. No GA benefits are associated with non-assistantship student positions.

4. Graduate Assistant Hiring Requirements

Requirement	Minimum	Maximum	Exception
Work hours/week during the academic year	10 GA hours (see 7a below for details)	20 total GA hours	Maximum 25 GA hours with approval from Graduate School. (See 7e for more information)
Stipend/term	<b>\$2250 (\$15/hour * 10 hours/week * 15 weeks)</b> prorated for additional hours/week (i.e., 20 hours/week = \$4500 minimum for one semester)	Determined by department/college	
Pay rate	<b>\$15/hour minimum rate,</b> effective 7/1/2023 based on memo from Division of Human Resources emailed 7/3/2023	Not more than postdoctoral and/or adjunct instructors in same unit.	
Enrollment	Fall/Spring = 6 credit hours  Summer = 3 credit hours	Determined by department/college	1-5 credit hours if approved and coded for Special Enrollment status. (See 7c for more information)

5. Hiring date ranges—not to exceed academic year (**Aug-May**)

- a. Official Academic Year: August 16 - May 15; Summer: May 16 - August 15
- b. Two-week extensions were approved June 26, 2015 for positions with responsibilities before Fall or after Spring semesters: Fall may begin August 1; Spring may end May 31.
- c. Single-term hire for Summer is the only date range that can cross the fiscal year change.

6. **Written Hiring Agreement.** Graduate assistants should have a written agreement with the hiring unit addressing the information outlined in [ACAF 4.00](#) Policy section D. The Human Resources Student Employment Office will send a confirmation email to students when a hire has processed. The hiring unit is responsible for the hours and pay details to match funding offers.

7. Additional information

- a. Students can check in **Self-Service Carolina** to see when their Student Type changes to Graduate Assistant. Bursar accounts usually change *the business day after* the Student Type changes in Banner.
- b. **Processing time** takes a minimum of 3 days to clear all approvals before tuition exemptions and insurance subsidies are applied to student bills.
- c. [Request for Special Enrollment](#) forms (necessary for GAs enrolling in 1-5 credit hours, usually in final terms) must be submitted to the Graduate School. Students must be enrolled in a minimum of 1 credit hour and have a Program of Study on file **before** Special Enrollment/Z-Status will be approved each semester.
- d. Departments are expected to monitor and enforce the GA enrollment requirement. Enrollment is required at time of hire. Graduate School staff will verify full-time GA enrollment status/Z-Status at the beginning of each semester.

- e. Submit the [Graduate Assistant Appeal to Work 21-25 Hours](#) form to the Graduate School.  
**Note: additional hours are not available for International Students.**