



Southeastern Louisiana University

Graduate Assistantships

Graduate Assistant Handbook

Part III: Policies Governing Employment of Graduate Assistants

Section A. Graduate Assistantships

GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

Categories of Appointments

Teaching Fellows (TF)

The graduate assistant teaches a course(s) and has full responsibility for the course(s). He/she is the Instructor of Record for the course(s). The graduate teaching fellow is exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act and does not have to clock in or out.

Teaching Assistant (TA)

TAs are to assist faculty members in teaching and delivery of course content, which may include taking roll, grading papers, conducting help sessions or serving an apprenticeship under the supervision of a faculty member. A faculty member has the primary responsibility for determining all aspects regarding course content and delivery and as such is the Primary Instructor of Record. TAs are entered into the PeopleSoft System as a Secondary Instructor of Record for purposes of employment classification. This classification means that teaching assistants are exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act and, therefore, are not required to clock in and out.

Research Assistant (RA)

The graduate assistant primarily performs research assignments for a faculty member. Often the research assistant is working together with the faculty member in conducting a research project. The research assistant is exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act and does not have to clock in or out.

Professional Service Assistant (PSA)

The PSA title would be reserved for graduate students who perform jobs or tasks directly related to their graduate training program or discipline. Departments, units or offices wishing to offer PSAs would be required to have specific position descriptions and verify that the student is being hired to work in an identical or appropriately related area in which the student is pursuing the graduate degree. PSA positions are approved by the Dean for Research and Graduate Studies. In addition, students classified as a PSA will be subject to random verification that the activities being performed are consistent with appropriate professional service activities. Professional service assistants would not be exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act and, therefore, are required to clock in and out.

Administrative Assistant (AA)

The graduate assistant performs assignments primarily of a clerical nature or supervisory nature, although he/she may be assigned other duties. AAs would not be exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act and, therefore, are required to clock in and out.

Graduate assistants shall be designated in one of the above categories, according to the type of duties they primarily perform. For example, if a graduate assistant spends 60 percent of his/her time assisting in laboratory sections and 40 percent conducting research; he/she shall be designated as a teaching assistant.

Terms of Appointment

All graduate assistants hold their appointments at the pleasure or will of the University of Louisiana System.

1. The employment term of graduate assistants follows the University's academic calendar (from the first week of freshman orientation through the week of final examinations) for the fall and spring semesters and for the summer term.
2. Some budget units may require graduate assistants to work prior to or beyond the defined academic calendar. These will be clearly documented prior to the students' acceptance of the assistantships.
3. All graduate assistants shall work an average of twenty (20) hours per week (Sunday through Saturday). Hours missed due to holidays or to other University closures are not made up.
4. Graduate assistants may be employed on a semester-by-semester basis or on an academic year basis (i.e., from the first week of freshman orientation in the fall semester through the week of final examinations in the spring semester).
5. Graduate students hired to replace graduate assistants who resigned or were terminated during a semester will not receive tuition waivers. Graduate assistants whose appointments begin after the first week of Freshman Orientation will have their salary prorated.
6. Federal regulations prohibit non-resident aliens from working more than twenty (20) hours per week during semesters or more than forty (40) hours per week during breaks.
7. Graduate assistants may not hold any other employment in the University.
8. Graduate assistants must attend the Graduate Assistant Orientation session held at the beginning of the semester of their employment. Graduate Teaching Assistants must attend the TA workshop prior to the beginning of the fall semester.
9. Graduate assistants may not continue to be employed as graduate assistants after they have graduated, that is, completed their graduate degree. Individuals pursuing a second master's degree may petition through the graduate assistant application process for continued eligibility to receive a graduate assistantship.
10. A graduate assistant who resigns or who will not be employed as a graduate assistant for the following semester must complete the Exit Check-Out Procedure Form. Graduate assistants who work in the spring semester and who will be employed in the fall in the department do not have to check out if they do not work during the summer session. Failure to complete the Exit Check-Out Procedures Form may result in their check being held until the check-out procedure is completed.

Graduate Teaching Fellows

1. Graduate teaching fellows must undergo regular in-service training and supervision.
2. Graduate teaching fellows:
 - A. May teach a maximum of six (6) semester hours per semester or its equivalent.
 - B. Must have satisfactorily completed at least eighteen (18) graduate hours in the teaching discipline and hold a master's degree, or hold at least a master's degree with a major in the teaching field,

Or

- C. If they do not have a master's degree, they must have satisfactorily completed at least eighteen (18) graduate hours in the teaching discipline, remain under the direct continuous supervision of a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, and be regularly supervised.
- D. Graduate teaching fellows for whom English is a second language must demonstrate proficiency in oral and written communication in English prior to their appointment.
- E. Graduate teaching fellows must undergo planned and periodic evaluations.

Academic Requirements

1. A graduate assistant must have been admitted into a graduate degree program of the University as graduate student prior to the beginning of his/her employment.
2. A Master's level student graduate assistant will be eligible for a maximum of twenty-four (24) consecutive months of employment and a student pursuing a doctorate will be eligible for forty-eight (48) consecutive months of employment. Students in the Counselor Education Master's degree program, due to a 60 hour requirement for the degree, are eligible for employment as a graduate assistant for thirty-six (36) consecutive months. All timeframes are based on the start date of the degree program.
3. A one semester extension of a graduate assistantship beyond the timeframes noted in #2 above may be granted by the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies. A detailed explanation and justification for the requested extension must be provided to the Dean.
4. A graduate assistant may carry a maximum of twelve (12) hours of graduate course work, during the fall and spring semesters, and nine (9) hours during the summer term.
5. A graduate assistant seeking a waiver of the minimum or maximum course loads must secure the approval of the Dean for Research and Graduate Studies prior to registering for classes.

Appointment, Evaluation, and Continuation

1. To be considered for employment as a graduate assistant, a graduate student is required to apply through the University on-line Human Resources employment website.
2. All budget units hiring graduate assistants who have not been previously employed at Southeastern must complete the Telephone Verification of Personal References form and submit the completed form, together with the other required employment materials, to the Office for Research and Graduate Studies.
3. Graduate assistant employment for new graduate assistants will not be processed until all employment materials (On-line Application for Employment, Background Check Authorization, Recommendation for Employment and Telephone Verification of Personal Reference) are submitted to the Office for Graduate Studies. Graduate Assistants will also have to provide a W4 federal tax form, L4 state tax form and copies of citizen student's driver's license and social security card to the Human Resources Offices. If the student does not have a driver's license, contact Human Resources for acceptable substitutes.
4. Appointments of graduate assistants may be made for one semester or for an academic year (fall and spring semester). Appointments carry no assurances of reappointment.
5. All appointments and re-appointments of graduate assistants are made by the Dean for Research and Graduate Studies upon the recommendation of the appropriate budget unit head.
 These appointments are made with the understanding that the employment of the individual shall terminate unconditionally on the ending date of the semester or academic year for which they were appointed.
6. Supervisors may make written performance evaluations of their graduate assistant(s) and shall discuss the performance evaluation with him/her each semester.
7. Causes for discharge of graduate assistants include conduct seriously prejudicial to the employing budget unit or to the University, such as infraction of the law or of commonly

accepted standards of morality, failure to follow orders, violation of institutional or system rules and regulations, willful neglect of duty, inefficiency, incompetence, or consistent or excessive tardiness or absenteeism. The foregoing enumeration of causes for discharge shall not be deemed exclusive.

8. Graduate assistants with grievances shall follow the University Grievance Procedure for Unclassified Staff.