

Graduate Programs Office

CALA Room 101B | 1040 N. Olive Rd (520) 621-9819

Graduate Assistant Requirements

Graduate students must satisfy the following requirements in order to occupy a graduate assistantship or associate ship. Any additions or exceptions must be articulated in writing prior to hire.

- A GA must be admitted to a graduate degree-seeking program (masters or doctoral) at the University of Arizona.
- A GA must maintain a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.000 or higher. If the student is new, the admitted GPA will be considered. Exceptions may be requested by emailing the Graduate College.
- An associate level GA must be concurrently admitted to a doctoral program. An associate must retain this distinction unless converted to a non-doctoral program or they change hiring departments.
- GA's are required to enroll for and complete a minimum of six (6) units of graded graduate credit during each major academic term. Hiring departments may hold additional requirements. GA's are not required to register during summer sessions to maintain employment.

GA's who will have direct instructional contact with students must comply with the following training requirements. Records of these requirements will exist at <https://grad.arizona.edu/gc/> for restricted viewing.

- A TA must complete the Graduate Assistant Teaching Orientation (GATO). This is orientation is a one-time requirement. A special section of this orientation is mandatory for international TA's. One can register for this orientation through the Graduate College's website.
- A TA whose first teaching assistantship/associate ship was after spring 2007 must complete the Teaching Assistant Training Online (TATO). The minimum passing score for the TATO examination is 95%. Should a student exhaust their number of attempts and not pass, their hiring department must review the training and complete the TATO Remediation form, which is available on the Graduate College's website.
- Departments may host their own orientations. GA's must attend these relevant orientations.

TA's whose first language is not English must adhere to the following additional requirements.

- A TA must demonstrate proficiency in spoken English. Various tests exist; a passing score on any one of these is sufficient.

Minimum Passing Speaking Evaluation Scores		
TBEST	TOEFL (Speaking Section of IBT)	TSE/SPEAK
7	26	50

Requesting Exceptions or Exemptions

Hiring exceptions related to GPA can be requested through the Graduate College. Departments may make requests by emailing gahelp@grad.arizona.edu. Students may not request exceptions. These requests should explain why the individual is being offered a position over other potential students who meet this requirement. Such an exception is only permitted for a single term.

Hiring exceptions related to speaking proficiency of a TA can be requested through the Graduate College. Departments may make requests by emailing gahelp@grad.arizona.edu. Students may not request exceptions. Requests may only be made if the TA will not have direct unsupervised student contact or if the TA will only be teaching in their native language. In these cases, the TA should be responsible only for objective grading. It is strongly suggested that departments take steps improve proficiency in English for such students. Such exceptions are only permitted for a single term. These exceptions can only be made if a minimum score is achieved on a speaking evaluation.

Minimum Speaking Evaluation Scores for Exception		
TBEST	TOEFL (Speaking Section of IBT)	TSE/SPEAK
6	23	45

Exemptions from speaking evaluation for TA's may be requested if the student has achieved a degree from a US institution. Contact Cynthia Bjerk-Plocke at (520) 621-7815 or cbjerk@grad.arizona.edu to arrange an interview with Dr. Maria Teresa Velez.

Graduate Assistant Responsibilities

The following outlines the responsibilities of a GA.

- A GA must discuss all other employment with their supervisor(s).
- A GA hired on an academic contract is not required to work before the start of classes, after finals, during winter break, or during spring break. Exceptions to this default must be articulated in writing prior to hire.
- GA's are hired for the "whole job" and therefore are required to perform work whenever it may be necessary. Work requirements are to be articulated in writing prior to hire.

Employment Status and Limitations

GA's are salaried employees. As such their reported hours may not be reduced in most cases. GA's are classified as student employees. The following limitations on GA's employment apply:

- During periods where they are concurrently enrolled, total on-campus employment may not exceed 30 hours per week (0.75 FTE).

- International GA's on F-1 or J-1 visas are subject to additional restriction; their employment may not exceed 20 hours per week (0.50 FTE) while they are concurrently enrolled.
- While concurrently enrolled at least at half-time, a GA is exempt from Social Security taxes (FICA). The minimum enrollment for this exemption is 6 units during the fall and spring and 3 units during the summer sessions.
- GA's are not eligible for participation in either in The University of Arizona's faculty/staff employee benefits program or the State of Arizona Retirement Program.
- Any hours worked above a GA's designated FTE must be paid via supplemental compensation.
- A GA may hold multiple positions so long as the total FTE does not exceed the restrictions.
- According to the Arizona Board of Regents policies, GA's are not eligible for concurrent employment as staff of faculty.
- The Graduate Council has ruled that TA's are not allowed to engage in any commercial activity relative to the courses they are instructing.
- TA's may not be the instructor of record for graduate level courses. Duties of GA's involved in graduate level courses should be restricted to objective grading, lab setup, website maintenance, and general advising.
- Approved titles for GA's are: Graduate Assistant, Teaching, Graduate Assistant, Research, Graduate Assistant, Other, Graduate Assistant, Outreach, Graduate Associate, Teaching, Graduate Associate, Research, Graduate Associate, Other, Graduate Associate, Outreach. Please do not confuse these with titles of "Teaching Assistant", "Teaching Associate" and "Research Associate", which are the titles for appointed personnel, not graduate appointments.
- The Arizona Board of Regents has approved five possible FTE's and maximum workable hours for GA's. Multiple appointments cannot exceed 0.75 FTE total.

FTE	0.25	0.33	0.50	0.66	0.75
Hours Per Pay Period	20.0	26.4	40.0	52.8	60.0

Supplemental Compensation

If supplemental compensation is to be earned during the summer months, students must be employed as a GA, either concurrently or during the preceding spring semester. A GA may not receive supplemental compensation past the end of their appointment if they have graduated the previous spring semester.

The Supplemental Compensation Authorization form is used to pay a GA for duties performed in addition to the assistantship and is available on the web at <http://uabis.arizona.edu/eforms/>. If a new supplemental compensation position control number is needed, leave that space blank and

Systems Control will assign one. The PAF and PCF are not required with the supplemental compensation form. Follow these instructions when completing the form.

1. Original/Revision/Continuation: check the appropriate box to indicate if this is an original, revision or a continuation to a prior supplemental compensation authorization request.
2. Date: Enter current date.
3. Employee Name: Enter the employee's name (last/first/middle initial).
4. Employee Identification Number: Enter the employee's EIN.
5. FTE: Enter the employee's FTE.
6. Primary Title: Enter the title from the GA position.
7. Home Department's Name: Enter the name of the department employing the Student as a GA.
8. Home Department's Number: Enter the 4-digit number of the department employing the student as a GA.
9. Academic/Fiscal: Check the appropriate box to indicate if the assistantship is an academic or fiscal appointment.
10. Hiring Dept. Name: Enter the name of the department hiring the student into the supplemental compensation position.
11. Dept. Number: Enter the 4-digit number of the hiring department.
12. Job Description: Enter the specific description of duties that are to be performed for the supplemental compensation.
13. Position Start Date: Enter the start date of the supplemental compensation position.
14. Position End Date: Enter the date that the supplemental compensation position ends.
15. Position Control Number: Enter a "Supplemental Compensation, Graduate" position control number. This number is to be used even if a department uses a student wage rate (A, B or C). The only exception is for summer session when the "Summer Session, Assistant" position control number may be used.
16. Hourly Rate: Enter the hourly rate to be paid.
17. Account: Enter the 6-digit FRS account number(s) that will fund the student in this position.
18. Amount: Enter the dollar amount to be expended from each account.
19. Account Dates: No entry is approved if each account covers the entire working period as specified in number 13 above. Otherwise, enter the start dates of each account. The total funding shown must completely cover the working period specified for the employee and should agree with the amount shown in number 18, above. If state funds are not involved, the funding period may encompass portions of two different fiscal years (summer funding).
20. Total Amount to be Earned: Enter the total amount of supplemental compensation the student is to earn in this position during the total period specified.
21. Total Number of Hours to be Worked: Enter the total number of hours the employee is to perform supplemental compensation work during the total period specified.
22. Initiator Name: Enter the preparer's name.
23. Phone Number: Enter the preparer's phone number.
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GA Tuition Deferment Program

The GA Tuition Deferment Program will allow a GA to defer payment of their tuition until the end of the semester. There is no cost to enroll in this program.

This program does not cover college tuition differentials or non-tuition related expenses.

For each semester that a student wishes to be enrolled in this program, they must designate their enrollment in the program by completing the [GA Tuition Deferment Program enrollment form](#). Students must enroll in the plan before the first day of class in each semester to avoid late fees.

While this program replaces the Payroll Deduction Program, there are no payments scheduled and no money will be subtracted from paychecks to account for tuition costs. Students must ensure that their account balance is settled by the end of the semester. Delinquency will result in late fees and loss of this benefit for subsequent semesters.

Graduate Assistant Benefits

Benefits that a GA may receive will affect the available student financial aid. Contact the Office of Student Financial Aid for more information.

GA benefits are not taxable.

All students, including GA's are responsible of assessing their bursar's accounts. The Graduate College does not evaluate bursar's account balances or individual financial responsibility.

GA's will not be assessed non-resident tuition, even if classified as non-resident students.

During fall and spring semesters, GA's are eligible for a waiver of their tuition. The value of the tuition waiver that a GA receives is dependent on their FTE and enrollment. Please refer to the following chart for values. This benefit should be loaded as soon as hiring information is processed and requirements are fulfilled (this is different from previous semesters).

Base Tuition Coverage (Per Semester)				
FTE	{0.25, 0.33}		{0.50, 0.66, 0.75}	
Enrollment	6 Units	7+ Units	6 Units	7+ Units
Coverage	\$2,187	\$2,550	\$4,374	\$5,100

A GA is eligible for coverage of the premium for student health insurance through the University of Arizona Campus Health. To receive this benefit, a student must enroll in the student health insurance program during their open enrollment period. More information is available at http://www.health.arizona.edu/webfiles/insurance_gradbenefit.html. Students enrolled in the plan cannot cancel their coverage after the open enrollment period, even if they resign or are terminated. Students who resign or are terminated during the period of coverage will be responsible for payment of the premium. A student will be automatically reenrolled in the student health insurance program. One must take action to cancel or modify their enrollment in this plan.

GA's who do not occupy an assistantship for the entire semester will receive prorated benefits. Tuition waivers will be prorated by pay-period. Insurance benefits will be prorated by day.

A GA is eligible for a 10% discount off the price of select items purchased at all ASUA Bookstores, subject to Bookstore policies in effect. (Updated September 21, 2010) This benefit goes into effect once hiring information is loaded and requirements are satisfied. This benefit must be mentioned at the time of purchase to receive it. This benefit is not available retroactively. Speak with representatives at the Bookstores for more information about this discount.

GA's that are eligible for the Qualified Tuition Reduction (QTR) due to spousal/partner or dependent status should note that coordination of these benefits is a manual process that will require action from the GA at the beginning of each semester. The spousal/partner and dependent QTR benefits are taxable. Recall that GA tuition and insurance benefits are not taxable.

Dates and FTE

Notices of Appointment should be received by systems control no later than 10 days before the beginning of the appointment to ensure proper time for processing.

The fall section of the academic appointments goes from August 16, 2010 to January 2, 2011. The spring section goes from January 3, 2011 to May 22, 2011.

During winter break (December 18, 2010 – January 12, 2011) and spring break (March 12, 2011 – March 20, 2011) school is not in session but the students are being paid for their GA appointments. Departments may report hours up to full time. Student employees cannot be paid for Christmas Eve, Christmas Day or New Year's Day. GA's on academic appointments are not required to put in hours during the break unless this has been discussed in advance. Any hours worked not previously discussed must be paid via supplemental compensation. Only departments approved by the provost's office to be open may pay students for the winter closure. Students on J-1 or F-1 visas are not normally eligible for the maximum during winter break as they cannot work over 20 hours per week until after finals. A student on an F-1 or J-1 visa can work up to 40 hours during spring break.

Students are not required to enroll during the summer for fiscal appointments or supplemental compensation. If a student enrolls during the summer, they may work no more than 30 hours per

week. Otherwise they may work 40 hours per week. Available hours by pay period for summer sessions are listed below.

If a student is enrolled during the summer sessions, they may work up to 30 hours per week (0.75 FTE) total while classes are in session. This applies to international students on visas as well. If a student is not enrolled for summer sessions, they may work up to 40 hours per week (1.00 FTE). Students may not work on the closure for Memorial Day (May 30, 2011) or for Independence Day (July 4, 2011).

The fall section of the fiscal appointments goes from July 1, 2010 to December 31, 2010. The spring section goes from January 1, 2011 to June 30, 2011.

Social Security Numbers

All students are required to have a valid Social Security Number (SSN) in order to be paid for work by The University of Arizona. New international students that do not have an SSN can apply for one using the Graduate International Student Awards Letter (GISAL). Please see the form, instructions and general information in Section 6. Students must be referred to the Office of the International Student Programs and Services for further information.

GA's have three weeks to present a valid SSN card to the Financial Services Office/Customer Service desk. If the SSN card has not been presented the GA's paycheck will be re-routed to FSO/Customer Service until the original SSN card or proof of SSN receipt has been provided.

Recruitment Process

Departments are expected to strive to hire the most highly qualified individuals for graduate appointments. When making a selection, departments should consider a candidate's past academic coursework, success in teaching, research and publication, relevant professional experience and professional references. In support of The University of Arizona's commitment to Equal Opportunity Employment and Affirmative Action, employing departments are expected to consider all eligible applications.

Graduate Assistants/Associates are subject to pre-employment screening in accordance with ABOR policy 6-709 if being hired in a security sensitive position and/or working with direct access to select agents. Please go to http://www.hr.arizona.edu/02_sel/ for further information.

Resignation Process

GA's are required to tender a letter of resignation if they are leaving their position before the end of their employment contract (e.g., degree completion, withdrawing from the university, changing from salary to wages or changing status from student employment to faculty or staff). The GA submits the letter to the appropriate departmental payroll representative for completion of a term report or PAF. Departments should submit a PAF indicating services completed for any students for who continued employment is not planned but full termination is not desired. The original letter and the termination report or PAF must be forwarded to Systems Control.

Students leaving appointments early generally will owe charges due to withdrawal of benefits. It is strongly advised that the department or the student contact the Graduate College at gahelp@grad.arizona.edu to determine what affect the end of the appointment will have.

Students who will be inactive for more than one semester but will be returning should be reported to Systems Control as a “term flag = R” on the PAF.

Involuntary Termination

In some circumstances, a GA’s supervisor may find it necessary to terminate a GA before the end of their appointment period. The reasons for a premature termination may include, but are not limited to:

- Academic misconduct
- Excessive absences
- Misconduct
- Breach of Contract

Except in cases of gross misconduct that require immediate termination, a GA supervisor must follow the procedure outlined below in order to end an appointment early. The GA must continue to be paid throughout this process.

1. The student must be given multiple specific verbal warnings indicating the problem and steps to correct it. The supervisor must keep written documentation, with dates, summarizing what was said to the GA and the GA’s response.
2. If the verbal warnings do not correct the problem, the supervisor must issue a written warning again stating the problem, corrective measures, and a time frame in which action must be taken. Both the GA and the supervisor should sign the document. The warning must include information indicating to the student the fiscal ramifications of the premature end of the appointment (i.e. loss of GA benefits) and the effective date of the end. A copy of this letter must be attached to the PAF or Termination Report should this action be necessary.
3. Systems Control and the Graduate College will process the early end of the appointment, including application of charges to the student’s account for lost benefits. A billing letter will be sent to the student detailing the charges. The Bursar’s Office will also send their normal billing statement and the student’s account may incur additional charges associated with that process.

Documents and Information

Various types of information relevant to graduate assistantships are available at the Graduate College website, <http://grad.arizona.edu/>, under the financial section.

Information about the Arizona Board of Regents’ policy can be found on their website, <http://www.abor.asu.edu/>.

Information concerning student code of conduct and code of academic integrity can be found at the Dean of Students’ website, <http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/>.

An example of the type of application you may use in determining who will be appointed as a GA in your unit can be found at <https://grad.arizona.edu/gc/forms/> under forms. This form complies with University Affirmative Action policies and applicable provisions of State and Federal law relating to the equality of employment opportunity for all persons.

Each department should tailor their offer letters to their own needs. Important items to include are: length of appointment, salary amount, FTE, training requirements, background check requirements, English proficiency testing, and contacts.

The Graduate International Student Awards Letter (GISAL) must be completed by the hiring department if the GA is international and does not have a valid Social Security card or has not already applied for one. Please go to <https://grad.arizona.edu/gc/>, log in, and look for forms to view the documents.

Students on the university's payroll for the first time must complete employee information packets that may be obtained from Human Resources web site, <http://www.hr.arizona.edu/>. Paychecks will NOT be processed until this requirement is fulfilled.

Departments who are hiring students new to the university's payroll system must verify their identity and work eligibility by completing an I-9. Notices of Appointment will NOT be processed until this requirement is fulfilled.

Advice from the Office of Institutional Equity concerning how to prevent sexual harassment and maintain professional boundaries is available here: <http://equity.arizona.edu/oiefiles/TipsForGTAs.pdf>. GAs and departments should take active roles in knowing what is appropriate in the workplace.

The Legal Arizona Workers Act requires the University of Arizona to use EVerify, a federal on-line system, to check the names and identification documents of all new employees to ensure they are legally authorized to work in the United States.

The student must sign the Notice of Appointment (as well as the Employee Information Packet and I-9 Form for new hires). Copies of all hiring documents, including the turn-around PAF, should be retained by the hiring department. Copies must be given to the student for their records as well.

Send the completed hiring packets (with the original Notice of Appointment, Employee Information Packet, and I-9 Form) to Systems Control, University Services Building #401. Please do not forward incomplete packets, as they cannot be processed.

Position Control Forms (PCF's) are only to be used for funding changes.

Personnel Action Forms (PAF's) are only to be used for changes of name, address, etc.

The Supplemental Compensation Authorization form is used to pay a GA for duties performed in addition to the assistantship and is available on the web at <http://uabis.arizona.edu/eforms/>.