

Graduate Assistantships

Graduate assistantships are offered to encourage graduate work, to promote teaching, and to promote research. Graduate assistants have a graduate degree as their primary goal, and the assistantships are part of their graduate education. Assistantships are available through various departments of instruction, under the auspices of the Graduate School. Any student qualified for admission to the Graduate School is eligible to apply for a graduate assistantship.

A student eligible for an assistantship may be appointed as a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA), Graduate Research Assistant (GRA), or Graduate Administrative Assistant (GAA). Full assistantships usually require 20 hours per week service to the University, but may require more or fewer hours per week in exceptional cases. All full-time graduate assistants must be registered for a minimum of 9 semester hours (6 semester hours in the summer term) during any semester in which an appointment is held. Exceptions require permission of the Graduate Dean. Normally, all courses for which the student is registered shall be graduate credit courses. Exceptions must be approved by the Department Chair and Graduate Dean.

All assistantship appointments are subject to the continuing availability of funds. Appointments are made by the department only when resources to support them are assured, but students are cautioned that a variety of circumstances could cause positions to be terminated prior to the end of the appointment period. All assistantships are awarded contingent upon satisfactory progress toward a graduate degree. Assistantship support may continue through one additional semester after the semester in which degree requirements are completed.

Benefits

Tuition

A graduate assistant who holds a full assistantship (20 hours per week) appointment will receive tuition and fees for 9 to 12 hours per semester (6 hours in the summer term). Tuition and fees for students who hold less than a full assistantship appointment are prorated accordingly.

Stipend

Assistantship stipends vary in amount by type, program, and student academic progress. Students receive an offer letter indicating the amount of the stipend. Further information may be obtained in the department or in the Graduate School.

Graduate Teaching Assistantships

As the title implies, Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) share the faculty's responsibility for teaching. The purpose of this assistantship is twofold: one is to support the departmental teaching program, and the other is to aid the student's professional development. The teaching assistant may have duties assigned as a classroom instructor, laboratory instructor, tutor, grader or other activities related to the educational mission of the department. Only students in good academic standing are eligible for and may be awarded a teaching assistantship. The GTA's teaching load will necessarily vary from one department to another, and the load should be proportional to the normal full-time teaching load carried by other faculty members in the department.

If a student holding an assistantship withdraws from courses during the semester such that his/her course load is below the minimum required hours, that student can be required to reimburse the University for tuition and health insurance prorated on the remaining course load. Students holding an assistantship that do not continue to make satisfactory progress toward their degree may have their assistantship revoked.

Mandatory GTA training for all new GTAs is available within Canvas prior to the beginning of classes each semester and must be completed within two weeks of the semester start date. Ongoing GTAs need to complete the course only once, but if the student's assistantship lapses, the student will need to complete the modules again.

GTAs must have completed at least 18 semester hours of graduate coursework in their discipline to qualify as the instructor of record in any class.

Graduate Research Assistantships

A Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) performs research under the supervision of a faculty member. At times, a research project to which the research assistant is appointed may eventually lead to a thesis or dissertation topic; however, a research supervisor cannot guarantee that a particular project will provide suitable material for a thesis or dissertation. All assistantship appointments are subject to the continuing availability of funds. Appointments are made only when resources to support them are assured, but a financial emergency in the University could cause positions, including those of graduate assistants, to be terminated prior to the end of the appointment period. Assistantship support normally will not continue past the end of the semester in which the assistant expects to complete degree requirements. Some contracts or grants may specify U.S. citizenship as a prerequisite for appointment.

Graduate Administrative Assistants

A GAA performs administrative duties under the supervision of a faculty/staff member. As a condition of an administrative assistantship appointment, a 20-hour per week graduate assistant must be registered for at least 9 semester hours of graduate credit courses during any semester (Fall or Spring), and for at least 6 hours during the Summer term. Minimum course loads for appointments of lesser work-hours per week are prorated accordingly. A student with a graduate administrative assistantship may be permitted to enroll in appropriate, relevant, undergraduate courses only with the approval of the supervisor, the department/program chair, and the Graduate Dean. GAA opportunities are limited and not as common as the GTAs or GRAs.

Further Information

If a student holding an assistantship withdraws from courses during the semester such that his/her course load is below the minimum required hours, that student can be required to reimburse the university for tuition prorated on the remaining course load. Students holding an assistantship that will not continue to make satisfactory progress toward their degree may have their assistantship revoked.

International Students

English proficiency is a prerequisite for classroom or laboratory instruction for any non-native English speakers wishing to obtain an assistantship. Please visit the International Student section of the catalog (<https://catalog.uah.edu/grad/admissions/additional-admission-requirements-international-students/>) for more information regarding language requirements.