

**School of**  
**Educational Policy and Leadership**  
**Graduate Associate Handbook**



**Autumn 2011**

**Graduate Associate Policy**  
**School of Educational Policy and Leadership**  
**The Ohio State University Graduate School**  
**2011-2012**

This document combines the University policies related to Graduate Associates (GA) and the policies of the School of Educational Policy and Leadership. The University policies are in regular font and the School policies are found in *italics*.

**Section IX- Graduate Associates**

Graduate associate appointments must conform to the following Graduate School rules. Additional information may be obtained from the student's appointing unit, the Graduate Studies Committee, or the Office of Human Resources. Each office participates in the formulation of GA rules.

**General Information IX.1**

A graduate student's principal objective is to earn a graduate degree. Appointment as a GA contributes to that objective by providing an apprenticeship experience along with financial support. This apprenticeship complements formal instruction and gives the student practical, personal experience that can be gained only by performing instructional, research, or administrative activities. It is expected that GA responsibilities will not interfere with a student's reasonable progress toward completion of the graduate degree.

*Graduate Associates appointed by the School of Educational Policy and Leadership will be assigned to specific positions with supervision provided for orientation, training, and performance feedback and evaluation.*

**Titles.** The three graduate associate titles are: Graduate Administrative Associate (GAA), Graduate Research Associate (GRA), and Graduate Teaching Associate (GTA).

**Responsibilities.** Specific GA responsibilities are determined by the appointing units. These may include teaching classes, recitations, and labs; advising and counseling students; grading papers; gathering and analyzing data; writing reports; and assisting faculty members and administrators.

*All supervisors will provide preliminary written job descriptions prior to the start of the GA appointment. Aspects of the job descriptions may be added or negotiated after the job starts. Final job descriptions are approved by the Director of the School.*

**Eligibility.** To hold a GA appointment, a student must satisfy the following eligibility requirements. The student

1. must be pursuing a graduate degree at this University

*All graduate students holding an appointment in the School of Educational Policy and Leadership or in any other School or Department in the College of Education and Human Ecology must have achieved a minimum of 500 (or its equivalent) on both the verbal and quantitative portions of the GRE.*

2. must meet minimum Graduate School registration requirements:

- nine credit hours during each quarter a 50 percent or greater GA appointment is held, except during the summer quarter, when the minimum is seven
- seven credit hours during each quarter a 25 percent appointment is held
- for doctoral students who have passed the candidacy examination, three credit hours each quarter a 50 percent GA appointment is held, including summer quarter. Students who were admitted to the Graduate School Autumn Quarter 2008 and after are required to be continuously enrolled after passing the candidacy examination (VII.8).

Audited courses do not count toward these requirements.

*Effective Autumn Quarter 2007, all pre-candidacy GAs in the School of Educational Policy and Leadership are strongly urged to enroll for a minimum of 15 credit hours per quarter during which a School tuition fee payment authorization is utilized. GAs should meet with their advisors to discuss quarterly course schedules. To reach the 15 credit hours, GAs may choose to enroll in EPL 930 Internship in Higher Education (6-12 credit hours) or EPL 884.32 Field Experience in Higher Education (1-15 credit hours.). These enrollments are not intended to increase academic assignments, but to reflect the mentoring and learning that GAs obtain during the course of the assistantship. Enrollment in the course may be listed under the supervisor of the associateship or the School Director.*

3. must be in good standing in the Graduate School when the appointment or reappointment becomes effective

*A letter of exception for initial appointment can be requested of the Graduate Studies Committee by the admitting unit so student can hold a GA position.*

4. must maintain reasonable progress toward a graduate degree. It is the responsibility of each Graduate Studies Committee to determine what constitutes reasonable progress in its degree programs

*Reasonable progress will be defined by the School as:*

- a. for PhD students already holding a Master's Degree – on track to graduate within 5 years.*
- b. for PhD students without a Master's Degree – on track to graduate within 6 years.*
- c. for Master's (MA) students – on track to graduate within 2 years*
- d. a minimum 3.0 grade point average*
- e. satisfactory evaluation by advisor that courses taken are reasonable for the degree sought*

5. must certify proficiency in spoken English before assuming GTA duties involving direct student contact (applies only to international non-English speaking graduate students)

6. must satisfy other requirements published by the Graduate Studies Committee or appointing unit

*Students must also satisfy other requirements stipulated by the Graduate Studies Committee of the School of Educational Policy and Leadership, the Director's Office of the School, or the College of Education and Human Ecology.*

7. must, if enrolled in a bachelor's/master's combined program, hold only a GA appointment that does not involve teaching of other students

**Monitoring.** Responsibility for monitoring of eligibility for GA appointments is the joint responsibility of the Dean of the Graduate School and the Graduate Studies Committee.

*Monitoring of Graduate Associate's eligibility for appointment or reappointment is delegated to the Director of the Office of Student Services and the student's advisor.*

### **Terms of Appointment, Reappointment, or Termination IX.2**

**Offer of Appointment.** Any student accepting a GA appointment must be provided with a Graduate Associate Appointment form stating the terms of the appointment. This form is signed by the student and the head of the appointing unit or his/her designee(s).

*Appointments and reappointments are initiated by the person responsible for overseeing and supervising the GA position for the term of the appointment and are approved and assigned by the School Director's office.*

*All GA appointments and reappointments are subject to University and School funding.*

*Final employment decisions rest with the Director. Contracts for appointment or reappointment are issued from the School Director's office.*

**Time of Offer.** The following timetable is suggested for the offer and acceptance of appointments and reappointments by appointing units and students. This timetable provides adequate time for students to make course scheduling and other necessary decisions. This university adheres to the Council of Graduate Schools' resolution regarding Graduate Associates as summarized below.

In those instances in which a student accepts an offer before April 15 and subsequently desires to withdraw that acceptance, the student may submit in writing a resignation of the appointment at any time through April 15. However, an acceptance given or left in force after April 15 commits the student not to accept another offer without first obtaining a written release from the institution to which the commitment has been made.

*If possible, offers of appointment and reappointment should be made prior to April 15 with a response date for acceptance or non-acceptance of April 15.*

*If possible, GTA assignments should be made at least one quarter in advance so that the GTA will have time to organize and plan the course and get copyright clearance for course materials, if necessary.*

Those appointing units offering initial appointments after April 15 must make offers as early as possible during the spring and summer quarters.

**Period of Appointment.** Typical GA appointments are for three quarters – autumn through spring quarters. Summer quarter GA appointments are sometimes available but usually as separate appointments. There may be instances when an appointing unit needs to fill a one- or two-quarter appointment. Students who have held such short-term appointments and have performed satisfactorily must be considered along with all other eligible candidates for three-quarter associateship appointments for the following year. A GA may not be appointed for less than one quarter except with the approval of the Graduate School.

- 1. The period of appointment will be specified on the appointment form as well as starting and termination dates. Typical appointments are for nine months.*
- 2. Appointments of shorter duration are determined by the School Director*
- 3. Availability of summer appointments is based on need and availability of funding. Offers for summer appointments are only for summer quarter and will typically be made early in spring quarter.*

**Percent Time.** The majority of GAs are appointed at 50 percent time with an average load of 20 hours per week over the duration of the appointment period. Appointments that routinely require more than 20 hours per week must be made at the appropriate percentage level (for instance, an appointment requiring 22 hours per week must be made at the 55 percent level and be paid accordingly). A GA may not hold an appointment for more than 75 percent time, whether a single appointment or combination of appointments.

International students may not be appointed for more than 50 percent time either as a single or combined appointment.

GAs may be appointed for less than 50 percent (partial appointment). With the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School, GAs may be appointed at 25 percent time, averaging 10 hours per week; however, only one half of their fees will be authorized.

- 1. For GAs, a 25% appointment will average 10 hours per week*
- 2. For GAs, a 50% appointment will average 20 hours per week*
- 3. For GAs, a 75% appointment or combination of appointments will average 30 hours per week*

*Generally, the guidelines below are desired; however, the Director of the School will set the final, actual conditions in line with the needs of the School. The Director also sets enrollment limits for GTA classes based on the needs of the School.*

- 1. a 25% appointment is one 3-hour class per quarter*
- 2. a 50% appointment is two 3-hour classes or one 5-hour class per quarter*
- 3. a 75% appointment is three 3-hour classes or one 5-hour and one 3-hour class per quarter.*

**Stipend.** This university establishes a minimum stipend for GAs. The current minimum stipend is \$1000 per month for a 50 percent GA. Appointing units determine stipend levels above the

minimum within university stipend policies. Levels of responsibility, years of experience, progress toward a graduate degree, and performance as a GA are the most common factors used by appointing units to determine stipend levels.

*Stipend levels are set by the Director of the School. Currently, stipend levels are determined by degree and progress toward degree. Master's degree students' stipend levels will be based on the students' status as first or second year student. Doctoral degree students' stipend levels will be based on the pre- or post-candidacy status of the student. Copies of the students' signed Candidacy Examination Report Form must be turned in to both the Student Services Office (122 Ramseyer Hall) and the HR/Fiscal Office (160 Ramseyer Hall) so that post-candidacy pay increases can be processed.*

**Reappointments.** Academic performance and prior GA performance are among the criteria for reappointment. If a reappointment is not made, the appointing unit must notify the GA as soon as possible. Reasons for non-reappointment must be stated in writing. For two weeks after the date of the non-reappointment notice, a GA has the right to initiate an appeal to the head of the appointing unit.

*School reappointment criteria are as follows:*

- 1. GA appointments are normally made for three academic quarters with the possibility of a fourth quarter of support. PhD students are normally eligible for reappointment up to three academic years unless otherwise stipulated in their letter of offer of admission or appointment. MA students are normally eligible for reappointment up to two academic years unless otherwise stipulated in their letters of offer of admission or appointment.*
- 2. Maintaining a 3.0 grade point average.*
- 3. Satisfactory evaluation by advisor that courses are reasonable for the degree sought.*
- 4. Satisfactory evaluation by supervisor(s) of positions held.*

**Termination Criteria.** GA appointments may be terminated prior to the end of the appointment period only with the written approval of the Graduate School. A GA appointment is terminated prior to the end of the appointment period for any of the following reasons:

1. the GA is no longer enrolled in the Graduate School
2. the GA is registered for fewer than the number of credit hours required for a GA appointment or fewer than three credit hours for a doctoral student who has passed the candidacy examination
3. performance as a GA is determined to be unsatisfactory by the employing unit
4. the GA graduates
5. the appointing unit has insufficient funds
6. unsatisfactory academic performance

**Volunteer GAs.** Under no circumstances should graduate students serve as "volunteer" GAs where they are expected to provide service with no stipend, at a stipend not commensurate with

the expected load, or without an appropriate payment of tuition and fees. Course credit cannot be awarded to a student performing in the role of a GA in lieu of a stipend. Circumstances that may warrant an exception to this policy must be approved in advance by the Graduate School on a case-by-case basis.

**GAs Teaching Graduate Students.** Graduate Associates may not be assigned to teach courses in which graduate students are enrolled for graduate credit. Circumstances that may warrant an exception to this policy must be approved in advance by the Graduate School.

**Outside Employment.** A GA should determine whether the Graduate Studies Committee of his/her program has an established policy governing this issue. Graduate Studies Committees are encouraged to establish a policy on outside employment for graduate associates. A GA who is considering additional employment outside the university should consult his/her graduate advisor. A careful evaluation of the impact of additional commitments on the student's academic progress, and on his/her GA responsibilities should be made.

*The School of Educational Policy and Leadership does not encourage outside employment of Graduate Associate appointees during the term of their appointment. Student advisors and GA advisors must work in consultation with one another to insure that academic progress and GA responsibilities are not compromised by outside employment. This consultation should occur annually.*

### **Appointing Unit Responsibilities IX.3**

Within the above-stated rules, each unit appointing GAs must develop, publish, and make available its GA rules, processes, and procedures. In addition, all GAs should be informed in writing of the person or persons from whom they should seek guidance and advice about their GA responsibilities. Each unit appointing GAs must provide the following information or direct students to a publication where it is located.

1. copies of Section IX of the *Graduate School Handbook*
2. local criteria and procedures for selecting GAs

*Candidates for GA positions are currently recommended to the Director of the School by faculty and/or staff. Final employment decisions rests with the Director.*

3. local criteria and procedures for reappointing GAs
4. period of appointments
5. availability of summer quarter appointments
6. stipend levels

*Current EPL stipend levels are available from the School's Fiscal Officer.*

7. dates for notifying students of appointments and for receiving acceptances or refusals
8. a completed Graduate Associate Appointment Document, including a statement of duties and responsibilities

9. criteria and procedures for evaluating and reporting GA performance, including information about the Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEI) form and other student evaluations

*The main purpose of positive and corrective performance feedback is to improve competence and performance of the GA.*

*If termination during the term of appointment or disqualification for reappointment is the judgment to be made, the supervisor shall justify the recommendation in writing to the Director, advisor, and GA. The Director shall make the final decision.*

10. criteria and procedures for terminating GA appointments
11. grievance procedures within the appointing unit
12. appropriate space and facilities necessary to carry out GA teaching, research, or administrative duties

#### **Grievance Procedures IX.4**

It is generally preferable for problems related to GA appointments to be settled at the local level. Regular, clear communication between graduate associates and their advisors and supervisors is key to establishing and maintaining an effective work environment. However, if talking to an advisor or immediate supervisor does not resolve a problem or potential grievance, graduate associates are encouraged to consult program handbooks and other materials provided by the appointing unit to ascertain grievance guidelines that may be in place. Graduate program chairs and heads of appointing units can also provide information about such guidelines. The staff of the Graduate School is also available to provide consultation with graduate students about problems or potential grievances. There may be instances in which recourse to these persons does not provide resolution. The Graduate Council has established grievance procedures (see Appendix C).

*If the above informal discussions do not result in a resolution and before the formal procedure of Appendix C in the Graduate School Handbook, GAs with a grievance are referred to the Director of the School. The Director will seek information from parties concerned in the grievance and render a formal decision on the grievance.*

*If the Director is a party concerned in the grievance, the grievance is referred to the Graduate Studies Committee. The Graduate Studies Committee will seek information from parties concerned in the grievance and render a formal decision on the grievance to the Graduate School.*

#### **Benefits Information IX.5**

**Fee Authorizations.** Every graduate associate (GTA, GRA, and GAA) appointed for at least 50 percent of full time receives a full tuition and fee authorization. Students holding GA appointments receive fee authorizations that include Instructional and General fees and nonresident fees. Other fees, including parking and late penalties, as well as college computing fees, student activity fee, and the mandatory COTA fee, must generally be paid by the student. GAs appointed on various grants and special projects also receive a fee authorization, although in their case the fees may be charged back to the grant or appointing unit through a complex formula that takes into account indirect costs to the university. Notice of fee authorizations is

typically sent to the Office of the University Bursar by the appointing unit and appears on the student's Statement of Account. A GA may not be denied a fee authorization. This is an entitlement that accompanies the title of GA. By the same token, no graduate student may receive a fee authorization that is not on appointment as a GA (except for various fellows, trainees, and those receiving a fourth-quarter fee authorization).

**Fourth Quarter Fee Authorization.** Graduate students holding a 50 percent or greater GA appointment for three consecutive quarters are entitled to a full fee authorization during the immediately following fourth quarter without being on appointment. Students holding a 25 percent or less GA appointment for three or more quarters are not entitled to a fourth quarter fee authorization. Students using the fourth quarter fee authorization must be registered for at least nine hours of credit, except during summer quarter, when the minimum is seven. Post-candidacy doctoral students must register for at least three hours of credit. A graduate student who elects not to enroll during the fourth consecutive quarter may not defer the use of the fourth quarter fee authorization.

*GAs must inform the EPL GA coordinator of their intent to use a fourth quarter fee authorization.*

Students on a fourth quarter fee authorization may hold a 25 percent or less GA appointment. They may also be appointed to various other appointment titles, including student assistant, lecturer, fellow, and clinical instructor with no FTE limitations. They should not be appointed as student associates as that title assumes that students are not enrolled for courses.

When students are on GA appointments of 50 percent or greater for four or more consecutive quarters, such cases are considered regular GA appointments and the fee authorization must be paid by the appointing unit. A fourth quarter fee authorization would occur at the conclusion of the consecutive GA appointment quarters when the student is not appointed or is appointed to a GA appointment of 25 percent or less.

**Time Off.** GAs do not accrue vacation or sick leave. Rules regarding time during quarter breaks or other times are determined by the GA's appointing unit. GAs must check with their appointing units to determine when they are expected to be on duty. GAs are not required to work on legal holidays noted in the university calendar. When university offices are required to maintain services on certain holidays and GAs are scheduled to work on a holiday, they must be given an alternate day off.

*GAs are expected to work during quarter breaks unless released by their supervisors.*

**Short-Term Absences and Leaves of Absence.** The university has formalized a set of practices to be used by academic and administrative units at Ohio State to support GAs, fellows, and trainees during instances of personal and/or family illness, bereavement, childbirth, and adoption. Each situation will be individually addressed according to the specific research, teaching, or administrative context the student is in and the individual's reason for requesting the leave.

All GAs, fellows, and trainees who are in good academic standing, making reasonable progress toward their degrees, and are paid through the Ohio State payroll, regardless of appointment length, type or FTE, are eligible to request a short-term absence to recover from a personal illness or to bereave the death of an immediate family member. A "short-term" absence is generally considered to be a period of one to three days. In rare instances, it might be up to two weeks and should always be proportionate to the needs of the situation.

Eligible funded graduate and professional students may request a leave of absence up to six weeks to manage a serious illness, childbirth, or adoption. All requests must be proportionate to the needs of the individual situation. To be eligible for a leave of absence, a graduate student must have completed three out of four consecutive quarters on fellowship, traineeship or associateship appointments of at least 50 percent FTE (or combined concurrent appointments of at least 50 percent FTE) paid through the Ohio State payroll system. A funded graduate or professional student must also hold a qualifying appointment as described above at the time of the leave, be in good academic standing, be making satisfactory progress toward the degree, and be registered full time.

*In the School of Educational Policy and Leadership, a six-week leave of absence must normally be taken consecutively.*

In some cases it may be appropriate for a student to take an academic leave of absence (e.g., a leave from both appointment duties and academic enrollment). See Appendix E of the Graduate School Handbook for the *Guidelines for Short-Term Absences and Leaves of Absence for Graduate Students Appointed as GAs, Fellows, and Trainees*.

**Military Leave.** GAs who are members of the Ohio National Guard or any other reserve component of the United States Armed Forces or who are ordered involuntarily to extended United States military service are granted leave without pay. The GA is required to submit to the supervisor a copy of military orders or other statement in writing from the appropriate military authority as evidence of the call for training or duty. Within 90 days from the date of honorable discharge or completion of training or active duty, the GA will be returned to the former position or its equivalent, without loss of seniority, upon application from such a position and reenrollment as a graduate student.

**Parking Permits.** Graduate associates and fellows are permitted to purchase "C" student or "B" staff parking permits, either for Central or West Campus. If the B permit is requested, written verification of the associateship must be submitted to Transportation and Parking Services at the time of purchase. Daytime garage permits are available. For C garage permits, students are selected by Transportation & Parking Services via a lottery system. B garage permits are sold on a first-come, first-served basis.

**Change in Status.** Whenever there is a change in the GA's status that affects the tax deduction, name, or W-2 Tax mailing address, the GA must fill out a W4 form available in the employing unit or in the Office of Human Resources.

**Health Insurance.** Columbus-campus-based students who are enrolled at least half-time are required to carry health insurance as a condition of enrollment. The university provides a health subsidy for graduate and professional students with fellowship, traineeship, or with 50 percent or great associateship appointments paid through the Ohio State payroll system. The university subsidy is 85 percent of the SHI premium for eligible funded graduate and professional students enrolled in single coverage. The university also provides a subsidy of 85 percent of the SHI premium for enrolled dependents of eligible funded graduate and professional students.

Graduate and professional students on associateship appointments at any appointment level (not trainees or fellows) paid through the Ohio State payroll system receive additional premium savings through pre-tax healthcare deductions. Additional information on GA health benefits is available from the Office of Human Resources.

**Workers' Compensation.** GAs are protected by the provisions of the Ohio Worker's Compensation Law. The provisions cover expenses for medical care, as well as certain benefits

for loss of salary, which are paid through the Bureau of Workers' Compensation for injuries or diseases which arise out of or within the course of employment. The benefits for loss of salary are payable only after the disability and resulting loss of salary extends beyond seven days.

**Retirement.** All GAs are eligible to participate in the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS). GTAs who have established membership with the State Teachers Retirement System of Ohio (STRS), based on other Ohio teaching service, may elect either to continue contributions to that system or to request STRS membership exemption. Exemptions from either system must be made within 31 days of the first day of the appointment. All GAs are also eligible to contribute to voluntary 403(b) or 457 retirement accounts, which allow additional retirement dollars to be contributed on a pretax basis.

**Unemployment Compensation.** Because a graduate associateship is viewed as a student position by the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services, GAs are ineligible for unemployment benefits when their appointment ends (between academic terms or after leaving the university).