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Introduction - Graduate Associates

A graduate student’s principal objective is to earn a graduate degree. Appointment as a Graduate Associate (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.

The three graduate associate titles are: graduate administrative associate (GAA), graduate research associate (GRA), and graduate teaching associate (GTA).

The Chair of the Department of Art awards Graduate Associate (GA) appointments on a competitive basis to support the needs of the department. Most of the appointments are for Graduate Teaching Associates (GTA); however, some appointments are for Graduate Associate Appointments (GAA). Associate stipends are based on 50% of full-time (20 hours per week).

GA’s are held both within the Department and outside of the Department. In the Department of Art, the most common alternative GA assignment is with the Arts Initiative. The unit that holds the GA has the responsibility for providing information about responsibilities and will set the work calendar and expectation for the student. Different GA assignments may have different calendars, work patterns are set locally and may vary (the AI, for example< may expect students to work during academic breaks). These units will be responsible for evaluating GA performance and reporting this evaluation to the Department of Art Chair.

All Department of Art Graduate Associates are required to enroll in a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester during Autumn and Spring semesters. GAs should meet with their major area advisor to discuss semester course schedules.

The awarding of a GA appointment does not guarantee automatic renewal in following semesters. GAs are renewed on the basis of satisfactory performance in assignments, satisfactory academic progress, and continued University monetary support to the Department.
Graduate Associate Responsibilities

A. Graduate Teaching Associate (GTA) responsibilities:
   - Specific GA responsibilities are determined by the appointing units but may include: assisting professors in regularly scheduled classes, teaching classes within Department of Art programs, such as Foundations, and may also include assisting technicians.

B. Graduate Administrative Associate (GAA) responsibilities:
   - Specific GA responsibilities are determined by the appointing units but may include: advising and counseling students; grading papers; gathering and analyzing data; writing reports; and assisting faculty members and administrators.

Terms of Appointment

C. Eligibility for Appointment
   - Graduate Associates must maintain an average of B (3.0) or better in all graduate credit courses to continue their appointments. A student who is on probation in the Graduate School may not be appointed or reappointed as a Graduate Associate.
   - Must be pursuing a graduate degree at this University.
   - Must meet minimum Graduate School registration requirements
     a) 8 credit hours during each semester a 50 percent or greater GA appointment is held, except during summer term, when the minimum is four.
     b) Audited courses do not count toward these requirements.
   - Must be in good standing with the Graduate School when the appointment or reappointment becomes effective.
   - Must maintain reasonable progress toward a graduate degree as evaluated and recorded by faculty committees during semester reviews.
   - Must certify proficiency in spoken English before assuming GTA duties involving direct student contact (applies only to international non-English speaking graduate students).
   - Must satisfy other requirements published by the Graduate Studies Committee or appointment unit.
D. Offer of Appointment

Any student accepting a GA appointment must be provided with a Graduate Associate Appointment Document 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).

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.

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

Period of Appointment

A typical GA appointment is for autumn and spring. Department of Art students will receive six semesters of support (during autumn & spring) whether it is a fellowship or a Graduate Associate appointment or any combination. Additional semesters of support may sometimes be possible, but should not be expected. For consideration as a summer term GTA, please apply to the Graduate Program Coordinator.

- Over six semesters, students with GTA appointments will receive not fewer than two, or more than three, different course/teaching assignments. Exceptions require GSC approval.

- Following six semesters of assignments (not including summer term) MFA Candidates shall lose priority for further GA contracts.
Please take note of additional requirements for GTA appointments as stated in other sections of this handbook. If you have questions, please contact the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Summer session appointments are not available in the Department of Art.

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 regularly 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 as a single appointment or combination of appointments.

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

E. 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.

Students who perform satisfactorily during the initial contract will retain priority for additional available contracts.

F. 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:

- the GA is no longer enrolled in the Graduate School
• the GA is registered for fewer than the number of credit hours required for a GA appointment
• performance as a GA is determined to be unsatisfactory by the employing unit
• the GA graduates
• the appointing unit has insufficient funds
• unsatisfactory academic performance

Students who perform satisfactorily during the initial contract will retain priority for additional available contracts.

Benefits

A. Stipend

The current minimum stipend within the Department of Art is $14,076 for a nine-month 50 percent GA appointment or $1,564 per month. 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.

• Students may elect to enroll in Direct Deposit to receive paychecks or payroll checks will be mailed to the mailing address on file.

Enroll/Change/Cancel Direct Deposit

• You may enroll in or make changes to your direct deposit by logging into Employee Self Service and selecting the Direct Deposit option. Make sure you have your bank account number(s) and corresponding routing number(s) ready.

• Your funds should be directly deposited into your requested account(s) within 1-2 pay periods. An email notification will be sent to your lastname.#@osu.edu account or your Med Center account regarding the change to your account.

It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the correct mailing address is entered into the OSU system. It is the responsibility of the student to enroll in Direct Deposit, if desired. The Department of Art is not responsible for lost, late, or misdirected mail or paychecks.
Please contact the Department of Art, Department Manager, Kara Campbell, campell.1644@osu.edu with questions regarding payroll processing.

B. Fee Authorization

Every graduate associate (GTA or 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 the student activity fee and the mandatory COTA fee, must generally be paid by the student.

C. Summer Fee Authorization

Graduate students holding a 50 percent or greater GA appointment for two consecutive semesters are entitled to a full fee authorization during the immediately following summer term without being on appointment. Students using the summer fee authorization must be registered for at least four hours of credit.

D. 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 or fellowship must be submitted to Transportation and Parking Services at the time of purchase. Daytime garage permits are available.

E. Health Insurance

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 greater associateship appointments paid through the Ohio State payroll system.

The university subsidy is 85 percent of the Student Health Insurance (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 pretax healthcare premium deductions. Additional information on GA health benefits is available from the Office of Human Resources.

Healthcare premium deductions for graduate associates enrolled in the Student Health Insurance Plan are now taken on a post-tax basis. Language referring to a pre-tax healthcare premium deduction has been removed.

F. Workers’ Compensation

GAs are protected by the provisions of the Ohio Workers’ 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.

G. 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.

H. Unemployment Compensation

Because a graduate associateship is viewed as a student position by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, GAs are ineligible for unemployment benefits when their appointment ends (between academic terms or after leaving the university).

Criteria for Evaluating Graduate Associate Performance

For Graduating Teaching Associates: SEIs should be looked at by area coordinators (or another faculty member in the area, can be agreed upon on an area basis) since they are the ones overseeing the courses and mentoring the GTAs in their area. Area coordinators can ask GTAs to provide the SEIs when they become available.
For Graduate Administrative Associates: The units will be responsible for evaluating GA performance and reporting this evaluation to the Department of Art Chair.

Outside Employment

Employment outside of the University during the academic year is strongly discouraged. The Department of Art of Art requires any Graduate Associate who is considering additional employment outside the University to consult with his/her graduate advisor, GA supervisor or major area coordinator, as well as the Chair of the Department. The first priority of students must be their research and academic work. A careful evaluation of the impact of such additional commitments on the student’s academic progress and on their GA responsibilities will be made to determine the feasibility of pursuing additional employment.

Time Off

GAs do not accrue vacation or sick leave. Rules regarding time off during semester or session 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 on 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.

Occasionally professional and personal travel is necessary, but a student’s academic and studio work is their first obligation and excessive travel should not interfere with the progression and evolution of this work. For this reason, travel for any reason should be discussed with your academic advisor.

Grievance Procedure

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 D in the Graduate School handbook.

A graduate student may petition the GSC for an extension or waiver of these conditions for reappointment. The GSC will consider the petition, determine the student's eligibility for reappointment, and notify the Graduate School of its decision.

Graduate Fellows

A Graduate School fellowship is a financial award made by the university directly to a graduate student to provide support during a portion of the graduate degree program. Fellows are selected on the basis of academic merit through university-wide competitions without respect to financial need. Graduate fellows cannot be required to perform a service in return for receiving a stipend.

Graduate School fellowship offers apply exclusively to graduate study in the program entry into a combined program or transfer to another program, must be approved by the Graduate School and appropriate graduate program(s) prior to that change, and could result in the loss of the fellowship and/or full fee authorization support.

A. Requirements

- Fellowship students must be in attendance on the Columbus campus and be pursuing a graduate degree in the program specified in the fellowship award letter from the dean of study or research at another institution, but fellowship students must continue to enroll for a minimum of 12 graduate credit hours each autumn and spring semester and 6 credit hours over the summer session at Ohio State. Fellows must be in attendance when classes are in session. Any exception must be requested and approved as explained
Fellowship students must carry a minimum of 12 graduate credit hours autumn and spring semester and 6 credit hours over the summer session on appointment as a graduate fellow. Fellows must also maintain good academic standing in the Graduate School and make reasonable progress toward the graduate degree. Any exception must be requested and approved as explained below.

Fellows are expected to learn, respect, and abide by the professional codes of ethics and responsibilities of the university and those commonly accepted in the fellow’s field of study or area of research. These codes include, but are not limited to, the Graduate Student Code of Research and Scholarly Conduct and Ohio State’s Code of Student Conduct.

Fellows are expected to devote full-time attention to their academic studies. Therefore, fellows may not hold other types of employment/appointments/awards, such as graduate associateships, fellowships, and/or traineeships. Any requests for an exception to the conditions of the fellowship must be submitted, in writing, by the graduate studies chair (GSC) in the fellow’s graduate program to Associate Dean Scott Herness in the Graduate School. The GSC and fellow will be notified in writing as to the outcome of the request.

The Graduate School reserves the right to terminate fellowship support before the end of the award period if conditions of the fellowship are not maintained.

B. Tuition and fees

The Graduate School authorizes the payment of resident and nonresident tuition, the general fees, and learning technology fee for its fellows, with the following exceptions:

- Late fees: Fellows are responsible for any late registration penalty and late fee payment penalty if the late fee payment is the result of inappropriate registration (e.g., less than the minimum credit hours of enrollment).

- Withdrawal/disenrollment costs: If a fellow chooses to leave (withdraw) from the university or is suspended or dismissed, he or she will be billed for the prorated value of the tuition and fees used during the quarter of withdrawal. The prorated value is based on the university's tuition and fee refund schedule. For example, if a non-funded student withdraws from the university during the
second week of the semester, that student would be eligible for an 80% refund of tuition and fees paid. Fellows do not pay tuition and fees, so former fellows would be responsible for the 20% of the tuition and fees forfeited by the Graduate School because of their withdrawal.

If withdrawal or disenrollment is being considered, please contact Fellowship Services, (614) 292-9490, or gsfellowship@osu.edu to discuss the timing and possible forfeiture fees.

C. Appointment/stipend

Fellowship support is available for a maximum of 12 consecutive months and is nonrenewable. All stipends are paid electronically. The stipend will be available on the last working day of each month. If the fellow leaves the fellowship early, the stipend will be prorated to reflect the date of departure.

A monthly stipend of $1,700 is paid on the last working day of each month. The Dean's Distinguished University Fellowship monthly stipend is $2,125. The monthly stipend for the dissertation year of the Distinguished University and Dean's Graduate Enrichment Fellowships as well as the Presidential Fellowship is also $2,125.

Tenure for the academic year is September 1, through May 30. Summer support is available and cannot be deferred. Tenure for the summer is June 1, through August 31.

D. Benefits

Student health insurance: Graduate fellows are eligible for the University Insurance Premium Contribution if they elect to purchase the student health insurance. The university contributes 85% of the Comprehensive Student Health Insurance Plan. The fellow’s portion of the student health insurance will be divided into equal payments that will be deducted from the monthly fellowship stipend. Graduate fellowships are non-service appointments, and, as such, fellows are not eligible for worker’s compensation or disability insurance.

Parking permits: Graduate fellows may purchase a staff, rather than the student, parking permit. Information regarding staff “B” parking status is available from CampusParc.

Library: Graduate fellows have staff library privileges.
E. Expenses not covered by fellowship

Room and board, application fee, books, equipment, lab fees, parking, the student’s portion of the student health insurance, COTA bus fee, student activity fee, student union fee, recreation fee, student legal fee, and other personal expenses are not paid by the fellowship. Some of these fees will be deducted from the fellow's monthly stipend.

F. Tax liability

According to the Federal Tax Reform Act of 1986, fellowship stipends are considered taxable income. Because fellowships are considered awards, the university does not withhold income tax from the monthly stipend. Students are required to file both the federal and state estimated quarterly income tax forms. Information

Any questions regarding a Graduate School fellowship may be directed to Katherine Eckstrand, director of fellowship services, (614) 292-9490.

Short-term Absences and Leaves of Absence

These guidelines formalize a set of practices to be used by academic and administrative units at Ohio State to support graduate associates (GAAs, GRAs, and GTAs, collectively referred to hereafter as GAs), fellows and trainees during instances of personal and/or family illness, bereavement, childbirth and adoption.

Absences extending longer than two weeks (referred to hereafter as leaves of absence), especially those that are unexpected, are usually the most difficult to manage, since they require careful balancing of the student’s personal needs with academic and administrative policies, the student’s academic standing and degree progress, unit or principal investigator needs, and funding realities. For a complete review of all guidelines please refer to the Graduate School handbook.

A. Short-term absence

Generally considered to be one to three days. In rare circumstances, it might be up to two weeks and should always be proportionate to the needs of the situation. Any GA, fellow, or trainee may request a short-term absence to recover from a personal illness or to bereave the death of an immediate family member (see Section VI in the Graduate School handbook for a definition of immediate family.) In these instances, the GA, fellow, or trainee will make a request to the appropriate immediate supervisor as promptly as possible so that options for coverage during the
requested short-term absence can be addressed, often jointly, by the graduate student and his/her supervisor.

Reasonable requests for short-term absences will generally be approved and stipends will be maintained, without requiring make-up time. Appropriate documentation regarding the reason for the short-term absence is required but may be waived in some circumstances.

B. Leave of absence

Funded graduate students may, on occasion, require a leave of absence for a personal serious health condition or to care for an immediate family member with a serious health condition. In these rare circumstances, every effort should be made to protect the funded graduate student’s stipend and appointment. Medical documentation is required in cases of leaves of absence for medical/family reasons. Please see Appendix E in the Graduate School handbook for more detail.

C. 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 Stated 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 for such a position and reenrollment as a graduate student.