

## GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### General Information

Students admitted to the Graduate School may be eligible to receive financial support in the form of an assistantship. The primary purpose of graduate assistantships is to promote the successful completion of an academic program by enabling students to work in an educational setting while they earn their degrees. Graduate assistants work under the supervision of an appropriate faculty member. Graduate assistantship assignments provide support of the University's teaching, research, or service missions for the benefit of the student in an area closely related to the student's chosen field of study. Employment is measured as a proportion of full-time equivalent (FTE) status, with 1.0 FTE representing employment estimated to be 40 hours per week. For a full list of the requirements and eligibility criteria applicable to graduate assistants, please see the Graduate Assistantship Contract.

### Types of Graduate Assistantships

#### I. Graduate Teaching Assistant – GTA/IOR

A graduate teaching assistant (GTA) works with a supervising faculty member to gain instructional skills and an increased understanding of the discipline. The GTA is paid a stipend, and their primary responsibilities are to support the University's instructional mission. Services provided by a GTA may include some or all of the following: classroom or laboratory teaching (IOR Instructor of Record); advising and mentoring of students; proctoring examinations; grading papers, homework, and projects; providing artistic instruction or assisting with preparation and management of materials and programs that are utilized in imparting knowledge or in the instructional process; or providing other general assistance in the instruction process.

#### Criteria Used for Awarding Instructor of Record Graduate Teaching Assistantships

Instructor of Record assistantships are of the highest priority. Following factors determine the distribution of awards:

1. The best course of action for the School of Art and Design.
2. The experience and qualifications of the applicants.
3. Compliance with University and NASAD policy requiring graduate students (MFA/MAEd) have 18+ graduate semester hours in studio art completed before being awarded a teaching assistantship.

#### Eighteen Graduate-Semester-Hour Rule

Teaching assistants assigned primary responsibility for the administration, instruction, and evaluation of students enrolled in courses must have satisfactorily completed a minimum of 18 semester hours of graduate course work in the field in which instruction is given (SACS 18-hour rule). They must also receive in-service training, be under the direct supervision of an experienced faculty member in the field, and evaluated each semester.

Instructor of Record Assistants must comply with all ECU Policies and Procedures Regarding Instruction:

1. Maintain weekly office hours – appropriate to teaching load
2. Provide complete course syllabus
3. Submit final grades on time each semester
4. Observe FERPA guidelines [<https://registrar.ecu.edu/family-educational-rights-privacy-act/>].

Instructor of Record assistantships are compensated at a 0.75-time position (15 hours/week).

## II. Graduate Teaching Assistant – GTA/GA

A graduate teaching assistant (GTA) works with a supervising faculty member to gain instructional skills and an increased understanding of the discipline. The GTA is paid a stipend, and their primary responsibilities are to support the University's instructional mission. Services provided by a GTA may include some or all of the following: advising and mentoring of students; proctoring examinations; grading papers,, and projects; assisting with preparation and management of materials and programs that are utilized in imparting knowledge or in the instructional process; or providing other general assistance in the instruction process.

### Limitations on FTE, Workload, and Appointments

The Graduate School limits the FTE of graduate assistantships to ensure that students make adequate, satisfactory academic progress and complete their degrees within appropriate time limits. A graduate assistantship of 0.50 FTE is estimated to be the equivalent of 20 hours of work per week. Assistantships up to 0.625 FTE are equivalent to an estimated maximum of 25 hours per week and do not require the permission of the dean of the Graduate School. Exceptions for appointment totals exceeding 0.625 require the approval of the dean of the Graduate School. The sponsoring unit must allocate sufficient funds to cover the employer's portion of the NC State Employee's Health Insurance plan, if applicable.

### Eligibility for Assistantship Funds

Graduate assistantship funds are allocated by the Graduate School to departments to be used to support graduate teaching assistantships and graduate research assistantships. They may only be awarded to graduate students enrolled in on-campus programs.

### Minimum Assistantship Amount

A full-time graduate assistantship (20 hours per week - fall and spring semesters) pays a minimum of \$12,000 (\$6,000 per term). Units may opt to split assistantships into 1/4 (5 hours per week), 1/2 (10 hours per week), and 3/4 (15 hours/week) appointments as deemed necessary.

### Tax Withholding Requirements

For graduate assistants to be exempt from FICA tax withholding, they must have a minimum registration of 4 hours for the fall and spring semesters and 3 hours in the summer. If the graduate assistant is registered for less than the stated hours, FICA will be withheld. Departments paying students from sources other than state-appropriated dollars should note that the University's portion of the FICA (7.65%) will be taken from the funding source used to pay the assistantship and should, therefore, budget accordingly.

### Time Limit on the Use of Graduate School Assistantship Funds

Students in the MFA program may not receive assistantship support from Graduate School funds after their sixth semester of enrollment (excluding summer sessions). A department may use its funds in such cases where a longer length of time is necessary and appropriate at its discretion. First consideration will be given to funding full-time students at a higher level. Other factors include academic record and performance in previous assistantship positions. Students who have extended beyond three years of graduate study must make a written request to the Graduate Director explaining the circumstances and need for an extension of funding. The SoAD makes no guarantee to fund such requests.

## General Information Regarding the Awarding of Assistantships

The annual assistantship budget for the School of Art and Design determines the number of positions available for the academic year. In making assistantship awards, the overall needs of the School of Art and Design remain the Graduate Committee's and the Graduate Program Director's primary responsibility. There is no obligation to award a particular assistantship, even when requested. However, the Graduate Committee and the Graduate Program Director make every effort to accommodate the graduate student and the Area Coordinator's specific requests. Furthermore, because the SoAD budget is dependent on the State Legislature for funding, awarding a graduate assistantship to each graduate student is NOT guaranteed. Any questions or complaints regarding awarding graduate assistantships should be formally presented to the Graduate Committee.

## Procedures for Awarding Graduate Assistantships

1. At the date noted on the SoAD Graduate Calendar, enrolled graduate students should discuss requests for assistantship assignments or changes with their area coordinator and the Graduate Program Director.
  - a. Students who want to be considered for Instructor of Record positions in the First-Year Shared Experience must consult the First-Year Programs Coordinator before teaching.
  - b. Students that want to be considered for Instructor of Record positions for sophomore courses within their discipline must discuss this possibility and related requirements with their area coordinator.
2. Area Coordinators will provide the Graduate Program Director with a list of job assignments within their area and the number of hours requested for each student.
3. In consultation with the Area Coordinators, the Graduate Program Director will assign assistantships in the following order;
  - a. Instructor of Record
  - b. Research assistantships that are safety-related and assistantships that require specialized training\*
  - c. All other assistantships
4. The Graduate Program Director consults the Graduate Committee and the School of Art and Design Director to make any necessary adjustments.
5. Contracts are logged into Banner.
6. Contracts are reviewed and approved by the College of Fine Arts and Communication, then the Graduate School.
7. Graduate students are notified to review their assignments and sign contracts. If a student rejects any part of their job, they drop to the bottom of the list and will be offered any remaining jobs if available.
8. There will always be unforeseen circumstances that may require adjustments. The most common is when a graduate student's class does not make the minimum enrollment. The course will be canceled, and the student will be reassigned.

\* Please inform the Graduate Program Director if students have the training, experience, or expertise outside their concentration area (Technology, Art Histories, etc.).

## Supervision of Instructor of Record Graduate Teaching Assistantships

Each graduate Instructor of Record will be assigned a faculty supervisor. Faculty supervisors are responsible for providing graduate assistants with training and written information, as stated in the Faculty Manual Part II Section 4, [[www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/fsonline/customcf/currentfacultymanual/part2section4.pdf](http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/fsonline/customcf/currentfacultymanual/part2section4.pdf)].

1. Course pre-requisites and required class-standing
2. Course objectives and the student learning outcomes
3. Course content
4. Complete requirements of the course and class attendance regulations
5. The weight of various requirements of the course in determining the final grade
6. Any other items warranted for instruction/administration of course purposes

Written material and any text for the course should be provided to the graduate teaching assistant after the assistantship award is made and before formal in-service training covering these items. The first training session should occur before the first meeting of the class.

Supervisors are responsible for scheduling and providing written notification of periodic in-service training sessions to assigned graduate teaching assistants before and during the semesters in which the graduate student is teaching. In-service session attendance is required and must be announced as necessary for graduate teaching assistants. These in-service training sessions collectively cover administration, instruction, and evaluation of the course taught by the graduate assistant.

Supervisors are responsible for arranging a minimum of 2 classroom observations of a graduate teaching assistant that occur each semester. A written evaluation of each observation must be provided to the Graduate Program Director. These observations and written assessments are in addition to the brief summation currently required on graduate assistant performance.

It is not required that the supervisor be the person, or the only person, involved in in-service training or evaluations of teaching assistants. It is, however, the responsibility of the supervisor to see that in-service training and assessments occur.

Written materials provided to the graduate teaching assistant by the supervisor should include:

1. Course objectives and the student learning outcomes
2. Sample course syllabus
3. Sample project assignments
4. Grade book
5. Any additional support materials

## Responsibilities of the School of Art and Design Graduate Assistants

1. Reporting to an assigned supervisor one week before the registration day of each semester (summer sessions are an exception). This period extends through the last day of exams (university schedule) for the semester.
2. Meeting with an assigned supervisor once a week at a mutually agreed upon time and location.
3. Fulfilling duties promptly, as outlined in the position job description under the direction and to the satisfaction of the assigned supervisor by the weekly/hourly rate as indicated on the job description, located in the Job Description Book in the main office.
4. Keeping the assigned supervisor informed, regularly, of time spent in the performance of duties.
5. Attending all required meetings with the assigned supervisor.
6. Maintaining good academic standing.
7. Informing the School of Art and Design Graduate Program Director and the designated supervisor of impending absence from the performance of assistantship duties and filling out appropriate paperwork before the absence.
8. Instructor of Record Graduate Teaching Assistants must be available for five office-hours per week with time and location noted on the syllabus.

## Rights of the School of Art and Design Assistantship Recipients.

1. Performance of only the duties outlined in the job description for the position awarded.
2. Time spent in the performance of the responsibilities of the position is not to exceed the total time allotment specified for a semester or a summer session.
3. When an infraction of responsibilities/duties/standards occurs, where such notice or complaint is made to the student in writing, the student may submit, in writing, a rebuttal of charges. This rebuttal must be addressed to the student's assigned supervisor, and a copy must be sent to the Graduate Program Director.
4. Timely notification of specific duties that are to be performed to allow for personal and academic schedule adjustments when such responsibilities are outside the usual performance required of the position.
5. To meet all scheduled classes in which the student is enrolled and to inform the supervisor when specific duties will interfere with class/study degree program requirements and work out a compromise with the assigned supervisor.
6. To address, in writing, infractions of rights as listed herein to the designated supervisor, with a copy sent to the Graduate Program Director.
7. To receive timely written notice of individual meetings with the student's assigned supervisor.
8. To have access to all written evaluations of the assistantship performance with the right to provide written rebuttals.
9. To receive, from the assigned supervisor, adequate orientation, instruction, and guidance, in the fulfillment of the responsibilities and duties of the assistantship.

## Graduate Student Online Professionalism Policy

Graduate students must obey all applicable federal, state, and University regulations on academic integrity and privacy. We also encourage you to be mindful of your public behavior more broadly, especially what you do and say online. While you might consider your activity on social media sites like Facebook or Twitter to be personal, it can be a reflection on your professional life. Students, peers, supervisors, and potential employers will likely search for and access whatever you post publicly. You may not be able to control access to all the information about you available online. Still, we urge you to safeguard this information whenever possible and to use restraint and common sense to protect your privacy.

Remember:

- Any email you write may be archived and retrieved later, and any emails sent from or to official ECU email addresses are considered public records. Personal email addresses are inappropriate for official communications and may represent a FERPA violation if used to discuss confidential information with students. Likewise, it is not appropriate to use your ECU email for non-professional purposes. Considering all the potential audiences you could have; it is a good idea to maintain a professional and respectful style in any emails you write as a graduate student.
- Use the privacy settings on your social media accounts to limit access to your personal information and use discretion when making or accepting friend requests. For example, it is usually not appropriate to friend undergraduate students you may be responsible for teaching, grading, or supervising, or faculty who may have these responsibilities over you. Be careful to control who can see what you post, especially in your capacity as a graduate student.
- Photo and video sharing sites such as Instagram and YouTube are public venues. Again, use discretion in what you post and who you allow to see it.
- By law, the University provides multiple avenues for addressing concerns and filing formal grievances. Concerns about faculty, staff, or students should be directed to the appropriate department or University officials, such as the Director of Graduate Studies, the Department Chair, the University Title IX Coordinator, or the Office of Student Affairs. Student Health Services and the Center for Counseling & Student Development also offer a confidential consultation.

It is easy to forget that the information you put on the Internet is accessible by default. It can be used to evaluate you for employment, academic reviews, applications for internships or residencies, and other professional opportunities. Maintaining a separation between your personal and professional activity online is not difficult, but it requires deliberate effort.

## Performance Review

Graduate assistants receive two formal evaluations of their performance each semester, one before mid-term and the other before finals. The assistantship supervisor will provide assessment in the following areas: Fulfillment of Duties, Dependability and Communication, Problem Solving and Initiative, Preparation, and Articulation of Course Material and Critique (GTA IOR only).

## Due Process and Procedure

Should the graduate assistant fail to meet the responsibilities listed herein, the supervisor will, in writing, document and inform the student of specifics relative to responsibilities/duties/standards not met. A copy of this letter will be forwarded to the Graduate Program Director. Should a second infraction occur, and written documentation is received by both the graduate student and the Graduate Program Director, the School of Art and Design Graduate Committee will convene with both the student and immediate supervisor in attendance, to receive any additional evidence. A majority vote by the School of Art and Design Graduate Committee shall determine recommendations/actions to be taken.

Should the initial infraction of responsibilities/duties/standards has jeopardized the safety of student(s), property, and the educational programs, the School of Art and Design Graduate Committee will convene, with both the student and immediate supervisor in attendance, to receive additional evidence. A majority vote by the School of Art and Design Graduate Committee shall determine recommendations and actions to be taken.

## Unlawful Harassment and Discrimination Training

Unlawful harassment and discrimination endanger the environment of tolerance, civility, and mutual respect that must prevail if the University is to fulfill its mission. East Carolina University is committed to providing and promoting an atmosphere in which employees can realize their maximum potential in the workplace, and students can engage fully in the learning process. Therefore, no acts of harassment or discrimination will be tolerated among any of the faculty, staff, or students who comprise our academic community.

To that end, in 2007, mandatory harassment and discrimination training was established to ensure that all employees are informed about Equity laws and policies. Our commitment has been formalized in clear and accessible policies that can be found at [<https://oed.ecu.edu/>].

To receive your first assistantship, you will be required to complete the Preventing Sexual Harassment (PSH) and Preventing Employment Discrimination (PED) training modules.

The Graduate Program Director will contact you with details. The training certification lasts for two years and must be renewed to receive subsequent assistantship awards.

Individuals with questions about unlawful harassment and discrimination, equity policies, or PED/PSH training should contact the Office for Equity and Diversity at 252 328 6804.