

DIVISION OF
STUDENT AFFAIRS



Graduate Assistant Supervisor Orientation

2019

Agenda

- Philosophy
- Recruitment
- Hiring Paperwork
 - Pay Levels
 - Out-of-State Waivers
 - Tuition Benefit
 - Course Load Exemptions
- Time Reporting
- GA Expectations and Opportunities
- Supervisor Expectations
- Q&A

Philosophy Statement

- We need them and they need us.
- How GAs support the Division:
 - Provide support for Division programs and services;
 - Provide a diverse perspective on student engagement and student learning;
 - Provide a conduit to the UNT student experience
- How the Division supports GAs:
 - Provide training to increase effectiveness and productivity;
 - Provide professional development opportunities for GAs to gain valuable experience within their field of study;
 - Provide a positive learning and work environment through supervision, competitive compensation, and mentoring.

Recruitment

- Positions coordinated, with very few exceptions, through the GA Program Coordinator (M. McGuire) and the Higher Education Department.
- Positions are 1-year appointments, with very few exceptions.
- Timeline:
 - Returners: late-January/early-February Timeframe
 - New Candidates:
 - Application deadline March 1; Interview Days likely 3rd week of March (Thursday and Friday).
 - At least some of our positions are left unfilled throughout these processes. Once these processes conclude, departments can post their positions in Handshake for other graduate students to pursue.

Recruitment Cont.

- Prior to interview days, you will have a chance to review candidate resumes and rank candidates you feel would be a potentially good fit for your position.
- Program coordinator (M. McGuire) will use this information, in coordination with candidate rankings, to develop an interview schedule.
- Similar matching process will take place after interviews.
- Program coordinator (M. McGuire) will notify departments of match **after** the Higher Education department confirms acceptance to program (for first-years).

Hiring Paperwork

- Offer Letter (draft provided by GA Program Coordinator)
 - Start Date/End Date
 - Salary Information
 - Criminal Background Check
 - Tuition Benefit
- We will start with verbal offers (contingent upon a successful criminal background check), followed by an offer letter once we learn what our tuition benefit is for the next year.

Salary Information

Levels of Pay:

- Level 1: First year students without experience in a graduate degree program. [job code = 0831; \$1424.32/month]
- Level 2: Students pursuing a master's or doctoral degree with at least 18 completed credits toward their degree. [job code = 0832; \$1,675.67/month]
- Level 3: Doctoral student who has completed all, but their dissertation (ABD); they have passed their qualifying exams. [job code = 0833; \$1,927.02/month]
 - Requires student to complete Certification document through Provost Office.
- Level 2 and 3 pay only take effect **September 1**.
- Offering above entry
 - Make sure department has funds to do so.
 - Provide justification on ePar.

Out-of-State Tuition Waivers

- Graduate Assistants are eligible to receive an in-state tuition reduction to help ease the burden of the cost of their educational experience based on their specific role.
- The waiver might be applied in one of three ways:
 1. **::NEW::** The department of employment offers a tuition benefit to the student. Any tuition benefit we give will automatically qualify a student for an employment waiver.
 2. The department of study may award a competitive scholarship of at least \$1,000 to the student, which allows a student to have the out-of-state tuition to be waived, or
 3. The department of employment along with the related faculty of area of study should agree upon a “research agenda with deliverables” that the graduate research assistant will complete by the end of the academic term. This document should be turned into Student Accounting along with the tuition waiver form for final approval.
- Job code if options 2 or 3 are utilized:
 - 0821, 0822, or 0823, depending on pay level.

Tuition Benefit Hours

- Program Advisor (M. McGuire) will coordinate on behalf of all Division positions.
- Students who are in the Higher Education master's cohort will be given preference and will receive funding equivalent to 6 SCH each long semester.
 - Exceptions: Rec Center staff and Ph.D. in Higher Education students.
- Students who are higher education majors (but not in the cohort) and any other major that meets one of the requirements of the program (see next slide) will receive funding equivalent to 3 SCH each long semester.
- Once our hours run out, no more hours will be disbursed to GAs unless a department decides they want to purchase hours for their GAs.
- Students are responsible for making sure they meet the program requirements. Generally speaking, they must be enrolled in 9 hours and have a GPA of 3.0+.

Tuition Benefit Hours Cont.

- **::NEW::** A graduate assistant must be employed by the census date to receive a tuition benefit.
- **::NEW::** Students receiving the Faculty/Staff Scholarship are ineligible for a typical tuition award, but they may be eligible for partial funding (~100 per TBP credit hour). If a GA falls in this category, they should contact gradaward@unt.edu to see what they are eligible for. From there, I will see what tuition benefit we have remaining.
- **::NEW::** If a TBP recipient is employed in a department other than their degree major, they are required to submit a certification from both the employer and academic authority in their major department to certify there is a direct relationship between the employment position and degree program.
 - Toulouse Graduate School will notify GA Program Coordinator of which graduate assistants need one of these.

Course Load Exemptions

- If a student is not enrolled in 9 SCH, they are required to complete a Course Load Exemption through the Graduate School to receive their tuition benefit.
 - Typically, these are reserved for students in final semester or ABD status.
- Notes:
 - A student must have a degree plan on for the Graduate School to review. This should be completed 2 weeks prior to the start of the semester, for each term.
 - Faculty advisor **MUST** sign-off on this form (and submit it via the Toulouse Graduate School secure portal) as they know the student's degree plan more than we do. **We do not have any authority over this form.**
- International students do NOT need to submit a Course Load Exemption form; instead, they submit the **Graduate Student Full-Time Equivalency Report** (aka "the purple form") from UNT-International. This is needed for Visa purposes.

Timekeeping

- Develop a schedule that complements the needs of your student's course load and the needs of your department.
- GAs need to complete 4 hours each weekday of a month; 80-92 hours a month (depending on the number of weeks in the month).
 - This is regardless of university closures, holidays, etc.
 - Hours can be shifted day-to-date or week-to-week within a month, but no roll over hours are allowed month-to-month.
- Maximum allowable hours per week (per Policy 15.1.27):
 - 6 SCH – max is 40 hours/week
 - 9 SCH – max is 30 hours/week
 - 12 SCH – max is 20 hours/week
- Although GAs are considered salaried employees, they are not benefits-eligible (they do not accrue sick or vacation time).
- Although a timesheet does not have to be submitted for a GA, keep a timesheet internal to your department for tracking and audit purposes.

Leaving Assistantship

- If a GA leaves or is removed from assistantship, notify GA Program coordinator immediately.
 - Keep Program coordinator (M. McGuire) in loop if issues are on the rise.
- Upon removal, immediately submit ePAR, noting official last day and “termination.”
- If GA is being removed from payroll just over summer months, but plans to return in the fall, make sure ePAR is coded as “Summer Termination.”
 - If GA stays on during the summer, make sure an ePAR is submitted with the code “Summer Appointment.”



GA and Supervisor Expectations & Opportunities



Graduate Assistant

Professional Development

- Away from campus:
 - GA should **not** list weekend hours or any more than four hours per business day as a part of the total hours for that month.
 - This way, the GA's opportunity to attend a conference does not take away from the productivity of the office, and the GA does not have to make up hours missed during time away from the office on business days.
- On-campus:
 - A graduate assistant may use 0-4 hours of their monthly working hours to attend professional development sessions offered on campus. Since each department and role has different types of responsibilities, it will be up to the supervisor to approve the GA's time away from the office to attend a professional development session

Graduate Assistant Cont.

- **Professional Development Cont.**
 - Conferences/webinars/etc. – general rule of thumb is to spend about \$500 on professional development, per GA, should departmental funding be available.
 - Division GA Gatherings
 - GA Orientation
 - Monthly GA lunches
 - The first Monday of every month from 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- **Mentorship**
 - Transition mentor provided by Program advisor (outside department)

Additional Supervisor Information

- Seek to provide a meaningful experience for your GA.
 - Supervisor trainings are currently being scheduled.
 - Let me know topics you would like included.
- GA/Supervisor Expectations Worksheet
- GA Mid-Year (December) and Annual Evaluation (May)
 - Share with GA at the start of their experience.
 - Send a copy to Program coordinator (M. McGuire) in May.
- Utilize the website!
 - <http://studentaffairs.unt.edu/graduate-assistant-program>

GA/Supervisor Expectations Worksheet

Sometimes supervisors and graduate assistants have different ideas and assumptions of what their roles are and what is expected of them. This exercise is designed to allow each party to share expectations and begin discussion that will best facilitate a successful partnership. Please have this exercise completed within 14 business days of the graduate assistant's initial hire date.

Directions:

1. The supervisor and graduate assistant should each have a blank copy of this worksheet. Do not write your names on these worksheets.
2. Read each statement carefully.
3. Rate each statement from 1 to 5 (1=Not At All Important/Completely Disagree, 5=Very Important/Completely Agree).
4. After both parties have finished the exercise, they will meet together to compare the similarities, focusing discussion around how to have a successful working relationship.

Check one – I am a: Supervisor Graduate Assistant

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Important/ Completely Disagree	Not Important/ Disagree	Neutral	Important/ Agree	Very Important/ Completely Agree

Rate each of the following statements: 1-5

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Both GAs and Supervisors should have a structured, scheduled time to meet one-one-one	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2. Both GAs and Supervisors should be able to socialize together outside of work	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3. GA should attend all office staff meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4. GA should be a part of the programmatic decision making processes	<input type="checkbox"/>				
5. GA should undergo periodic performance evaluations	<input type="checkbox"/>				
6. GA should dress professionally (discuss definition of what professional dress means to you)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
7. GA should conduct self in a professional manner (discuss what professional manner means to you)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
8. GA should be prepared to attend events outside typical working hours (8am-5pm)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
9. GA should be able to voice concerns or opinions to their supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/>				
10. GA should feel freedom to pitch new ideas for his/her office	<input type="checkbox"/>				
11. GA should be allowed to talk to whomever they like regarding a conflict with his/her supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/>				
12. GA should seek approval prior to making financial or contractual decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>				
13. GA should CC supervisor on all email communications	<input type="checkbox"/>				
14. GA should be allowed to attend all Division events and programs	<input type="checkbox"/>				
15. GA should be allowed to attend meetings outside the department without notifying supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/>				
16. GA should not be allowed to access internet sites unrelated to work projects (aol.com, facebook.com, cnn.com, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
17. GA should be allowed to deal with personal matters during working hours	<input type="checkbox"/>				
18. GA should be allowed to work on course work during working hours, but between projects	<input type="checkbox"/>				
19. GA should not expect flexibility in working hours once they are determined for the semester	<input type="checkbox"/>				
20. GA should be able to put classroom assignments before work projects during midterms and finals while at work	<input type="checkbox"/>				
21. GA should be able to take breaks at his/her own will	<input type="checkbox"/>				
22. GA should be able to invite a friend to meet him/her for lunch	<input type="checkbox"/>				
23. GA should not be able to arrive and leave work at his/her own discretion	<input type="checkbox"/>				
24. GA should build strong relationships with other GAs in the Division	<input type="checkbox"/>				
25. GA should not build strong relationships with other GA supervisors	<input type="checkbox"/>				
26. GA should not discuss information from his/her department with others	<input type="checkbox"/>				
27. GA should be able to leave personal belongings in the office workspace	<input type="checkbox"/>				
28. GA can single-handedly make decisions concerning a large project	<input type="checkbox"/>				
29. GA should not have authority to delegate work to student assistants	<input type="checkbox"/>				
30. GA should accept all tasks and projects from his/her supervisor (no matter what is asked)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
31. GA should not date undergraduates, supervisors, or other graduate students who are clients/customers of the department	<input type="checkbox"/>				
32. Supervisor should keep the GA informed of all office projects/occurrences	<input type="checkbox"/>				

DSA Graduate Assistant Performance Evaluation

Graduate Assistant Name	
Supervisor	
Department	
Employment Term	

Criteria	PERFORMANCE STANDARDS	Mid-Year Rating	End-of Year Rating	Action Items/Comments
Professionalism	Is dependable, punctual, honors time commitments.	N/A	N/A	
	Exhibits a professional attitude.	N/A	N/A	
	Appropriate communication style.	N/A	N/A	
	Appropriate dress attire.	N/A	N/A	
	Positively represents office to other departments or visitors.	N/A	N/A	
Job Effectiveness	Demonstrates independent thinking; willing to offer suggestions confidently.	N/A	N/A	
	Plans and organizes workload efficiently; is able to prioritize appropriately to meet deadlines.	N/A	N/A	
	Exhibits effective oral communication skills.	N/A	N/A	
	Exhibits effective written communication skills.	N/A	N/A	
	Takes initiative and demonstrates problem solving skills.	N/A	N/A	
	Produces high quality work in areas of responsibility with adequate speed and accuracy.	N/A	N/A	
	Forms positive relationships; works well with faculty, staff, and other GAs; team player.	N/A	N/A	
	Appropriately engages supervisor for feedback.	N/A	N/A	

Q&A