ASSISTANTSHIPS

Graduate Studies

Intro
A graduate assistantship provides financial support for a graduate student for a set period of time during which the student is expected to pursue activities towards the advanced degree.

Time Required
Work required by an assistantship and not directly related to the student's degree program cannot exceed 13-19.6 hours per week (.33 to .49 FTE).

Although students on graduate assistantships may not have employment exceeding 19.6 hours per week from all sources both on and off campus during the period of the assistantship, there is no limit to time spent on studies and research relating to the advanced degree.

Because of the potential for exploitation of graduate students, any assignment of responsibilities, such as teaching a course, must be associated with a fair and reasonable compensation. Graduate students may not volunteer for any significant service to the department without an appropriate stipend.

Types of Assistantships
In each case, the student is expected to continue working towards the advanced degree while a graduate assistant.

- A teaching assistantship provides a stipend to a student who is typically assisting in an academic department's teaching program, i.e., grading, assisting a professor with a course, etc.
- A research assistantship provides a stipend to a student who is typically assisting a professor with a research project, enabling the graduate student to work towards an advanced degree.
- Other graduate assistantships provide a stipend to a student who is assisting an academic or nonacademic department with a wide variety of functions.

Eligibility
To hold a graduate assistantship a student must be admitted for a specific graduate degree objective and enrolled for credit during the tenure of the assistantship.

Individual departments make assistantship appointments. Students who wish to be considered for assistantships in their major should direct inquiries to the graduate chair of their department. All international graduate students who are to be teaching assistants at UNL must attend the Institute for International Teaching Assistants (http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current/ita).

Benefits
Benefits Offered
Tuition remission of up to 12 hours per semester is provided as a benefit of eligible assistantships. Students holding eligible assistantships are provided basic individual student health insurance coverage with related benefits. The University subsidizes part of the student health insurance (http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current/health) premium for eligible graduate assistants.

Within departments and within each level of differentiation (master's or doctoral, new or experienced, number of work hours), stipends should generally be equivalent. Guidelines used to determine stipend levels should be available to students through the department.

Assistants may be given @unl.edu email addresses; those accounts close at the end of the assistantship.

Eligibility For Benefits
Eligibility for assistantship benefits requires meeting all of the following criteria:

- A continuous appointment for four full months within the semester dates.
- The stipend meets the minimum salary level set by the University.
- The assistantship or combination of assistantships in one or more departments totals at least 13.33 hours per week employment.

Resignation or Termination
If a graduate assistant resigns or their assistantship is terminated during the semester before four full months of consecutive service (e.g., 120 consecutive days within the semester dates, August-December or January-May) all benefits will be lost and the student will be responsible for the total tuition payment and health insurance premiums.

Summer Tuition
If a graduate assistant, while on an appointment during both semesters of the preceding academic year, was paid a stipend meeting the minimum qualification for summer tuition, the student is not charged tuition for the first 6 hours during the summer sessions. If such a stipend met the next level of qualification, the student is not charged tuition for the first 12 hours during the summer sessions. (Specific dollar amounts are available each year in the Guidelines for Graduate Assistantships (http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/facstaff/funding).)

Non-Benefits-Eligible Assistantships
A student on a non-benefits-eligible graduate assistantship is charged tuition at resident rates if the stipend received is equal to, or greater than, the total of the amount set by the University for the relative summer session.

Hiring and Renewal
The responsibilities of the graduate assistant and the method by which the student will be evaluated should be provided in writing to the student by the immediate supervisor at the beginning of the assistantship.

General Responsibilities
Each department or unit shall establish its own documented procedures for recruitment, selection, retention and dismissal of graduate assistants in accordance with UNL graduate policy and Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity guidelines. These procedures shall be made available to each graduate student and posted in the department. Individual departments may establish a required minimum course load (https://catalog.unl.edu/graduate-professional/graduate/registration/requirements) for funded students.

Departments must provide students with an official signed offer letter (http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/facstaff/funding), informing them of assistantship expectations, responsibilities, and compensation. A
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The academic freedom of graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) is not necessarily coextensive with that of faculty. All GTAs are engaged in supervised teaching or instruction. Supervisors are responsible for defining the nature, scope and manner of instruction to be used for each course. Supervisors should communicate the extent to which GTAs have discretion to introduce additional material. Graduate teaching assistants should follow the instructions of the supervisor. Graduate teaching assistants may not be penalized for expressing their own views on matters within the scope of the course, provided they adequately represent these views as their own.

In interpreting teaching evaluations, supervisors shall make every effort to distinguish legitimate critiques of the course from negative evaluations due to