



GRADUATE ASSISTANT OVERVIEW

Definition of a GRADUATE ASSISTANT

- ✓ Student pursuing a graduate degree
- ✓ Has the opportunity to gain experience his/her academic field by teaching or research
- ✓ Has a service obligation for which she/he receives a stipend
- ✓ Receives a tuition reduction that has no service obligation

Types of graduate assistantships

- Graduate Teaching Assistant (TA)
- Graduate Research Assistant (RA)
- Graduate Administrative Assistant (GA)

Graduate Teaching Assistant

- Have a primary responsibility in an instructional capacity
- Provide up to a maximum of 10 or 20 hours of instructional service per week over the course of a semester

Examples of duties:

- ✓ include lecturing in undergraduate level courses
- ✓ leading discussion groups
- ✓ serving as assistants to laboratory classes
- ✓ grading tests and papers
- ✓ lesson planning
- ✓ *A TA can perform any ancillary duty that would otherwise fall to the professor.*

Graduate Research Assistants

- Selected for excellence in scholarship and potential as researchers
- Provide up to a maximum of 10 or 20 hours of service per week over the course of semester
- Perform activities that relate directly to the student's degree requirements

Important to note: not all Research is done in a lab

Graduate Administrative Assistants

- Provide up to a maximum of 10 or 20 hours of service per week over the course of a semester that are purely administrative duties
- Have the opportunity to gain experience his/her academic field but are not considered research or teaching
- The stipend is taxable.

Examples: students working in the marketing office, the Rec Center

Graduate Assistant Requirements and Expectations

In addition to the duties performed, Graduate Assistants:

- Must be enrolled as a **full-time** student (8 credits minimum)
- Maintain a full-time status for the entire semester for graduate credits that satisfy Oakland's degree requirements
- GAs that applied to graduate may be approved to enroll less than the full-time requirement during that semester. The approval process is outlined in the Graduate Assistantship Policy Guidelines (page 5).

Graduate Assistant Requirements and Expectations

- Assistantship agreements are subject to cancellation if the student does not meet the minimum enrollment requirement.
- Graduate course work or research must contribute directly to the satisfaction of degree requirements.
- Graduate Assistants must maintain at least an overall 3.0 grade point average and make satisfactory academic progress, general degree and other program requirements as published in the Graduate Catalog or program handbook.

Steps to be Taken to Become a GA

Employment Verification

- **Prior to beginning work**, the Graduate School must verify your identity and work authorization by appearing in person at our office to complete the form I-9 and provide supporting documentation to complete the form. The Oath Card and Confidential Payroll Information forms are also required.
- The GA may not begin his/her service obligation until the employment paperwork is completed and the Graduate School tells your supervisor via email that you have completed this.
- The stipend for a new GA beginning after September 1 may be prorated based on the date eligibility is determined.

Working Outside of Your Graduate Assistantship

On Campus Employment

- A full-time graduate assistant may **NOT** work for or be paid by Oakland in any other employment classification during the same month in which they either worked or were paid as a graduate assistant.
- A part-time graduate assistant may be eligible to work as a student employee as long as the duties are different than the duties they are performing as a graduate assistant.

Off Campus Employment OU doesn't regulate students' off campus employment unless you are an international student. International students: <https://wwwp.oakland.edu/isso/employment/>

CPT and Graduate Assistantship

Curricular Practical Training (CPT): for international students to connect academic course work with a practical experience

- The CPT experience starts at the beginning of a semester.
- Students cannot voluntarily withdraw from the graduate assistantship program during a semester in order to do a CPT that same semester.
- Information provided by ISSO:
<https://wwwp.oakland.edu/isso/employment/>

Important For CPT/OPT: ISSO approves the CPT and the Grad School verifies the eligibility.

Payroll and Tuition Awards

- The stipend for service is paid on the last business day of each month for the semesters that your GA offer is valid.
- The tuition award is processed by the Financial Aid Office. If you have questions regarding how your GA award will effect your overall financial aid package, please make an appointment with a financial aid adviser.
- Direct deposit or check – The student determines how they will receive their stipend – deposited directly into checking and/or savings accounts or via a paper check. Paper checks may be picked up directly at the Payroll Office in 121 Vandenberg Hall. You will need to present picture identification to receive the check. Direct deposit forms can be completed in the Payroll Office, the Graduate School office, or on Sail.

Time To Degree

Doctoral Students

- The maximum time limit for completing a Ph.D. degree : 10 years from the term of the first course enrollment in the doctoral program.
- Student should achieve candidacy within six years from the first course enrollment in the doctoral program.
- After being advanced to candidacy, a student is expected to complete the remaining degree requirements within four years (including the dissertation defense).

Masters Students

- The maximum time limit for completing a master degree: 6 years from the term of the first course enrollment in the master program.

Leave of Absence

- Use for interruption in graduate studies
- Must apply and be approved for Leave of Absence
- A student on official Leave of Absence is not required to register for a course during the fall, winter or summer semesters.

The benefits of applying for a leave of absence are:

- The student's time-to-degree is extended while the student is covered by the leave of absence;
- The student's status as a cohort member is maintained during a leave of absence;
- The student will not be required to reapply for admission when the leave of absence is concluded.

Issues While Working as a GA

Disagreement With Your Supervisor

- In the rare occasion that you have a conflict with your supervisor, try to resolve the issue directly with your supervisor.
- If you can't resolve the issue with your supervisor directly you should seek guidance from your department chairperson.
- If the issue remains unresolved contact your academic dean's office
- If issue remains unsolved, contact the Graduate School

Disagreement with other students

- Talk with your faculty supervisor

GA Performance Evaluation

- There is no formal performance evaluation process that is required by the Graduate School.
- Your department or supervisor may have a process of their own for communicating how satisfied they are with your work.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

- The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, also known as the Buckley Amendment, *provides an OU student with the right to inspect and review his/her educational record and, with certain exceptions, to limit disclosure of information from that record.*

Educational records:

- Records directly related to a student and maintained by OU or a person acting for OU, such as a faculty member or other employee
- Covers records, files, documents, student papers and tests, and data directly related to students and maintained in any medium, except as may be specifically excluded by law. FERPA does not require OU to keep or maintain any particular record.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Except for specific exceptions (listed in #10), *a signed and dated consent must be obtained from students for the release of information from education records, specifying what is to be released, the reasons for release, and to whom, with a copy of the record sent to the student if he or she desires.*

OU may not require a written consent as a condition of providing a service or program. For more information, visit

<https://www.oakland.edu/deanofstudents/student-privacy-rights-ferpa/ferpa-policy/>.