



THE UNIVERSITY *of*  
**TULSA**

# **MANAGING YOUR GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP**

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## MANAGING YOUR GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP

### 1. Types of Graduate Assistantships

- a. TA= Teaching Assistantship
- b. AA= Administrative Assistantship
- c. RA= Research Assistantship

### 2. Your Assistantship Award

- a. Sign your award and return it to the Graduate School.
- b. Note the credit hours awarded for each semester.
  - i. Enroll in classes prior to the beginning of the semester, otherwise your check (and health insurance) will be delayed.
  - ii. Enroll in the same number of credits as indicated on your award (e.g., if award indicates 9 credits but you only enroll in 1 credit, the tuition will not be credited to your account).
- c. Note the number of hours per week of duties: typically 20 hours/week
  - i. 20 hours/week duties: full-time commitment
  - ii. International students by federal law are limited to  $\leq 20$  hours/week.
  - iii. If a domestic student requests to work additional hours, your advisor must approve your request prior to petitioning the Graduate Dean.
- d. Note calendar period of your award.
  - i. This determines your stipend payment (full month or half month).
  - ii. If you do not receive your paycheck at the end of the month, contact the Graduate School; do not wait several months to report the problem.
  - iii. If your award will expire in a month, and you thought it was going to be renewed, see your advisor immediately.

### 3. Follow the Terms of Appointment noted on the award.

- a. Full-time graduate student:
  - i. 9 credits/semester of enrollment
  - ii. After 2 consecutive semesters of  $\geq 9$  credits/semester:  
a master's student may enroll in  $< 9$  credits for 2 semesters  
a doctoral student may enroll in  $< 9$  credits for 4 semesters
  - iii. The semesters must be consecutive; no stopping out.
- b. Good academic standing:
  - i. Maintain a cumulative graduate GPA  $\geq 3.0$ .
  - ii. Not on probation
- c. Contingent upon
  - i. Performing duties in a satisfactory manner,
  - ii. Demonstrating honesty, professional integrity, ethics, and courtesy.

### 4. Maintain eligibility for your assistantship

- i. Full-time status
- ii. Good academic standing
- iii. Compliance with University policies regarding Academic Honesty and Ethical Conduct of Research and Scholarship
- iv. Satisfactory performance of duties
- v. Embody honesty, professional integrity, ethics and courtesy

### 5. TU Student Health Insurance is provided with your assistantship, if requested.

- i. Green form is included with your award notification.
- ii. Must complete and submit the form each year by August 31.
- iii. All student accounts are charged for insurance as of 8/1; accounts are credited for insurance after 8/31, if appropriate.
- iv. After 8/31 if a GA requests health insurance coverage, it is prorated.
- v. If you need to use your TU health insurance coverage prior to 8/31, go to the United Health Care website: [www.studentcenter.uhcsr.com](http://www.studentcenter.uhcsr.com) or contact Carlie Malone (918-949-6715), who will be at the Resource Fair. After 8/31, print your insurance card from the website.

## **6. Student Fees**

- i. These are not typically covered by assistantship awards.
- ii. Pay these promptly or you risk interest charges.

## **7. Contact Diahanna Moffitt (918-631-2291) for questions regarding your award.**

- i. Awards are processed in the Graduate School Office (Lorton Hall 201)

## **8. Payroll Arrangements**

- a. Direct deposit into your checking/savings account
- b. Forms: W-4 and I-9
- c. Contact Roxie Marris (918-631-2609) for questions

## **9. Supervisor**

- a. Introduce yourself to your supervisor if you have not done so.
- b. If it is a faculty member, you should address them as “Dr. Smith” or “Professor Smith”. If they prefer you call them by their first names, they will say so.
- c. Inquire about your duties associated with your assistantship assignment and if there is any required training.
- d. Assigned work should be commensurate with your experience. If not, ask for guidance from your supervisor. If you do not know how to grade, ask for rubrics or ask to discuss grading with the faculty member. If the assigned task is in an administrative office, ask the supervisor how to do the task or who in the office may instruct you in the task. For research assignments, ask your supervisor if you are unfamiliar with the database, or where to acquire the primary research materials, or how to operate the instrument, etc.
- e. Ask your supervisor what you are expected to accomplish that semester. Inquire how it will help your work in the future and how it may assist you in acquiring a job in the future. Each new responsibility in your assistantship will contribute to your competency and perhaps your specialization.
- f. Ask if there is a dress code, or required personal protective equipment, etc.
- g. Ask if there is any confidential information that you will be handling and if there is a confidentiality agreement that you must sign.
- h. Acquire keys, etc. that will be needed to access facilities/rooms for your duties.
- i. Introduce yourself to the departmental administrative assistant who will arrange for your keys, etc. and may be critical to your academic welfare.

## **10. Confidentiality**

- a. TA/AA: Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- b. TA/AA: Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA)
- c. TA/AA: Student files: academic or health related
- d. TA/AA/RA: Office or departmental discussions
- e. RA: Research data
- f. RA/AA: Confidentiality agreement
- g. If unsure about confidentiality of an issue, ask your supervisor.

## **11. Syllabi** All syllabi must contain the following statement:

- a. Students with disabilities should contact the Center for Student Academic Support (CSAS) to self-identify their needs in order to facilitate their rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Amendments and set up appropriate accommodations. All students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with and take advantage of services provided by CSAS, including tutoring, academic counseling, and developing study skills. CSAS also provides confidential consultations to any student with academic concerns. Contact CSAS at 918-631-2315.

## **12. Personal Conduct/Professional Etiquette**

- a. Attitude: Respect for others produces a positive and helpful attitude.
- b. Ambassador for TU: You may be the first contact someone has with TU.
- c. Acknowledge other’s presence and provide a welcoming tone.
- d. Use courtesy and common sense.
- e. Attire: neat, presentable, professional appearance
- f. Display initiative and motivation.
- g. Career development skills

### **13. Crisis Management**

- a. TA/AA: for undergraduate issues contact your supervisor
- b. Yourself or a colleague
- c. Life Skills Series

### **14. University Correspondence and Communications**

You must have departmental permission to use official university letterhead.

### **15. Holiday Policy**

- a. 20 hours of duties/week reduced proportionally by the time the University is closed.
- b. If TU is open 3 days of a week, then a maximum of 12 hours of duties is expected, not 20 hours for the week.

### **16. Harassment or Assault**

- a. In the University of Tulsa Harassment Policy, all of us share responsibility for reporting instances of harassment to appropriate University officials. If someone reports harassment to you or if you are aware of a situation that looks like harassment, act promptly and notify one of the following: your supervisor, department chair, the Graduate School, or the Provost Office. Do not delay reporting the incident, even if the victim suggests you “wait and see what happens.” Let the appropriate university officials determine what steps need to be taken.
- b. In cases of sexual assault, notify Campus Security immediately. They will take the appropriate steps in notifying public officials as well as university officials.

**Please be aware, as a new graduate assistant you are expected to attend the following TU LifeSkills Workshops, if you have not already attended them. These are *Harassment: Defining It, Avoiding It, & Reporting It; Research Integrity; and Plagiarism and How to Avoid It.***

## **GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE ASSISTANTS WHEN WORKING WITH OTHER STUDENTS**

### **Reporting and Dealing with Student Problems**

- Be aware of problems and signs of unusual levels of stress.
  - Belligerence or other antisocial behavior
  - Chronic tardiness and other attendance problems
  - Changes in behavior or mood, e.g. withdrawal from class interaction
  - Abrupt change in performance level
  - Inability to complete assigned work
- Undergraduate and graduate students should be informed that anyone with a disability and seeking accommodation should contact the CSAS (Center for Student Academic Support).
  - This should be included on any syllabus distributed to students.
  - Inform your supervisor if a student approaches you regarding a disability.
- Faculty should deal with severe student problems, but if you are a TA, they may ask you to sit in. The same applies if you are an AA, a staff member may ask you to sit in. These problems may include
  - Sex, drugs, and alcohol
  - Sexual or other forms of harassment
  - Problems with family
  - Health problems
- Encourage students who complain of harassment to discuss it with the appropriate TU employee. This could be a faculty member, department chair, or an administrator.
- As a graduate assistant, you are *required* to report cases of suspected harassment (sexual or otherwise) to your assistantship supervisor or the chair of the department.

### **Avoiding Problems while Supervising or Teaching Undergraduates**

- Maintain a professional attitude in the classroom, office, or lab
- Be honest, do not pretend to know something, find out
- Dress professionally
- Keep your office door open when working with students
- Maintain appropriate psychological and physical distance
  - No flirting
  - Avoid intimate relations with your undergraduate students
  - Be very careful with physical contact
- Be respectful of cultural differences
- Avoid personal comments
- Avoid sarcasm with students
- Avoid appearance of favoritism
- Treat everyone equally

### **People to Contact if You or Another Student Needs Help**

- Your work supervisor, or your department chair
- The college dean or the Dean of the Graduate School (ext. 2336)
- The Center for Student Academic Support (ext. 2315)
- The Alexander Health Center (ext. 2241)
- Richard Redner (Senior Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs at ext. 2986)

## **TRANSFER OF ASSISTANTSHIP SKILLS TO A VARIETY OF JOB POSITIONS**

### **1. Your Assistantship**

- a. Qualifies as legitimate professional experience
- b. Skills honed through your curriculum and assistantship may be transferred to various work settings
- c. Strong portable skills equip you for multiple job changes throughout your career(s)
- d. Your supervisor may be willing to serve as a reference. Request letters of recommendation three to four weeks in advance.

### **2. Skills**

- a. Strong communications skills
- b. Computer and technical aptitude
- c. Use of technology for learning
- d. Problem-solving and innovation
- e. Knowledge construction
- f. Leadership
- g. Teamwork and collaboration
- h. Interpersonal abilities
- i. Self-regulation and self-motivation
- j. Willingness to learn quickly and continuously

### **3. Show potential employers what you can do with high-level skills and in-depth knowledge base.**

“The world doesn’t care about what you may know any more but about what you can do with what you know.”

Thomas Friedman, the foreign-affairs columnist for *The New York Times*, 2013

## **KEY CONTACTS REGARDING ASSISTANTSHIPS**

Diahanna Moffitt: 918-631-2291  
Award processing  
TU Health Insurance availability

Roxie Marrs: 918-631-2609  
Direct Deposit questions  
I-9 and W-4 questions