

Guidance on Administering Student Development Graduate Assistantships for 2015-16

1. Definitions

graduate assistant (GA). An employee who is an actively enrolled student attending classes during the current semester at the University who is employed by the Graduate School on a contract basis to work a specified number of hours per week. The Employee does not receive any State or University fringe benefits. (*ASU Policy Manual* - Policy 506.1 § 4.2.1)

graduate assistantship year. The standard contracted period of work for a graduate assistantship beginning one week prior to the first week of classes thru the completion of exam week for each term. A graduate assistant year is for a period of 36 weeks.

The graduate assistant year for 2015-16 is defined below:

Fall 2015: Monday, August 10, 2015 – Sunday, December 13, 2015

Spring 2016: Monday, January 4, 2016 – Sunday, May 8, 2016

payroll workweek. Payroll defines a workweek as the period from 12:01 a.m. Monday - 12:00 midnight Sunday. (*ASU Policy Manual* - Policy 506.1 § 4.7.6.2)

2. Graduate Assistantship Financial Package

The financial package for a Graduate Assistantship in the Division of Student Development includes the following components:

- an allocation of \$9,000 to be used towards student temporary wages for hours worked within a graduate assistantship year
- a minimum professional development allowance of \$300.00
- a campus parking permit (valued at \$204.00) will be provided to you as a part of your compensation; and
- an *in-state* tuition scholarship, which is currently estimated at \$4,518.00.

3. Graduate Assistantship Wages

Graduate Assistants in the Division of Student Development are allowed to earn up to \$9,000 during a graduate assistantship year. Graduate assistants will be paid twice monthly for actual hours worked based upon timesheet entry. The hiring department should instruct graduate students on when and how to submit their timesheet showing hours worked. Timesheets will follow the same submission

schedule and procedure as student temporary employees. (*ASU Policy Manual – Policy 506.1 § 4.5.4.2*)

Graduate Assistants should be paid at a rate of \$12.00 per hour for time worked throughout the graduate assistantship year. A \$9,000 allocation per assistantship allows up to 750 hours of available work time throughout the graduate assistantship year. This is approximately 21 hours per payroll workweek.

For example, if a graduate assistant only works 20 hours per week during the graduate assistantship year, here is the breakdown of those hours:

Allocation used: 720 hours - \$ 8,640.00

Allocation remaining: 30 hours - \$ 360.00

In this example, a graduate assistant would need to work an additional 30 hours throughout the graduate assistantship year in order to earn all \$9,000 in their allocation.

Graduate Assistants will only be paid for actual hours worked. Any balance in the \$9,000 allocation for a Graduate Assistant's wages at the end of the graduate assistantship year will be forfeited.

Note: If a graduate assistant earns overtime due to working more than 40 hours during a payroll workweek, this will leave less than 750 hours for a graduate assistant to work during the graduate assistantship year. Only \$9,000 per graduate assistantship is available in your budget and additional funds will not be provided beyond that amount per GA. It is recommended that a GA never works over 40 hours in a payroll workweek, however, if this is required you will need to recalculate the number of hours available for the GA to work for the time remaining in the graduate assistantship year.

4. Professional Development Allocations

Your departmental budget will include a minimum of \$300 per graduate student in the Travel Budget Pool (731000) of the same fund the graduate assistant is paid from. If you have questions about this, please ask Matt Dull (dullmc@appstate.edu). The graduate student will not see this as a part of their In-State Tuition Scholarship.

5. Campus Parking Permit

Graduate Assistants should register for parking permits at any point using Parking and Traffic's registration system in [Banner Self Service](#). The Division of Student Development has provided the name of each graduate assistant to Payroll. The total reimbursement for a parking permit is \$204 and will be included in the student's first payroll check. The student should be made aware that parking permits are considered a form of compensation and the University will be required to withhold

federal and state taxes from their paycheck to cover the tax withholdings due for the \$204 cost of the parking permit. The student can view this reimbursement using [Self Service](#) and clicking the *Pay Information* link, then the *Pay Stubs* link in the “Employee” tab.

6. In-State Tuition Award

Student Development will place an award on financial aid package of each Graduate Assistant equivalent to In-State Graduate Tuition. The 2015-16 scholarship amount is \$4,518 and will be applied in two equal payments between the fall and spring semester to their student account -- \$2,259 per semester. Students will see these awards in their financial aid package at this time. They can view their financial aid package online on [Banner Self Service](#) under the “Financial Aid” tab. Students often ask how much they should pay towards their bill from Student Accounts – they should:

- Take their total bill amount for the semester and subtract the \$2,259 scholarship amount
- This gives them the remaining balance of their student account after the In-State Tuition Award is applied

If approved for graduate enrollment in less than 9 hours of course work, the amount of the graduate assistant’s in-state tuition scholarship will equal the actual cost of *in-state* tuition for that semester. All other general fees, health insurance, graduation application fees, internship fees, etc. are not included in this scholarship amount and it is the student’s responsibility to pay these charges by the published due dates.

7. Other Employment Requirements

Graduate Assistants are considered Appalachian State University employees. To become an employee, all Graduate Assistants must complete the following employment paperwork:

- Form W-4 (Federal Tax withholding)
- Form NC-4 (NC tax withholding)
- Form I-9 (Federal proof of eligibility to work)

Graduate Assistant positions must be e-Verified through the Department of Homeland Security on the first day of employment. For more information on completing this step, please contact Office of Human Resources at 828-262-3187.

This paperwork is filled out on the first day of employment as a Graduate Assistant at the University. Additional details on the process can be provided by the graduate school and is available on their website at:

<http://www.graduate.appstate.edu/students/assistantships/paperwork.html>

The other requirement for employment for any graduate assistant is the [Mandatory Training for Graduate Assistantships](#), which must be completed in order to continue payment beyond the first paycheck. This training takes approximately 30 to 60 minutes total. The training is on-line, and there is a quiz that the student must take at the end.

8. Employment Contract

Departments should submit a [Request to Issue Graduate Assistantship Contract](#) for each assistantship. This form will be used to develop an electronic Graduate Assistantship Contract using DocuSign. DocuSign is an approved electronic signature tool that we are using for completing graduate assistantship contracts. Once your department has completed this form, the Central Office will issue a Graduate Assistantship Contract electronically. This contract will first be routed to the Director, then on to the student for review and signature. Once the contract is fully signed, all parties will receive a PDF copy of the completed contract.

This contract will be considered the pay authorization form for Student Development graduate assistantships. You do not need to complete any other student pay authorization form for Graduate Assistants. The Central Office will forward completed contracts to the Graduate School and Payroll on your behalf.

9. Time Entry

Payroll will create a pay authorization for Graduate Assistantships in INB Banner once the contract is returned to Student Development.

All Graduate Students will be responsible for entering their own time worked in [Banner Self Service](#). Their time entry will be similar to the process of student temporary time entry where they will enter the time worked for each day worked in the payroll period. After the student submits their payroll, it will be forwarded to the approver for departmental payroll.

Your Department should provide the schedule of when to submit timesheets. Timesheet entry will follow the same submission schedule and procedure as student temporary employees (twice monthly).

10. Contact

If you or your students have questions about any of these items, please have them contact Matt Dull at dullmc@appstate.edu or (828) 262-2060.