

HIRING GRADUATE TEACHING AND RESEARCH ASSISTANTS, GRADUATE INSTRUCTORS, GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

Eligibility: Only graduate students who are in good academic standing (minimum 3.00 GPA) and making appropriate progress toward their degree are eligible for an assistantship.

Hiring GAs from another department/ degree program: Departments wishing to hire a graduate student from another degree program must check with the Graduate School before offering a position. Submission of an “authorization to hire a graduate student in a department outside their degree program” must be submitted to the Graduate School **before** an offer of employment is made.

Communicate with Graduate Assistants (GAs) so they know exactly what their award provides.

Rationale: Fulltime graduate students usually give up their jobs. They frequently misjudge how much less they will be paid as a GA and often face serious financial problems. Provide an appointment letter to the student stating pay, work hours, starting and ending date,

Require all GAs who are U.S. citizens to complete a FASFA form through Financial Aid.

Rationale: Graduate students can get up to \$18,500 per year in low-interest student loans.

Hiring Time Frame for GAs

Normally, GAs will be hired either by semester or on a 9-month appointment. The University considers summer appointments additional employment and requires a separate PAF. Any GA paid for the summer who is not enrolled in classes cannot obtain the FICA exemption on their salary. Please note that graduate assistants cannot be fired before the end of their contract unless you follow the termination policy set form in the faculty handbook.

PAF Approval Dependent upon Enrollment:

Rationale: The Graduate School cannot approve PAFs unless a student is enrolled in the appropriate number of credit hours. If a student is hired over two or more semesters, the department must verify that the student is enrolled in the appropriate number of hours *each* semester of employment. Any GA who is not enrolled must either be terminated or have their title changed to a non-graduate student title.

Summer Exception

During the summer, a GA is not required to be enrolled in classes. However, if the GA is not enrolled or is under-enrolled (less than half-time) the PAF must reflect “N” as non-exempt for the FICA waiver.

FICA exemption requires half-time enrollment

This is an IRS policy. Any department not in compliance could face financial penalties. Any student not enrolled half-time must have the FICA status changed to “N” (non-exempt).

Tuition for GRAs paid on grants

The Graduate School and the Office of Research Administration require that GRAs whose salary is funded by an external grant must have their tuition paid by that grant if allowed by the granting agency. A PI may request an exception to this policy in writing to the Graduate Dean. A compelling rationale must be included in the request.

PAF Approval – The University requires that all PAFs for GIs, GTAs, GRAs, GAs be approved by the Graduate Dean. This includes new hires, rehires, terminations and changes in pay.

Benefits. Please refer to <http://www.umsl.edu/divisions/graduate/formsregs/gta.html> for benefits for GTA/GRAs/GA/GIs.

IRS Tax Issues: Please refer to <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p970.pdf>