



WAYNE STATE
Graduate School

GRADUATE ASSISTANT HIRING MANUAL

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**Checklist for New Hire
Graduate Assistants
Revised July 2013**

- Letter of Offer
- Award Agreement
- Certificate of Relevancy (for Graduate Student Assistants and Graduate Research Assistants)
- GEOC Support Allocation Form (for GTAs and GSAs, unless exempt)
- Tax Forms (Employee completes and sends to the Payroll Office.)
- Medical, dental and vision insurance forms (Employee completes and sends to the Total compensation and Wellness Office.)
- Confidential Survey to Identify Faculty and Staff with Disabilities and U.S. Veterans
<http://www.hr.wayne.edu/help/2005veteransanddisabilitysurvey.pdf>
- Council of Graduate Schools Resolution (for newly admitted graduate students)
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) brochure
- Background Check
- I-9 Employment Authorization Form
- OISS Work Authorization Form (for international students)

Hiring a Graduate Assistant

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These procedures should be followed the first time you hire a graduate assistant, when there has been a break in service (excluding the summer for 9-month based appointments) or when a former graduate assistant changes to a different graduate assistant classification type (e.g. GTA to GRA).

- **Determine the type of position that you need:**
 - GTAs have primarily teaching-related responsibilities
 - GSAs have scholarly- or research-related responsibilities. Note that the research should not be related to the GSA's own dissertation.
 - GRAs have research-related responsibilities that are directly associated with the GRAs own dissertation research.
 - To review the description for each of the above classifications and/or learn more about the specific duties tied to each type of graduate assistant, see the descriptions (GTA, GSA, GRA) on the Graduate School website.

- **Determine the length of the graduate assistant's contract, i.e. is it one semester, two semesters or a full twelve-month contract?**
 - GTA contracts are generally one or two semesters (academic year) in length.
 - GSA and GRA contracts are typically for an academic year or a full 12 months.
 - If there is a possibility that the graduate assistant who is being appointed on a 12-month basis will be renewed or appointed in the subsequent academic year on a 9-month basis, consider using a contract end date that will facilitate a smooth transition from a 12-month based appointment to a 9-month based appointment. Use a contract end date that is the day before the next academic year contract begin date. For example, if you are hiring a GSA on a 12-month basis beginning February 2, 2009 and it is possible that this same GSA will be a 9-month graduate assistant in 2009-10, you should end the GSA contract on 8/18/09 (2/2/09 – 8/18/09), so that the 2009-10 contract can begin on 8/19/09 (the first day for academic year appointments in 09-10).

- **Determine the payroll basis on which the employee will be paid, i.e. on a 9-month (9M) or 12-month (BW) basis.**
 - 9-month (9M) basis means that the employee's annual salary will be divided by 20 in order to determine the amount per pay.
 - 12-month (BW) basis means that the employee's annual salary will be divided by 26.1 in order to determine the amount per pay.

- **Determine the *annualized* salary.**
 - The salary must be at or above the minimum posted graduate assistant salary for the discipline. The minimum will depend upon the source of funding for the position (general fund or non-general fund), the discipline and the classification.
 - The salary for all GEOC-AFT represented classifications (GTA and GSA) must be the minimum defined in the GEOC-AFT contract, even if they are supported on non-general funds.
 - The minimum salary amounts are listed on the Graduate School website.

- The salary that the person actually receives may be less than the annualized amount if the contract period is less than the 9-M or BW period. If this is the case, review the Salary Calculation section below.

- **Salary calculation for the letter of offer when graduate assistant will be receiving less than the annualized salary amount.**

If the graduate assistant will be receiving less than the annualized salary amount (9M or 12-month), then you must calculate the amount that he or she will actually receive. This will be the amount that you put in the letter of offer. To calculate this figure, review the following:

9-month graduate assistant

- Divide the annualized salary by 20 pays to determine the amount per pay.
- Multiply the amount per pay by the number of full and/or partial pay periods during the graduate assistant's actual contract period. For example, if the contract period is 7.7 pays (7 full pays plus 7 days), then you will multiply the amount per pay times 7.7 to determine the actual amount that the graduate assistant will receive.
- Include this amount in the letter of offer.
- See the special EPAF processing instructions related to salary.

12-month graduate assistant

- Divide the annualized salary by 26.1 pays to determine the amount per pay.
- Multiply the amount per pay by the number of full and/or partial pay periods during the graduate assistant's actual contract period. For example, if the contract period is 7.7 pays (7 full pays plus 7 days), then you will multiply the amount per pay times 7.7 to determine the actual amount that the graduate assistant will receive.
- Include this amount in the letter of offer.
- See the special EPAF processing instructions related to salary.

- **Determine the required codes.**

E-class

U2 – any 12-month basis graduate assistant classification

U9 – any 9-month basis graduate assistant classification

Classification Code

Graduate Teaching Assistant

12-month = U2001

9-month = U9001

Graduate Student Assistant

12-month = U2002

9-month = U9002

Graduate Research Assistant

12-month = U2003

9-month = U9003

FTE

.50

Appointment Percent

50%

Hours per Pay
37.5

Hours per Day
3.75

Account Code
61141

Position Number

Graduate assistants have pool position numbers, i.e. the position number is not unique to the position. It is only unique to the department, and within that, to the classification type (GTA, GSA, GRA) and E-class type (U2, U9). All pool positions begin with a "P". If your department does not already have a pool position number established for the graduate assistant type and E-class that you are going to have, you will want to submit a [Position Action Request \(PAR\) form](#) to the Employment Services Office, requesting that a position number be established for you.

Suffix

Use 00 for the *first* time the person is hired under the position number.
Use 01 (or 02, etc.) if the person has been in the position (number) before but there was a break in service. For example, the first time a GTA is assigned to a position number in Economics, you would use the 00 suffix. If that person is rehired as a GTA in Economics two years later (same position number), you would use the 01 suffix.

Job Change Reason

Use HIAPP or HIREA, as appropriate. Review the explanations associated with the Job Change Reason codes on the [HR Help System](#).

- **Identify the person to fill the position and check his or her qualifications for the position.**
 - Must be an admitted graduate student (by the semester of hire).
 - Must have a minimum GPA of 3.0.
 - Must have sufficient credits remaining to meet the minimum enrollment requirement for the position in the semester(s) of the contract.

- **Determine if the position is represented by the GEOC-AFT**
 - All Graduate Teaching Assistants and Graduate Student Assistants, regardless of the source of funding, are represented by the GEOC-AFT. There are a few exceptions, which are delineated in Article II of the GEOC-AFT Labor Agreement.
 - The full content of the GEOC-AFT Labor Agreement is available on the Graduate School website.

- **Prepare the Letter of offer and Award Agreement Form**
 - Go to the Graduate School website and choose the appropriate Standard Letter of Offer and Award Agreement.
 - Complete and print the letter and agreement on your department letterhead.

- Follow your department and college procedures regarding obtaining signatures and initiating the offer. If you are unsure of the nature of the procedures, contact your dean's office personnel administrator for direction.
- **Facilitate the completion of the: Certificate of Relevancy if appropriate, GEOC-AFT Support Allocation form if appropriate, Veteran's Survey Form, Employee Data Form, tax and benefit forms, Council of Graduate Schools Resolution and Employee Assistance Program brochure.**
 - Certificates of Relevancy – The forms (separate for GRAs and GSAs) are found on the [Graduate School website](#). Certificates are not required for GTAs.
 - GEOC-AFT Support Allocation Form - All represented GEOC-AFT graduate assistants should be provided a GEOC Support Allocation Form to complete the first time the graduate assistant is assigned to either a represented classification-type (GTA or GSA). The graduate assistant does not have to complete another Support Allocation Form unless and until he or she wishes to change the authorization that he or she indicated on the Form. (See the FAQs for graduate assistants on the Graduate School website for information on changing dues or fees authorization.)
 - Confidential Survey to Identify Faculty and Staff with Disabilities and U.S. Veterans (Veteran's Survey) Form – This form is not required; however, it should be offered to the prospective graduate assistant to complete if he or she wishes to do so.
 - Employee Data Form - This form is completed and signed by the graduate assistant.
 - Tax withholding forms – All employees are asked to complete a federal, state and city tax withholding (W-4) form. Forms may be available in your department, dean's office or the Payroll Office. You may also obtain federal and state forms via the Payroll Office website. International graduate assistants may be eligible for exemption from tax withholding due to a tax treaty. This graduate assistant should complete the [Form 8233 - Exemption from Withholding on Compensation for Independent](#) (and Certain Dependent) Personal Services of a Nonresident Alien Individual. Information and the form are available on the Payroll Office website. Completed forms should be submitted directly to the Payroll Office by the employee or hiring unit.
 - Benefit forms – All graduate assistants are eligible for subsidized medical, vision and dental benefits. Graduate assistants also have the option to accept Cash in Lieu of subsidized medical insurance if they can provide documentation of coverage outside of the University. Benefit information and forms are available at. Completed forms should be submitted directly to the Total Compensation and Wellness Office by the employee or hiring unit.
 - Council of Graduate Schools Resolution – cb needs to add after CGS website is updated
 - Employee Assistance Program (EAP) brochure – All graduate assistants are eligible to receive the benefits provided by the Employee Assistance Program. The services for WSU's EAP are currently provided by Ulliance. EAP brochures are available from the Human Resource Office . When possible, graduate assistants should be provided a

brochure. If brochures are unavailable, the graduate assistant should be directed to the [EAP website](#) for information.

- **Conclude the appointment document submission process:**

- Compile the required completed and signed documents to assign a graduate assistant (letter of offer and award agreement, Certificate of Relevancy if appropriate, GE0C-AFT Support Allocation form if appropriate, Veteran's Survey Form, tax and benefit forms)
- Complete the EPAF Data Summary Worksheet
- Submit the Worksheet and electronic versions of the completed and signed forms to your regional HR team for processing. This HR team will facilitate the I-9 process, the Work Authorization for international graduate students, the Background Check and the EPAF transaction.

- **Additional Information Regarding Assistantships:**

- The standard letters of offer and Award Agreement forms may not be modified.
- All graduate assistants have a tuition scholarship associated with their assistantship. The credits provided by the scholarship are the same, regardless of source of funding, and may not be altered due to lack of funding on the part of the hiring unit. Information regarding which unit (hiring or Graduate School) is responsible for the tuition scholarship payment is available on the Graduate School website.
- All graduate assistants are exempt from FICA and FICA Medicare Withholding as long as they are enrolled for the required number of credits per term of their appointments.
- All graduate assistants are eligible for spouse and dependent tuition benefits.
- The Graduate School web site provides information related to the minimum compensation amount, the academic year contract dates to use, as well as the current medical, vision, dental and tuition scholarship values that should be used in Letter of Offer and Award Agreement.
- The Graduate School website includes a link to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), which may be beneficial to students, faculty and staff involved with graduate assistantship appointments.

Renewing a Graduate Assistant

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These procedures should be followed when you are renewing the contract for a graduate assistant. If the classification is changing (e.g. from GTA to GSA), you will need to use a letter of offer and award agreement format rather than a renewal letter.

- Determine the length of the graduate assistant's contract, i.e. is it one semester, two semesters or a full twelve-month contract? See detailed explanation in the procedures for Hiring a Graduate Assistant.
- Determine the *annualized* salary, if there is an increase in salary included in the renewal.
 - Note that there is a new minimum salary at the beginning of each academic year. The minimum salary will depend upon the source of funding for the position (general fund or non-general fund), the discipline and the classification.
 - The salary for all GEOC-AFT represented classifications (GTA and GSA) must be the minimum defined in the GEOC-AFT contract, even if they are supported on non-general funds.
The minimum salary amounts are listed on the Graduate School website.
 - The salary that the person actually receives may be less than the annualized amount if the contract period is less than the 9-M or BW period. If this is the case, review the Salary Calculation section in the procedures for Hiring a Graduate Assistant.
- **Check the qualification of the graduate student who is being renewed.**
 - Must have a minimum GPA of 3.0.
 - Must have sufficient credits remaining to meet the minimum enrollment requirement for the position in the semester(s) of the contract.
- **Determine if the position is represented by the GEOC-AFT.**
 - All Graduate Teaching Assistants and Graduate Student Assistants, regardless of the source of funding, are represented by the GEOC-AFT. There are a few exceptions, which are delineated in Article II of the GEOC-AFT Labor Agreement.
 - Note that a GEOC-AFT Support Allocation Form is not required because the graduate assistant would have submitted the form with his or her original appointment in that classification, if appropriate.
- **Prepare the Renewal Letter of offer.**
 - Go to the Graduate School website and click on the appropriate Renewal Letter of Offer [link](#).
 - Complete and print the letter on your department letterhead.
 - Follow your department and college procedures regarding obtaining signatures and initiating the offer. If you are unsure of the nature of the procedures, contact your dean's office personnel administrator for direction.

- **Facilitate the completion of the Certificate of Relevancy form, if appropriate**
 - Certificates are not required for GTAs.

- **Conclude the renewal document submission process:**
 - Compile the required completed and signed documents to renew the graduate assistant (renewal letter of offer, Certificate of Relevancy if appropriate).
 - Complete the EPAF Data Summary Worksheet
 - Submit the Worksheet and electronic versions of the completed and signed forms to your regional HR team for processing. This HR team will facilitate the Work Authorization for international graduate students, if appropriate, and the EPAF transaction

Reclassification for a Graduate Assistant

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These procedures should be followed only when you are changing a graduate assistant from one graduate assistant classification (e.g. GTA) to another (e.g. GRA) in the middle of the original contract (e.g. beginning January 1st in an academic year contract) and the contract end date will remain the same.

- **Determine if the salary is changing. If so, consider the following:**
 - The salary must be at or above the minimum posted graduate assistant salary for the discipline. The minimum will depend upon the source of funding for the position (general fund or non-general fund), the discipline and the classification.
 - The salary for all GEOC-AFT represented classifications (GTA and GSA) must be the minimum defined in the GEOC-AFT contract, even if they are supported on non-general funds.
 - The minimum salary amounts are listed on the Graduate School website.
 - The salary that the person actually receives may be less than the annualized amount if the contract period is less than the 9-M or BW period. If this is the case, review the Salary Calculation section in the New Hire section.

- **Determine the appropriate E-class and Classification codes for the new classification. Review the codes listed in the New Hire section.**

- **Determine the appropriate suffix (see information below regarding paper and EPAF transaction processing).**
 - Note that the suffix will change because you will be using a position number different from the current classification.

- **Determine if the new position is represented by the GEOC-AFT.**
 - All Graduate Teaching Assistants and Graduate Student Assistants, regardless of the source of funding, are represented by the GEOC-AFT. There are a few exceptions, which are delineated in Article II of the GEOC-AFT Labor Agreement.
 - The full content of the GEOC-AFT Labor Agreement is available on the Graduate School website.

- **Prepare the appropriate Letter of offer.**
 - Because the action is changing the graduate assistant to a different classification, you must use a standard letter of offer and award agreement format (not a renewal).
 - Go to the Graduate School website and click on the appropriate Letter of Offer.
 - Complete and print the letter on your department letterhead.
 - Follow your department and college procedures regarding obtaining signatures and initiating the offer. If you are unsure of the nature of the procedures, contact your dean's office personnel administrator for direction.

- **Facilitate the completion of the Certificate of Relevancy form, if appropriate**
 - The forms (separate for GRAs and GSAs) are found on the Graduate School website. Certificates are not required for GTAs.

- **If the new classification is one that is represented by the GEOC-AFT and the graduate student has not previously submitted a GEOC-AFT Support Allocation Form, provide the form to the graduate assistant for completion. See additional information in the New Hire section.**

- **Conclude the reclassification document submission process:**
 - Compile the required completed and signed documents to reclassify the graduate assistant (Letter of offer and Award Agreement, Certificate of Relevancy if appropriate, GEOC-AFT Support Allocation Form, if appropriate).
 - Complete the EPAF Data Summary Worksheet
 - Submit the Worksheet and electronic versions of the completed and signed forms to your regional HR team for processing.

Salary Adjustment for a Graduate Assistant

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A hiring unit may provide an increase in salary for a graduate assistant as long as funding is available within the unit's budget.

- Determine the *annualized* salary.
The salary that the person actually receives may be less than the annualized amount if the contract period is less than the 9-M or BW period. If this is the case, review the Salary Calculation section in the procedures for Hiring a Graduate Assistant
- **Conclude the Salary Adjustment document submission process:**
 - Complete the EPAF Data Summary Worksheet
 - Submit the Worksheet to your regional HR team for processing.

Documentation is not required for a salary increase; however, if documentation regarding the adjustment exists, it should be included in the information provided to the HR Team.

Separating a Graduate Assistant

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When a graduate assistant leaves prior to the end of his or her contract, there may be implications to the benefits that are provided with the assistantship. In addition, removing a graduate assistant from his or her position due to performance-related issues should be done so only after reviewing and taking contractual obligations into consideration.

- Determine the type of separation, i.e. voluntary (resignation) or non-voluntary (e.g. for unsatisfactory performance).
- Voluntary separations
 - Obtain a written letter of resignation.
 - Notify the graduate assistant of the implications to his or her benefits
 - Medical, vision and dental insurance benefits will only continue through the end of the month of the graduate assistant's last day of work.
 - Tuition scholarship payment(s) will be reversed in full if the graduate assistant withdraws from, i.e. does not complete, his or her courses. The scholarship payment may remain intact if the last day of work is at the end of one semester of a multiple semester contract and the courses are completed. For example, a graduate assistant with an academic year contract who resigns at the end of the fall semester but completes his or her fall courses will have the fall semester scholarship left intact on his or her student account.
- Non-voluntary separations (due to lack of satisfactory academic or work performance)
 - Review the GEOC-AFT Labor Agreement language (Article VII: Job Security) thoroughly to determine if the circumstances should be reviewed further before notifying the graduate assistant of the separation. When in doubt, refer the hiring unit to the associate provost for academic affairs.
 - If no further review is necessary, prepare a written separation notification to the graduate assistant.
 - Notify the graduate assistant of the implications to his or her benefits (see text above under Voluntary separations).
- **For either type of separation, conclude the Salary Adjustment document submission process:**
 - Complete the EPAF Data Summary Worksheet
 - Submit the Worksheet to your regional HR team for processing.