

Bowling Green State University
GRADUATE COLLEGE STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING¹
IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

STANDARD CONTRACT PERIODS 2024-2025²

Summer 2024:	May 13, 2024 – August 2, 2024
Academic Year 2024-2025:	August 26, 2024 – May 2, 2025
Fall 2024:	August 26, 2024 – December 13, 2024
Spring 2025:	January 13, 2025 – May 2, 2025

Graduate Assistants of Bowling Green State University are expected to support and focus BGSU’s research/creative and instructional activities to serve the public interest and support the university’s commitment to the public good.

Bowling Green State University is a signatory to [the Council of Graduate Schools \(CGS\) Resolution Regarding Graduate Scholars, Fellows, Trainees and Assistants](#) which states that students are under no obligation to respond to offers of financial support prior to April 15th. If the Graduate Assistantship contract offer is made prior to April 15th, BGSU requests that the decision to accept or decline the offer as soon as feasible. If contract offers are made after April 15th, BGSU requests that notification regarding acceptance be made to the department within **five (5)** business days. Failure to respond in a timely manner may result in the withdrawal of this contract offer.

Please note that some Graduate Assistants (GA) will be offered only an assistantship contract with a stipend for a GA position, while some graduate students will receive offers for both an assistantship contract and graduate student tuition scholarship (GSTS). Formal GSTS and assistantship notifications are sent separately. These notifications and other official university communications are sent to your BGSU email account. You are responsible for all official correspondence sent to your BGSU email account, so please check it regularly.

Official final credentials must be submitted to the Graduate Admissions prior to the start of the admit term. Any incomplete credentials identified in a student’s letter of admission, including missing transcripts or missing official test scores for the TOEFL, must be completed prior to beginning the appointment. Students who fail to supply the required documents will have a registration hold placed on their accounts for any subsequent term of enrollment until they are received, and this may affect a student’s ability to qualify for financial aid, graduate assistantship contracts and/or any GSTS offers.

ASSISTANTSHIP ASSIGNMENT

The number of hours graduate assistants will work may be displayed in “full time equivalents” (or FTE) of a 40-hour work week on the contract. This translates to weekly hours according to the following formula:

Hours	FTE	Hours	FTE	Hours	FTE	Hours	FTE	Hours	FTE
1	0.025	5	0.125	9	0.225	13	0.325	17	0.425
2	0.050	6	0.150	10	0.250	14	0.350	18	0.450
3	0.075	7	0.175	11	0.275	15	0.375	19	0.475
4	0.100	8	0.200	12	0.300	16	0.400	20	0.500

¹ Questions should be directed to the Graduate College, (+1) 419.372.2791 or graduateoperatns@bgsu.edu.

² Some circumstances require contracts to be written for special time periods. Please check your contract for specific dates.

Assistantship assignments may involve instruction, instructional support, research, applied research or creative activity, or residence hall supervision. Employing offices will determine specific assignment(s), and are responsible for supplying position descriptions specific to the employing office and supervising graduate assistant work. Position descriptions outlining the expectations of graduate assistant appointments are available on the Graduate College [website](#).

ASSISTANTSHIP REQUIREMENTS

It is expected that Graduate Assistantship work is performed on the BGSU campus assigned (i.e., Main, Firelands, etc.), or the location as outlined by a sponsorship agreement. All GA's working in a location other than a BGSU campus must complete a Telecommute Form as directed on the [Graduate College website](#). Graduate Assistantship assignments may not be performed outside the United States unless an official Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has the approval of the appropriate BGSU signatory and the approval of the Graduate College.

All Graduate Assistants are expected to be available for work the weeks (class days) outlined in the academic calendar period matching their contract period. Changes to a standard work schedule should be made in advance of the change and in agreement between the GA and supervisor(s). As appointees, GAs are not eligible for compensated sick or vacation days. If circumstances do not permit advanced notice of absenteeism (i.e., medical emergency), notification must be made to the supervisor within 48 hours of the absence.

Graduate Assistants must adhere to university student and [employee policies](#). Annual training modules are required to be completed by graduate assistants which include, but are not limited to, topics of: Anti-Hazing, A.L.I.C.E. Training, Preventing discrimination and harassment, Preventing sexual violence and Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Online opportunities for these trainings will be communicated via university email prior to the start of each academic term.

Graduate Assistants must be aware of University rules and regulations relating to their assistantship assignments, what is expected of them, and who is supervising their work. Evaluation is a crucial part of the Graduate Assistantship experience. It should be a supportive, constructive, and on-going process that helps identify strengths and weaknesses. Improvement plans should be developed as needed. The following should occur:

- The student must be provided a job description, given clear information on job expectations at the beginning of the employment period, and informed of how progress will be measured
- An informal check-in should be conducted three weeks after the student's start date (e.g., helpful observations of performance, clarification of next steps or assignment, welcomes questions)
- A formal performance appraisal should be conducted at the end of the semester

The formal performance appraisal process involves the student and the supervisor discussing a written evaluation. The appraisal should be constructive to help the student grow as a professional. Questions or problems concerning assignments should be resolved within the employing office whenever possible. Performance appraisals should be retained in the employing department for 5 (five) years in compliance with BGSU retention schedule [GS PER 02-2018](#).

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENT

The policy for [Enrollment and Registration](#) is the primary guidance for Graduate Assistant and graduate scholarship requirements. As is stated by the [Graduate Funding Guidelines](#) of the Graduate College, graduate students who receive a GA stipend are expected to be registered as full time students during the terms of their appointment. Registration in undergraduate courses or classes graded as audit cannot be used to meet the minimum registration requirement. In the event there is a problem in meeting these registration requirements, students should contact the Graduate Coordinator of their academic program regarding potential exceptions. The Line College Associate Dean and the Graduate College Dean must approve all exceptions in writing.

Failure to register for classes at least 15 days prior to the first day of classes and maintain the minimum registration requirement throughout the semester could place the student in jeopardy of losing GA and/or GSTS awards, potentially inaccurate bursar bills and/or student health insurance enrollment.

DEGREE PROGRESS AND ACADEMIC STANDING

Graduate students must make satisfactory degree progress and maintain good academic standing as stated as defined by the [Academic Progress](#) policy. Failure to do so may result in the termination of a funding contract(s) by the Program, Line College or Dean of the Graduate College. Each term the graduate funding is contracted, the student must actively participate in their academic responsibilities pursuant to the educational mission of their degree program.

ON-BOARDING PROCESS, BACKGROUND CHECK AND PAY SCHEDULE

International Students: Following the signing of the assistantship contract, BGSU International Programs & Partnerships (IPP) will mail an I-20 form via standard U.S. mail. All international students must complete the I-9 form and on-boarding documents (see below). Students will be notified of date and time of the International Student Orientation by IPP via BGSU email. Arriving students should visit IPP as soon as possible. An unexpired foreign passport, I-20 and I-94 will be required upon arrival to the International Program & Partnerships in 301 University Hall.

Domestic and International Students: All graduate assistantship contracts will be paid bi-weekly (every two weeks) based on the BGSU Payroll Office Payroll Schedule. Please reference the [Graduate Assistant Pay Schedule](#) for distribution dates by contract period. The first paycheck may be delayed if the Graduate College does not receive the signed contract *at least three weeks* prior to the first day the assistantship is contracted to begin. Payroll processing cannot be done until [Student Employment Services \(SES\)](#) has received the following **on-boarding paperwork**:

- state and federal tax withholding forms
- valid I-9 form (electronic) including the required documentation
- SSA 1945 form
- Direct deposit to a US financial institution
- Ohio Fraud Notice **and**
- Student Employee Retirement form

If a student does not have a Social Security Number, information will be available on how to apply for one. International students will be able to apply for a Social Security number **10 days after their arrival** in the U.S.

On-boarding forms and instructions for on-line and in-person form submission are available at [Student Employment Services New Hire Paperwork](#). If you have questions, please contact Student Employment Services at 419.372.2865 or graduateoperatns@bgsu.edu.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

Graduate Assistants are required to authorize and pass a background investigation *prior to the start of employment* per university [policy](#). Offers of employment are conditional until a background investigation has been successfully completed and all other pre-employment requirements are satisfied. The University reserves the right to determine and confirm suitability for employment and to end any employment already begun if the background check reveals disqualifying information.

International students whose visa was issued by the U.S. State Department in the Department of Homeland Security, or a student who has already completed a background investigation as part of their program's admissions process (within one year of their first contract start date), will not be required to undergo an additional background investigation.

Please visit the [Background Check](#) web page for particular steps of the process. Please note that a past criminal conviction identified during a background check **does not automatically cancel the contract offer**. Students with concerns, or who would like to have a confidential discussion regarding a situation, should review the [Background Check Policy](#) first and contact the Graduate College Office at BGSU (419) 372-2791 and request to speak to the Dean or Associate Dean of the Graduate College if concerns persist.

On-time distribution of a GA's first paycheck is contingent upon the receipt of a signed contract, completion of related on-boarding documents, and notification of a successful required background check prior to the established [payroll deadlines](#).

GRADUATE STUDENT ORIENTATION

Bowling Green State University's Graduate Student Orientation program is designed to acclimate new graduate students to campus resources in order to foster community engagement and ensure student success. Graduate Student Orientation provides initial professional development for students to ensure compliance with institutional policies as well as a successful start to their academic career. We typically offer orientation experiences both virtually and through on-campus events. All new graduate students are encouraged to participate.

All graduate assistants are expected to participate in Graduate Student Orientation. Notification of how to access the content and participate in Graduate Student Orientation will be sent via BGSU email.

CONTRACT RENEWAL

Graduate Assistant contracts are funded from a variety of sources within the University as well as grants and external funds. *Contract renewals are not guaranteed*. Renewals are subject to the continuing availability of funds, academic progress requirements, individual department standards, and guidelines regarding the number of years required to complete a degree in your field of study. Graduate Assistants should contact their Graduate Coordinator and/or assistantship supervisor to discuss department standards/guidelines for contract renewal. Graduate Assistant contracts supported by Graduate College funding are limited to two years for a master's degree and four years for a doctoral degree.

CONTRACT TERMINATIONS/CANCELLATIONS/RESIGNATIONS

If for any reason a student must resign from the assistantship contract before its official termination date, it is their responsibility to personally notify the program's Graduate Coordinator and assistantship supervisor as to their final day of work.

A graduate assistant may be terminated for cause which may include, but not limited to:

- Failure to maintain good academic standing
- Neglect of assistantship duties, including university employee expectations
- Constant refusal to follow supervisor's advice/counsel
- Failure to comply with assistantship obligations as set forth by this Statement of Understanding or department/program rules/sponsored research agreements
- Conduct that violates code of conduct policy and/or university policy
- Suspension or dismissal of a graduate student from the University due to disciplinary reasons
- Inability to complete assistantship assignment due to extended absence, and/or withdraw from classes

If graduate assistant wages are disbursed more than the amount earned due to resignation, cancellation, termination or contract error, students are responsible for returning the amount overpaid. BGSU Payroll will determine any amount due the University and lead communication(s) with the current or former graduate assistant.

Graduate Assistants may seek to appeal assistantship related concerns in coordination with the policy and procedures outlined in the [Graduate Appeal Policy](#).

ADDITIONAL EMPLOYMENT

Immigration and Customs Enforcement Service (ICE) limits international students with F-1 and J-1 visas to 20 hours work per week on campus while school is in session. During the break between fall and spring semesters, as well as the summer between spring and fall semesters, students with F-1 and J-1 visas may work up to 28 hours per week [C.F.R. 2(f)(9)(i)].

United States citizens, nationals, and lawful permanent residents of the U.S. are limited to 28 hours of work per week on campus. Student employees (including Graduate Assistants) are responsible for complying with the employment policies of BGSU and the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services.

CLASSROOM TEACHING

Classroom teaching is a critical assistantship assignment. Graduate Assistants are not members of the faculty (as per the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the University and BGSU Faculty Association); thus, they are subject to faculty and/or department supervision in the conduct of their teaching. The following general guidelines are provided to prevent misunderstandings concerning the role and responsibilities of Graduate Teaching Associates, or Graduate Assistants who are instructors of record. If you teach a course, your responsibilities are to:

- a) Conduct classes or otherwise assist in instruction in accordance with directions from the faculty member (supervisor) in charge of the course. In a multi-section course, adhere to the syllabus that has been established.
- b) Meet all assigned classes at approved or scheduled time, place and delivery mode(s). Secure approval, through your supervisor, for any changes.
- c) Inform the supervisor in advance and, through them, the Department Chair of any inability to meet a class. Emergency absences should be reported as promptly as possible.
- d) Give and grade quizzes, examinations, papers, etc. in a manner which meets with the approval of your supervisor.
- e) Confer with the supervisor concerning grading practices in the department and assign course grades accordingly. Review assigned grades with the supervisor prior to submitting them to the Registrar. Questions or challenges that cannot be resolved between the supervisor and graduate student are to be resolved at the departmental/school level.
- f) Report to the Department Chair, through the supervisor, any incidents involving cheating, intimidation, or other interference with a class.

PRODUCTS FROM RESEARCH STUDY

Pursuant to provisions of Sect. 3345.15 (Ohio Revised Code) and [University Patent Policy](#), all rights to any discovery/invention resulting from research or investigation conducted by Graduate Assistants/fellows shall be the exclusive property of Bowling Green State University. Under the [University Copyright Policy](#), academic works such as student papers, theses, or dissertations are the property of the student author(s).

Last Revised 4/29/24 by the Graduate College and the Office of General Counsel