

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

STANDARD CONTRACT PERIODS 2020-2021²

Summer 2020:	May 20, 2020 – August 14, 2020
Academic Year 2020-2021:	August 26, 2020 – April 30, 2021
Fall 2020:	August 26, 2020 – December 11, 2020
Spring 2021:	January 11, 2021 – April 30, 2021

Graduate Assistants of Bowling Green State University are expected to support and focus BGSU’s research and creative activities to serve the public interest and support our 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 notification regarding the decision to accept or decline our offer is made as soon as feasible. If contract offers are made after April 15th, BGSU requests that notification regarding acceptance is 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 tuition scholarship. Formal scholarship and assistantship notifications are sent separately.

Any incomplete credentials identified in a student’s letter of admission, including missing transcripts or missing official test scores for the GRE, GMAT, Praxis or TOEFL, must be completed prior to beginning the appointment. Failure to comply will result in a registration “hold” and may affect a student’s ability to qualify for financial aid, including a graduate assistantship and/or any scholarship 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. Translate 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 This is important information about Graduate Assistantships at Bowling Green State University. 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 (teaching a class under appropriate faculty supervision or teaching recitation or laboratory sections of lecture classes), instructional support (grading, preparation of laboratory activities, helping students in computer or writing laboratories, etc.), research (providing support for faculty research projects), applied research to a work setting, or residence hall supervision. Employing offices will determine specific assignment(s) and are responsible for supervising graduate assistant work. Position descriptions outlining the expectations of graduate assistant appointments are available at <https://www.bgsu.edu/content/dam/BGSU/graduate-college/images/FINAL-Grad-Col-GA-policies-2020-21.pdf>.

Graduate Assistants are responsible for being aware of University rules and regulations relating to their assistantship assignments, what is expected of them, and who is supervising their work. Questions or problems concerning assignments should be resolved within the employing office whenever possible. Non-performance or poor performance of assistantship assignments may result in the reduction or termination of an appointment and/or scholarship funding. Please see the [Graduate College website](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#) as references regarding performance.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENT

Check the Graduate College's Graduate Assistant policies at:

<https://www.bgsu.edu/content/dam/BGSU/graduate-college/images/FINAL-Grad-Col-GA-policies-2020-21.pdf> for all policies pertaining to registration.

Unless it is explicitly stated otherwise by the Graduate Assistant policies of the Graduate College, graduate students who receive a GA stipend must be registered as full time students during the fall and spring semesters 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.

Summer registration must adhere to Graduate College policy, available at:

<https://www.bgsu.edu/content/dam/BGSU/graduate-college/images/FINAL-Grad-Col-GA-policies-2020-21.pdf>. The Line 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 stipend and/or scholarship awards, or potentially inaccurate bursar bills or student health insurance enrollment.

DEGREE PROGRESS AND ACADEMIC STANDING

Graduate Assistants must make satisfactory degree progress and maintain good academic standing as stated in the Graduate College Catalog. Failure to do so may result in the termination of an appointment by the Dean of the Graduate College. Please see policy for details on satisfactory progress and good academic standing: <http://www.bgsu.edu/content/dam/BGSU/general-counsel/documents/Academic-Progress-Probation-Dismissal-graduate.pdf>

GRADUATE STUDENT ORIENTATION

Graduate Student Orientation (GSO) is held at the beginning of the academic year and is designed to promote graduate student success and community engagement by acclimating new graduate students to essential campus resources. All graduate students (with or without an assistantship), as well as faculty, are welcome to attend these sessions.

All graduate assistants are expected to attend Graduate Student Orientation (GSO). Notification of the exact dates and times of GSO will be sent via BGSU email; you will be required to complete an online registration form prior to GSO week. Information regarding orientation week activities and upcoming professional development opportunities will be forthcoming.

ON-BOARDING PROCESS, BACKGROUND CHECK AND PAY SCHEDULE

All graduate assistantship contracts will be paid bi-weekly (every two weeks) based on the BGSU Payroll Office Payroll Schedule. The first payday for Summer 2020 assistantships will be **June 12, 2020**. The first payday for the academic year and fall only assistantships will be **September 18, 2020**. The first payday for spring session only assistantships will be **February 5, 2021**. Please reference the Graduate Assistant Pay Schedule available at <http://www.bgsu.edu/graduate/graduate-assistantships/graduate-assistant-and-tuition-scholarship-information.html>

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, Ohio Fraud Notice and *either* an OPERS election form or waiver form on file. 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 are available at https://www.bgsu.edu/student-employment-services/New_Hire_Paperwork.html. **Please bring copies of completed paperwork to the SES office at 225 Bowen Thompson Student Union.** If you have questions, please contact Student Employment Services at 419.372.2865 or graduateoperatns@bgsu.edu.

International Students: Following the signing of the assistantship contract, BGSU International Program & Partnerships (IPP) will mail an I-20 form via standard U.S. mail. All international students must complete the I-9 form and remaining on-boarding documents. Students will be notified of date and time of the International Student Orientation by IPP via BGSU email. Students arriving in the area after the International Student Orientation 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: Please bring the following documents to Student Employment Services:

DIRECT DEPOSIT

All Graduate Assistants are required to have their payroll checks directly deposited to their U.S. financial institution. The direct deposit may be made to a checking or savings account at any U.S. bank or credit union. Students new to the Bowling Green area that plan to open an account locally, should do this as soon as possible after arriving in Bowling Green.

I-9 – EMPLOYMENT VERIFICATION

Under the regulations of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, all employees of BGSU must verify employability with the University. *GA's will not be authorized to begin employment until verification is complete.* Completion of the I-9 form can begin prior to the first date of the assistantship by producing the required documents. *According to United States*

*Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS), this process must be completed **in person**. Students must produce original documents for examination – faxed or photocopied documents are not acceptable. A complete list of acceptable documents is available when completing the electronic I9 form.*

FEDERAL, STATE, CITY, AND SCHOOL DISTRICT INCOME TAX

Graduate Assistants must complete Federal and Ohio State Income Tax withholding forms (W4 & IT-4). In addition, a Bowling Green City income tax of 2% is automatically deducted from paychecks. Depending upon the Public School District of Residence of the documented address, students may also be required to pay a school district income tax.

OHIO PUBLIC EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM (OPERS)

All Graduate Assistants are subject to enrollment in the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS). However, students can choose to be exempt from OPERS on the condition they are enrolled at least half time (four graduate credit hours). If students elect to enroll in OPERS, or they are automatically enrolled because registration falls below four credit hours during any term of employment, BGSU will deduct 10% of a student's gross salary from the payroll check each bi-weekly payroll period. BGSU will contribute an additional 14% as its share towards the students retirement account. On-boarding includes a submission of either the OPERS Enrollment form (establishes a retirement account with the state of Ohio) or an OPERS Exemption form (meets the enrollment requirements *and* chooses NOT to begin a retirement account.) Please refer to the on-boarding web page for additional information and links.

If a Graduate Assistant has previously paid into the Ohio State Teachers Retirement System (STRS), they may elect to continue contributions to STRS, *only if* the GA is employed as a BGSU Graduate Teaching Associate or Assistant. This option is only available to Graduate Assistants who have a record of prior contributions to STRS. Please contact the BGSU Payroll Office (payroll@bgsu.edu or 419.372.2201) directly for further information.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

Graduate Assistants are required to authorize and pass a background investigation prior to the start of employment. 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.

Domestic and naturalized students signing their first assistantship contract will receive an e-mail notification from PreTrax, Inc. within five business days after signing their contract. PreTrax, Inc. is contracted by BGSU to conduct background investigations. Please complete the information requested and respond to PreTrax **within five business days**. Failure to complete the background investigation process will disqualify students from employment with Bowling Green

State University. If a message from PreTrax has not been received within 5 business days, please be sure it was not filtered as junk mail/clutter.

Please note that a past criminal conviction identified during a background check **does not automatically cancel the contract offer**. Candidates will be given the opportunity to provide additional information, to explain the nature and circumstances of the conviction, and to provide any evidence of rehabilitation. In determining suitability for employment, consideration will be given to these related factors:

- the specific duties of the graduate assistantship position
- the number of offenses and circumstances of each
- date of conviction
- whether the conviction rose out of employment.

Students having any concerns or would like to have a confidential discussion regarding a situation should contact the Graduate College Office at BGSU (419) 372-2791 and request to speak to the Dean or Associate Dean of the Graduate College.

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.

HEALTH INSURANCE REQUIREMENT

All domestic and naturalized graduate students enrolled in eight or more credit hours, and *all* international students, are required to have health insurance coverage meeting Federal and University guidelines. Graduate students who currently have health insurance coverage meeting those guidelines will need to submit an online waiver through their MyBGSU web portal. The waiver will be available *after* class registration.

A summary of the waiver requirements for Domestic and International Students are available on the Student Insurance Program Website at <http://www.bgsu.edu/student-insurance-program.html> Graduate students who would like to enroll into the BGSU sponsored student health insurance plan should confirm their enrollment through their MyBGSU web portal after class registration. Graduate students taking less than 5 credit hours may be eligible to enroll into the Student Health Insurance plan. Please contact the Student Insurance Office for more details (studentins@bgsu.edu).

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 as well as 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 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. Late or delayed notifications of contract termination could result in an overpayment and require the student to reimburse the University for incorrect wage distribution.

ADDITIONAL EMPLOYMENT

Because academic success is the primary goal of graduate study, Graduate Assistants are discouraged from working more than 20 hours per week (including assistantship assignment(s)) when classes are in session. *Graduate Assistants should confer with their Graduate Coordinators and assistantship supervisors before accepting employment or retaining prior employment beyond 20 hours.*

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 very critical and sensitive 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 times and places. Secure approval, through your supervisor, for any changes to the schedule.
- c) Inform the supervisor in advance and, through him/her, 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 (<http://www.bgsu.edu/content/dam/BGSU/general-counsel/documents/Patent-Policy-MIF.pdf>), 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 (<http://www.bgsu.edu/content/dam/BGSU/general-counsel/documents/Copyright-Policy-MIF.pdf>), academic works such as student papers, theses, or dissertations are the property of the student author(s).

Last Revised 6-25-2020 by the Graduate College