Bowling Green State University

GRADUATE COLLEGE STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

STANDARD CONTRACT PERIODS 2017-2018

Academic Year 2017-2018
Fall Semester 2017: August 13, 2017 – December 23, 2017
Spring Semester 2018: December 31, 2017 – May 12, 2018
Summer Semester 2017: May 7, 2017 – August 12, 2017

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

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 as soon as feasible regarding the decision to accept or decline our offer. 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 will result in the withdrawal of this contract offer.

Please note that some graduate assistants will be offered only a contract with a stipend for a GA position, while some will receive offers for both an assistantship contract and tuition scholarship. Formal scholarship and contract 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 any scholarship offers.

If offered funding as a doctoral level student students must complete their master’s degree before the starting date of this contract or a contract offer may be reduced.

ASSISTANTSHIP ASSIGNMENT

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>FTE</th>
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<th>FTE</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>FTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.025</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.125</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.225</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.325</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.050</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.150</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.250</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.350</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.450</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.075</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.175</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.275</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.375</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.100</td>
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<td>0.300</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.400</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 is responsible for supervising graduate assistant work.

All Graduate Assistants will receive a position description outlining the expectations of their appointment.

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: http://www.bgsu.edu/graduate/graduate-assistantships/college-assistantship-policies.html for all policies pertaining to registration. Unless it is explicitly stated otherwise by the stipend 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: http://www.bgsu.edu/graduate/graduate-assistantships/college-assistantship-policies.html. All exceptions must be approved in writing by the graduate coordinator and the College Dean.

Each semester, course selection and registration must be approved by a GA’s Graduate Coordinator or Department Chair. 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 or scholarship rewards, 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
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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 1) acclimating new graduate students to essential campus resources; and 2) ensuring students with graduate assistantships are in compliance with Bowling Green State University employment policies and procedures. All graduate students (with or without an assistantship), as well as faculty, are welcome to attend these sessions.

Notification of the exact dates and times of Graduate Student Orientation will be sent via email. New graduate assistants are required to complete an online registration form prior to GSO week. All graduate students are invited to join the Graduate Student Orientation course through Canvas. This course will provide notification of orientation week activities, upcoming professional development opportunities and act as an ongoing resource of information.

Please note that GA contracts start one week before classes begin, understanding GA’s will be attending the Graduate Student Orientation during this week. As a result, GA’s are also expected to report directly to employing offices/supervisors during this week before classes begin to receive details regarding assistantship assignments.

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 Bi-Weekly Payroll Schedule. The first payday for Summer 2017 contracts will be June 2, 2017. The first payday for Academic Year and Fall only contracts will be September 8, 2017. The first payday for Spring only contracts will be January 26, 2018. Academic year contracts may receive a reduced payroll disbursements due to the winter break. Please reference the Graduate Assistant Pay Schedule available at: http://www.bgsu.edu/graduate/graduate-assistantships/graduate-assistant-and-tuition-scholarship-information.html

Graduate Assistants first paycheck may be delayed if the Graduate College does not receive the signed contract at least three weeks prior to Graduate Student Orientation. GA’s cannot be processed for the University payroll until Student Employment Services (SES) has received completed on-boarding paperwork including: direct deposit form, state and federal tax withholding forms, valid I-9 Form, valid I-9 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 how to apply for one. International students will be able to apply for a Social Security number in Bowling Green 10 days after their arrival in the U.S.) On-boarding forms are available at: http://www.bgsu.edu/student-employment-services/students/New_Hire_Paperwork.html. Please bring a printed copy of the complete on-boarding packet to Graduate Student Orientation or the SES office 225 Bowen Thompson Student Union. Please contact Student Employment Services at 419.372.2865 or graduateoperatns@bgsu.edu with questions.

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, please do this as soon as possible after arriving in Bowling Green in preparation of the direct deposit process.
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. Review of documents and I-9 verification will take place during Graduate Student Orientation. 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 verification documents is available in the I-9 link of the on-boarding web page.

International Students: All international students must attend an orientation with the International Student Services Office (ISS) to complete the I-9 and remaining on-boarding documents. Students will be notified of an International student orientation by ISS via email. Students arriving in the area after International Student Orientation day, please make arrangements to visit ISS as soon as possible after arriving in Bowling Green. An unexpired foreign passport and I-20 to International Student Services will be required upon arrival to 319 Administration Building. Following the signing of the assistantship contract, BGSU International Student Services Office will mail an I-20 form via standard U.S. mail.

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. However, students can choose to be exempt from OPERS on the condition they are enrolled at least half-time (4 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 (estabishes a retirement account with the state of Ohio) or an OPERS Exemption form (meets the enrollment requirements and choose NOT to begin a retirement account.) Please refer to the on-boarding web pages 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 Teaching 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 contract start date), will not be required to undergo an additional background investigation.

Student’s 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 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 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](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. Generally, Graduate Assistant contracts 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 programs 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 repayment to the University.

**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 seeking or accepting additional 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:

1. 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
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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 12-29-16 by the Graduate College and Student Employment Services