

## BGSU Graduate College Graduate Funding Guidelines 2024-2025

Program coordinators should share this information, and the [Supervisor Responsibilities](#) with any GA supervisor employed within the department, in a different department, or at an external agency.

### Graduate Funding Definitions, Policies, Guidelines and Academic Standards:

1. **Admission Requirement(s)**
  - a. Students must have earned [regular admission](#) status in a graduate degree program to receive graduate funding.
  - b. A student who has been conditionally admitted is not eligible for a graduate assistantship or graduate student scholarship until regular admission/status has been achieved, unless an exception has been requested by the academic program and approved by the Graduate College.
  - c. Students enrolled as part of a Memorandum of Understanding with president and/or Graduate College pre-approval may be funded in alignment with the MOU.
  - d. International students may receive graduate funding if they hold a visa type of J1, F1 or J2 (J2 requires approval from the office of International Programs & Partnerships).
2. **Types of graduate funding:**
  - a. **Assistantship Stipend:** A stipend is the remuneration given to a Graduate Assistant for service provided in that appointment. Please review the **Position Descriptions** section at the end of this document for graduate assistant job titles and an overview of their commitments.
  - b. **Scholarship:** Awarded to reduce instructional expense (tuition) and/or for non-resident fees.
    - Instructional Scholarship may only be used to pay for instructional fees.
    - Non-Resident Scholarship may only be used to pay for non-resident fees.
3. Students must maintain [good academic standing](#) as defined by the Graduate College and their academic program to retain their graduate assistantship and/or scholarship(s).
4. **Time Limits of Support:** The degree program awards financial assistance in the form of scholarship and/or assistantship annually. **Renewal is not guaranteed**, and financial support contains duration limits based on [university policy](#) by degree type.
  - a. Master's students are limited to two years (24 consecutive months) of graduate assistantship and/or tuition scholarship unless the student is working on a Graduate College approved dual masters.
    - For approved dual master's, or a concurrent second master's degree, the financial support maximum is 3 years (36 consecutive months).
    - Exception requests must be provided in writing by the program coordinator with support from department chair/school director and approved by the line/reporting dean and a Graduate College designate.
  - b. Doctoral students may be awarded financial assistance in the form of tuition scholarship and/or assistantship for no more than four years (48 consecutive months).
    - Exception requests must be provided in writing by the program coordinator with support from department chair/school director and approved by the line/reporting dean and a Graduate College designate.
    - If doctoral students are admitted with a bachelor's degree, they may receive support as a master's student and a doctoral student.
  - c. Both master's and doctoral degree students are eligible for one year of non-resident scholarship if the student is not an Ohio resident. See **Scholarship Guidelines and Policies** for additional information.
5. **Communication with Students:** Communicating with students during the offer and renewal process is vital.
  - a. Programs are expected to use the [Initial Offer](#) funding template and send it to first time funded students as an offer before submitting the contract. These [AdobeSign](#) templates (*Graduate Initial Funding Offer*) should be saved in the department in case there is any confusion about the offer from the student. A copy of the completed AdobeSign agreement will be emailed to [graduateoperatns@bgsu.edu](mailto:graduateoperatns@bgsu.edu)

- b. Students should be informed, prior to or upon their arrival to campus, expectations for reappointment (i.e., future funding).
  - Time limits of funding should be determined (i.e., one semester, one year)
  - Policies regarding student eligibility for reappointment should be provided. (i.e., [Academic Progress](#))
  - A student's funding is limited to the contractual agreement and the responsibilities aligned with the appointment.
  - Reappointment is regulated by policies and resources.
  - Programs are expected to provide a job description to the student by the first day of their assistantship. These should contain tasks that are more specific than the generic job descriptions provided at the end of this document.
- c. After a contract expires, reappointment may be available. Reappointment is contingent upon:
  - time limit of support;
  - satisfactory progress toward completion of the degree;
  - available resources; and/or
  - satisfactory performance of duties.

If a graduate assistant is not to be reappointed, they will be given written notice about the non-reappointment and of the reason(s) therefore. Notices of non-reappointment and of reappointment will be given to students *no later than the last day of the semester in which the current contract is active*.

6. **CGS GA Resolution:** Prospective Graduate Assistants are subject to the Council of Graduate Schools Resolution Regarding Graduate Scholars, Fellows, Trainees, and Assistants. BGSU is a member institution supporting [this resolution](#).

### **Graduate Student Scholarship (Instructional and Non-Resident) Guidelines and Policies**

A graduate scholarship is awarded separately from an assistantship position and *must not be used as compensation* for services provided by the student. Graduate scholarships are for tuition (instructional) and non-resident fees only.

1. **Scholarship funds can only** be used towards graduate credit hours that satisfy requirements for a degree. (No undergraduate credits may satisfy graduate degree requirements).
2. A **scholarship may be awarded** for up to 12 credit hours per semester. Students may take between 12 and 18 credit hours at the 12-credit hour rate. See the [Cost of Attendance webpage](#) for additional information.
3. **Non-Resident Scholarships:** Graduate College allocation budgets may not be used to pay for out-of-state tuition **beyond one year** (except for international students and at the discretion of the program). It is the *student's responsibility* to follow all state of Ohio policies for residency requirements. See [Ohio Residency Application Instructions](#).
4. Scholarship funds **cannot be used for repeated course(s)** due to academic progress, previously dropped courses or grade replacement.
5. A **scholarship does not cover** any student general or miscellaneous fees. See the [Cost of Attendance webpage](#) for additional information on types and amounts of these fees. If the terms of a grant or cost-sharing agreement allow the inclusion of general or miscellaneous fees within the scholarship, this must be pre-approved, in writing, with the signature of the line/reporting dean.
6. Program scholarship awarders and student scholarship recipients must be aware of and adhere to the [Graduate Student Tuition Scholarship Terms and Conditions](#) and the Bursar [Financial Responsibility Agreement](#).

## Graduate Assistant Guidelines and Policies

Graduate assistantships provide students with education and training opportunities that align with the educational mission of their degree programs. The appointment as a Graduate Assistant (GA) contributes to the graduate student's principal objective: to develop academically and to assist in the successful completion of the academic program. The US Department of Labor defines the Graduate Assistant role as one that is primarily an *educational relationship and not an employment relationship with the school or with a grantor*. A Graduate Assistant may have one of the following designations per contract: Research Assistant (I or II), Teaching Assistant, Teaching Associate, or Housing Assistant.

1. **Students and their supervisors** should read the [Statement of Understanding](#) using the link that accompanies the GA contract for guidelines and procedures affiliated with a GA stipend contract.
2. **Graduate assistants must be enrolled** as graduate students for the duration of each contract period to maintain their GA appointment.
  - a. First year Students awarded a GA position of 11 – 20 hours must be enrolled **full-time** during the academic year (minimum of 8 credit hours per term).
  - b. First year Students awarded a GA position of 1 – 10 hours must be enrolled at least **half-time** during the academic year (minimum of 4 credits hours per term).
  - c. master's degree students who have completed 16 credit hours of the degree program **may** be enrolled between 1-8 credit hours per term and hold a GA position for 1 – 20 hours.<sup>1</sup>
  - d. doctoral students who have completed 32 credit hours of the degree program **may** be enrolled between 1-8 credit hours per term and hold a GA position for 1 – 20 hours.<sup>2</sup>
  - e. Unless "c" or "d" above applies, students awarded a graduate assistantship in the **summer** must register for a minimum of 4 credit hours during the summer term.<sup>3</sup>
3. All students must be **provided with a position description** specific to their appointment for each assistantship prior to their contract start date. This position description should provide added detail beyond the [position designations for graduate assistantships](#).
4. **Students may have multiple GA contracts** with different designations.
  - a. Students with the same designation, within the same program, and at the same degree (masters or doctorate) will be paid in the same assistantship compensation level.
  - b. Students funded by an external agency may be compensated at a different rate than the program stipend level as agreed upon in writing by said agency and BGSU.

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<sup>1</sup> Exceptions to these guidelines must be approved by the Line Associate Dean and Dean of the Graduate College (or Dean's designate).

<sup>2</sup> Exceptions to these guidelines must be approved by the Line Associate Dean and Dean of the Graduate College (or Dean's designate).

<sup>3</sup> Possible implications exist for [OPERS](#) and [financial aid loans](#) (See Enrollment/Academic Status section of this link) when falling below 4 credit hours.

5. **Contract Hours:** No student will be contracted for more than 20 hours per week in sum of all GA contracts issued.<sup>4</sup>
  - a. All graduate assistants are expected to be available for work the weeks (class days) outlined in the academic calendar period matching their contract period. If standard work schedules require duties on non-class days, those expectations should be shared with the GA prior to the start of the contract.
    - i. In-frequent occasions where exceptions to work schedules are needed must be agreed upon between supervisor and GA in advance of the temporary schedule modification.
  - b. Some departments may choose to award assistantships at *reduced hours* (e.g., 15 or 10 hours per week). The stipend amount will be pro-rated from the full-time stipend rate of the program stipend level.
  - c. Students should not be asked to work more than their contracted amount. Supervisors should be cautious in providing [volunteer opportunities](#) to graduate assistants.
6. **Background Checks:** Per [university policy](#), students being offered a graduate assistantship must undergo a background check **prior to hire**. For more information on the [background check process](#), visit the Graduate College web page.
7. **Cleared to Work:** Students MUST have a signed contract and be authorized (cleared) to work by *Student Employment Services* before beginning work, per the 2012 General Counsel declaration:
 

*Students should NOT be in the workplace training, shadowing, or working prior to being authorized to work. If students are injured at the job prior to the time they are authorized to begin working, they are not covered by Workers' Compensation, and the injured person or their estate would be entitled to bring suit for all injuries and damages against the University and their supervisors who allowed them to commence work prior to being properly authorized to begin working.*

*The supervisors who allowed such work to begin would be considered to have acted outside the course and scope of their employment, not entitled to state employee immunity, and individually liable to suit by the injured person. Such supervisors would have to engage counsel at their own expense and be personally liable for any damages arising from any injuries. Such supervisors would also be subject to disciplinary action up to, and including, discharge for having violated University policies and State law regarding workers' compensation.*

The clearance process includes 1) Fully signed GA contract **and** 2) Completed Background Check (if necessary) **and** 3) Completed [on-boarding](#).

Supervisors should confirm that a student is cleared to work *before beginning to work*. The status of the clearance process may be viewed in the GA Contracting Application [Reports](#), "Cleared Students" and "Not Cleared Students".
8. **Graduate Assistantship Performance Appraisal:** 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:
  - a. The student must be provided a job description, given clear information job expectations at the beginning of the employment period, and informed of how progress will be measured.
  - b. 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)

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<sup>4</sup> Graduate Student Senate elected officials who receive an extra stipend for their service may be compensated for up to 24 hours per week. International GSS elected officials must maintain a maximum of 20 hours per week per Department of Homeland Security regulations.

- c. 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](#)

9. **Maintenance of Graduate Assistantship:** Students who resign from their GA position or who are removed from the graduate assistantship for cause or lack of academic progress are subject to having their stipends and/or scholarship cancelled or terminated under the direction of either the graduate program or Graduate College.
10. **Termination of an assistantship:** A student may be terminated for cause, including, but not limited to:
  - a. Failure to maintain academic standing
  - b. Neglect of duties
  - c. Constant refusal to follow supervisor's advice/counsel
  - d. Failure to comply with assistantship obligations as set forth by the [Statement of Understanding](#) or department/program rules/sponsored research agreements
  - e. Conduct that violates code of conduct policy and/or university policies
  - f. Suspension or dismissal of a graduate student from the University due to disciplinary reasons
  - g. Inability to complete assistantship assignment due to extended absence, and/or withdraw from classes

### **Graduate Student Employees**

Contrary to Graduate Assistants, Graduate Student Employees perform duties on campus that may not directly align with the mission of their degree. As employees, these students are hired through the [Office of Student Employment Services](#) (SES) and are subject to policies outlined in the Student Employment Handbook. Policies include a limit of 28 hours of work per week in all positions for domestic and permanent residents and a limit of 20 hours of work per week in all positions for international students in the academic year. Please reference the SES web site for further details. Offices hiring these student employees may not use Graduate College allocations for these positions.

### **Graduate Assistant Categorical Position Descriptions**

All Graduate Assistant positions will fall under one of the following categories. Students should also receive a more detailed position description, specific to the nature of the individual position from their employing office.

#### **Research Assistant I**

Research Assistants I (RAI) perform research that is related to the student's field of study. Some portion of the hours spent on research is attributable as university work, but those research responsibilities are related to their academic program. The research responsibilities performed are under the direct supervision of and collaboration with faculty. Depending on the discipline or field, the research experience could take place in laboratories, field-based settings, clinical locations, or other academic environments necessary to the research methodology. Duties vary by discipline and program, but generally include: experimentation; data collection, entry and analysis; literature searches; manuscript assistance; attendance at conferences to present results; and training and supervising less experienced research personnel.

#### **Research Assistant II**

Research Assistants II (RAII) participate in applied research and creative activities that are related to the student's field of study. The hours spent on applied conceptualization of their field is attributable as university work, but still related to their academic program. This applied experience is performed under the direct supervision of either faculty or university professionals working in the student's field of interest. Depending on the discipline or field, the professional experience could take place in: laboratories, field-based settings, clinical locations, or other university environments necessary to the application of the field of interest. Duties vary by discipline and program but could include: field based learning derived from interactions with clients, professionals, students, and other participants; data organization; and training and supervising less experienced personnel.

**Teaching Assistant (TA)**

Teaching Assistants are assigned to one or more faculty to assist them with instructional responsibilities for a course that is related to their field of study. The faculty for whom they are assisting provide oversight of the course and take on a supervisory role. Teaching Assistant responsibilities vary by discipline and program, but normally include one or all of the following: grading assignments and examinations; administering/proctoring tests or exams; maintaining the online class management system (e.g., Canvas); and collecting and organizing class records and data.

**Teaching Associate (TI)**

The primary responsibility of a Teaching Associate is that of an instructor (thus the “I” in TI). The form of instruction may include any of the following: the sole instructor of record for a section of a class; leader of discussion or recitation section of a course; or supervisor of instruction and tutoring in a lab. Without these individuals, the course, discussion group, or lab could not be held. While Teaching Associates are supervised by a faculty member or academic administrator, their primary responsibility is to carry out their own teaching, guidance, and tutoring with students and not assist faculty with their teaching. Teaching assignments must be in or closely aligned with the TI’s field of study, and meet the requirements of the Higher Learning Commission per the Office of Institutional Effectiveness

**Housing Associate (HA)**

Housing Associates are live-in staff members for the Office of Residence Life who assist in the daily operation of an undergraduate residence hall. Specific duties include but are not limited to: the hiring, supervising, advising, training, and evaluating of Resident Advisor (RA) staff. They also co-supervise the Student Desk Manager. Housing Associates are generally responsible for developing a well-rounded community within the residence facility, focused on academic success, safety and security, inclusivity, personal growth, and engagement. Within this position, they counsel students and respond to crisis situations that may occur in the residence hall; conduct meetings with students who have violated the Code of Student Conduct; and assign sanction or refer to the university-level conduct system.

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