

# JACK N. AVERITT COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY



# GRADUATE ASSISTANT HANDBOOK

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## QUICK START – HIRING A GRADUATE ASSISTANT & FAQ'S

Please bookmark <http://cogs.georgiasouthern.edu/gahiring/> and <http://cogs.georgiasouthern.edu/new-current-students/graduate-assistantships-information/> for quick reference.

### HIRING A GA

Go to: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0Bz29v3dUh0M2Q2ZNOWd0eFg1VjA/view> for step-by-step GA Hiring Instructions.

### FAQ'S, TIPS & REMINDERS – GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

**Note:** Online hiring information is supplied by the student (GA Application) and by Banner. Please remember in the occurrence that Banner is down, then the GA Hiring System will be as well. The GA System confirms course load and academic standing to determine eligibility.

**\*\*The GA System does not confirm admissions decisions – It is the Supervisors Responsibility during the hiring process to confirm that the student has been officially admitted. (The GA System will pull the most recent application; a majority of student's submit more than one admissions application.)**

#### **When I go to “Find a GA”, I do not see my student – Why?**

Try searching by just their Eagle ID **or** just their last name.

If you cannot locate your student, chances are that they have not completed the online GA application. Have them go to the COGS Website to complete the application. It takes only a few minutes. This step is required because this is how we pull Banner information to determine eligibility.

GA Application: <https://w3.georgiasouthern.edu/cogs/gaapp/>

#### **My GTA choice shows CONTACT COGS or INELIGIBLE/WEB CERT?**

**DO NOT** skip this student. Simply send COGS an email with the student's name and EID. COGS will confirm eligibility. Their information could just be listed out of order in Banner or it could be something as simple as the Eagle ID has been entered incorrectly.

***Do not proceed with hiring until you receive confirmation from COGS to proceed.***

**TIP!** *Gather all budget information before beginning the PAF*

#### **Completing the PAF Online – Tips and Reminders**

- ❖ Confirm funding sources for the PA:
  - COGS funded (also called “Allocated”)
  - Department Funded (also called “Unallocated”)
  - Grant Funded (include required grant approvers in approval chain)

*Remember in the Graduate Assistant PAF world, the only funds considered allocated are COGS funds*

- ❖ Effective Date: Always the 1<sup>st</sup> day of class or 1 week prior
- ❖ End Date: Always the last day of final exams
- ❖ Payroll Start/End Dates: first day and last day of the month
  
- ❖ Budget data is completed in full including section B IF funding source is anything other than COGS funded.
  
- ❖ Enter only internal approvers \*\*This is the same pathway for approval that the paper process follows – *Do not enter anyone in the Provost Office, Budgets Office or HR.*
  
- ❖ Some Dean's and VP's would like the PAF to go to their Admin or Budget manager for approval; please check with your Department to see how they would like to have the approvals work.
  
- ❖ Pay attention to hiring deadlines. Completing this paperwork too late may result in your GTA not being paid until the end of month two.
  
- ❖ If your GTA graduates Fall and you have them as a Fall/Spring GA – You MUST complete a termination PA to avoid the GTA being paid after graduation.
  
- ❖ Termination or Data Change PA's (currently still paper forms) must go thru COGS (PO Box 8008 or Veazey Hall, suite 1013C) FIRST. *Skipping this step only delays processing.*

### **I need to make a change to the PA – What do I do?**

**\*\*\* Please do NOT change any information after the PA status shows COGS Approved (i.e. Do not log in and update your Fall PA to Spring).**

- 1) Go into the hiring system via 'Manage GA Paperwork' and enter your GA's name or EID
- 2) Click the Record Number for your student (far left)
- 3) Click **EDIT RECORD** at the top
- 4) Make your changes
- 5) Click **SUBMIT CHANGES** at the very bottom

### **Reminders for Personnel Action Forms – Paper Versions**

- ❖ Please submit an electronic version and then you may print the PAF for appropriate internal signatures, if required.
  
- ❖ Your GA will still need to complete the online GA Application before the hiring paperwork can be processed.
  
- ❖ Please make sure all fields are completed – Employee ID and Social Security numbers are most often missing on paper PAs submitted to COGS.

- ❖ Please use paper clips vs staples
- ❖ Paper PAs need to be sent directly to COGS (PO Box 8008) or Veazey Hall, suite 1013.

## TA2 Requirements

- ❖ TA2's are required to attend Teaching and Learning Essentials Seminar provided by CT2. Completion of the seminar is required for all Teaching Assistants, Level 2 (TA2) **PRIOR** to starting their teaching assignment. There is not an exception to this requirement.  
<http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/ctl/series/tle/>
- ❖ TA2's require the following supporting documents to be sent to COGS after the PA has been submitted online:
  - Official transcripts
  - Resume
  - FID form

## TA Parking Permit Request

Please do not promise your TA a parking permit. Parking & Transportation has a limited amount of Parking Permits allotted to TAs and those permits get filled very quickly. Previous requests for more permits have been denied because there is simply not enough spaces available on campus.

COGS TA Parking Permit Procedure/Policy:

- Parking permits are received in the COGS office
- 7-10 days before the standard start date of the semester, the applications are reviewed and the TA will be added to the list, **if** they have hiring paperwork submitted for the upcoming semester(s).
- TA2s receive priority appointment, then TA1s
- The TA will be notified prior to the standard start date that they have been approved for a permit
- The TA will have until the end of the first week of classes to obtain their permit before their permit will be offered to a TA who has been waitlisted
- Those who have been waitlisted will be awarded a permit based on TA level, with TA2s receiving available permits first, then TA1s.

## WHAT IS A GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP?

GAs are essential to the success of the graduate programs at Georgia Southern University. The assistantship not only enables the student to complete their program of study in a timely fashion, but also affords the opportunity to be involved in full-time study at the university. GAs enliven the academic environment of the university by adding to the community of scholars within the institution. Such students further enliven the academic environment of the university by setting high standards for their fellow students and encouraging the best from their professors. The key reality is that a well-funded GA program is an important component in the University's efforts to attract high quality students. To encourage this academic environment, Georgia Southern University provides some 650 graduate assistantships in any given year.

Georgia Southern University's programs of study aim to provide students with a variety of opportunities for professional and scholarly development. Since GAs give students an opportunity to gain practical experience in teaching, research, or academic service under the guidance of a faculty member or institutional supervisor, these experiences can be a significant and challenging avenue for both professional and academic development. The central reality at Georgia Southern is that GA positions are designed to reinforce and enhance a student's academic development. *Thus, service as a GA presents a dual challenge: those who hold the position are both students and employees.*

**As Students** – GAs are expected to concentrate on their studies under the direction of faculty or other institutional supervisors and to make satisfactory progress toward their scholarly and professional objectives. The GA relationship should always keep this at the forefront. *The GA workload should never become so cumbersome and time consuming that a student cannot excel in their program of study or the workload increases the time to degree completion.* GAs are also expected to perform well academically to retain the assistantship.

**As Employees** – GAs are expected to perform their assigned responsibilities and to both progress and support the work of the unit or department in which the GA is assigned. GAs should follow all the standard rules of professional conduct. This includes:

- being punctual and fulfilling the required work hours;
- dressing appropriately for the work of the unit;
- communicating with the supervisor and other members of the unit in a professional and courteous manner;
- making effective use of time while at work;
- following the employment policies of the university;
- completing assignments/responsibilities as given; and
- learning about departmental, college, or institutional regulations and follow them consistently.

At Georgia Southern, our graduate programs are designed to transform the individual from student to a professional in their field of study. When a graduate assistantship is well conceived and executed, it should serve as an ideal activity to help facilitate this desired transformation.

*The primary goal of the assistantship is to facilitate progress toward the graduate degree. The GA process should not interfere or conflict with the student's educational objective.*

Since GAs play an important role in the educational and work activities of the university, they should be given assignments and supervision that will help them to grow academically and professionally. In that, their graduate studies and assistantship responsibilities should reinforce each other. Research projects, when possible, should work in concert with their thesis or dissertation. Teaching should give them greater insight into the content of their chosen area of study. Service responsibilities should provide an environment where the student learns more about working in a professional space. To this end, GAs should not be asked or required to perform such tasks as getting coffee, picking up dry cleaning for their supervisor, or getting a faculty member's children from school. The best graduate experience will evolve from careful planning and monitoring to see that both the GA and the university benefit from the relationship.

### **Governing Authority**

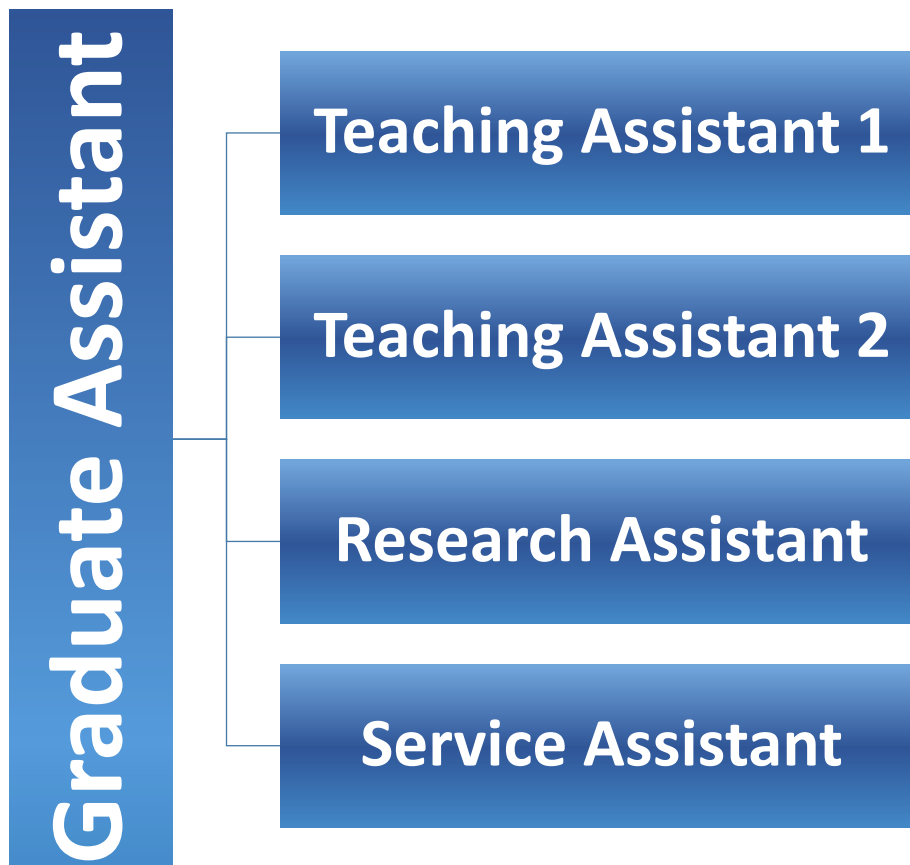
The College of Graduate Studies is the main administration authority over GAs at Georgia Southern University. All matters pertaining to GA appointments are handled in COGS. In certain instances, COGS may consult with Legal Affairs, Human Resources, Diversity Services, and/or the Provost's Office to gather information pertaining specifically to any appeals or complaints rendered on behalf of:

- Graduate Assistants and complaints, issues, or concerns they have about their appointment
- Faculty or Institutional Supervisors and their complaints, issues, or concerns they have about a GA or their appointment



## GRADUATE ASSISTANT CLASSIFICATIONS

At Georgia Southern University, the term Graduate Assistant or GA is a general marker used to classify all the different categories of appointments available to graduate students. ***Note that Graduate Assistantships are only available to graduate students who have been regularly admitted to a graduate program of study.*** Students who have been Provisionally Admitted or are enrolled in a Certificate program, or Georgia On My Line (GOML) program are not eligible to hold a GA appointment.



### ***Teaching Assistant 1 (TA1)***

A TA1 is a graduate student who works under the direct supervision of regular faculty members and may be assigned only to duties related to instruction. A TA1 may not have primary responsibility for a course or serve as the instructor of record, but may assist in the instructional process by serving as a discussion leader in breakout sections, grade papers, proctor exams, or assist the primary instructor of record in other ways. The department chair and graduate program director shall determine that the credentials of a student assigned TA1 qualify the individual to assist in instruction activities.

## Teaching Assistant 2 (TA2)

Graduate students appointed to the position of TA2 will have completed more than 18 hours of graduate course credit in the appropriate discipline and will have completed centralized training facilitated by the College of Graduate Studies. TA2s may have primary instructional responsibility for a course and may have autonomy for teaching, assigning grades, and providing laboratory instruction/setup as part of a regularly scheduled course. TA2s must be under the supervision of a Georgia Southern faculty member that teaches in the discipline. The department chair and graduate program director shall determine that the credentials of a student assigned as TA2 qualify the individual to undertake the assignment of instruction.

## Research Assistant (RA)

An RA is a graduate assistant whose primary responsibilities fit directly within the research efforts of the assigned faculty member, program, or department. An RA position is one that allows a graduate student to conduct research of a scholarly nature, normally under faculty supervision. Services provided by a research assistant may include, but are not limited to:

- regular maintenance and hygiene of the lab;
- the production and analysis of data;
- the development of theoretical analyses and models; and
- the production or publication of scholarly journals and research reports to develop his or her own research agenda and for the benefit of the University, Faculty, or academic staff supervisor or granting agency.

## Service Assistant (SA)

An SA is a graduate assistant who provides general administrative or service support to academic, non-academic, and administrative units within the University. The assigned duties to the SA should be relevant to the graduate program and the professional goals of the graduate student whenever possible. The greater percentage of GA appointments at Georgia Southern fit within this category. Work provided by the service assistant may include, but is not limited to:

- performing administrative assistant duties such as:
  - taking meeting minutes for program level meetings
  - organizing and ensuring the completion of essential program paperwork
  - handling student inquiries about department degree programs
- organizing administrative details for faculty searches
- assisting program directors with the scheduling of courses for future terms
- helping a department chair with various departmental tasks
- supporting athletic programs/teams with various responsibilities
- providing key support for a variety of student services across the campus
- working for Campus Recreation and Intramurals in a variety of roles
- providing technical or graphic support to program websites or with social media

## ELIGIBILITY

Assistantships may only be awarded to graduate students who have unqualified admission to the College of Graduate Studies under the “Regular” degree admission classification. Provisional degree or non-degree admits are **not eligible** to hold a graduate assistantship.

Graduate assistants must maintain a cumulative graduate GPA of 3.0\*\*,\*\* Ed.D., Curriculum Studies must maintain cumulative graduate GPA of 3.25, Ed.D., Educational Administration must maintain cumulative graduate GPA of 3.50.

If an Incomplete (I) grade is received, the graduate assistant must remove the “I” during the following semester.

Graduate Assistants must be registered for a minimum of 9 credit hours of course work for Fall or Spring semester, within the program of study throughout the period of the assistantship. The only exceptions are:

| <b>Program</b>                              | <b>Credit Hours</b> |
|---|---------------------|
| Master of Public Administration             | 8                   |
| Master of Music                             | 7                   |
| Master of Science in Applied Economics      | 6                   |
| Master of Science in Computer Science       | 6                   |
| Doctor of Education, Educational Leadership | 6                   |
| Master of Science in Nursing                | 5                   |
| Doctor of Nursing Practice                  | 5                   |

Summer Terms A or B require a minimum of 3 credit hours. Summer Long Term or Term A and B together require a minimum of 6 hours *except* Master of Science in Nursing and Doctor of Nursing Practice which requires a minimum of 5 hours.

\*\*Student must be registered during the term in which they hold an assistantship.

The College of Graduate Studies will run reports in the beginning of the semester to determine eligibility. In the event COGS discovers an eligibility issue with your GTA, COGS will email the student and copy the supervisor.

## **ASSISTANTSHIPS FOR FULLY-ONLINE STUDENTS**

At the discretion of the dean of the respective college, a limited number of assistantships may be provided to students enrolled in programs or classes that are delivered fully-online AND where the student will be employed as a TA, RA or GA in the home college/department of the graduate program. In cases where the employing unit and the academic unit are NOT one and the same, the employing unit **MUST** seek prior approval from the dean of the academic unit in advance of offering the student an assistantship.

To be eligible, fully-online students must be able to meet the same eligibility requirements and are required to fulfill the same on-campus work schedule as a traditional graduate assistant.

In cases where the employing unit and the academic unit are NOT one and the same, **the employing unit MUST seek prior approval from the dean of the academic unit in advance of offering the student an assistantship. The student's home academic unit will not receive revenue from the online tuition.**

**\*\*Please forward approval from Student's home college/department Dean to COGS @ [gradschool@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:gradschool@georgiasouthern.edu)**

## **TERM OF ASSISTANTSHIP**

[Council of Graduate Schools Resolution Regarding Graduate Scholars, Fellows, Trainees, and Assistants:](#)

Please note that it is essential that all university personnel follow proper procedures as it relates to the offers of assistantships. Individuals, departments, or institutional units should NOT offer these awards verbally or in writing to a student, or tell the student that they have been recommended for a GA appointment until the student has been regularly admitted into a qualified graduate program. Once formally admitted, an offer of assistantship may be made by the hiring unit or department.

Acceptance of an offer of financial support such as a graduate scholarship, fellowship, traineeship, or assistantship (*excluding offers of admission*) for the next academic year by a prospective or enrolled graduate student completes an agreement that both the student and the graduate school expect to honor. In that context, the conditions affecting such offers and their acceptance must be defined carefully and understood by all parties.

Students are under no obligation to respond to offers of financial support prior to April 15; earlier deadlines for acceptance of such offers violate the intent of this Resolution. In those instances in which a student accepts an offer before April 15, and subsequently desires to withdraw that acceptance, the student may submit in writing a resignation of the appointment at any time through April 15. However, an acceptance given or left in force after April 15 commits

the student not to accept another offer without first obtaining a written release from the institution to which a commitment has been made. Similarly, an offer by an institution after April 15 is conditional on presentation by the student of the written release from any previously accepted offer. It is further agreed by the institutions and organizations subscribing to the above Resolution that a copy of this Resolution or a link to the URL should accompany every scholarship, fellowship, traineeship, and assistantship offer.

Assistantships are normally available during a given academic year meaning the Fall and Spring semesters. The standard starting date for a graduate assistant shall be one week before the first day of classes and run for 16 weeks total. The standard ending date shall be the last day of final exams.

It is noted that assistantships are to provide an opportunity for grad students to complete their degree in a timely manner. This is defined by a student progressing normally to degree completion based upon the standards set by the various graduate programs at Georgia Southern University. Normal progression to degree completion will vary by discipline and level of degree.

To this end, GAs must meet full programmatic credit hour requirements during the semester in which the GA appointment is held to maintain a graduate assistantship. The specific graduate credit hour load requirement in a given semester will be defined by the program as the GA progresses through the various components of their program of study. For instance, during regular course work, a GA may need to be enrolled in nine (9) graduate credit hours in a given semester. A GA may take as little as one (1) credit hour IF is is within the same semester that the GA is graduating AND they have 1) applied for graduation and 2) have a cleared DegreeWorks audit.

***Graduate Assistantships are not meant as a support for maximum time frames to degree completion.*** For instance, some programs allow students 5 years to Candidacy Exam and then another 5 years to defend the dissertation document. Graduate Assistants will not be available for this length of time. They are awarded based on normal progression to degree completion.

Any exceptions to this policy such as it relates to internship requirements or extending time to degree completion standards in a given program to retain a GA appointment require a formal GA extension request to be submitted to COGS. This will be completed through the online appeals process on the COGS website.

### **Summer Assistantships**

There are some summer assistantships available but they are limited and it cannot be guaranteed. It is purely based upon department, unit, or center workload and available funding. A student granted an assistantship during the summer term must be enrolled in graduate courses during that semester for the assistantship to be granted. The student must be enrolled in three (3) graduate credit hours for Short Term A & B or six (6) graduate credit hours for Summer Long Term.

## WORKLOAD AND RESPONSIBILITIES

There are a variety of models across the nation as it relates to the work hours required of GA's. Here at Georgia Southern University, we only have one classification. *A normal workload for a fulltime graduate assistant is twenty (20) hours per week.* Federal law generally limits the number of hours that international students can work on campus to twenty (20) hours per week as well. COGS may grant exceptions to this limitation.

### Employment Restrictions

GAs are NOT eligible for additional Georgia Southern employment as an adjunct, a faculty member, or casual laborer and cannot be hired as a student employee. GAs cannot be classified in more than one type of employment.

Occasionally, GAs may be required to extend work beyond the 20-hour work week. Instances might include:

- A GA with a Georgia Southern Athletics sports team are required to attend to regular work and then is asked to travel with the team to an off-campus sporting event during the regular team season
- A GA working with the undergraduate admissions office is asked to work extra hours to help with a significant or time sensitive workload that has come into the office
- A GA with student services is asked to provide additional work during an on-campus recruiting event or program

In instances such as these, there are two approaches that can be taken.

- 1) The GA can be paid regular student casual labor hourly rates for the hours extending beyond the 20 hours in the form of a one-time payment. This is an arrangement to be made between the GA and the Supervising Department or Institutional Unit. The additional salary costs are incurred by the supervising department or institutional unit. COGS can provide support in making and setting up these arrangements.
- 2) The GA can work the extra hours in a given week and then be required to work less hours in the next week or upcoming weeks to account for the overage of hours. *GAs working in Athletic training work less in the off season of the team sport that they are assigned.*

**International Graduate Assistants** are mandated by Federal Law to a maximum of 20 hours of work per week. Where domestic students can exceed the 20-hour rule with a combination of the GA appointment and hourly student employment, this is not the case for International GA's. *International GA's cannot work more than 20 hours per week.*

The twenty (20) hour work week is also tied to the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

## GA Health Insurance Requirements

So as it relates to Georgia Southern and the ACA regulations, all GAs are required to have health insurance. Currently, health insurance is provided by United Healthcare through the University System of Georgia Student Health Insurance Program. All GAs must apply for health insurance through the United Healthcare website. [Health Services/United Healthcare website](#) Those student who are already insured through another plan may opt to waive out of the United Health Care plan on the [Health Services website](#).

All departments and GAs should be careful to document graduate assistant work hours and maintain as required. Detailed policy can be found in Appendix 3.

*At Georgia Southern University, GA's are not allowed to hold assistantships that require them to work more than 20 hours a week on average throughout the academic or calendar year.*

## Non-Compliance

Campus units that appoint graduate assistants are responsible for ensuring GA's do not exceed the maximum 20-hour work week over the entirety of the appointment during a given academic year. Georgia Southern University is held accountable for the accuracy of the hours reported as it relates to graduate assistants and the institution could face serious taxes and/or fines.

In this process, Human Resources will monitor graduate assistant and employment hours through OneUSG and will inform the College of Graduate Studies of any violations.

The following actions will be taken in response to violations of the ACA and Federal Law employment restrictions.

### **Academic Department or Institutional Unit Violations:**

If it is a determined by the College of Graduate Studies to be an academic department or institutional unit violation:

- any resulting financial obligations associated with ACA or Federal Law non-compliance may be incurred by the unit with the current GA appointment; or
- the relevant unit may lose the GA appointment immediately or in the subsequent academic year depending on the severity or timing of the case.

### **Graduate Assistant Violations:**

If it is determined by the College of Graduate Studies to be a Graduate Assistant violation:

- the GA may receive temporary disciplinary action;
- the GA may receive a written reprimand to be included in their student files; or
- the GA may be terminated from the position and would incur all relevant costs and/or fees associated with the dismissal.

## **Work Reporting Requirements**

All Graduate Assistants are required to track time in OneUSG per the Affordable Care Act (ACA). More information about tracking time is provided during employee on-boarding. More Information about working with OneUSG can be found at [Georgia Southern's HR Website](#).

Some things to consider as it relates to OneUSG. It is very important to make sure that hours are recorded accurately – whether this is above or below the required 20 hours. Data related to the hours could be used by COGS to determine that GA need is high in a particular area and more GA's may be needed in that unit. That same information could be used by the department or institutional to account for the fact that GA work is not enough and hiring a full-time employee is justified.

## **GRADUATE ASSISTANT JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

Each graduate assistant position must have a job description that must be reviewed and approved by the College of Graduate Studies prior to its use. Each type of assistantship the academic department or institutional unit offers must be posted on the College of Graduate Studies Graduate Assistant website. The hiring unit must also provide each student with their specific job description and duties immediately upon starting the GA position. A copy of the job description should be kept in the student's departmental file.

The job description should be prepared with care because it will be the document against which the supervisor will evaluate the graduate assistant's performance.

Please notify COGS when the position has been filled so that the website can be as updated as possible.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS FOR GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS**

All incoming graduate students are offered the opportunity to [apply for a GA position](#) during the application process. Some incoming graduate students will be offered an assistantship as part of their acceptance into a graduate program. In the event that no offer of an assistantship within the degree program, academic department, or college is made; graduate students are encouraged to proactively seek a position in other service units on campus. A list of open GA positions is posted on the COGS website [here](#).

The College of Graduate Studies **does not** make the assistantship appointment or hire. It is the student's responsibility to secure a position. You may contact the manager listed for each position directly. More information on assistantships can be found [here](#).

### ***Graduate Assistantship Offer and Acceptance Process***

Once an offer of Assistantship is made, a Graduate Commitment Form will be electronically signed by the student and the supervisor. The commitment for will include the dates for hire, stipend amount, and necessary eligibility information for maintaining the position. During this



hiring period, paperwork for the tuition waiver and mandatory health insurance will be processed and the resulting charges will be reflected on the student's account.

Prior to beginning the first day of work, the GA must attend an on-boarding session with Human Resources and provide the necessary identification as proof of eligibility to work in the U.S. Those students classified as TA2, must also complete mandatory training required by Southern Association of Colleges and Schools™ (SACS).

Please visit the COGS Website for online hiring procedures.

## **ASSISTANTSHIP SALARY**

Graduate assistantship amounts vary depending on the type of appointment and resources available within the specific College or unit of the appointment. Some colleges and units on campus have additional funds allocated to support GA's. Please note that these rates change from year to year based upon funding from the Board of Regents and institutional resources. For current salary amounts and allocations, please contact your Dean.

Salaries are based on 16 work weeks for the semester. This is the 15 weeks for the regular semester of classes and then GA's are to report one week prior to the beginning of the semester. GA's are not required to work during Thanksgiving Week during the Fall semester or Spring Break Week during the Spring semester. Salaries are paid through payroll the last working day of the month and are evenly distributed throughout the Fall and Spring semesters.

The total salary includes: Tuition Waiver and the Monthly Stipend

Departments **MUST** indicate on the PA if the position is **ALLOCATED** (COGS allocated) or **UNALLOCATED** (department, grant or externally funded)

Stipends for 2018-2019 are: Fall, Spring or Summer Long: \$3,875.00/semester (i.e. \$7,750 for Fall 18/Sp 19)

Summer Term A or Term B: \$1,937.50

## **Work Dates and Hours**

Full time Graduate Assistants can expect to work a maximum of 20 hrs/wk in both the fall and spring semesters. Federal law generally limits the number of hours that international students can work on campus to 20 hrs/wk in the fall and spring semesters. All Graduate Assistants are required to track time in OneUSG per the Affordable Care Act (ACA). More information about tracking time is provided during employee on-boarding. More Information about working with OneUSG can be found at [Georgia Southern's HR Website](#). The appointment extends through the final exam week in both the Fall and Spring semesters.

The standard starting date for a graduate assistant should be one week before the first day of classes and the standard ending date shall be the last day of final exams. Graduate Assistants are **NOT** required to work when classes are not in session (ie holidays, between semesters), unless

previously arranged with their supervisor. Depending on the agreements, appropriate remuneration for the additional work should be addressed.

If a GA cannot work their assistantship hours for reasons out of their control, the student shall provide their supervisor - and a copy to COGS - with written notice as soon as possible and when appropriate prior to the dates of the requested leave. Leave requests 20 hours and under have a greater potential of being granted. The notice needs to include the reason for the absence and the dates of the requested leave. When applicable, supporting documents should be provided. Please note that if the GA is requesting an extended leave, the GA risks losing the appointment. In these instances, the student may also incur all additional costs associated with losing the GA appointment. These matters will be decided on a case by case basis.

If a GA misses work due to illness and plans to return to work within the week, the GA shall contact their supervisor to make arrangements to make up their hours and when necessary provide a doctor's note or excuse. GAs should notify their supervisor that they will absent as soon as possible.

## **Absences**

**Jury Duty/Subpoenaed as a Witness** – If a GA is called to serve on a jury or as a witness, and is not excused/released, the department must allow the GA to adjust his/her work schedule accordingly. Proof of jury duty services or subpoena showing dates and times of service will be required to turn into their supervisor and should be kept in the student's personnel file in the department.

**Military Service** – If a GA is called to Active Military duty, the student is eligible for a withdrawal from the semester without academic penalty and without revocation of their tuition scholarship, if they have one. A copy of the student's military orders will need to be provided to their supervisor and to COGS in order to not have their assistantship revoked. The student would need to resign their GA since they will no longer be enrolled and they are unable to fulfill their GA duties.

**National Guard** – Supervisors/departments are expected to allow a GA to adjust his/her work schedule to accommodate National Guard duty/training.

**FMLA (Family Medical Leave Act)** – GAs do not meet the eligibility criteria for leave under the Family Medical Leave Act. However, students who must resign their graduate assistantship should contact COGS and discuss these matters with their supervisor due to a documented FMLA-type circumstance. GAs that are taking a medical withdrawal from all academic work should contact the [Career and Counseling Center](#).

**Parental Support and Relief for Graduate Assistants** - Graduate assistants who wish to suspend their academic responsibilities because of pregnancy, the birth, or adoption of a child may request parental support or relief during the semester in which the pregnancy, birth, or adoption occurs. This policy applies to graduate students who are current graduate assistants and who are/will be related to the child as mother or father, including domestic partners. If both parents are graduate assistants, this policy applies to both. This policy is not mandatory – if the

graduate assistant chooses not to suspend academic responsibilities during the semester of the pregnancy, birth, or adoption of a child, no action is warranted.

## WORKERS COMPENSATION

Graduate Assistants, like all employees of Georgia Southern University, are covered by [Workers' Compensation](#). Worker's Compensation is a no-fault insurance plan that is mandated by State Law. It pays medical expenses of employees resulting from allowable work-related injuries or illness. **Any workplace injury or illness must be reported to their supervisor immediately.**

## SUPERVISOR AND GA RELATIONSHIP

GAs should work closely with their supervisor in carrying out assigned duties as specified in the student's job description. At a minimum, this means having regular weekly contact. This regularly contact keeps lines of communication and expectations open. Addressing issues early through open communication allows for most problems to be easily resolved.

To get the most from this experience, both the graduate assistant and the supervisor should establish goals early during the term of appointment and work together to achieve them. This also means assessing work experience, in consultation with the supervisor, on a regular basis.

### *Performance Appraisals – Tracking Development*

In the Supervisor and GA relationship, the COGS encourages units or departments to assist in developing essential work and academic skills in the GA position. These will vary depending on the type of GA appointment and the unit in which the GA has been assigned.

Evaluation is a crucial part of the assistantship experience. It should be a supportive and constructive process that helps identify strengths as well as weaknesses and develops a plan for improvement.

All GAs should receive a formal performance appraisal twice a semester by their supervisor. The first performance appraisal should be done three (3) weeks after the student's start date and then another appraisal be done at the end of the semester. At any point during the semester, additional performance appraisals may be done at the request of the GA or their supervisor.

As a first step in the performance appraisal process, the student must be provided a job description and be given clear information by the supervisor about job expectations at the beginning of the employment period and must be informed of the ways in which progress will be measured.

The performance appraisal process involves the student and the supervisor discussing a written evaluation and is intended to be constructive and to serve as an aid to the GA in correcting any cited performance problems. Following the review, the performance appraisal form will be signed by the supervisor and the GA. The program coordinator or director needs to sign the form after the evaluation has been done and has been signed by the graduate assistant and their

supervisor. Both the student and the supervisor share responsibility for ensuring that the evaluation process is carried out.

The performance evaluation should be kept in the GA's personnel file in the department. A copy of the Evaluation should be sent to COGS so that we can track the GA Appraisal and GA development process.

Many departments or institutional units may already have their own formal Performance Appraisal process.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Whether working in a laboratory, classroom, office, or other setting, graduate assistants must maintain standards of academic honesty and integrity and report any violations of these to their supervisor. Students must also keep well informed of departmental, college, and institutional regulations and follow them consistently.

GAs are also to be examples to their peers. As such, they should strive for academic excellence. GA's are required to maintain a GPA of 3.0. Failure to remain in "Good Academic Standing" at Georgia Southern will result in the termination of the assistantship. The institutional policy is that graduate students have nine (9) graduate credit hours to get their GPA back to the minimum of 3.0 when placed on Academic Probation. GA's who accomplish this requirement, can qualify for a new GA appointment. This would not be automatic nor guaranteed and would happen through the regular application process for all GA's.

## **RESIGNATION OF A GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP**

A graduate student may elect to resign their GA position. If students are carrying a full-time load in their program of study and are maintaining a 3.00 grade average or higher, they may retain their Graduate Tuition Waiver if they have passed the 8-week mark of the semester. GA's cannot hold "Incomplete" grades in a course for more than one semester. Tuition Waivers awarded under an externally funded grant may be terminated as well, if required under the terms of the grant or by university policy.

If a student resigns from their GA position, they must provide written notice to the College of Graduate Studies and to the relevant department or institutional unit providing at least two weeks' notice. Their stipend will terminate on the day the resignation is effective, or the last day worked if prior to resignation. Payroll will contact the student if any overpayment has been made to the student to work out repayment of these funds.

If the student is a non-resident and resigns from their Graduate Assistantship, they will be charged tuition at the non-resident or out-of-state rate.

If a GA resigns because they are dropping all classes or dropping below a full-time load in the program of study, the waiver will be revoked and the student will be required to pay all relevant tuition and mandatory fees. Please see the Graduate Catalog for information on withdrawal.

*As it relates to these matters, it is essential that GA's have open communication with their Supervisor so that requests for resignation are only as a result of extreme situations.*

## TERMINATION OF A GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP

**Termination should be a last resort.** The key thing is that a GA position is about developing the person both academically and professionally. Opportunities should be provided to develop the student before termination is considered. The assistantship cannot be terminated without appropriate procedures.

Suspension or dismissal of a graduate student from the University for disciplinary reasons will terminate a student's GA position.

Any member of the University who is found to have engaged in discrimination or harassment that violates University policy or the law will be subject to disciplinary action, including termination or dismissal. Faculty and graduate students should familiarize themselves with the University Discrimination and Harassment Policy under the [Equal Opportunity and Title IX](#) office. Suspension or dismissal of a graduate student from the University for violation of this policy will terminate an assistantship. Other disciplinary actions against a graduate student resulting from a discrimination or harassment complaint may also lead to termination.

A GA may also be terminated for any one of the following reasons:

- a) their GPA falls below 3.00,
- b) failure of the comprehensive/qualifying examination,
- c) unsatisfactory or failing evaluation from a thesis or dissertation defense,
- d) the semester course load falls below the full programmatic requirement in the program of study in the relevant semester, or
- e) an allegation of academic or scientific misconduct such as cheating, plagiarism, or falsification of data, has been investigated and verified.
- f) failure to comply with mandatory training for those students who hold TA2 positions

Along with COGS, the hiring departments need to monitor the GPA and enrollment requirements closely. Early recognition of a problem could result in opportunities for professional growth before termination is a consideration.

In addition to the above reasons, a student's GA may be terminated when there is substantial written documentation that a student consistently has not carried out work assignments which fall within the description of the assistantship position. Students on assistantships are employees of the University for the duration of their appointment. During the appointment period, they have similar protection against unlawful termination afforded other University employees. If a student holds a GA, the failure to perform work assignments for the assistantship can lead to termination of the Graduate Tuition Waiver. Assistantships awarded under an externally funded grant may also be terminated as well if required under the terms of the grant.

Before a department or institutional unit recommends termination, it must follow the appropriate procedures under the guidelines of progressive discipline depending on the nature of the offense. Please refer to the [Progressive Discipline Guide](#) for direction on this. Generally,

- a) notify the student of the specific nature of the problem or problems, with documentation of non-performance of duties or poor performance of duties,
- b) allow the student a reasonable opportunity to be heard, whether the student wishes to respond orally or in writing,
- c) if possible, attempt an informal resolution to avoid termination, and
- d) give the student written notification of the department's reasons for recommending termination if an informal resolution cannot be achieved.

After the above steps have been followed, the department shall forward its written recommendation, including the reasons leading to the recommendation, COGS for review. COGS and the department or institutional unit to which the graduate student is assigned have a joint responsibility to ensure that appropriate procedures are followed before the termination. A department cannot terminate an award without the review of the College of Graduate Studies, even if the funding is not provided by COGS.

*If a student elects to file a grievance under the Graduate Assistant Grievance Procedure, then the procedures therein take precedence over all of the above.*

## GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Any GA who holds or has held an assistantship and who has a complaint or disagreement concerning his or her assistantship has the right to try to resolve it using the grievance procedure as outlined in this section. Such grievances are restricted to only interpretation or application of established policies and procedures governing assistantships; the grievance procedure does not apply to tuition waiver, stipend adjustments, or matters pertaining to academic performance such as poor grades.

To help the graduate assistant through the entire grievance procedure, two means of support are available at all times: 1) COGS is available for consultation, and 2) the GA may be accompanied by one representative of his or her choice. COGS is responsible for monitoring the grievance procedures, both informal and formal; it is COGS role, in part, to make sure the grievance procedures are followed based upon these policies.

*The important element in this process is that the Grievance Policy is not designed to encourage or provide for formal adjudication of differences or to create a bureaucracy of review. Instead, the policy is intended to provide a fair and uniform set of guidelines by which the grievances of GAs may be heard and resolved. The policy is intended to create a space where grievances can be resolved at the lowest possible administrative level and in the most equitable way. While those seeking redress of grievances have the right of appeal at successive levels of administration, they should recognize that the more formal the review, the more certainly they must bear the burden of proof through appropriate documentation and relevant evidence.*

Please see Appendix 4 for further information.

## PARKING

A Graduate Assistant who is classified as teaching assistant may be permitted to apply for a GTA parking permit, which will allow students to park in special designated faculty parking areas. Graduate Assistants must be **actively engaged in teaching** to receive a GA Parking Permit. Active teaching engagement includes: teaching in a class, lab, or other such place at a specific time to interact with students. Grading tests, for example, would not be a valid reason for pursuing such a permit. COGS is granted a limited number of spaces from Parking and Transportation for these purposes.

These spaces are dispensed on a first come, first served basis. GAs classified as TA2 (instructor of record) are given preference over those classified as TA1. To apply for a GTA parking space, graduate students should fill out the [Parking Request Form](#) and turn it in to COGS with the required signatures.

Once student is notified that they have been granted a GTA space, they will need to contact the Office of Parking and Transportation to procure the permit.

COGS must receive a Parking Request Form signed by the student and the Department Chair.

There must be an active/current Personnel Action Form submitted by the hiring department

TA2s will receive priority ranking

Student's will be notified two (2) weeks prior to the start of classes of their approval status and must pick up the pass the first week of class or the permit will be re-assigned.

## WORKPLACE PROTOCOLS

Georgia Southern University GTAs are expected to follow all Workplace Protocols outlined by Human Resources. Georgia Southern is a tobacco free campus.

## APPENDIX 1

### ACA Policy and GTA's

*In 2004, the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR) requested a formal opinion from the Secretary of Labor regarding whether an employer-employee relationship existed between Universities and graduate assistants. At that time, the Secretary of Labor, Elaine Chao, indicated in response that the 1994 rule that graduate assistants were exempt from Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) rules remained in effect. This directive was despite the new (FLSA) regulations that were implemented in August of 2004. Unfortunately, the IRS is under no obligation to follow that past directive by the Department of Labor and it remains to be seen if the relationship between graduate assistants (and student workers) and the University will be impacted by the ACA (Affordable Care Act).*

*Absent from a clear exemption for graduate assistants, care must be taken to account for the number of hours they work.*

*Graduate assistants, particularly those engaged in classroom or laboratory assignments, presently do not account for their time and are treated as if they are on salary. Graduate assistants are considered to work at a percentage of effort that equates to 20 hours per week. This level of effort places them below the ACA eligibility threshold and thus they would not be eligible for health insurance.*

*However, problems could arise particularly in laboratory settings or with athletic teams where the demands of the assistantship could create work weeks well in excess of twenty hours. The law seems clear that, regardless of the percentage of effort assigned, actual hours worked will determine eligibility for benefits.*

*For that reason, supervisors of graduate assistants must maintain monthly time records that must be signed by the supervisor and graduate assistant, certifying the hours worked. Furthermore, it must be stressed that those individuals who work 1560 hours or more per year (or an average of 30 hours or more per week) would qualify for the opportunity to participate in the employee health insurance plan.*

### Affordable Care Act/GA Health Insurance Requirements

The following information links our Graduate Assistantships to the Affordable Care Act – also known as *Obamacare* - released in the Spring of 2014.

#### The Basics of ACA

- 1) ACA requires that institutions of higher learning provide and offer healthcare to all employees. This is called the “Employer Mandate”. In this policy, institutions will have to pay significant new taxes if:



- a. they do not offer health insurance coverage to substantially all their full-time employees;
  - b. the coverage they do offer is not affordable; or
  - c. the coverage does not provide a certain minimum level of benefits.
- 2) As part of this policy, graduate assistants have typically not had access to employer-offered health care and so this process provides an opportunity for access to healthcare. So in 2015, in order to avoid significant new taxes, the employer mandate requires universities and colleges to offer coverage to any employee who works an average of 30 or more hours per week.
- 3) To make sure that Georgia Southern University is compliant with ACA, we need to begin tracking the hours of work performed by GA's to determine if their hours align with ACA. Basically, if the hours are below 30 hours per week, then the GA can get healthcare through the University System of Georgia. If the hours exceed 30 hours per week, then Georgia Southern University is responsible for providing a healthcare option to the student.
- 4) There are two taxes that a university can be held accountable as it relates to ACA: Headcount Tax and Individual Tax.
- a. **Headcount Tax** stipulates that a college or university must offer minimum essential healthcare coverage to at least 70% (in 2015) and 95% (in 2016 and thereafter) of its full-time employees and their dependents. Failure to comply with this could result in a \$2000 tax per year for each of its "full-time" employees. Note that health care only has to be offered for an institution to be compliant. Employees do not have to enroll. So tracking the hours of Graduate Students becomes essential so their employment status can be correctly determined.
  - b. **Individualized Tax** may be triggered if the institution's coverage for full-time employees is unaffordable or fails to provide minimum value. If this is the case, then the institution would have to pay a tax of \$3000 per year for each such full-time employee who does not actually elect the institutions coverage because of these variables and receives subsidized coverage under a state health care exchange.
- 5) 2015 is the year in which institutions can begin measuring the hours that employees work so that accurate evaluations can be made to determine full-time status. A full-time employee under the employer mandate is defined as a common law employee who is employed an average of at least 30 hours per week. In this, there are some employees who fluctuate between full-time and part-time work depending on the semester or components of time within a semester. So universities have a "stability period" in which to track the regular work of an employee to determine their status. *So for instance, there may be 2 weeks in a given semester where a GA works more than Georgia Southern's institutional requirement of 20 hours per week, but that would not make the institution non-ACA compliant. The ACA hours are measured over the longevity of GA appointment and not viewed week by week.*

## APPENDIX 2

### *Graduate Assistant job description examples*

The following are some guides in the construction of a Graduate Assistant Job Description

#### **SERVICE ASSISTANT JOB DESCRIPTION WITH A NON-ACADEMIC UNIT**

A service assistant in the office of \_\_\_\_\_ will be expected to perform the following duties.

- Provide event planning and support for monthly recruitment fairs.
- Assist in the production of the office of \_\_\_\_\_ monthly newsletter.
- Assist the office of \_\_\_\_\_ by handling student inquiry phone calls.
- Monitor the office of \_\_\_\_\_ Twitter account.

I have discussed these duties with my supervisor and understand my responsibilities.

\_\_\_\_\_ SA Signature and Date

**RESEARCH ASSISTANT JOB DESCRIPTION (RA)**

Your duties as a Research Assistant (RA) in the department of \_\_\_\_\_ will include, but may not be limited to the following items.

- Provide support to a faculty member's research program by performing designated research under the direction of that faculty member.
- Collect and analyze data from the research.
- Keep appropriate research notes, which will be turned in to the professor at the end of the appointment period.
- Keep lab equipment clean and operable. Report problems immediately to the faculty mentor.
- Meet on a regular basis with the director of the research project.
- Participate in the writing of manuscripts resulting from the research.
- Participate in the development of research grant proposals based on the present research.
- Present the results of the research at professional meetings if deemed appropriate by the faculty mentor.

I have discussed these duties with my supervisor and understand my responsibilities.

\_\_\_\_\_ RA Signature and Date

**TEACHING ASSISTANT JOB DESCRIPTION (TA1)**

Your duties as a Teaching Assistant (TA1) in the department of \_\_\_\_\_ will include, but may not be limited to the following items.

- Design and test laboratory experiments for laboratory course \_\_\_\_\_.
- Proctor and grade exams in lecture course \_\_\_\_\_.
- Enter test scores in a computer and keep grade information up to date.
- Tutor students outside of class for course \_\_\_\_\_.
- Ensure that chemicals and other items are set up properly and on time in the teaching of laboratory course \_\_\_\_\_.

I have discussed these duties with my supervisor and understand my responsibilities.

\_\_\_\_\_ TA1 Signature and Date

### **TEACHING ASSISTANT JOB DESCRIPTION (TA2)**

Your duties as a Teaching Assistant (TA2) in the department of \_\_\_\_\_ will include, but may not be limited to the following items.

Take charge of two undergraduate laboratory sections in course \_\_\_\_\_. This will generally include but may not be limited to:

- Having or acquiring knowledge of the laboratory experiments.
- Giving short lectures on purpose and procedures for the day's experiment(s) at the beginning of the laboratory sections.
- Maintaining safe and proper laboratory conditions.
- Preparing and grading quizzes and reports.
- Grading laboratory notebooks, and evaluating the student's performance in the laboratory.
- Preparing materials and setting up experiments for the laboratory.
- Attend meetings related to the coordination of laboratory teaching, proctoring, or grading assignments.
- Proctoring and grading exams for lecture courses.

I have discussed these duties with my supervisor and understand my responsibilities.

\_\_\_\_\_ TA2 Signature and Date

## **APPENDIX 3**

### ***Graduate Assistant Performance Appraisals – Tracking Development Examples***

Performance Appraisal form can be found on the COGS website by going to <http://cogs.georgiasouthern.edu/faculty-staff/forms/> and choosing the GA FORMS tab, then GA Evaluation Form

### ***Performance Appraisals – Further Tracking***

Georgia Southern University yearly offers well over 600 GA Appointments. From this, there is a lot of service, research, and teaching hours produced by our GAs. This is a large institutional investment linked to the professional and academic growth of our graduate students. As such, there are numerous programs across the campus that have designed some innovative practices to specifically track the hours of their GA's and how their work is leading to professional and academic development. The following is an example adapted from the Department of Curriculum, Foundations, and Reading (CFR) in the College of Education.

***COGS encourages other Departments or Institutional Units across the campus to devise or continue to use similar approaches relevant to their areas.***

CFR is a unit where there are several GA's assigned to the department but not specifically to one professor. So one particular GA may be working on multiple projects for two or three professors. CFR has assigned one faculty member to oversee the coordination of the GA's and to assist in the tracking of hours and workload of the GA's. CFR has utilized categories of the work experiences they would like their GA's to develop over the course of their GA appointment. The work or projects given to the GA are then linked back to these categories. For their department, work is categorized into: Professional Development, Service, Research, Teaching, and Academic Development. So the structure is not just about tracking the GA's hours but to make the process more meaningful by tracking how the hours are utilized.

At the beginning of the week, the GA will be assigned a variety of work projects that will help guide and focus the efforts for that week. For instance:

### ***Week 3 Activities***

#### ***Research –***

- Work on literature review on Pre-service teachers in Special Education
- Find articles on self-study methods in Qualitative Research
- Develop a tracking and organization method for articles reviewed

#### ***Teaching –***

- Assist Professor X with developing questions for mid-term exam
- Assist Professor Y with finding a case study activity for upcoming class

#### ***Service –***

- Develop a flyer for upcoming conference that CFR is hosting

#### ***Academic Development –***

- Develop the Significance Section for your dissertation document

#### ***Professional Development –***

- View one webcast or webinar on Case Study Research

The following is a Log Sheet that would be used for GA's as they track their work hours and productivity around the work categories.

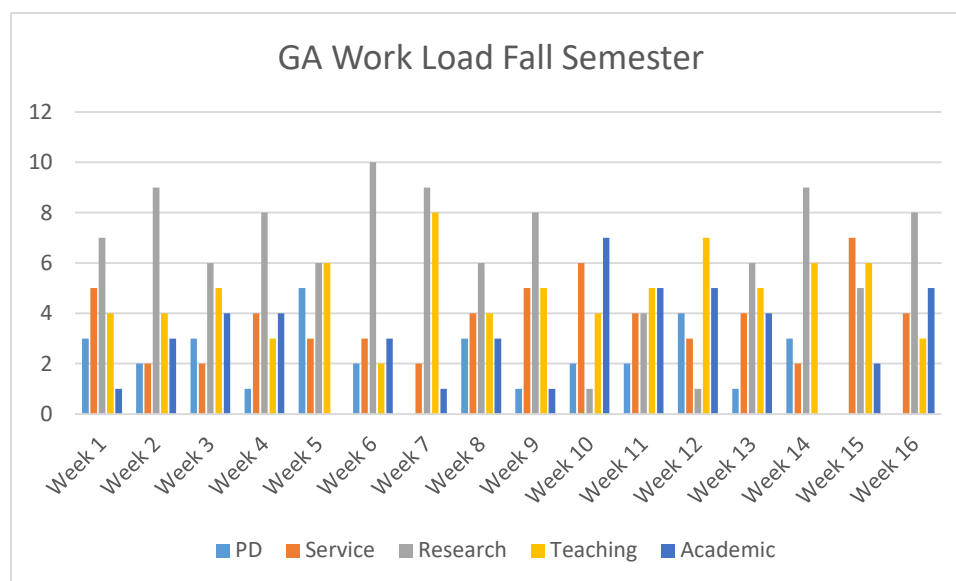
| <b>FALL SEMESTER LOG SHEET – WEEK 3</b>  |                      |                       |                       |                                   |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| DATE:  | TIME IN:             | PROFESSOR(S):         | WORK PERFORMED        | TIME OUT:                         |
|  |                      |                       |                       |                                   |
|  |                      |                       |                       |                                   |
|  |                      |                       |                       |                                   |
|  |                      |                       |                       |                                   |
|  |                      |                       |                       | TOTAL HOURS:                      |
| On the last day that you will be working this week, calculate the Total Hours you have completed. Please categorize your hours worked this week into the following row. Please submit the Log Sheet into your supervisor when completed. |                      |                       |                       |                                   |
| <b>Professional Development Hours</b>  | <b>Service Hours</b> | <b>Research Hours</b> | <b>Teaching Hours</b> | <b>Academic Development Hours</b> |
|  |                      |                       |                       |                                   |

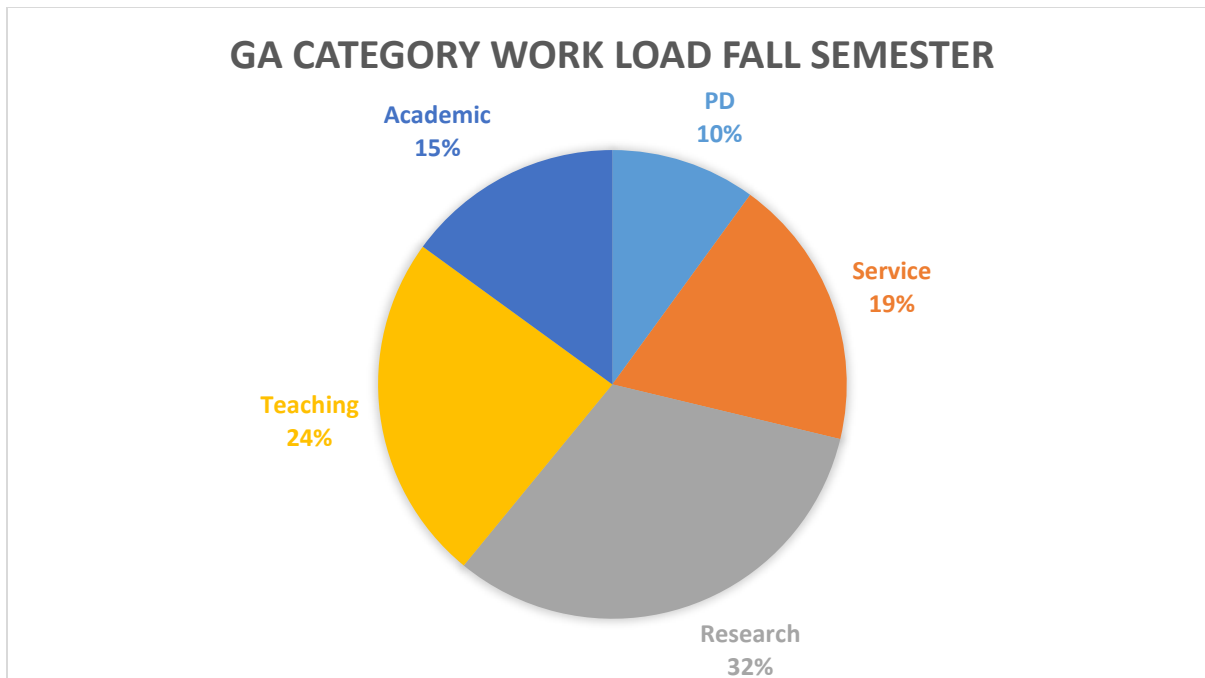
This data would then be tracked on a weekly basis by the student in an excel spreadsheet to get total work productivity over the categories throughout the semester. The GA would then submit this data to their supervisor at a few intervals throughout the semester. This data can then be used to make sure that GA's are appropriately spreading out work along the range of professional development dispositions and skills needed for that GA.

So the data could show as this:

|        | PD | Service | Research | Teaching | Academic | Total |
|--------|----|---------|----------|----------|----------|-------|
| Week 1 | 3  | 5       | 7        | 4        | 1        | 20    |
| Week 2 | 2  | 2       | 9        | 4        | 3        | 20    |
| Week 3 | 3  | 2       | 6        | 5        | 4        | 20    |
| Week 4 | 1  | 4       | 8        | 3        | 4        | 20    |
| Week 5 | 5  | 3       | 6        | 6        | 0        | 20    |
| Week 6 | 2  | 3       | 10       | 2        | 3        | 20    |
| Week 7 | 0  | 2       | 9        | 8        | 1        | 20    |

|              |           |           |            |           |           |            |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Week 8       | 3         | 4         | 6          | 4         | 3         | 20         |
| Week 9       | 1         | 5         | 8          | 5         | 1         | 20         |
| Week 10      | 2         | 6         | 1          | 4         | 7         | 20         |
| Week 11      | 2         | 4         | 4          | 5         | 5         | 20         |
| Week 12      | 4         | 3         | 1          | 7         | 5         | 20         |
| Week 13      | 1         | 4         | 6          | 5         | 4         | 20         |
| Week 14      | 3         | 2         | 9          | 6         | 0         | 20         |
| Week 15      | 0         | 7         | 5          | 6         | 2         | 20         |
| Week 16      | 0         | 4         | 8          | 3         | 5         | 20         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>32</b> | <b>60</b> | <b>103</b> | <b>77</b> | <b>48</b> | <b>320</b> |





From here, Supervisors can make analyses of how a particular GA is developing professionally and academically through the GA appointment and then determine if adjustments need to be made in successive semesters.

This is a general approach and can be adapted to different programs and units across campus. For instance, the categories listed here are for an academic unit. Other institutional units might have categories linked to work skills: customer service, answering phones, data entry, website development, note taking, video production, lab setup, and so forth.

These reports could then be submitted to the College of Graduate Studies at the end of the semester so data supporting the impact of GA work across the campus could be measured and publicized accordingly.

### ***Performance Training and Appraisal for TA1 and TA2***

Preparatory and in-service training is required by SACS for Graduate Students with a TA2 teaching position; it is optional for Graduate Students teaching as TA1 and those without a teaching position (departmental policy may vary). This mandatory training is carried out by The Center for Teaching and Technology (CT2).

The pedagogical preparatory and in-service training includes two parts:

1. *Intensive pedagogical seminar* – “Introduction to College Teaching”

This seminar will be offered at the end of the Spring semester for all TAs interested in learning more about teaching. TAs who have already been informed of their appointment or desire to be appointed as TA2s for the following Fall term are especially encouraged to attend.



## 2. *In-service Training*

During their first year as instructors of record, TA2s are required to complete the following:

- a. three training electives in the first semester
- b. completion of a required, non-evaluative teaching observation of the TA2s classroom instruction in the first semester
- c. in the second semester of teaching, TA2s are required to complete two different (2) electives and develop a teaching portfolio.

Upon successful completion of ALL of these requirements TAs will be awarded a Certificate to document their training.

For more information on TA Training and the elective workshops options available, please contact CT2.

## APPENDIX 4

### *Grievance Procedures*

#### **INFORMAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

The GA must seek initially to resolve the complaint or disagreement by informal means. Remember that the Director of Graduate Student Services is available for consultation, not only with you but also with your supervisor to help resolve any problems. Resolutions of complaints and disagreements at the informal level are strongly encouraged.

Due to time constraints on the overall grievance procedure, the informal procedure should be pursued promptly. To leave enough time, should a formal grievance be deemed necessary, the informal procedure should be limited to no more than ten (10) working days from when the occurrence of the grievance is first noted.

#### **FORMAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

If resolution by informal means fails, the graduate assistant may then initiate the formal grievance procedure. The formal grievance must be filed within thirty (30) calendar days of the date when the occurrence of such grievance is first noted (or should have been noted) by the graduate assistant.

**Grievance Procedures** - Two principles must be followed during the grievance procedure.

- *The first is Preponderance of Evidence.* If a GA believes that a faculty member or other person has acted inappropriately, then that GA must gather sufficient evidence which may be in the form of emails, letters, or other forms of written documentation.

- *The second principle is Without Retaliation.* At no time during the process, should a faculty member or other person take action that could be considered retaliation against the GA who has submitted the grievance.

**Procedure** - Procedure is defined as the process of resolution in which the graduate student contacts the faculty or administrator who has committed the grievance, and if needed, additional personnel up to the level of the GA's college dean to resolve the situation.

**STEP 1** – This is initially covered through the Informal Grievance Process. Failure of the informal process can begin the formal process where the GA sends an email or makes contact in writing and asks the faculty member or administrator to cease engaging in the behavior(s) in question.

**STEP 2** - If the behavior of the faculty or administrator persists, then the GA should notify the department head of the faculty member or the immediate supervisor of the administrator. The GA will provide the administrator with a copy of the email or written correspondence noting the date of the request to desist and ask them to arbitrate the matter. The department head will notify the GA after he/she speaks with the faculty member or administrator within five working days.

**STEP 3** - If the behavior of the faculty or administrator continues after the intervention by the department head or other administrator, or the graduate assistant is not satisfied with the response from the department head, the student will contact the Dean of the College. If the GA is not satisfied at this point, he/she may ask for intervention by COGS.

**Written Complaint and Formal Investigation** - Formal investigation is defined as the process of investigation wherein COGS convenes a review committee to investigate and recommend a resolution to the Provost, who will pronounce the final decision.

A formal investigation is convened when the graduate assistant submits a written complaint. COGS will promptly (within ten working days) designate a committee to investigate the complaint. The committee will be formed by establishing a Grievance Sub-Committee of the Graduate Committee of the Faculty Senate.

**Responsibilities of the Investigating Committee** – One member of this Grievance Sub-Committee will serve as the chair of the investigating committee. The Chair may consult with the relevant institutional offices to ensure the sub-committee renders a decision consistent with legal, human resources, or other institutional policies. He/she will inform the graduate student:

- The manner and frequency with which the graduate student will be updated about the status of the investigation.
- The need for a high level of discretion during the investigatory process.
- Ensure that there is no retaliation against the GA.

Normally within five working days of receipt of the assignment, the Investigating Committee will advise of and provide the faculty or administrator who is alleged to have committed the violation with:

- The specific allegations and a copy of the written complaint.
- The manner and frequency in which the faculty member or administrator will be updated about the status of the investigation.
- The need for all parties to exercise a high level of discretion during the investigatory process and the University's policy with respect to retaliation.
- An opportunity to submit a written response to the complaint within five working days of notification of the complaint.

**Investigation** - The purpose of the investigation is to gather facts. Depending upon the facts of the case, an investigation may range from a one-on-one conversation between the investigating committee and the two parties to an inquiry with multiple witness interviews. The investigating committee will produce a written finding of facts at the conclusion of the investigation.

The investigation committee decision shall be made on the "preponderance of evidence" standard. Any finding against an individual or department on the subject of grievance must be supported by a preponderance of the evidence.

Investigations should normally be completed within five working days from the date the complaint was first asserted. If this is not reasonably possible, the investigation committee should make the grievant and the faculty or administrator who is alleged to have committed the violation aware of the status of the review and provide an estimated conclusion date.

**Submission of Investigative Report** - Upon completion of the investigation, the Chair of the Grievance Sub-Committee shall submit their report to COGS. Upon receipt of the investigative report, COGS shall review the report and submit an initial determination to the Provost that states that a violation did or did not occur. If an initial determination is that a violation did occur, then the Dean shall also submit an initial proposal to the Provost stating what "prompt remedial action" the Dean considers appropriate, including potential disciplinary action. The Provost will make the final determination as to what actions, if any, be taken.

**Notification of Decision and Appeal Process** - Upon conclusion of the determination process, the complainant and respondent will receive a written copy of the Provost's decision. The faculty/administrator who is alleged to have committed the violation may appeal the decision in writing, within five working days, to the Provost. The appeal must be based on (a) new facts not previously available, (b) the sanction is arbitrarily harsh or capricious, and/or (c) procedures were not followed that substantially affected the result. The Provost will render a final decision within five working days. This decision completes the university process.

**General Advice to Graduate Assistants in Pursuing Grievance Procedure** – GA's are recommended to use their discretion in following these suggestions.

- Maintain a diary of events to ensure a chronological record is readily available and so that the GA does not forget the sequence of events surrounding the grievance.
- If possible, change the major advisor if the current major advisor is the person against whom the grievance was lodged.

- Keep copies of written communications that are involved in the grievance and any further communication from the faculty member or administrator against whom the grievance was lodged.

### ***Harassment/Discrimination***

As it relates to matters of both Termination and Grievance, both parties must be considerate of issues of Harassment and Discrimination. Harassment based on protected class constitutes a violation of university policy and may also constitute a violation of civil rights laws. Such harassment will not be tolerated at Georgia Southern University. It subverts the mission of the university and threatens the careers, educational experience and well-being of students, faculty, and staff. Prohibited harassment includes harassment based on race, gender, age, religion, color, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, and veteran status.

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and is prohibited by federal regulation. Sexual harassment in academic settings and in the employment area where Graduate Assistants are involved is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, graphic, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when (1) submission to such conduct may be explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a GA's academic success or employment; (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct may be used as the basis for employment or academic decisions affecting the GA and the GA's total educational and/or work experience; or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with a GA's employment or academic performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or educational environment that is severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive. GA's who are unsure or are unclear if they are facing harassment or discrimination, can (1) contact the Graduate Student Services director in the College of Graduate Studies to generally discuss their concerns; or (2) contact the [Equal Opportunity and Title IX](#) office to discuss their concerns.