



4-OP-C-7-H2 GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

Responsible Executive:	Vice President for Finance and Administration
Approving Official:	Vice President for Finance and Administration
Effective Date:	8/1/2022
Revision History:	1/1/2014; 8/1/2016

I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching and research are an integral part of the requirement of obtaining a graduate degree at Florida State University. Because of this, the primary relationship with the University for Graduate Assistants receiving a stipend for degree-related work is one of being a student. Department of Labor guidance regarding the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) indicates that the FLSA does not apply to Graduate Assistants engaged in degree-related work. ~~Likewise, the IRS accords student employees of a university a special status with the expectation that they are pursuing their studies, and accords the FICA tax exemption on the basis that the duty assignment is incident to and for the purpose of pursuing a course of study.~~

II. POLICY (Including any Forms and Attachments)

This policy provides guidance regarding Graduate Assistant appointments to ensure compliance with university policies, appointment requirements, and the UFF-FSU-GAU Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). It is imperative that the proper appointment classifications be used for Graduate Assistant appointments. All Graduate Assistants must be admitted to and meet the requirements of the Graduate School, be fully admitted to a graduate degree program, and be under the supervision of an appropriate graduate faculty member. The Graduate School and the Office of Human Resources will verify the requirements for each classification and are the offices to contact if there are any questions.

Graduate Assistant job codes can only be used in the following circumstances:

1. A graduate student pursues the work activity under the direction of a faculty member who has an appointment in the home academic unit of the student or an affiliated academic unit (e.g., in the case of interdisciplinary programs). The activity must be degree-related e.g., involve teaching, research/creative, or professional work.
2. If a non-degree granting campus unit has established a formal written partnership agreement with an academic unit to offer work activity opportunities to its graduate students and it is agreed that faculty in the home unit will engage with the employing unit to ensure that the activity is integrated with the graduate student's program of study and considered during the overall assessment of academic progress.
3. If a non-degree granting campus unit has established a formal written partnership with a particular faculty member in an academic unit to offer work activity opportunities to the faculty member's graduate students and it is agreed that the professor in the home unit will engage with



the employing unit to ensure that the activity is integrated with the graduate student's program of study and considered during the overall assessment of academic progress.

Duties consisting of primarily clerical activity are not appropriate for appointment using any graduate assistant job code.

A. GRADUATE ASSISTANT JOB CODES

M9182 Graduate Research Assistant - Stipend

This Graduate Research Assistant shall be classified as a degree seeking graduate student who performs research activities or assignments that are related to the student's academic program.

Example: A student doing research in a lab or a library.

Z9185 Graduate Assistant in Professional - Stipend

This Graduate Assistant shall be classified as a degree seeking graduate student who does one of the following:

1. Assists in a degree related professional or academic function under the supervision of a graduate faculty member, or
2. Performs degree related professional or administrative services that support research or instructional activities. Examples: A theatre design major assisting in set or costume design, or a counseling major assisting in a psychology clinic or in a residence hall. This category does not include clerical assistance or non-degree related employment.

W9185 Graduate Assistant in Teaching - Stipend

This Graduate Assistant shall be classified as a degree seeking graduate student who assists in the instructional process and who may have direct contact with a student or a group of students, but does NOT have primary responsibility for teaching. The graduate assistant may be directly involved in a tutorial or group instructional environment and may grade papers and analyze work products as part of their overall assignment.

Examples: Graders, tutors, recitation leaders, lab supervisors, and assistants to faculty instructor.

M9184 Graduate Teaching Assistant - Stipend

This Graduate Assistant shall be classified as a degree seeking graduate student who has a master's degree in the teaching discipline or at least 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline and performs primary teaching duties as the Instructor of Record (IOR) that are related to that student's academic program. (See: Standards and Training Requirements).

Examples: A graduate student having full instructional responsibilities for a credit class.

M9183 Graduate Teaching Associate- Stipend

This Graduate Teaching Associate shall assist in teaching function of a graduate course or co-listed course but is not the Instructor of record and does not have primary responsibility for teaching. Examples include but are not limited to, tutors, recitation leaders, laboratory supervisors, assistants to faculty instructions, or comparable roles for graduate-level or co-listed courses. Limited grading and instruction of graduate students are permitted as long as the supervising faculty member retains final authority over grades and provides supervision on instructional content.

B. APPOINTMENT REQUIREMENTS



Students appointed in these job codes with an appointment of 0.25 FTE or greater, must be enrolled full-time by the home department for a minimum of nine credit hours per semester. Academic deans or designees may grant exceptions to this policy (as allowable under the Waiver Management Manual) for graduate assistants in those departments which conform to national course load policies in their disciplines, or for other extenuating circumstances. in the fall and spring. For the summer, the student must be enrolled in nine hours for session A or any combination of sessions, seven hours for sessions D and F, and five hours for sessions B and C.

For all Graduate Assistant appointments with 0.25 FTE or more (on average at least ten hours per week for the semester), the Graduate Assistant shall be provided matriculation and out-of-state fee waivers (Reference: Graduate Student Waiver Management Manual), and any other benefits in accordance with established university policy and specified in the FSU-UFF-GAU CBA. If a Graduate Assistant is performing degree-related work, but the workload is less than a 0.25 FTE, it is still appropriate to use one of the qualifying appointment codes, but the student is not eligible for the matriculation and out-of-state fee waivers or benefits referenced above.

To ensure compliance with the FSU-UFF-GAU CBA, Appointment Letters are required for every Graduate Assistant appointment and re-appointment. The Office of Human Resources can be contacted regarding the required elements that must be included in the letter and the Graduate School can be contacted regarding letter templates.

C. WORKLOAD LIMITATIONS

Generally, regular and ongoing workloads greater than 0.5 FTE are in conflict with the expectation that a graduate student on an assistantship is pursuing a full-time course of study. A student may carry a greater FTE assignment, not to exceed 0.75 FTE, under special and occasional circumstances (e.g., in the summer) if scrutinized critically for conflicts of interest and/or any negative impact on a graduate student's academic progress. Graduate assistants shall not be assigned a workload greater than 0.75 FTE under any circumstances. All FSU appointments are considered part of this cumulative workload limitation. Graduate Assistants are only exempt from FICA taxes for any given period if they are appointed less than 30 hours per week for the pay period in question.

Departments shall permit outside employment or other activity to the extent that such outside employment or other activity does not constitute a conflict of interest, as defined in Section 7.2 (B) of the FSU-BOT-GAU Collective Bargaining Agreement.

D. STANDARDS AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Departments that employ Graduate Assistants are responsible for establishing standards and means of training, and the supervisor of their graduate assistants' work, however, departments must, at a minimum, meet the established University-wide standards for both teaching and research. Questions regarding the content of this procedure should be directed to the Graduate School.

Graduate Assistants being appointed to the W9185, M9184, or M9183 job codes must meet the University-wide standards for Graduate Teaching Assistants, found in the following link, prior to assuming one of the various instructional roles. University-wide Standards for Graduate Teaching Assistants

Graduate Assistants conducting any type of research must receive Research Compliance Training as outlined by the Office of Research in the following link. Research Compliance Training.

E. TERMINATIONS



When a Graduate Assistant resigns or is terminated for his/her appointment prior to the appointment/funding end date, or transfers to another position or department, a personnel action must be completed to avoid overpayment and to unencumber funds. Termination of a Graduate Assistant appointment must be in compliance with the FSU-UFF-GAU CBA. Therefore, before any termination, the department must contact the Office of Human Resources, Faculty Relations.

III. LEGAL SUPPORT, JUSTIFICATION, AND REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

The President holds delegated authority from the Board of Trustees to establish personnel policies. Constitutional authority, state statutes, federal statutes, Florida Board of Governors regulations, and University regulations authorize the policy:

- o Florida Constitution Article IX, Section 7;
- o Florida Statutes Section 1001.706(6)(a);
- o Florida Board of Governors Regulation 1.001(2)(e) and (5)(a); and
- o Florida State University Board of Trustees Regulation FSU-4.001

This policy shall be reviewed by the Chief Human Resources Officer every seven years for its effectiveness. The Office of Human Resources shall make recommendations to the Vice President for Finance and Administration for any modification or elimination.

/s/ Name of Approving Official

[Proof of approval retained in file]