

Internal Guidelines on Awarding Graduate Assistantships

***NOTE: These guidelines are not applicable to individuals hired on a temporary (OPS) basis to support laboratory sections or other instructional needs.**

Appointment of Graduate Assistants by the University of South Florida St. Petersburg (USFSP) is governed by the current Collective Bargaining Agreement enacted by the Graduate Assistants United (GAU) and the USF System Board of Trustees. The GAU is the labor union certified as the exclusive bargaining agent for Graduate Assistants enrolled at all institutions of the USF System.

Graduate Assistants may teach, conduct research, or fulfill other responsibilities that contribute to the graduate student's professional development. Graduate Assistants are appointed as Graduate Assistant (job code 9185), Graduate Teaching Assistant/Associate (job codes 9183 and 9184, respectively), Graduate Instructional Assistant (job code 9550), or Graduate Research Assistant/Associate (job codes 9181 and 9182, respectively). (See summary of [Job Codes and Descriptions for Temporary Appointments](#) and full discussion in the [Graduate Assistant Handbook](#).)

Note: it is expected that Graduate Research Assistants/Associates will be supported through externally sponsored programs.

Guidelines

The Chief Academic Officer, in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies, distributes Graduate Assistantships to the colleges and degree programs to address instructional needs in undergraduate courses. Priority consideration is given to assistantship appointments that support general education courses, courses directly associated with majors in areas of strategic emphasis as determined by the Florida Board of Governors, and courses with high enrollment. Considerations for funding allocations include the number of undergraduate core courses that will be supported, student demand in key undergraduate majors, faculty to student ratios, and graduate student eligibility as outlined in the GAU Collective Bargaining Agreement and summarized below. In addition, certain areas of strategic importance to USFSP on occasion may be supported by Graduate Assistantships in the areas of research and/or community engagement.

Allocation Process

The allocation process will be conducted each fall in preparation for deployment of offers to prospective graduate assistant the following spring (assignments to begin the following autumn).

1. College staff will develop an inventory of core general education courses, courses in areas of strategic emphasis, and courses with high enrollment or intensive teaching demands. Areas of strategic importance in need of support outside the classroom may also be included.

2. College staff will calculate the number of Graduate Assistants necessary to maintain effective ratios of instructor to student credit hours for these core courses. A three-year rolling average of department/program enrollments and majors will be examined as part of this review. The information is submitted to Academic Affairs.
3. The Chief Academic Officer, in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies, will assign graduate assistantships to the colleges based on these metrics.
4. The college deans will distribute Graduate Assistantships within the college to programs based on these metrics.
5. Department chairs will allocate Graduate Assistantships based on these metrics. Appointment of qualified Graduate Assistants may commence per eligibility requirements below.

Eligibility

Graduate Assistantships are awarded to qualified students on a competitive basis. Graduate Assistantships for master-degree seeking students are awarded for no more than two full years from time of entry (ordinarily fall/spring/summer/fall/spring/summer).

In order to be awarded a Graduate Assistantship, students must meet the following requirements:

- Is a graduate student enrolled at USFSP;
- Meets the qualifications as specified by the graduate program and has been accepted into a graduate degree program;
- Meets the academic qualifications as specified by the GA job code;
- Has earned appropriate verbal test scores if English is not the primary language;
- Maintains an overall minimum grade point average (GPA) and degree program GPA of 3.0 or better;
- Complies with all Office of Graduate Studies enrollment requirements to retain the assistantship as stated in the Policies section of the Office of Graduate Studies Catalog (i.e., is enrolled full-time during the semester(s) appointed as a Graduate Assistant). Full-time enrollment is considered to be 9 graduate credit hours in the fall semester, 9 graduate credit hours in the spring semester, and 6 graduate credit hours in the summer semester. If a Graduate Assistant is enrolled in the last semester of his/her program of study, the number of registered semester hours may be less than the full-time requirement (special circumstances apply for international students not enrolled full time during their last term);

- Has demonstrated satisfactory progress toward degree;
- in the case of requested reappointment, has earned a rating of Achieves or better on the [Graduate Assistant Performance Evaluation](#).

Compensation

Tuition Waiver: For appointed Graduate Assistants, in-state tuition for up to nine (9) credit hours may be waived for the fall semester and nine (9) credits may be waived for spring semester. For summer term, up to six (6) credits may be waived. Total tuition waived is limited to 100% of the number of credits required for program completion.

Fees: Fees are not waived and are the responsibility of the Graduate Assistant.

Stipend: Graduate Assistants appointed at 0.5 FTE will be appointed for one academic year at a time (nine months /19.5 pay periods) and will be paid a minimum stipend as specified in the current collective bargaining agreement.

Health Insurance: USFSP will contribute the current cost of the Graduate Assistants' health insurance for those assistants electing coverage under the USF Student Health Insurance Plan.

Notes:

*Subject to instructional support needs and unit budget, additional student labor may be engaged, but only Graduate Assistants appointed through the process described above will be eligible for tuition waivers and graduate health insurance. Students appointed as temporary (OPS) assistance are not eligible for the benefits of GA/RA/TA appointment.

Guidelines are effective beginning Academic Year 2019-2020

Guidelines finalized April 5, 2019, USFSP Office of Academic Affairs

References:

Graduate Assistant Handbook 2017 – 2020: http://www.grad.usf.edu/GA_Handbook.php.

Graduate Assistant Collective Bargaining Agreement 2017-2020:

<https://www.usfgau.org/assets/2017-2020-CBA-1.pdf>.

To appoint a Graduate Assistant, departments with approved GA allocations must convey the following information to the USFSP Office of Graduate Studies:

Name of student requested for Appointment:

Student U number:

Semesters of Appointment:

Course Prefix and Number:

Course Enrollment Cap:

Do the academic credentials of the student meet SACS requirements to teach this discipline at the lower level?

Is the course a general education course?

Does the course support a CIP major or strategic emphasis?

Mode of course delivery?

A proposed ASF employment form

An unofficial transcript

Copy of the student's most recent employment evaluation (if request is for reappointment).