



SOUTHEAST MISSOURI
STATE UNIVERSITY · 1873

**GRADUATE ASSISTANT
HANDBOOK**

2018-2019

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS



What is a Graduate Assistantship?

The graduate assistantship is designed to provide support for a student during full-time graduate study. Technically, the assistantship is a scholarship for which service is required. The assistantship provides an opportunity for a graduate student to serve in a professional role and to establish a professional relationship with faculty, professional staff, and/or administrators. By accepting an assistantship, a graduate student makes a significant commitment to serve the University by carrying substantial professional responsibilities while achieving excellent academic performance in his/her degree program. Meeting these two responsibilities, as student and University employee, requires significant self-discipline and professionalism.

Two types of GA positions exist at Southeast Missouri State University: (a) teaching and (b) administrative. Each provides a standard stipend and a waiver of fees for coursework related to a student's approved program of study for the period of appointment. The nature of each type of assistantship is described below.

What is a Teaching Assistantship?

The graduate teaching assistant (TA) is expected to participate directly in the teaching of a course, tutoring, or to fulfill duties pertaining to teaching support activities assigned to specific course sections. Support activities may include laboratory or clinical preparation, grading, tutoring, or library research to help prepare class presentations, etc. It is expected that the assistantship will be a learning experience that fosters understanding of pedagogy and content in the student's academic discipline. The University's intention is to make the teaching assistantship a valuable and integral part of the student's graduate education.

What is an Administrative Assistantship?

The graduate administrative assistant (AA) is expected to develop competencies in and assist in the daily operations of a University administrative unit. It is expected that such appointment is primarily a learning experience that should be related to the student's program of study. The AA appointment should *not* be viewed as the equivalent to a fulltime staff or clerical level appointment with its related responsibilities. The AA should be given the opportunity to learn the functions of the office as well as educational management procedures. It is expected that such an AA appointment provide more than routine student clerical support that would typically be performed by student workers on campus.

What is the Role of the Office of the Provost in GA Supervision?

The Office of the Provost assumes an active role in establishing policies that govern graduate assistant allocations at the University. Policies articulated in this document cover stipend levels, reasonable workloads, minimum academic qualifications, appointment and renewal guidelines, and resolution of grievances.

The Office of the Provost also serves as an advocate for graduate assistants, ensuring that they are treated fairly and that their assistantship duties do not interfere unduly with their academic studies, but rather contributes to them.

OPERATING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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Appointment Process

Appointment recommendations are initiated in the department/unit and require the approval of the College Dean and the Provost. Once approved, the appointment or reappointment forms are finalized by the Office of the Provost and forwarded to Human Resources in order for a contract to be issued. The GA will receive e-mail notification to his/her Southeast student e-mail address regarding the issuance of the contract, along with detailed instructions related to the process of reviewing and accepting the contract. Human Resources will notify new student GAs (within this same e-mail) of additional information such as the W-4, MO-W4, I-9, Direct Deposit, and Personnel Data forms that will need to be submitted by the specified date to Human Resources located in Academic Hall - Room 012. These additional personnel forms can be viewed and printed at http://www.semo.edu/hr/forms_list.html#New_Employee. All GAs should review the contract information carefully prior to acceptance, including the information obtained by clicking the “Contract Note” icon and the “Download Compensation Data” button. Appointments may be for one or two semesters with the terms stipulated in the contract. When the contract is accepted by the GA, a waiver of fees *for approved coursework during the contractual period* is scheduled. The fee waiver applies to graduate courses applicable to your degree program.

Time Commitment

TAs are expected to work 20 hours per week in completing the equivalent of six credit hours of instruction per semester. GAs are expected to work 20 hours per week. In no instance should workload related to the job expectations interfere with the GA's program of study (e.g., time away from class, missing examinations). **All GAs will report to their respective offices to begin their assignment one week before the semester officially starts. Finals week is included in the time commitment for all GAs.** Due to the number and scheduling of pay periods during each semester, hours should be scheduled/worked during finals week to meet the requirements of the assistantship program, unless other arrangements have been made through the GA supervisor.

Appropriate Supervision

All GAs must be directly supervised by a graduate faculty member within an academic department or by a designated professional staff member within other units. The person responsible for this supervision must be indicated on the job description provided to the GA when the appointment is initiated. Supervision of GAs must adhere to any existing accreditation guidelines that are applicable to academic programs to which GAs are assigned.

GA Privileges

When the GA contract is accepted, ID Services, located on the second floor of the University Center (UC) inside the Center for Student Involvement (CSI), can issue a special graduate assistant I.D. card. This card is used for access to essential campus services such as Kent Library, the Student Recreation Center, and the Southeast Bookstore.

GA Parking Permit

All GAs will be funded for parking permits (**Parking services is located at 1401 North Sprigg Street, in front of the Show Me Center.**)

Enrollment

GAs are required to complete a minimum of six (6) hours of graduate level work per semester. The fee waiver included in the assistantship covers up to nine (9) graduate hours of coursework applicable to the student's degree program per semester for the fall and spring semesters, and up to six (6) hours of graduate coursework during the summer semester. ***Enrollment in excess of nine hours requires the specific approval of the Provost.*** In general, approval for excess hours will be given only when the student has established a record at the graduate level that is clearly above average (**3.5 G.P.A. or better**). Payment for the excess hours is the student's responsibility.

Academic Standard

Since the assistantship is essentially a scholarship, GAs are expected to maintain a satisfactory academic record. ***At all times, the GA must maintain at least a 3.0 cumulative G.P.A. A student who receives a failing grade (F) in a graduate program will be suspended until obtaining the written approval from the appropriate college/department/program official(s) & the Provost.*** Failure to exhibit appropriate academic performance results in automatic termination of the assistantship.

Academic honesty is the keystone of the scholarly community. All graduate students should ***read and become familiar with the university's academic honesty policy at*** <http://www.semo.edu/facultysenate/handbook/5d.htm>

Resignation/Termination

If for adequate cause a GA finds it necessary to resign his/her position prior to the end of the contractual period, a letter of resignation must immediately be sent to the Provost with a copy delivered to the student's supervisor. The intent to resign should be discussed with the supervisor prior to submitting this letter to the Provost. In the event that the resignation occurs during/within a semester, payroll and tuition will be prorated based upon actual days/hours worked.

An assistantship may be terminated by the supervisor for failure to adequately perform assigned duties specified in the job description, unprofessional behavior, or by the Provost for failure to complete six hours of graduate course work *related to the GAs degree program of study* each semester with a satisfactory G.P.A. (Some exceptions to the 6 hour completion policy are made for students at the end of their programs who are enrolled for thesis.) As the assistantship is a service scholarship, students who resign or are terminated are not eligible for unemployment compensation.

Job Descriptions

The unit to which a GA is assigned is required to clearly communicate to the GA who his/her supervisor will be during the appointment, and must provide the GA with a written description of his/her specific responsibilities. For teaching assistants, the description should specify details (e.g., supervisor, office hours, attendance at faculty meetings, lines of authority, daily work activities). Departments/units should make sure that the *essential functions* of the assistantship are clearly stated in the job description. The Office of Human Resources should be consulted in developing appropriate job descriptions.

Payroll

The current amount of a GA stipend is **\$8,600** per academic year. All GAs must make arrangements for direct deposit of bi-weekly payroll into a bank account. For the fall 2018 Semester, the first payroll deposit will be on **August 31, 2018** and the final payroll deposit will be on **December 21, 2018**. Payroll deposits for the spring 2019 semester will be made available when the 2019 Payroll Calendar is approved by the Office of Human Resources. Verification of deposit by a Direct Deposit Advice may be obtained by logging into the University portal at: <http://portal.semo.edu>

Check-Out Procedure for Terminating or Graduating GAs

At the end of each semester, the Office of the Provost provides the Payroll Office and Human Resources with a list of GAs who will be **terminating or graduating** and provides a checkout form to each assistant. Each of these GAs *will complete and return the GA checkout form to **Human Resources, Academic Hall – Room 012** (refer to <http://www.semo.edu/gradschool/ga/forms.htm> for this form) to successfully complete their appointment.*

Summer Fee Waivers


GAs who have satisfactorily completed the spring semester of service are eligible for a summer semester fee waiver *for graduate courses that are part of the degree program of study*. No more than 6 credit hours of graduate-level coursework, related to the degree program, will be covered by the summer semester fee waiver.

Classroom Procedures

For Teaching Assistants, the specific departmental policies related to grading, office hours, student rights and responsibilities, and other activities should be provided to the student by the department. TAs are expected to comply with all university academic policies as published in the Faculty Handbook (e.g. attendance, student evaluation of instruction, academic honesty). ***The Faculty Handbook should be reviewed by all new TAs at <http://www.semo.edu/facultysenate/handbook>.***

Evaluation

Each GA must be ***evaluated by his/her immediate supervisor during each semester of service*** (refer to <http://www.semo.edu/gradschool/ga/forms.htm> for this form.) The written evaluation is shared with the GA and a copy forwarded to the departmental/unit office, Dean of the College, and Provost. The purpose of the evaluation is to provide feedback that will support the continued development of the GA and support professional growth. Additionally, each GA is asked to annually evaluate and provide constructive feedback related to his/her appointment experience within the graduate assistant program.

 <p>SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY · 1873</p>	<p>BUSINESS POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL</p>	Date Issued: 12/14	Revision Date:	Page: 1 of 1	
		Section: ADMINISTRATION			Classification Code: 01-02
		Subject: TITLE IX COMPLIANCE SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION SEXUAL HARASSMENT, SEXUAL MISCONDUCT/SEXUAL VIOLENCE			

GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY


Southeast Missouri State University is committed to fostering a safe, healthy and civil learning and working environment that is free from all forms of discrimination based on sex/gender, and to promoting an environment of personal integrity and mutual respect for all members of the University community. The goals of this policy are to prevent all forms of sex discrimination, to promptly address and remedy such discrimination if it occurs, and to prevent its recurrence.

It is the policy of Southeast Missouri State University to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, which states that “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” Title IX and this policy prohibit all forms of discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation and gender identity, including sexual harassment and sexual misconduct/sexual violence. Retaliation against any member of the University community who has reported or asserted a claim regarding such conduct or who assists in making or investigating any such claims is also prohibited and is considered a serious violation of this policy and Title IX.

The prohibition in Title IX and this policy against any form of sex/gender discrimination applies to all students, administrators, faculty and staff, applicants for employment and admission, and to third party visitors to the campus. It extends to all aspects of the University’s educational programs and activities, including, but not limited to, admission, employment, athletics, academics, housing, and student financial aid programs.

The University will maintain complaint resolution procedures implementing this policy in compliance with Title IX, will promptly investigate all complaints of sex discrimination, sexual harassment and sexual misconduct/sexual violence, will take appropriate steps to provide prompt and equitable resolution, and with due respect for the rights of all concerned. If it is determined that a violation of this policy has occurred, the University will take effective remedial action, and will take steps to provide support and resources, as appropriate, to address the effects of the conduct.

The Vice President for Finance & Administration and the Vice President for Enrollment Management & Student Success shall be responsible for issuing and maintaining operating procedures to implement this policy.

 SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY · 1873	BUSINESS POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL	Date Issued: 09/90	Revision Date: 12/14 12/16	Page: 1 of 2
		Classification Code: 01-03		
		Section: ADMINISTRATION		
		Subject: NONDISCRIMINATION		

GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

Southeast Missouri State University is committed to providing a safe, civil and positive learning and working environment for its faculty, staff, students, and visitors, free from discrimination in any form. This policy applies to all members and guests of the University community and prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, genetic information, disability, or protected veteran status in any of its programs or activities. Harassment based on any of these classifications is a form of discrimination that also violates University policy and will not be tolerated. In some circumstances, such discrimination may also violate federal and/or state law. Retaliation is also prohibited against anyone who asserts a claim of discrimination, participates in a discrimination investigation, or otherwise opposes unlawful discrimination.

This policy is consistent with the academic mission of the University and with the legal requirements of applicable state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination. These laws include, but are not limited to: Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Missouri Human Rights Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Equal Pay Act, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Vietnam-Era Veterans Readjustment Act, the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, and all amendments to the foregoing.

Equal Employment Opportunities


The University’s nondiscrimination policy and commitment to equal opportunity applies to applicants for employment, to all phases of the employment process, and to all terms and conditions of employment with Southeast.

Access to Educational Opportunities

The University’s prohibition against discrimination also applies to admission policies and practices, financial aid programs and to all other aspects of the University’s educational programs and activities offered or sponsored by the University, in accordance with applicable law, including the requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which requires the University not to discriminate based on sex (including sexual harassment and sexual violence) in its education programs and activities.

Questions about the information in this policy or about the application of this policy may be directed to:

Office for Institutional Equity and Diversity
One University Plaza
MS3375
Cape Girardeau, Missouri 63701
Email: equityissues@semo.edu
Phone: 573-651-2524

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Office for Civil Rights
1010 Walnut Street, Suite 320
Kansas City, Missouri 64106
Email: OCR.KansasCity@ed.gov
Phone: 816-268-0550
TTY: 877-521-2172

The Vice President for Finance & Administration shall be responsible for issuing and maintaining operating procedures to implement this policy.

GA Website

The Office of the Provost maintains a comprehensive website for its GAs to access information about their programs, to obtain information about key deadlines, and to obtain forms needed for program requirements at: www.semo.edu/grad. *GAs should refer to this website to access the Graduate Bulletin.*

Grievances

Whenever a concern arises regarding the GA's program of study or the performance of responsibilities related to the assistantship, the GA has an obligation to attempt to resolve the concern with his/her supervisor *at the department/unit level*. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be achieved, the GA should then present the issue to the Chairperson of the assigned department. If a satisfactory resolution of the concern cannot be resolved at that level, the GA may then present the concern to the Dean of the unit for resolution. If a satisfactory resolution of the GA's concern cannot be attained at the Dean level, the concern may then be presented to the Provost. For GAs assigned to units other than academic departments, a concern brought before their administrator/supervisor or unit manager that goes unresolved should be brought directly to the Provost.

The primary financial aid available to graduate students is the assistantship program. If additional support is needed, students should inquire at Student Financial Services as to available loan and scholarship programs. Opportunities for summer employment at student labor rates are also available. Southeast Missouri State University is unique among master's level institutions in its support of the professional development of graduate students. Graduate students may apply for funds to support research and other professional activities during their assistantship.

Application for Student Professional Development Fund Support

This support is designed to provide financial assistance to any graduate student planning to present at a professional, educational, or otherwise academically-oriented convention, seminar, or workshop. The form is available online in .pdf format. This form may be downloaded, printed, then completed in ink, or it may be completed online and printed. This form may be accessed and/or completed at: http://www.semo.edu/pdf/Provost_FFR_StudentApplication.pdf

Eligibility

Any currently enrolled graduate student planning to present at an out-of-town convention, seminar, or workshop, that directly relates to the student's educational and professional goals is eligible to apply for assistance. Validity of the trip is determined by the student's advisor and/or department chairperson, who are required to signify their approval of the trip on the student's written request form or by a separate cover memo. Departments should indicate on the form whether matching funds are being provided for the student's request.

Procedure

Each student requesting travel funds must present a completed application to the Office of the Provost. The request form found on our website includes:

1. A description of the event to be attended and its relevancy to the student's course of study and educational and professional goals.
2. An itemized list of estimated expenses is required. The estimation of costs should follow these guidelines:
 - Only reasonable and necessary amounts are allowed for lodging and meal expenses. If the student shares a room, **only his/her portion of the lodging expense should be listed.**
 - Three meals per day are subject to reimbursement, and amounts should not exceed:
 - Breakfast - \$ 10.00
 - Lunch - \$ 15.00
 - Dinner - \$20.00
 - These are prescribed maximums, and should not be used without regard to a reasonable estimation of the actual food expenses to be incurred.*
 - Transportation costs should be based on an estimate of actual costs (gas, airplane tickets, etc.), rather than standard mileage allowances.
 - Within 10 days of completion of the trip, the student should present the original receipts to the Department Chairperson or faculty/staff member that helped initiate the travel opportunity. Failure to file these receipts will result in the delay of a check being issued to the student.
 - Reimbursement of personal expenses such as personal insurance, alcoholic beverages, laundry, extra meals, tips, telephone and telegraph bills, organizational membership fees, etc. is not allowed.
 - Students should anticipate needs as far in advance as possible. Requests received during the fall semester for spring semester funding can be honored as long as funds are available.

Allocation of Funds

The following rules will govern the allocation of graduate student professional development funds:

1. No student will receive in excess of \$500 in travel assistance funds for the entire fiscal year, regardless of the number of trips the student has completed that year.
2. The decision of the Provost is final

Collection of Funds

Reimbursements are generally available within ten days of the receipt of the appropriate receipts. All checks are distributed through Student Financial Services, Academic Hall – Room 019.

To support professional development of graduate assistants, various workshops are available. The following will prove helpful to both beginning and experienced GAs.

Workshops

To support professional development of graduate assistants various workshops are available. The following will prove helpful to both beginning and experienced TAs:

Center for Scholarship in Teaching and Learning

The Center for Scholarship on Teaching and Learning (CSTL), housed in Kent Library, is eager to assist both teaching assistants and university faculty interested in instructional improvement. In addition to conducting workshops and seminars, the Center Director and staff will consult with GAs seeking help in (a) developing instructional materials, (b) improving classroom examinations, (c) conducting classroom visits, and (d) designing educational research. The Director of the CSTL has experience in working with teaching assistants and welcomes GA inquiries.

Training and Development

The Office of Continuing Education located in the Economic and Business Engagement Center at 920 Broadway – Room 302 offers training courses to faculty, staff, students and participants within our community. On-campus employees have opportunities to participate in a variety of courses covering University policy and procedures, management topics, and personal growth and development for free through **Training and Development**. They also offer online trainings for on-campus employees. For a listing of upcoming programs, please visit their website at <http://www.semo.edu/training>



Department/Unit Evaluation of Graduate Assistant

Name of GA: _____

Department/Unit: _____

Date of Evaluation: _____

Type of Evaluation (Check one): First semester Annual

Overall Performance Observation (Narrative of strengths/contributions)

Performance Challenges (Narrative or strength/contributions)

GA signature: _____

Date: _____

Supervisor signature: _____

Date: _____

cc:
Provost
Dean of College
Department Chair

Annual Student Evaluation of Graduate Assistantship

Name of GA: _____

Department/Unit: _____

Date of Evaluation: _____

Please answer the following questions regarding your perceived experience:

1. Has your GA experience in the past academic year been a positive one? (Check one): YES NO
Comments:

2. Have you been satisfied with the level of supervision provided to you by the department/unit where you were assigned?
 - a. (Check one): YES NO Comments:

3. Have you been satisfied with the level of support (e.g., academic, financial) provided to you by the department/unit where you were assigned? (Check one): YES NO Comments:

4. Have you had opportunities for professional growth and development (e.g., travel to conferences, workshops) during your appointment? (Check one): YES NO Comments:

5. Have you been satisfied with the level of support provided by the School of Graduate Studies (e.g., information, resources, support) during your appointment? (Check one): YES NO Comments:

6. Have you used the School of Graduate Studies webpage resources during the past academic year? If YES, were these resources helpful? (Check one): YES NO Comments:

7. Have you developed new skills/competencies during your appointment as a GA that will help you in the future?
 - a. (Check one): YES NO Comments:

8. What concerns/challenges did you encounter related to your experience as a GA?

9. What recommendations would you offer to your department/unit to improve the quality of your GA experience?

10. What recommendations would you offer to the School of Graduate Studies to improve the quality of GA experiences for all students?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this evaluation. Please send the completed questionnaire to: Office of the Provost, MS 3400 (graduateschool@semo.edu)

GA signature: _____ **Date:** _____



GRADUATE ASSISTANT CHECK-OUT PROCEDURE
(To be submitted by Graduate Assistants completing or withdrawing from an assistantship)

Name: _____

Southeast ID: _____

A Graduate Assistant whose contract expires should clear all financial obligations to the University and return all University property. (Please be aware that any obligations must be cleared to prevent the holding of your degree.)

A PHYSICAL SIGNATURE IS REQUIRED FROM EACH LISTED DEPARTMENT.

Signatures

- (a) **STUDENT FINANCIAL SERVICES** – _____
any financial obligations
- (b) **LIBRARY** - return of withdrawals _____
- (c) **TEXTBOOK SERVICES** - (supervisor _____
may verify for non-teaching assistants)
- (d) **DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSON** – (grade- _____
books and all other University owned supplies,
books, and equipment)
- (e) **FACILITIES MANAGEMENT** – return _____
keys if you are leaving (supervisor may sign
if you are staying)
- (f) **ACCOUNTING SERVICES** _____
- (g) **HUMAN RESOURCES** – return ID _____

PLEASE FORWARD THE COMPLETED FORM TO THE HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE
ACADEMIC HALL – ROOM 012

GRADUATE ASSISTANT CHECKS
2018-2019

	CHECK #	CHECKDATE
2018	1	August 31, 2018
	2	September 14, 2018
	3	September 28, 2018
	4	October 12, 2018
	5	October 26, 2018
	6	November 9, 2018
	7	November 21, 2018
	8	December 7, 2018
	9	December 21, 2018

2019	10	January 18, 2019
	11	February 1, 2019
	12	February 15, 2019
	13	March 1, 2019
	14	March 15, 2019
	15	March 29, 2019
	16	April 12, 2019
	17	April 26, 2019
	18	May 10, 2019