



TERMS OF OFFER AND GENERAL CONDITIONS OF A GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP APPOINTMENT**

I. Terms of Offer

Offer Made To: _____ Date of Offer: _____

Total Stipend: _____ Plus Remission of Graduate Assistant Rate Tuition: _____

Starting Date of Assistantship: _____ Ending Date of Assistantship: _____

Department* Name: _____ Estimated Weekly Hours: _____

Level of Assistantship: ¼ Time ½ Time ¾ Time

Contingent Upon Your Enrollment in the Graduate School as a graduate student in the Major Field of: _____ **

Graduate Program Search

Date Upon Which to Report: _____ Report To: _____

Status of Admission: Admitted Admission Recommended to Graduate School

Type of Appointment: Teaching Assistantship Research Assistantship Administrative Support Assistantship

In carrying out their duties, graduate students are expected to maintain the same high standards of ethical and moral behavior expected of faculty members (see Policy AD47, "General Standards of Professional Ethics").

Satisfactory performance of both assistantship duties and academic duties is a condition of the appointment. An assistantship may be terminated if a graduate student fails to meet departmental standards. Procedural guidelines are available in Appendix IV of the Graduate Degree Programs Bulletin available online at <http://bulletins.psu.edu/bulletins/whitebook/appendices.cfm?section=appendix4>.

Additional paper work is required to finalize all new assistantship appointments. Please contact your department for information.

An early acceptance (or refusal) would be appreciated. If you accept an offer for fall semester before April 15, you are free to withdraw your acceptance until that date. An acceptance left in force beyond April 15 is a commitment not to accept an offer from any other university for the period of this offer. If you have received an offer after April 15, you have ten (10) working days from the date of the offer (given above) to accept. One signed copy of this offer should be returned; the other is for your files. Acceptance of this offer will not preclude you from being offered a fellowship or traineeship at a later date. Should you be offered such an appointment at The Pennsylvania State University, you are free to resign this appointment in order to accept the better offer.

*Wherever the word "department" appears, it refers to the unit with fiscal responsibility for the student's assistantship.

II. General Conditions of a Graduate Assistantship Appointment

Period of Appointment

The Pennsylvania State University operates on a semester calendar system. The period of instruction each semester is 15 weeks. Graduate assistants are appointed for 18 weeks of activities each semester. Each semester begins with an orientation period preceding the start of classes and ends with a final examination period. Graduate assistants with teaching duties often are assigned work starting during registration week and will often have work (such as paper correcting and grading) to complete lasting several days past the end of classes each semester. All graduate assistantship appointments are made for one or two semesters or for the Summer Sessions. An academic year appointment (36 weeks) will usually begin on the Monday following the last day of Summer Session final exams and continue until the last day of exams for the spring semester, less the period of time classes are suspended at Thanksgiving and during winter and spring breaks. In cases of later start dates or breaks in activities during the appointment, students are expected to be involved in assistantship activities for a cumulative total of 18 weeks per semester.

The period of appointment being offered to you is set forth above. Preference in renewals normally is given to those students who have shown superior aptitude in the performance of assistantship duties and in academic progress. A graduate assistantship may be terminated prior to completion of the full term of appointment if the student fails to meet departmental standards as described above, following due process procedures as described in Appendix IV of the Graduate Degree Programs Bulletin, "Procedures for Termination of Assistantships Due to Inadequate Performance," available online at <http://bulletins.psu.edu/bulletins/whitebook/appendices.cfm?section=appendix4>.

Eligibility

New appointments are contingent upon the student's admission to the Graduate School as a degree-seeking student enrolled in residence. All domestic graduate assistants must have received from a regionally accredited institution a baccalaureate degree earned under residence and credit conditions substantially equivalent to those required by The Pennsylvania State University and all international graduate assistants must hold the equivalent of an American four-year baccalaureate degree. Certain IUG students in simultaneous degree programs, approved by the Dean of the Graduate School, are also eligible. Nondegree students are not eligible for assistantship appointments.

Objectives of Assistantships

Graduate assistants are students, and graduate assistantships provide pedagogic experiences designed to make students better instructors, researchers, and scholars. Thus, it is a general policy to assign graduate assistants largely scholarly tasks that will provide a useful and meaningful experience in their major field. Assistantship duties may include classroom teaching, research, and other work as assigned by the department.

Will all of the duties assigned to this student be required of every degree candidate in the applicable program as a condition of receiving a degree?

FALL SEMESTER - YES NO SPRING SEMESTER - YES NO

Employment Prohibition

Additional compensation may be paid to a graduate assistant by the University for additional hours of work only with special, advance approval of the administrative head of the academic unit in which the assistantship is held and the chair of the student's academic program, provided that such compensation is not for additional hours of work on the assigned assistantship duties.

Payment

Assistantship stipends are paid monthly. For the Fall semester, graduate assistants will be paid 1/5 of the semester stipend at the end of August (if processed in time), September, October, November, and December. For the Spring semester, graduate assistants will receive 1/5 of the semester stipend at the end of January (if processed in time), February, March, April, and May. Students on assistantship during Summer Session will be paid half of the stipend at the end of June and half at the end July.

Credit Load

Graduate assistants must be enrolled at Penn State as graduate students working toward advanced degrees. Because assistantships are provided as aids to completion of advanced degrees, assistants are expected to enroll for credit loads each semester that fall within the limits indicated in the table below. Upper limits on permissible credit loads are indicated in order to ensure that the student can devote the necessary attention to academic progress while holding an assistantship. These considerations give rise to the table of credit loads below (see exceptions below).

Level of Assistantship	Credits Per Semester		Credits Per Summer Session **	
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
Quarter-Time	9	14	5	7
Half-Time	9	12	4	6
Three-Quarter-Time *	6	8	3	4

* International students may not hold three-quarter time assistantships in accordance with HR26.

** Credits taken during the Maymester and over both six-week summer sessions must total a minimum of 9 (for 1/4- and 1/2-time assistantships) or 6 (for 3/4-time assistantships) and cannot exceed a maximum of 8 (for 3/4-time assistantships), 12 (for 1/2-time assistantships), or 14 (for 1/4-time assistantships).

Exceptions to the specified limits may be made in particular cases with the approval of the student's assistantship supervisor, the program head, and the Dean of the Graduate School. The Graduate School expects that an exception made in one semester will be compensated for by a suitably modified credit load in the subsequent semester, so that, on the average, normal progress is maintained at a rate falling within the limits previously mentioned. Failure to do so may jeopardize the student's academic status.

A graduate assistant may accept concurrent outside employment only with permission from the assistantship department and graduate academic program chair.

Vehicle Registration

A graduate assistant must register his or her vehicle, and is required to comply with student regulations concerning motor vehicles.

Tax Withholdings

The University is required to withhold all applicable taxes from assistantship paychecks. Therefore, students on assistantships will receive a W-2 form at the end of each calendar year summarizing funds received and taxes withheld.

Health Insurance

International graduate assistants are required to have health insurance coverage for themselves and their dependents in the United States. For domestic graduate assistants, University health insurance is optional. The University provides a health insurance benefit as part of the assistantship contract. The University will pay a percentage of the annual premium for the Penn State Student Health Insurance Plan. The remaining percentage will be automatically deducted from the student's assistantship stipend. The University will not supplement, nor will a payroll deduction be made, for insurance policies other than the Penn State Student Insurance Plan.

International graduate assistants who have adequate alternate medical coverage and who do not wish to be enrolled in the Penn State Student Health Insurance Plan must submit a waiver application. In order to be granted a waiver, alternate plans must meet certain standards as established by the University Student Insurance Committee. This Committee will approve or disapprove the waiver application. International graduate assistants who do not apply for a waiver will be automatically enrolled in the Penn State Student Insurance Plan.

(NOTE: Applications for a waiver demonstrating adequate alternate insurance must be submitted on a yearly basis each fall.)

Domestic graduate assistants will automatically be enrolled in the Penn State Student Insurance Plan. Domestic graduate assistants who do not wish to be enrolled in the Penn State Student Insurance Plan must decline the insurance. Dependent health insurance coverage for domestic graduate assistants must be submitted on a yearly basis each fall.

For further information, contact the Student Insurance Office, 814-865-7467.

Important University Policies

University Policy covering Patents and Copyrights (Intellectual Property) must be adhered to during a graduate assistant's appointment. (See Policy IP01; copies available upon request.)

Please refer to University Policy PR06 and the Graduate Degree Programs Bulletin for additional information concerning graduate assistants.

A condition of this appointment is that you accept by _____

Print Name and Title of Official Making Offer

Signature and Date

My acceptance of this offer indicates that I have read and agree to the "Terms of Offer and General Conditions of a Graduate Assistantship Appointment" set forth in this document.

I Accept this offer:

I Decline this offer of a graduate assistantship because:

Signature _____ Date _____

Address until start of assistantship: _____

Revised 1/2017

Signature

Date

** Graduate Assistantship appointments are for graduate students registered for the appropriate number of credits applicable to a graduate degree offered under the Graduate School and commensurate with their level of assistantship and semester of appointment (see table in section 2)