

Graduate Assistantships General Information

Eligibility

1. Only students matriculated and enrolled full-time (typically 12 credit hours or documented full-time equivalency) in a graduate program at RIT may be appointed to a graduate assistantship. Students enrolled in a BS/MS program must be a level 6 to receive a graduate assistantship appointment.
2. Typical assistantships are for one academic year – September through May. A separate appointment may be made for the summer quarter. Occasionally, assistantships may be for one academic quarter only.
3. Departments and other offices making such appointments must complete a detailed description of the duties to be performed to and submit the information with the hiring paperwork. Standard job description templates are available.

Employment Classifications

1. Graduate assistants (GA), graduate grading assistants (GGA) and graduate technical assistants (GTechA) are hourly employees, paid bi-weekly through the University's regular payroll process. Payments are subject to withholding at the time the payment is made; the student will receive a Form W-2 annually.
 - If a student will be performing duties in all three non-exempt job classifications, the student may be hired as a GA on object code 71130. However, indicate all applicable job duties on the job description form.
2. Graduate teaching assistants (GTAs 1 – 3) are appointed to assist a faculty member with the teaching of a class or laboratory. The faculty member remains responsible for the conduct of the class, and for any grades assigned to students for work completed in that class. However, based on their instruction/teaching responsibilities, GTAs meet the “white collar” teaching exemption (classroom instruction is a primary component of their assistantship) and are not subject to FLSA regulations. Therefore, GTAs are exempt employees, paid a salary through regular bi-weekly payroll process.
 - GTAs are expected to prepare for their responsibilities by participating in a workshop or course designed to introduce them to teaching at RIT. Such programs are offered by several colleges and by the Office of Graduate Studies
3. Graduate research assistants (GRAs 1 – 3) are considered “students” (not employees) of the University (i.e., no employee-employer relationship exists). GRAs receive a semi-monthly stipend payment through the accounts payable process based on the level of effort committed to at the time the appointment is made. No taxes are withheld at the time the payment is made (for U.S. Citizens and Permanent Residents); the student will receive a Form 1099 annually.
 - The academic department should advise the GRA of his/her U.S. tax reporting responsibility when the appointment is offered. Information is available on the

Controller's Office web site in the [Payments Made to Graduate Students – Federal and NYS Tax Treatment](#) document.

Effort

1. A 20-hour graduate assistantship appointment is equal to 100% effort (for Federal effort reporting purposes); the maximum number of hours a student may work in a graduate assistantship position is 20 hours a week; typical assistantships are not less than 10 hours per week (refer to the table at the bottom of the page for information about the corresponding tuition remission amounts).

Pay Rates

1. Pay rates in the [Graduate Assistant Job Classifications & Pay Rates](#) document reflect base rates only. Graduate teaching and research assistants in the later years of an appointment may receive merit increases which would result in an annual salary or stipend above the high amount in the range.
2. The quarterly wages/salary/stipend amounts reflected on the [Graduate Assistant Job Classifications & Pay Rates](#) document are based on a 20-hour per week appointment during the 11-week academic quarter (academic year stipend = 20-hour per week appointment for 33 weeks). Prorate the amount paid for <20 hour per week assistantships according to the level of effort specified in the appointment letter.

Tuition Remission

1. Graduate assistants that fall into one of the job classifications described in this document may also receive tuition remission; the amount is determined based on the level of effort required for the specific appointment.
 - a. When a graduate research assistant who is working on a sponsored project receives both tuition remission and a stipend, both the tuition remission and the stipend must be charged to the same sponsored project in the same proportion (i.e., 50 % appointment = ½ the standard tuition remission award; effort of 10 hours per week = ½ the standard stipend amount) – refer to the table below.
 - b. Note: not all graduate assistants receive tuition remission as part of their compensation package. However, when tuition remission is charged to a sponsored project, the student must also receive a stipend.

Level of Effort	Standard Tuition Remission	Stipend
100% (20 hours per week)	50%	100%
75% (15 hours per week)	75% of standard amount	75% of standard amount
50% (10 hours per week)	50% of standard amount	50% of standard amount

Other Information

1. Graduate assistantship appointments are intended to provide financial support to qualified graduate students. Graduate students who do not require or receive an assistantship may be eligible to receive other forms of scholarship support. In addition, these graduate students may be eligible to work in a regular student employment position on campus.
2. The recommended compensation levels and tuition remission limitation referred to in the [Graduate Assistant Employment Policies](#) and the [Tuition Remission Policy](#) does not apply to federal and non-federal programs that specifically support graduate and post-doctoral study and research training such as the NSF *Graduate Research Fellowship Program*, NIH *National Research Service Award*, *Graduate Engineering for Minorities (GEM)*, etc. .