

WAGNER COLLEGE

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Graduate Assistant Handbook

2019- 2020



INTRODUCTION

The Office of Graduate Studies at Wagner College oversees all graduate assistantships (excluding Athletics). The policies and procedures outlined in this handbook have been collaboratively developed by the Provost's Council and the Graduate Council. This handbook provides the most current information about Wagner College graduate assistantships and will be updated annually.

Graduate assistantships are available to students in all graduate programs, with the exception of the Accelerated MBA, Executive MBA, Media Management and the DNP Program (second degree Baccalaureate students are not considered graduate students, and therefore, are ineligible). Students who have previously been graduate assistants are not eligible for graduate assistantship when pursuing a second graduate degree at the college. Graduate assistantships are granted to facilitate the academic progress of selected graduate students by providing institutional support. The graduate assistantship (GA) regulations and procedures outlined in this handbook are designed to promote this academic objective. Therefore, such factors as satisfactory academic standing and progress are considerations for retaining assistantships. Likewise, work assignments should complement or contribute to academic objectives and should not lead to unsatisfactory academic performance or interfere with completion of a degree in a timely fashion.

All questions regarding graduate assistantships should be forwarded to the Dean of Graduate Studies, who will coordinate the program college-wide.

CRITERIA FOR OBTAINING AN ASSISTANTSHIP

Academic Requirements

To be eligible for an assistantship, students must be admitted as a degree-seeking student in a graduate academic program and remitted their deposit. The exceptions to this are students admitted to the Accelerated MBA, EMBA, Media Management and DNP Programs, who are ineligible for graduate assistantships. Students may apply for a graduate assistantship upon admission to a graduate program or may apply, at a later date. Students must pay their deposit. Students applying for assistantships for the first time after having taken graduate courses must have a minimum of a 3.0 graduate GPA based on a minimum of six graduate semester hours. To retain a graduate assistantship, the student must maintain a 3.0 GPA. Failure to do so is grounds for dismissal as graduate assistant. The Office of Graduate Studies will monitor the GPAs of all graduate assistants.

Administrative Requirements

To be eligible for an assistantship, students must be in good account standing with the College. Any student having an open account for tuition or fees will not be awarded an assistantship.

Application Process

Candidates for graduate assistantships must complete a Graduate Assistantship Application (<http://wagner.edu/academics/wp-content/blogs.dir/22/files/2013/01/Grad-Assistantship-App.pdf>). An active file will be kept in the Office of Graduate Studies. Individual department representatives may peruse the file to select candidates for interview. Once a department selects a candidate and notifies the Office of Graduate Studies, the candidate's file will be removed from the candidate pool. After a review of the

candidate's application and recommendation by the department, a contract will be issued to the candidate.

WHAT GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS INCLUDE

Tuition Credits

Graduate Assistants are awarded 80% tuition remission during the semester or year that they hold an appointment. The tuition remission covers a maximum of 9 graduate credits as listed in your GA contract. The assistant will be required to pay any additional tuition charges and/or fees assessed with any special courses they take. Tuition remission that was not used in the semester allotted cannot be used at a later date. Room and board is not included in the GA package. Graduate Assistants working 20 hours a week receive 80% tuition remission for no more than 9 credits a semester. The expectation is that students shall register for at least 9 credits or the equivalent.

Tuition remission is considered part of the financial aid package and may impact upon the other types of aid you may have otherwise been eligible for. Tuition remission is exempt from taxation, at the present time, because they are provided in recognition of the Graduate Assistant's academic accomplishments.

LOCATING, APPLYING FOR, AND MAINTAINING ASSISTANTSHIPS

The primary source of contact for Assistantships is the Office of Graduate Studies. The Office of Graduate Studies will post graduate assistantships available throughout the academic year. Positions can be found at wagner.edu/academics/graduate/ga/.

Graduate Assistant Offer

Acceptance of an offer of assistantship, for the next academic year, by a prospective or enrolled graduate student completes an agreement that both the student and the college expects to honor. In that context, the conditions affecting such offers and their acceptance must be defined carefully and understood by all parties.

The College will make the assistantship offer in writing. The potential Graduate Assistant should accept or decline the offer by signing the offer and returning it to the Office of Graduate Studies within 10 days of receipt.

Graduate Assistant Appointments

Unless otherwise provided for, Wagner College graduate assistant contracts cover the length of the academic year (fall and spring) to reduce possible interruption in financial aid for Graduate Assistants. The contract may be extended to May 31 or begin August 1 of that year if the student will be employed by the department for the remainder of the month of August or May; without obligating the student to enroll in the summer session preceding, or the summer session following the contract year.

NOTE: Once a graduate assistant has been appointed, the department/area may request an extension of the graduate assistantship provided that all previous conditions for maintaining the position have been fulfilled. A memorandum or email requesting this extension is required. Note that no GA may hold her/his position more than three years (6 semesters excluding summer sessions).

Residence Life Assistantships generally require students to be on the same schedule as the Residence Life Department. This means being on campus before the start of classes for orientation, training, and remaining on duty through the final examination period. Responsibilities for some assistantships could include being available during academic program break periods when college is open. Graduate assistants are not expected to provide services or make up time because of college closures due to inclement weather or other emergencies. Explicit agreements between the department and the student about hours, time off, absences, etc., need to be indicated in the offer letter, particularly if there are expectations for providing services when classes are not in session.

Generally, all Graduate Assistants are required to report to their assignments seven days prior to the first day of classes each semester, unless otherwise specified. Their last day of employment is the last day of classes during the fall, spring, and summer semesters, unless otherwise specified. All Graduate Assistants who are not graduating are also required to work on the day of commencement.

Once an offer is made and the student has accepted, the student must complete an I-9 (U.S. Department of Justice Employment Eligibility Verification), an Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate, along with any other necessary payroll information (see Office of Human Resources).

Graduate assistants are not to begin work until they have returned a signed contract to the Office of Graduate Studies and employment eligibility has been verified by the Office of Human Resources.

Graduate Assistant Assignments

Work assignments should be such that the student's formal degree work is enhanced, and takes place in a setting related to the student's discipline. Master's degree students, if assigned to instructional responsibilities, must be supervised by regular faculty members. Graduate assistantships will be offered in programs not in the candidate's major field if no positions are available.

If graduate assistants have concerns regarding their hours or duties, the normal procedure is to discuss the matter with their supervisor, graduate coordinator, or department chair/unit administrator. If, for substantive reasons it seems appropriate, students may then contact the Office of Graduate Studies. Note that all college employees should avail themselves of the Office of Human Resources for issues related to harassment, discrimination, etc.

Mandatory Proctoring

Each graduate assistant will be assigned two hours during the course of the academic year to proctor examinations administered at the Center for Academic and Career Engagement (CACE). The assignments will take place during the graduate assistant's assigned work hours, and will be assigned by CACE in conjunction with the graduate assistant and their supervisor.

Maintaining the Assistantship

In order to maintain an assistantship, students need to:

- (a) Meet the performance criteria expected by the department providing the assistantship
- (b) Enroll for the required number of credit hours for spring and fall semesters
- (c) Maintain an overall minimum GPA of 3.0
- (d) Show satisfactory progress towards a degree completion

RESPONSIBILITIES OF APPOINTING DEPARTMENT

Departments are to provide appropriate training, supervision, working conditions, and the resources for Graduate Assistants to perform the duties assigned. Performance assessment procedures must be included as part of the assistantship process and should be shared by the supervisor with the student and the Office of Graduate Studies. See Appendix B for the Graduate Assistant Evaluation Form. A department/area may substitute its own evaluation process/form, as long as the form is sent to the Office of Graduate Studies as requested.

TERMINATION/RESIGNATION

The Department, the Office of Graduate Studies or the graduate assistant may end the assistantship contract. If a student decides to resign from their Graduate Assistantship, they must notify, in writing, their immediate supervisor and the Office of Graduate Studies.

The department or the Office of Graduate Studies may terminate the assistantship if criteria for satisfactory performance as a graduate assistant or as a graduate student are not met. Not meeting the criteria below will result in termination of the assistantship. All terminations will occur in consultation with the specific department/area.

The criteria are

1. Maintaining a 3.0 graduate GPA for each semester while on an assistantship.
2. Maintaining an overall graduate GPA of 3.0 while on an assistantship.
3. Enrollment in up to 9 credit hours of course work for each semester while on a full-time assistantship; or up to 4 ½ credit hours for part-time assistantships in the spring and fall semester. (Note that students may not carry over unused credits in a given semester to another semester and that any courses taken beyond the 9 credits are the financial responsibility of the student. Also, note that a graduate

assistantship is given for up to one year at a time. Students wishing to continue their assistantships must request so in writing to their department/area supervisor. The supervisor will then notify the Office of Graduate Studies in writing (memorandum or email) to effect this request for an extension).

4. Maintaining satisfactory progress towards degree completion in a timely fashion: e.g., master's students on assistantship must complete a degree within a two-to-three year period.

5. Maintaining appropriate student loan information (e.g., a problem will occur if there is a default of a student loan that has not been cleared within 6 months of having signed an assistantship contract).

6. Satisfactory on the job performance as documented in writing by the department/area supervisor.

7. The Graduate Assistant agrees to conduct [himself *or* herself] at all times with due regard to public conventions and morals. Employee agrees not to do or commit any act that will reasonably tend to degrade [him *or* her] or bring him or herself or Wagner College into public hatred, contempt, or ridicule, or tend to shock or offend the Wagner College community, or to prejudice Employer or the Higher Education industry in general.

Should resignation or termination occur before the end of the semester tuition remission, stipends and any charges will be prorated according to the number of weeks completed.

OTHER EMPLOYMENT

Graduate assistants working 20 hours/week are not allowed to take other assistantships or employment on campus during the period of their assistantship. The college does not monitor off-campus employment of graduate assistants.

FEEES

Graduate assistants are responsible for all student fees owed to the college.

HOUSING CONSIDERATIONS

Due to financial constraints and equity issues, under no circumstances will graduate assistants be granted Room and Board as part of the Graduate Assistantship package.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Wagner College is committed to non-discrimination and equal opportunity in programs, activities, and employment for students and employees in a manner that is consistent with applicable Federal, State and Local Laws.

TYPES OF ASSISTANTSHIPS

Graduate Assistants may serve in one of the following categories: (a) Instructional, (b) academic services, (c) student services, (d) institutional support, and (e) auxiliary services.

INSTRUCTIONAL GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

The following departments (areas) are considered instructional: Early Childhood Center, Biology, Business, Education, and Nursing.

Instructional Graduate Assistants may be assigned responsibility for general office tasks, for assisting a faculty member with teaching-related tasks such as grading papers, meeting with students, preparing class materials, assisting during class, etc., or responsible for laboratory assignments or supervision accompanying faculty taught classes. Instructional GAs may also be assigned to an individual faculty member or program to assist with research. The nature of this assistance varies by discipline and can involve a variety of activities, such as library work, proposal writing, data gathering, and data analysis. Most instructional graduate assistants are supported through academic departments that receive funds allocated for those purposes through the college's budget process. Others may be funded through externally obtained grants and contracts.

ACADEMIC SERVICES GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

The following departments (areas) are considered academic services: Experiential Learning, Library, and Information Technology.

The responsibilities for Academic Services GAs are varied and can be located in many campus-wide administrative offices. They include such functions as administrative/professional duties, computer support, program planning, etc.

STUDENT SERVICES GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

The following departments (areas) are considered student services: Center for Academic and Career Engagement, Health Services, Financial Aid, Registrar, Student Government, Wagnerian, and Co-Curricular Programs.

The responsibilities for Student Services GAs are varied and can be located in many campus-wide administrative offices. They include such functions as administrative/professional duties, computer support, program planning, etc.

AUXILIARY SERVICES GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

The following departments (areas) are considered auxiliary services: Residential Life

Residence Life Assistantships are available with the Residence Life Department, in addition to usual assistantship support; they may also involve assistance with housing. These positions may supervise undergraduate Resident Assistants (RAs).

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

The following departments (areas) are considered institutional support: Business Office, Copy Center, and Postal Center. The responsibilities for Institutional GAs are varied and can be located in many campus-wide administrative offices. They include such functions as administrative/professional duties, computer support, program planning, etc.

NOTE: Departments or areas listed under each category above may be changed. Departments or areas may be deleted or added depending on demonstrated need for graduate assistants.

