

General Conditions of Graduate Student Appointments U.S. Citizenship Required

Graduate Assistantship Eligibility:

Graduate assistants must be enrolled at Penn State as graduate students working towards advanced degrees. Assistants are expected to enroll for credit loads each semester based on the Graduate School's guidelines. Graduate assistant offers are made based on funding opportunities. Typically, students will be offered one-half time appointments (20 hours per week) to work on research projects under the supervision of an ARL faculty member or engineer.

Graduate Wage Payroll Eligibility:

When graduate students are not registered for credits or have completed all of their course requirements, they may be offered wage payroll appointments.

Typically, students on wage payroll work 20 hours per week on research projects under the supervision of an ARL faculty member or engineer. The hourly rate is based on the student's scholarly achievements and is equivalent to the appropriate graduate assistantship grade level. However, unlike the graduate assistantship, tuition and other associated fees are not paid; nor is medical coverage provided, except as noted below under "Health Insurance."

Responsibilities:

Before ARL-OHR can make an initial offer of employment to students, supervisors must complete the "Graduate Assistant or Graduate Student Wage Payroll Appointment" form, and forward it through the appropriate channels for approval. (The form is available as a PDF on the ARL-OHR intranet site.)

The graduate students, supervisors, and ARL departments must notify ARL-OHR of any other assistantship or wage payroll support at the time an offer is made. Under normal circumstances, a student cannot hold both an assistantship and have wage payroll support. (See "Employment Prohibition" below.)

Each semester students and their supervisors complete a "Request for Continuation of Support" form indicating the type of financial support requested, i.e., assistantship or wage payroll. (The form is available as a PDF on the ARL-OHR intranet site.)

Graduate students, supervisors, and ARL departments are responsible for informing ARL-OHR of changes in a graduate student's status. This includes termination, eligibility for grade level change, appointment time change (1/2 to 3/4 time), supervisor change, department change, etc.

Students are responsible for completing the "Graduate Assistant Academic Status Report" to verify eligibility for a change in the grade-level assignment in accordance with ARL's graduate assistant schedule. (The form is available as a PDF on the ARL-OHR intranet site.) Changes in

the student's status after the semester has started will be made the beginning of the following semester.

Grade Level Assignments:

Grade 14 – M.S. & Ph.D. candidates

Grade 15 – Ph.D. candidates (passed candidacy)

Grade 16 – Ph.D. candidates (passed comprehensives)

Length of Employment:

Graduate Assistantship offers can be for the academic year or for either one or two semesters at a time based on the University's calendar. Students are expected to be involved in assistantship activities for a cumulative total of 18 weeks of activities per semester, and 12 weeks during summer session.

A graduate assistantship may be terminated prior to completion of the full term of appointment if the student fails to meet departmental standards of performance.

Students may be eligible for wage payroll at times outside of their assistantship appointment. (See "Graduate Assistant Information regarding Stipend and Wage Rates, and Appointment Dates" on the ARL-OHR intranet site.)

Payment:

The University mandates that all paychecks be directly deposited into either a checking account or savings account. Payroll check stubs are mailed to the student's office address via interoffice mail.

Therefore on the day the students report to ARL-OHR to fill out the employment paperwork, they must also complete the following information and provide appropriate documentation:

1. Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate - Form W-4.
2. Employment Eligibility Verification (INS Form I-9) – acceptable documentation includes Passport OR a drivers license AND social security card.
3. University Intellectual Property Agreement.
4. Salary Deposit Request –voided check or savings account number required + routing transit number.
5. Office Address and Telephone Information form.

Graduate Assistantship stipends are paid monthly. For the fall semester, assistants are paid 1/5 of the semester stipend each month beginning in August and ending in December. For spring semester, assistants are paid 1/5 of the semester stipend beginning in January and ending in May. Students on assistantships during summer session are paid 1/2 of the summer stipend at the end of June and July. Graduate assistants receiving a stipend who miss the first regular monthly

payroll, will receive an adjusted paycheck the following month. Cash advances cannot be issued.

Students supported on wage payroll are paid biweekly according to the University's pay schedule. Wage payroll students who miss the bi-weekly payroll date, will have their hours added to their next paycheck.

Employment Prohibition:

Students cannot hold simultaneous employment with other departments across campus, except as follows:

ONLY with special advance approval of the ARL Director, academic department head, and the chair of the student's graduate academic program is additional compensation paid to a graduate assistant for additional hours of work. However, such compensation is NOT for additional hours of work on the assigned assistantship.

Credit Loads:

The following provides the credit load limitations that are prescribed by the Graduate School. See the "Terms of Offer of a Graduate Assistantship" form for further information.

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	5

Note: Courses taken for audit do not count as part of the student's registered credit load.

Health Insurance:

Graduate assistants must have health insurance coverage that meets certain standards as established by the University Student Insurance Committee. The University covers 80 percent of the individual annual premium. The students are responsible for the remaining 20 percent, which is deducted in three equal payments from their monthly stipend checks in September, February, and April. However, if a graduate assistant has adequate alternative health insurance and does not wish to enroll in Penn State's Student Health Insurance Plan, he or she must submit a waiver application. For further information, students should contact the **Student Health Insurance at 302 Student Health Center (814-865-7467)**.

Graduate assistants who have had University health insurance during the academic year and switch to wage payroll for the summer continue their coverage at no additional cost until the beginning of the fall semester.

Parking:

Vehicle registration and payment of permit fees are handled through the University's Parking Office (Eisenhower Parking Deck). Vehicles must be registered by the first day of class each semester or by the first business day following arrival on campus. For further information, contact the Parking Office at (814)865-1436 via email parking@psu.edu or refer to the following website: <http://www.transportation.psu.edu/>

Terminating Students:

When students terminate employment, they must provide an updated W-4 form to ARL-OHR. In addition, to receive their last paycheck stub, students must provide a forwarding address to their ARL department staff assistant and the ARL mailroom. Security I.D. tags must be returned to the Security Office, and any outstanding books returned to the ARL Library. Students with a security clearance must obtain an ARL Termination Check-Out form from ARL-OHR and complete the form prior to their last day of employment.

For additional information, please contact ARL-OHR (814)865-6373.