EDUCATIONAL POLICY STUDIES

Department Graduate Assistantships

Approved by Department Council

May 15, 2013

A graduate assistantship position is viewed as an apprenticeship for further academic or professional careers. In view of this, graduate assistant functions shall not include routine commonly associated with secretarial, clerical, technical, or administrative work not directly related to the graduate assistant’s teaching or research duties (Academically Employed Graduate Students (AEGS) Collective Agreement, Section s(j)).

Graduate assistantships involve two types of duties: teaching and research.

Graduate teaching assistantships (GTA) can fall into three categories: (i) Principal Instructors; (ii) Teaching Assistants enrolled in doctoral programs but who are not Principal Instructors; and (iii) Teaching Assistants who are enrolled in master’s programs but who are not Principal Instructors. (AEGS Collective Agreement, Section 23(a)).

Principal Instructors are funded for 12 hours per week (192 hrs in a Term) and are fully responsible for a course, including lecturing, course and lecture planning, preparing and grading assignments and examinations, etc. (AEGS Collective Agreement, Section (l)). Principal Instructors are funded over 16 weeks (one Term) for 12 hours per week.

Teaching Assistants perform teaching-related duties, which can include preparing, and conducting lectures, laboratories, and seminars as well as grading assignments, reports, and examinations and performing other related duties. (AEGS Collective Agreement, Section 2(q)). Teaching Assistants are funded over a 16 weeks period (one Term) with the number of hours per week determined by the assignment.

Normally, graduate research assistantships (GRA), are for 9 hours per week (144 hours per term) and are designated as TAP B (as per the AEGS Collective Agreement, Section 2(r). A graduate student who is appointed as a research assistant “shall be asked to perform only research and related duties: these consist of work under the direction of a department or a staff member on a research project, the results of which may be used in the GA’s thesis” (AEGS Collective Agreement, Section 2(l)). The process for selection of graduate assistants shall follow fair and equitable employment processes; therefore all applications shall be considered.

Graduate assistantships are awarded during the Fall (Sept-Dec) or Winter (Jan-Apr) Terms.

1 AEGS Collective agreement available: http://hrs.ualberta.ca/MyEmployment/~mediahrs/MyEmployment/Agreements/2014-2016_AEGS_Agreement.pdf
Normally the Department will provide the following levels of support, budget permitting:

- a. Up to a total of 384 hours for Master students.
- b. Up to a total of 792 hours for Doctoral students.

Example of Possibilities for a Master Student:

Student A: PI – receives 12 hrs/wk (192 hrs) in Fall and 12 hrs/wk (192 hrs) in Winter
Total: 384 hours

Student B: TA – receives 6 hrs/wk (96 hrs) in Fall and 6 hrs/wk (96 hrs) in Winter
Total: 192 hrs
Eligible for an additional 192 hrs

Student C: GRA – receives 9 hrs/wk (144 hrs) in Fall and 9 hrs/wk (144 hrs) in Winter
Total: 288 hours
Eligible for an additional 96 hrs

Funded terms need not be consecutive.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA IN AWARDING GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

1. The Collective Agreement requires that to accept an offer of an assistantship over 6 hours per week, students must be registered full-time. Part-time students may hold assistantships of 6 hours or fewer. In all cases, priority in funding is given to full-time students.

2. New and continuing students must present a minimum GPA of 3.0.

3. Continuing students must present evidence of maintaining satisfactory progress in their graduate programs through a history of course completion and progress through the program.

4. In University administered Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI) course evaluations, instructor ratings for each of the five items must be 3.0 or above.

5. Satisfactory performance rating from research assistantship supervisor.

For Graduate Teaching Assistantships, students must present satisfactory teaching experience either through documentation of prior teaching (place of employment, period of appointment, subject and level, instructional ratings from students, colleagues, and/or employers), or of knowledge of the subject matter and participation in the Teaching Enhancement Series, Centre for Teaching and Learning.

For Graduate Research Assistantships, students must outline background experience in research through documentation of specific research skills, methodological orientation, and areas of research interest. Applicants must relate how their skills and experiences best qualify them for the research position to which they are applying.

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