



Title:	Employment of Graduate Assistants	Type:	Key Institutional
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Responsible Office: Center for Career and Life Planning, Vice President for Student Affairs		Reviews: P&BC Policy Subcomm, 1-5-2016; P&BC, 3-16-2016; President's Cabinet, 4-4-2016 President's Approval, 4-4-2016	
Next Review: 2021-2022		Revision No:	

## I. Purpose

This policy is intended to guide the appointment, classification, and compensation of graduate assistants.

## II. Definitions

Graduate Assistantships are a form of student employment designed to enrich the learning experience of graduate students by providing experiential learning opportunities in teaching, research, programming, administration, and service involving collaboration with faculty, staff, undergraduate students, and external constituencies. Graduate assistantships must have a bona-fide pedagogical, research, or co-curricular experiential learning purpose aligned to the educational mission of Rollins College and the student's educational objectives.

### **Types of Graduate Assistants**

- **Research:** a graduate student enrolled in a graduate program who is assigned to conduct research that is for the benefit of the student's own learning and research and for the benefit of the College, faculty or academic staff, supervisor.
- **Teaching:** a graduate student enrolled in a graduate program who is regularly assigned teaching and/or related responsibilities (other than manual or clerical responsibilities) under the supervision of a faculty member.
- **Pre-Professional:** a graduate student enrolled in a graduate program who is assigned to conduct specific programs, managing administrative responsibilities, performing service and/or conducting assessments, within an office that relates to the student's academic or professional goals.

## III. Procedures

- Compensation.** Graduate assistants will receive compensation for their services at a rate not less than the Federal and state minimum wage. The specific amount of compensation will be determined by the employing unit, taking into account available budget resources, the scope and level of responsibilities, and compensation equity within the unit. Graduate Assistants may also receive a graduate tuition stipend, waiver, or reduction, if funded by the employing department.
- Taxation.** Cash compensation provided to graduate assistants will be subject to Federal income tax withholding and reporting in accordance with applicable Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rules. Graduate tuition benefits provided via waiver or reduction in excess of IRS Section 127 limit (\$5,250 per calendar year) will be taxable to the graduate assistant, except for those employed in bona-fide research or teaching capacities, in which case graduate tuition benefits are exempt from taxes under IRS Section 117(d)(5); the Human Resources department will make the determination of eligibility of exemptions under this provision.
- Work Hours.** Rollins-enrolled Graduate Assistants may work up to 20 hours per week during the academic year. Exceptions to this limit must be approved by the Center for Career and Life Planning. Non-Rollins-

enrolled graduate assistants must be kept under 1,000 work hours per year in accordance with College benefit plan rules.

- d. **Classification of New Graduate Assistant Positions.** Departments intending to create new graduate assistant positions must submit the following information to the Director of Experiential Learning within the Center for Career and Life Planning (unless the employing unit is a part of the Crummer Graduate School of Business, in which case this information should be sent to the Associate Dean of Crummer):
- job description;
  - justification for graduate assistant designation (research, teaching, or programmatic), including intended learning outcomes;
  - pay type and rate;
  - appointment length;
  - approximate hours/week;
  - required/preferred qualifications; and
  - position number or department budget number to cover wages.

New graduate assistant positions will be classified as one of the three graduate assistant types (teaching, research, or pre-professional). Graduate student positions not meeting the criteria for bona-fide graduate assistantships should be classified under regular student employment guidelines.

- e. **Appointment, Reappointment, Duration of Appointment.** Most graduate assistants are appointed either for a regular academic year (9 months) or for a calendar year (12 months). Some appointments may be for a shorter period. The academic-year appointment begins in mid-August and ends in May. Students may be reappointed one or more times at the discretion of the department for which they serve. Each department is responsible for determining and communicating its own specific criteria, within the limits of College policy, for assessing student qualification for appointment and reappointment to a graduate assistantship. In general, reappointment is dependent upon satisfactory performance and normal progress toward a graduate degree. As with all student positions, appointment and reappointment are contingent upon the availability of funds.
- f. **Self-Assessments and Evaluations.** All graduate assistants will complete self-assessments at the beginning of their employment period and at the end of each academic year. Supervisors will complete a learning evaluation at the end of each academic year (or employment period), and will meet with the graduate student to discuss the student's strengths, opportunities for improvement, and learning goals in the position.

#### **IV. Related Policies or Applicable Publications**

*None applicable.*

#### **V. Appendices/Supplemental Materials**

*Not applicable.*

#### **VI. Rationale for Revision**

*Not applicable.*