



Graduate School

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO
COLORADO SPRINGS

Graduate Student Employee Appointment Manual

Academic Year 2025-2026



GRADUATE STUDENT APPOINTMENT MANUAL 2025-2026

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DEFINITIONS

Graduate Student Assistantships

Assistantships provide a supervised opportunity for graduate students to gain experience in teaching, research, or other valuable professional experiences, while receiving wages.

Graduate assistants are first and foremost students. Thus, the goal of all assistantships is to support the student assistant in the successful completion of their graduate degree.

Graduate students serving in assistantships are typically paid on term-based contracts according to department/unit salary ranges. Hiring units are responsible for having approved salary ranges for assistantships as part of their departmental compensation plans on file with student employment prior to hiring graduate assistantships. Salary ranges should address factors such as the type of work, student experience, and student level. Ranges must be the same regardless of funding type (i.e., university funded, grant funded, etc.)

When funding is available, we encourage the hiring unit to provide tuition support through tuition remission.

Graduate students who are on leave are not eligible for graduate assistantships.

Tuition Remission

Tuition remission, when eligible under I.R.C. § 117(d)(5)[4]- Qualified Tuition Reduction, is a benefit where tuition or a portion thereof is paid by the employer for graduate level courses offered to employees of an educational institution only if the recipient of the waiver is a graduate student engaged in teaching or research activities for the institution.

UCCS allows tuition remission benefits to be offered to graduate level students in eligible 1500 series positions. However, Graduate Readers, Pre-Doc Trainee (fellowship) appointments, and Undergraduate assistants are not eligible for tuition remission. For further details please refer to the [UCCS Student Employment website](#).

Job Codes for Graduate Student Assistants

1502 Graduate Assistant (GA): Graduate students who have assignments within a department but are not directly involved in instruction or research.

1503 Graduate Part-Time Instructor (GPTI): Graduate students who have a master's degree or equivalent and have demonstrated competence in classroom teaching. GPTIs generally are given full responsibility for an undergraduate class and designated the instructor of record. The activities may include preparing the course syllabus,

developing or modifying curriculum, course instruction, holding office hours, awarding of grades, etc. The state of Colorado pledge must be signed by all active GPTIs and kept in their home department.

1505 Research Assistant (RA): Graduate students assisting with and conducting research, analyzing data, writing up results of research, presenting findings at conferences, etc., but are not involved directly in course instruction.

1506 Teaching Assistant (TA): Graduate students engaged in classroom or lab instruction and supervision. Normal assignment is to assist faculty members in instructional tasks. Each TA must be under the guidance of a particular professor(s) designated by the department chair or their delegate. TAs are not placed in overall responsibility of courses.

Other Job Codes Used for Graduate Student Employment

3204 Pre Doc-Trainee (Fellowship): Graduate students on training grants or fellowships – no service to the university is expected. Payment allows for student to continue their education. Because this is not an employee of the university taxes are not withheld, nor does the student receive any tax documentation. It is the responsibility of the student to check with the IRS for guidance on how to report fellowship income.

3207 Participant Stipend: This title is used for support payments made to individuals who participate in specific training activities. Examples may include the following: participant costs at conferences, symposia, workshops, or other specific training activities. This also includes participants in sponsored projects, who are not employees, but are entitled to receive stipends for their participation in the sponsored project protocol. Generally, these stipends are in accordance with the National Science Foundation (NSF) Grants Policy Manual definition of Participant Stipends. No service to the university is expected. Paid as a stipend.

4101-4106 Student Assistant: Student employees who are paid hourly for work performed.

GRADUATE SCHOOL GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE STUDENT ASSISTANTSHIP APPOINTMENTS

Eligibility

- Student must be currently enrolled full-time as regular, degree-seeking graduate student at UCCS.
- Graduate students admitted with provisional status to a program or department are not eligible to hold an appointment until they are no longer considered provisional.
- At the discretion of their supervisor and/or home department, graduate students on academic probation, as defined in the [Graduate School Policies &](#)

[Procedures](#), may lose their eligibility to hold a graduate assistantship. Graduate School permission is not required.

- Students in an accelerated master's pathway (AMP) are not eligible to hold a graduate student appointment until they have graduate student status.
- If this work involves access to technology subject to U.S. export control laws (including, but not limited to, certain Department of Defense work), employment eligibility may require U.S. government authorization for foreign nationals. This is a federal requirement. For assistance, contact exportco@uccs.edu.
- An international student with visa status J1 or F1 must have appropriate authorization for any work and not be employed for more than 20 hours per week while classes are in session. Refer to [Student Employment Handbook](#) for further details.
- Graduate student assistants are not eligible for paid vacation leave.
- Graduate student assistants are eligible for paid sick leave under the Colorado Healthy Families and Workplaces Act and may be eligible for CU's Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program (FAMLI):
 - [Paid Sick Leave information](#)
 - [FAMLI Leave information](#)
- Graduate student assistants must demonstrate adequate progress every semester toward their degree in accordance with their program or department graduate student handbook.
- Graduate student assistants must fulfill the requirements of the position and behave in a professional manner in accordance with their program or department graduate student handbook as well as the [UCCS Student Employment Handbook](#).
- Graduate students with concerns regarding their assistantship position should contact their program graduate director or department chair. If they still have concerns, they may contact their college dean. If concerns are not resolved within the department and college, students may contact the Graduate School. Should the student need further support, they should reach out for guidance, mediation, or advisement, from the Office of Student Employment at any point in the process.

Appointment Procedures

To hire a graduate student assistant, follow [guidelines from the Student Employment Office](#).

Letters of appointment are required for all graduate student assistantships. These letters must indicate salary, period of appointment (including start and end dates), maintenance of academic progress, and all position requirements (see Student Position Offer form).

Graduate students may work a maximum of 25 hours per week (or maximum of 50 hours per bi-weekly payroll period with no single week exceeding 40 hours) with all work

hours for all positions combined. However, international graduate students are limited to 20 hours per week while classes are in session during the academic year.

- International students in the United States with a Student Visa (e.g. F1 Visa), may work on-campus as a non-work study for a maximum of 20 hours per week while classes are in session. Only during Spring break and Winter break, international students are allowed to work 25 hours per week. Over the Summer break, international students may work up to 40 hours per week (work is on-campus as a nonwork study employee).

Incoming graduate students may be employed during the summer prior to their first semester. However, eligibility is dependent on verified enrollment for the fall term immediately following. Interested supervisors can submit an Exception Request to Student Employment for consideration by completing the [Student Employee Exception Request Form](#).

All graduate student assistants must be paid at a standard rate according to department/unit salary ranges. Hiring units are responsible for having approved salary ranges for assistantships as part of their departmental compensation plans on file with student employment prior to hiring graduate assistantships. Salary ranges should address factors such as the type of work, student experience, and student level. Ranges must be the same regardless of funding type (i.e., university funded, grant funded, etc.)

TA & GPTI Appointments

In making teaching assignments, programs should consider multiple factors such as course difficulty, necessary class preparation time, in-class hours, and office hours. The hourly appointment must reflect the number of hours the graduate student is expected to work.

The department is responsible for providing teaching appointees with support and facilities needed to satisfactorily perform their duties. This may include office space, access to telephones, instructional mentoring, teaching resources, etc.

The laws of the state of Colorado require that people employed to teach in any state university who are citizens of the United States affirm in writing that they will support the constitutions of the United States and of Colorado, and that they will faithfully execute the duties of their employment. The state of Colorado pledge must be signed by all active GPTIs and kept in their home department.

Graduate students serving as Teaching Assistants and/or Graduate Part Time Instructors are expected to:

- treat students with understanding, dignity, and respect;
- maintain professional classroom climate that fosters inquiry, learning, and inclusivity;

- be able to justify all curricular materials introduced in the classroom as relevant to the content and objectives of the course;
- prepare adequately for classes;
- meet classes as scheduled, although the students' supervisor or department chair may approve occasional exceptions;
- complete grading tasks in a timely and professional manner while demonstrating fairness and consistency;
- act with professionalism and integrity in relationships with students, faculty, and staff; and
- comply with their program or department graduate student handbook as well as the [UCCS Student Employment Handbook](#) and the [UCCS Student Code of Conduct](#).

Examples of unacceptable conduct include:

- presentation of significant amounts of material unrelated to the course curriculum;
- evaluation of student work by criteria not directly reflective of the student's performance as measured by standards applied uniformly to all students in the course (except as may be necessary to reasonably accommodate students with disabilities);
- failure to avoid an actual or perceived conflict of interest, or failure to disclose the conflict and to thereafter comply with any university-approved management plan designed to remove or mitigate the conflict;
- failure to evaluate and report their assessment of students' work in a timely manner so that students are able to correct and learn;
- failure to comply with university or college requirements regarding deadlines, scheduling of examinations, reporting grades, and evaluation of students;
- discrimination, harassment, or related retaliation in violation of [university policy](#);
- sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, or stalking in violation of [university policy](#);
- workplace bullying in violation of [university policy](#); and
- intimidation of students or engaging in other conduct disrespecting the human dignity of students.

RA/GA Appointments

The hourly appointment of RA/GAs must reflect the number of hours the graduate student is expected to work.

A department may require a student to work during semester breaks. However, the department must notify the student as part of the terms of appointment in their appointment letter in order to make this a requirement, as expectations may vary by department.

The department is responsible for providing RA/GAs with support and facilities needed to satisfactorily perform their duties. This may include workspace, research mentoring, etc.

Graduate students serving as RA/GAs are expected to:

- comply with professional and ethical standards that govern proposing, carrying out, and reporting results from research, acknowledging that research, scholarship and creative work may take many forms so long as it is presented in such a way that it adheres with the standards of the academic discipline; and
- comply with their program or department graduate student handbook as well as the [UCCS Student Employment Handbook](#) and the [UCCS Student Code of Conduct](#).

Examples of unacceptable conduct include:

- research misconduct, including but not limited to plagiarism, falsification, or fabrication of data;
- failure to comply with established standards in one's academic discipline related to authorship on publication and creative work;
- failure to comply with federal requirements and university requirements related to the protection of researchers, human subjects, and the public, and for ensuring the welfare of laboratory animals;
- failure to comply with applicable federal regulations and university requirements regarding the confidentiality and security of restricted research;
- other serious deviations from accepted practices in proposing, carrying out, reviewing, or reporting results from research;
- discrimination, harassment, or related retaliation in violation of [university policy](#);
- sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, or stalking in violation of [university policy](#); and
- workplace bullying in violation of [university policy](#).

Hourly Graduate Student Assistantship Appointments

Graduate student assistants can be hired in positions that are hourly appointments. Information on how to hire hourly student employees can be found [here](#).

Exceptions

Exceptions to some of the regulations governing graduate student appointments may be warranted in special cases. For example, amount of work hours, full-time status issues, provisional status issues, alternative pay (i.e., not according to standard ranges), etc., may be considered reasonable exceptions. To request an exception, departments or hiring units should submit an Exception Request to Student Employment for consideration by completing the [Student Employee Exception Request Form](#). Student Employment will review each request and will collaborate as needed with the Graduate School or hiring unit to reach a determination.

Conflict Resolution

Whenever possible, graduate students and faculty in graduate programs should seek informal resolution of appointment conflicts. If a student has concerns about appointment duties, time commitment, compensation, etc., these should first be addressed to the employment supervisor. If the graduate student is not satisfied with the outcome, they should speak to the graduate program director. If still unsatisfied, the graduate student should contact the department chair. If a resolution is not found within the department, the graduate student should contact college-level leadership (i.e., Dean or Associate Dean of their college). If the issue is not resolved through communication within the department or with college-level leadership, the graduate student may contact the Graduate School or Student Employment to discuss further options.

The student employee grievance process is detailed in the [Student Employment Handbook](#). Graduate student assistants are asked to follow this guidance and reach out to Student Employment after following the outlined process above. A graduate student assistant and/or the Graduate School can reach out to the Office of Student Employment as needed to advise/support this process.

Guidance on Use of Fellowship or Trainee Job Codes

These positions allow for a student to be paid via a stipend. Use job code 3204 (pre-doctoral trainee) for graduate student fellowships.

These payments are to aid students in pursuit of studies or research. There is no expectation of past, present, or future services (job duties) in return for the financial support. Payroll stipends are not subject to withholdings (i.e., FICA and Medicare taxes), and it is the graduate student's responsibility to understand the tax implications of the payroll stipend. The university is acting as an educational or training advisor (not a personnel supervisor) providing guidance or educational oversight to an individual performing an activity. Thus, the University acts as a resource to the graduate student and the graduate student retains the right to decide how, where, and when to perform the activity.

Fellowships should not be used for a graduate student who is performing a service for the University and being supervised for the service by a University employee. A supervisor has the authority to instruct the individual how, where, and when to perform the activity and provides a performance evaluation annually to the employee (see here for [required personnel file information](#)).

Mandatory Reporting

All graduate assistants (GA, RA, TA, GPTI) are considered "responsible employees" and required to report any prohibited conduct such as incidents of discrimination, harassment, or sexual misconduct involving any member of the CU community that is disclosed to them to the Office of Institutional Equity: <https://equity.uccs.edu/>.