



Policy Number:	5521-20	Policy Section:	Institutional Support
Original Effective Date:	7/10/14	Policy Title:	Graduate Assistants
Date Last Revised:	6/3/25	Department:	Human Resources

Policy Statement:

The University recognizes the mutual benefit of employing graduate students to enable them to obtain advanced training in an employment setting at the University, while providing financial benefits toward their tuition costs. When qualified students and University needs and resources are available, the University provides these opportunities in the form of Graduate Assistantships. The purpose of this policy is to set forth the qualifications, requirements, and terms of this role. Graduate Assistant (GA) opportunities are available to Cairn students only.

Graduate Assistantships:

Graduate Assistantships are available to a limited number of Cairn full-time graduate students who have the skills and abilities to fulfill a professional position on a part-time basis during their period of study. Work duties may or may not be directly related to a GA's program of study. Dual-level students are not eligible for GA-ships.

The duration of a Graduate Assistantship may be for a minimum period of one semester (Fall/Spring/Summer) and for a maximum period of semesters required for the GA to complete his/her degree program, enrolled and continuing on a full-time basis (6 or 9 credit hours per fall and spring semesters, depending on graduate program requirements).

Graduate Assistants must maintain a grade of 'B' or higher in each course to remain eligible for the GA-ship. Failure to achieve this grade or higher in any course may result in loss of the GA-ship for up to and including all future terms.

1.0 Compensation

- 1.1 A GAs' primary compensation is in the form of the graduate tuition remission benefit. This benefit covers 100% of tuition costs for the program in which the GA is accepted and enrolled.
 - 1.1.1 The tuition remission assistance applies to tuition only, and not to other costs or fees.
Examples of other costs and fees include, but are not limited to, room and board; independent study fees; pre-requisite foundation course fees for graduate programs; confirmation and enrollment deposits; and textbook or supply costs.
 - 1.1.2 In semesters during which a GA does not work, his/her tuition remission benefit is suspended.
- 1.2 A GA's secondary form of compensation is a biweekly stipend of \$250 which is established to assist the GA in covering incidental expenses (it is not an hourly wage). Stipend payments are issued over the course of 8 pay dates each semester that the GA is active. Stipend payments are taxable.

2.0 Work Schedules

- 2.1 The three semesters' beginning and ending dates vary year-to-year. A Schedule Addendum listing the semesters and corresponding stipend payment dates will be issued each academic year (see last page of this policy).
- 2.2 GAs are required to begin work one week before the Fall semester's classes begin. In the Spring and Summer semesters, work begins the same week classes begin. In the Fall and Spring semesters, GAs' work ends when Finals Week ends. In the Summer semester, GAs' work ends the last week of classes.
- 2.3 The GA must be enrolled in classes in order to continue in the Graduate Assistant position and receive the stipend.
- 2.4 The hours-of-work requirements for a GA allow for limitations and flexibility and provide the opportunity for each manager to manage his/her GA's overall schedule. The expectation is that an average of 20 hrs/week will be worked. This allows for schedule variations for added hours, work-flow adjustments, and as-needed absences and breaks, without altering stipend payments or reporting exceptions.
 - 2.4.1 GAs must be limited to no more than 40 hours in any work week.
- 2.5 When the graduate program in which the GA is enrolled does not offer classes required by the GA to complete his/her degree in a given Summer, Fall, or Spring semester, the GA's stipend will be suspended and the GA may work up to 30 hours per week, for their GA assigned school/department, at an hourly pay rate of \$9.00. The GA will retain GA status so long as he/she is enrolled for the next semester, at which time normal GA stipend, work hours, and tuition remission benefit will resume.

3.0 Responsibilities of a GA Supervisor:

- 3.1 Ensure that the hiring school/department's budget includes funding for the GA stipend expense.
- 3.2 Manage, schedule, and record the GA's hours to ensure that the GA works an average of 20 hours per week within each semester of active GA service.
- 3.3 Notify the Assistant Director, Payroll and Benefits, in advance of the end of a semester to indicate whether the GA will be taking classes in the upcoming semester.
- 3.4 Promptly notify the Department of Human Resources when a student is unable to continue in the GA-ship program.

4.0 Approval, Selection and Hiring

As with other University employees, approval for the position, the application and screening process, and subsequent approval to hire shall be done in accordance with the hiring procedure for temporary employees as outlined in the University's Hiring Manual. The availability of, and funding for, positions will be determined by the President's Cabinet during the process of budget preparation for the upcoming fiscal year.

- 4.1 Graduate Assistant selection is based on the GA's interest, skills and abilities to perform the duties of the assignment. When recruitment is needed, the availability of GA positions and solicitation of interested applicants are made by way of posting the openings on the Applicant Tracking System and website, and through communication to enrolled graduate students through Admissions personnel and/or email announcements.
 - 4.1.1 Credentials: GA candidates must
 - have specific interest in or unique preparation for the assignment under consideration;
 - be a matriculated or full-time graduate student in good status;
 - be available and willing to fulfill the responsibilities of the assignment;

- have the necessary skills and abilities to perform the assignment(s);
- be available to work on a regular basis, as required by the department, which may include periods of time during which the GA will not have classes.

5.0 Employment-related Requirements

5.1 Work area, Email, Phone

Graduate Assistants shall be provided with an employee-type University email and computer account. In most cases, an assigned work area and designated phone extension will also be provided.

5.2 ID and Keys

GAs shall use their student IDs unless a departmental ID is available for copying/printing. Keys shall not be provided to Interns or GAs. Exceptions must have the approval of the overseeing Administrator.

5.3 Attendance at University Events

5.3.1 Employee Events:

Graduate Assistants are expected to attend events which require employee attendance as directed by their Dean/Director or Administrator. These include, but are not limited to, University Update meetings and Homecoming. Depending on the GA's assigned duties, attendance or participation in certain University events will be mandatory.

5.3.2 Student Events:

Graduate Assistants are students and may attend student events of their choosing so long as their schedules permit. Depending on their assigned duties, attendance or participation in certain student events will be mandatory.

6.0 Student Loan Deferment

One of the attractive features of Graduate Assistantships is the ability for the student to defer repayment of student loans. To qualify for deferment, the following conditions must be met:

- The student must be enrolled in an accredited program;
- The student must maintain an active status of at least one-half of full-time.

7.0 Corrective Action and Termination

It is expected that Graduate Assistants will complete the assignment they accept. When performance or behavioral issues arise, the Corrective Action process outlined in the Employment Handbook will be followed. If improvement is not made, or if the violation is severe, the University reserves the right to terminate the arrangement with no notice. Depending on the circumstances, the Graduate Assistant may be able to continue at the University as a student. The continued provision of tuition benefits will be determined on a case-by-case basis considering the circumstances.



President's Cabinet Representative

Date: 6/3/25

SCHEDULE ADDENDUM TO THE GRADUATE ASSISTANT POLICY
 Following are the scheduled semester and stipend pay dates for '25-'26.

Friday Stipend Pay Dates		Week beginning Monday...	Note:
		8/18/25	Fall semester service begins
F1	9/5/25		
F2	9/19/25		
F3	10/3/25		
F4	10/17/25		
F5	10/31/25		
F6	11/14/25		
F7	11/28/25		
F8	12/12/25	12/8/25	Finals week/F semester concludes
No Stipend	12/26/25		Christmas & semester break
No Stipend	1/9/26		Christmas & semester break
Sp1	1/23/26	1/12/26	Spring semester service begins
Sp2	2/6/26		
Sp3	2/20/26		
Sp4	3/6/26		
Sp5	3/20/26		
Sp6	4/3/26		
Sp7	4/17/26		
Sp8	5/1/26	5/11/26	Finals week/Sp semester concludes
Su1	5/15/26	5/18/26	Summer semester service begins
Su2	5/29/26		
Su3	6/12/26		
Su4	6/26/26		
Su5	7/10/26		
Su6	7/24/26		
Su7	8/7/26		
Su8	8/21/26	8/17/26	Summer semester ends 8/23/26