

Graduate Student Assistantships

Along with scholarships and loans, graduate assistantships are a common way U.S. graduate programs offer financial support and tuition remission to doctoral students. Requirements and duties vary between institutions, but graduate assistants usually work between 12-30 hours a week providing service to the department in exchange for tuition remission and a monthly stipend. Depending on the position and institution, the hourly work scheduled is usually very flexible to accommodate the graduate student's course schedule.

Often positions will be designated as .15FTE, .33FTE, or .45 FTE, (FTE refers to the hourly percentage full time equivalent). The amount of work hours contracted and corresponding monthly stipend for the assistantship will vary according to the position and institution's graduate assistant compensation schedule.

Each university and academic department is unique in the type of tasks assigned to graduate assistants, however most graduate assistantships fall into three types

- Research assistants-Could include applying practices and methods of scholarship such as conducting surveys, leading focus groups, providing literature reviews, analyzing data or writing up findings.
- Teaching assistants-Could include instruction or instructional support such as teaching classes, preparing course materials, advising students, proctoring exams, grading papers or supervising labs.
- Graduate assistants-Could include administrative or technical support such as preparing documents, coordinating travel schedules, facilitating meetings, database creation and management, website creation or maintenance or project management.

Since graduate assistantships are supervised by faculty members they can also offer a unique opportunity for networking and mentoring with supervising faculty and an additional source of professional development resources and experience. Even if your program's specific departments have a limited number of graduate assistant positions available, working as a graduate assistant in other departments on campus can provide a rich multidisciplinary educational experience.

Although many institutions provide details about graduate assistantship qualification, terms of employment and remuneration, often websites are not the best source of availability; not all graduate assistant positions are posted. Contacting your advisor, department chairs or program secretaries can also be a good source of potential openings. Additionally, many departments hire assistants well in advance of the Fall term, so it is a good idea to let your needs and interests be known as soon as possible.

An often overlooked but potentially valuable resource for finding assistantships is your fellow graduate student peers and mentors. If your program orientation provides

contacts or networking opportunities with current graduate students they can be a great source of useful information. Current students may have information about upcoming department assistantship openings resulting from peer graduation or career advancement.

Each institution and graduate program varies, so it is essential that you contact the institution you are considering for their specific qualifications and opportunities for graduate assistantships. However, the following links can provide a brief overview and a variety of examples of diverse graduate assistantships guidelines and possibilities for graduate study.

<http://www.unomaha.edu/graduate/gaquest.html>

University of Omaha, NB

http://www.grad.clemson.edu/ga_FAQ.php

Clemson University, GA

<http://www.uis.edu/graduateassistantships/about/GradDescriptors.html>

University of Illinois Springfield, IL

http://www.gse.buffalo.edu/programs/elp/fin_aid.asp

University of Buffalo NY

http://www.gsr.pdx.edu/ogs_gradassists.php

Portland State University, OR

[http://appl003.lsu.edu/grad/gradschool.nsf/\\$Content/Assistantships?OpenDocument](http://appl003.lsu.edu/grad/gradschool.nsf/$Content/Assistantships?OpenDocument)

Louisiana State University

<http://www.grads.vt.edu/financial/assistantships/index.html>

Virginia Tech