

Work Assignments and Related Factors

To utilize the four categories of assistantships, the following provisions should be observed.

1. Work assignments for each type of assistantship should be as specific as possible and should be developed to reflect both the needs of the department and each graduate assistant's obligation to make satisfactory progress in his/her program. Therefore, to the extent possible an assignment should appropriately reflect teaching hours, office hours, hours to be spent performing research or other specified tasks. Such specifications should be provided in writing at the time the offer is made.

In situations where the work assignment cannot be specifically described or must be changed from an initial assignment, the graduate assistant should clearly be informed before agreeing to, or continuing in, the assignment.

An important part of each graduate assistant's work assignment is the fostering of professional development. Such development plus variations in departmental needs may result in differences in number of hours per week for carrying out assignments.

Thus, weekly work assignments, when specified, are done so in terms of averages. For a one-fourth time appointment, the graduate assistant's normal work time should not exceed 10 hours per week. For a one-half time appointment, the average number of hours should not exceed 20 hours per week. Appointments exceeding 50% must have prior approval of the Dean of the Graduate School, excluding summer term. The normal number of hours for conducting an assignment should be mutually understood by the graduate assistant and immediate supervisor. For percentage efforts not covered by those appointments above, the normal work time per week will be prorated.

2. A one-half time graduate assistant in each of the four categories of assistantships normally should enroll for 6-11 semester hours of course work. A one-fourth time graduate assistant in each of the four categories of assistantships normally should take 9-13 semester hours. Exceptions to the above must have prior approval of the Head of the student's academic home unit. A student on a one-half time assistantship who takes at least six semester hours will be considered full-time.

The student's academic home unit is responsible for implementing these policies, regardless of the assignment or responsible account. It is therefore essential that the home unit be notified by any other unit employing the student of any assistantship awarded at the time of its initiation or renewal.

The maximum number of years that a graduate student can be appointed to a 25% or more assistantship is three years as a master's student, five years as a doctoral student, or eight years in doctoral programs in which students enter with a baccalaureate degree only. Departments or programs may impose stricter limits. Requests for an extension beyond the maximum terms here specified must be made in writing by the academic unit to the Dean of the Graduate School. Established time limits for completion of graduate programs – six years for a master's program and eight years for a doctoral program – also apply to all graduate assistants.

Qualifications of Graduate Assistants

Graduate assistants must be currently enrolled in graduate study (as fully-admitted degree-seeking students, non-degree students, or transient graduate students). The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) 18-hour requirement must also be met.