

Arizona State University

Graduate Assistant Handbook



graduate.asu.edu

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Graduate Assistant Handbook

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Introduction

This handbook is a resource to assist graduate students with navigating the graduate assistant appointment process. It will help graduate assistants understand the purpose, benefits, and responsibilities of graduate appointments. It outlines important procedures and policies, and it also directs graduate assistants to other sources of essential information across campus.

The handbook is organized in the following sections:

- Chart showing “Where to Go” with questions
- Glossary of Terms
- Value of Graduate Assistant Appointments
- Explanation of Graduate Assistant Types (RA/TA/GSA)
- Rights, Responsibilities & Roles
- Important University Policies
- What Graduate Assistants Need to Know

This handbook includes a non-exhaustive summary of many relevant policies, procedures, guidelines, and expectations for graduate assistants (in addition to the terms and conditions outlined in an appointment letter) that are currently in place. Other sources of applicable policies or rules exist, including, but not limited to, the policies of the Arizona Board of Regents and Arizona State University (ASU). Graduate assistants should read, become familiar with, abide by, and otherwise comply with the policies, procedures, and expectations set forth or referenced in the handbook. Nothing in this handbook creates or represents a contract of employment, a binding agreement of any kind, or any right to, or expectation of, continuing employment or benefits. The handbook, including the policies, terms, conditions, and expectations outlined or referenced herein, is subject to change at any time. Accordingly, the content of the handbook may be revised, expanded, deleted, or replaced from time to time, with or without notice.

Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition	Description
ACD	Academic Affairs Manual	The Academic Affairs Policies and Procedures Manual (ACD) provides information for ASU faculty and academic professionals and their administrators on academic organizations, governance, personnel, and programs.
Appointment Letter	Graduate Assistant Appointment Letter	A document that holds the terms of appointment for a RA/TA/GSA, including salary, benefits, duties and other important information about the appointment. The student will sign the letter to accept the appointment. A similar "recruitment letter" may also be given to the student to indicate the department's intention to provide the appointment before the final appointment letter is available for signature.
College	Academic College	Overarching academic college which contains the graduate student's degree program, often consisting of multiple schools and departments
Faculty Advisor	Faculty Advisor for Graduate Student	Faculty member assigned to a graduate student to advise and assist them throughout the pursuit of their degree
FICA	Federal Insurance Contributions Act	FICA is a U.S. tax. Stipend amounts earned by graduate appointees in RA/TA roles are exempt from this tax while they are enrolled.
FTE	Full-time Equivalent	Institutions use Full-time Equivalent as a measure of effort. At ASU, no student appointee may be asked to engage in more than 20 hours per week in their appointment. Might be referred to as .50 FTE or 50% full-time equivalency.
GA	Graduate Assistant	A degree-seeking graduate student who performs specialized duties through a RA, TA, or GSA position. Graduate students take on assistantships to gain professional experience while receiving financial support. This is a general term used to define all graduate students who hold RA, TA, or GSA positions and not an official ASU appointment title.
Graduate Staff	Graduate Staff of Unit or College	Non-faculty university staff employees in schools, departments, or colleges who assist

		graduate students.
GSA	Graduate Service Assistant	Graduate Service Assistants (GSAs) are appointed to provide professional-level administrative support to units.
I-9	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services refers to the Employment Eligibility Verification as form I-9	In order to perform the service related to a graduate appointment proof of employment eligibility is required for citizens and noncitizens.
RA	Research Assistant/Research Associate	Research Assistants (RAs) are appointed to provide support for the research and creative endeavors for a faculty member or several faculty in a unit. Research Associates perform similar roles but usually have completed a Master's or at least 30 graduate credit hours in the program.
Stipend	Graduate Assistant Stipend	A monetary allowance to alleviate personal expenses
TA	Teaching Assistant/Teaching Associate	Teaching Assistants (TAs) are appointed to provide support for instructional efforts for a faculty member or several faculty in a unit. Teaching Associates perform similar roles but usually have completed a Master's or at least 30 graduate credit hours in the program.
Tuition Award	Tuition Award	A benefit provided for students appointed as RAs or TAs by the university to alleviate the cost of tuition. This benefit only applies to tuition and not to fees.
Unit	Academic Unit	School or department within a college where a graduate student's degree program is located
Workload	Graduate Assistant Workload	A general term that refers to the amount of time expected to be required in the performance of duties. Workload could be calculated for the effort engaged by courses or by the duties engaged in through an appointment. Students with graduate appointments are limited to a total combined workload of .50 FTE, which equals 20 hours per week.

Value of a Graduate Appointment

A graduate assistant (RA/TA/GSA) is an enrolled student who is appointed to perform research, instructional or administrative duties. The goal of any type of graduate assistantship is to support the graduate student's academic training to meet their professional goals.

Graduate assistant appointments are an opportunity for graduate students to learn and gain skills through training relevant to roles in the university setting with experts in their field. All appointees receive the benefit of a stipend as a discount towards the overall cost of graduate education. Some appointments include additional benefits such as awards towards the cost of tuition and health insurance.

Types of Appointments

Appointment types are largely related to the kinds of duties they perform:

- Instructional duties – Teaching Assistants and Teaching Associates (TA)
- Research duties – Research Assistants and Research Associates (RA)
- Administrative duties – Graduate Services Assistant (GSA)

Each classification has its own specific attributes, conditions, and benefits. Please carefully read the relevant sections below. For more information about specific types of duties, visit:

graduate.asu.edu/current-students/funding-opportunities/graduate-appointments-and-assistantships/types-graduate.

Teaching Assistant

A teaching assistant (TA) is an enrolled, degree-seeking graduate student appointed (up to .50 FTE, 20 hrs per week, ASU's maximum allowed appointment) by the university whose primary responsibility is in an instructional capacity. A teaching assistant may lecture, lead discussion groups, serve as an assistant to laboratory classes, tutor students, proctor examinations, grade tests and papers, and provide general assistance in the instructional process under the direct supervision of a faculty supervisor.

Teaching Associate

A teaching associate (TA) is an enrolled, degree-seeking graduate student appointed (up to .50 FTE, 20 hrs per week, ASU's maximum allowed appointment) by the university under the direct supervision of a faculty member whose primary responsibility is in an instructional capacity and who holds a master's degree or its equivalent (30 hours of graduate work). The roles of a teaching associate are similar to those of the teaching assistant, but may differ in terms of responsibilities (e.g. course level).

Research Assistant

A research assistant (RA) is an enrolled, degree-seeking graduate student appointed

(up to .50 FTE, 20 hrs per week, ASU's maximum allowed appointment) by the university whose primary responsibilities are research related. Graduate research assistants may assist faculty members in research and creative activities, perform administrative or editorial duties directly connected to research and creative activities, develop and evaluate instructional materials and/or curricula, or assume responsibilities for a designated research area under the direct supervision of a faculty member.

Research Associate

A research associate (RA) is an enrolled, degree-seeking graduate student appointed (up to .50 FTE, 20 hrs per week, ASU's maximum allowed appointment) by the university under the direct supervision of a faculty member whose primary responsibilities are research related and who holds a master's degree or its equivalent (30 hours of graduate work). The roles of the research associate are similar to those of the research assistant, but may differ in terms of responsibilities.

Graduate Services Assistant

A graduate services assistant (GSA) is an enrolled, degree-seeking graduate student appointed (up to .50 FTE, 20 hrs per week, ASU's maximum allowed appointment) by the university who performs tasks within a specified unit in order to gain working knowledge and develop career-specific skills. GSAs provide professional-level support, performing various administrative tasks/projects that contribute to the mission of the unit. GSAs report to an administrator or professional member of the unit who will supervise and train them.

- Note: This appointment type does NOT provide the same benefits as RA/TA appointments. Students in these appointments are NOT eligible for a tuition award or health insurance benefits.

Expectations

1. Graduate assistants should expect to receive an appointment letter in writing at least two weeks before the appointment begins.
2. Graduate assistants should expect to receive a periodic review and written evaluation of their performance. Criteria for evaluations are established by the unit in which they are appointed. Graduate assistants should refer to their program handbook for information specific to their graduate degree program.
3. Graduate assistants receive access to professional development opportunities through the Graduate College and governance through the Graduate Student Professional Association (GPSA).
4. Graduate research and teaching assistants/associates with .50 FTE appointments and postdoctoral scholars may receive twelve weeks of paid leave for the birth or adoption of a child (as outlined in the "Parental Leave" section of the handbook).
5. A graduate assistant shall notify their supervisor in advance of an absence and, when possible, assist in obtaining a replacement or rearrangement of the duties.

Excessive absences may be cause for termination before the end of the appointment period.

6. A graduate assistant shall learn the Important University Policies (refer to section below) and know the appropriate procedures for handling violations at both the university and unit level. They should speak to their appointment supervisor if there are questions or concerns.
7. A graduate assistant is responsible for completing the [required training modules](#) which address these policies and duties.
8. A graduate assistant is required to abide by the [Student Code of Conduct](#).
9. The most important role for all graduate assistants is that of a graduate student, which requires meeting the performance expectations for their degree program. As a graduate assistant, they may also be asked to adopt roles as trainees representing their discipline, the unit and the University.

Important University Policies

In addition to policies relevant to all students at ASU ([including the Student Code of Conduct](#)), graduate assistants are subject to policies relevant to University personnel. The following is a non-inclusive list of policies relevant to graduate assistants with descriptions and the source of each policy. Graduate students are advised to review all [ACD policies](#) in addition to the policies identified below.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX)

[Title IX](#) protects individuals from discrimination based on sex in any educational program or activity operated by recipients of federal financial assistance. As required by Title IX, ASU does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the education programs or activities that we operate, including in admission and employment. Inquiries concerning the application of Title IX may be referred to the Title IX Coordinator or to the U.S. Department of Education, Assistant Secretary, or both. Contact titleixcoordinator@asu.edu or 480-965-0696 for more information. Please note that pursuant to Title IX, GAs who are informed of or have a reasonable basis to believe that sexual harassment has occurred are required to immediately report that information to the Office of University Rights and Responsibilities at urr@asu.edu, the Title IX Coordinator, or the Dean of Students Office. For information on making a report please go to www.asu.edu/reportit/.

[Source: Office of the University Provost](#)

ACD 401: Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation

Arizona State University is committed to providing an environment free of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation for the entire university community, including all students, faculty members, staff employees, and guests. ASU expressly prohibits [discrimination](#), [harassment](#), and [retaliation](#) by employees, students,

contractors, or agents of the university based on any protected status, including race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, and any other status protected under the law.

Source: Academic Affairs Manual

ACD 402: Romantic or Sexual Relationships between Faculty Members and Students

Faculty and academic professionals are prohibited from engaging in a romantic or sexual relationship with a student over whom the faculty member or academic professional exercises, or can reasonably be expected to exercise, academic or employment authority or influence.

Source: Academic Affairs Manual

SSM 701-03: Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

ASU is responsible for providing reasonable accommodations to qualified students with disabilities to ensure courses and course materials are readily accessible. Approved accommodations are determined on an individual student and course-by-course basis.

Source: Student Services Manual

ABOR 6-908: Intellectual Property Ownership

Data, including but not limited to lab notes, results of analyses, research notes, research data reports, and research notebooks, comprise a category of intellectual property covered by The Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) policy 6–908. By accepting an appointment, graduate assistants understand and acknowledge that they are assigning and do hereby assign any right, title, and interest they have in any Intellectual Property they develop to Arizona State University, as set forth in the policy. **Source:**

ABOR Policy Manual.

ACD 304-06: Commercial Note-Taking Services

All graduate students who are appointed for class/course support or who are graduate teaching or research assistants/associates for a specific course may not take or provide notes for that course to commercial note-taking services or students. An exception may be made by the course instructor(s) on a case-by-case basis as an authorized support service for a student with a documented disability. This policy covers all commercial activities (e.g., note-taking, paid review sessions) that might be associated with a course for which the assistant/associate has assigned responsibilities.

Source: Academic Affairs Manual

SSM 304-12 and ACD 401: Student Anti-Retaliation Statement

Students have the right to be free from retaliation. Threats or other forms of intimidation or retribution against a student who files a complaint or grievance, requests an administrative remedy, participates in an investigation, appears as a witness at an administrative hearing, or opposes an unlawful act, discriminatory practice, or policy are prohibited and subject to university disciplinary procedures. Students with complaints of

retaliation should utilize the procedures available under the University Code of Conduct, the Student Code of Conduct, the Graduate Student Grievance Procedure, the Student Employee Grievance Procedure, the Sexual Harassment Policy, nondiscrimination policies, or other available administrative procedures as appropriate. For assistance with procedures, students should contact the dean of the academic college if the circumstances relate to a course or academic evaluation, the Office of University Rights and Responsibilities if the circumstances relate to a claim of discrimination or harassment, or the Dean of Students for all other circumstances.

Sources: [Student Services Manual](#) and [Academic Affairs Manual](#)

Background Check Requirements

Graduate appointment offers are contingent upon the satisfactory outcome (as determined by the university) of certain screening activities (including verification of ability to work in the United States and a [background](#) or [fingerprint check](#)).

Resources and Important Information

I. Finding a Position

RA: Research Assistant positions are dependent upon the research agenda and available resources of individual faculty, departments and research centers. Students should check with faculty with related research interests to inquire about RA positions.

TA: Academic units seek to fill vacancies based on instructional needs and budget of the unit. Students should check with their academic unit to inquire about TA positions.

GSA: Units post position vacancies based on the administrative need and budget available. Students should check with administrative and academic units to inquire about positions.

II. Recruitment/Appointment Letters

Students selected for a graduate student appointment as an incoming graduate student will receive a recruitment financial support letter and an appointment letter. Students continuing in an appointment will receive an appointment letter only. Communications such as emails and verbal conversations between faculty and students do not constitute official offers of appointment. A student cannot begin any duties associated with an appointment until the business manager, or another designee, of the appointing unit issues and receives back a signed appointment letter.

III. New RA/TA Field Guides and Checklists

[The Teaching Assistant Field Guide](#) is available to all graduate assistants via

Canvas. Designed as an online reference tool, the TA Field Guide includes modules offering an introduction to the TA experience, instructional strategies, and classroom management and includes:

- onboarding checklists
- policies and procedures
- best practices
- asynchronous discussions

The Research Assistant Field Guide is available to all research assistants via Canvas. Designed as an online reference tool, the RA Field Guide includes modules introducing the RA experience, best practices for working with your supervisor, and how to build on your experience.

For graduate assistants with GSA appointments, the resources above are available for reference.

IV. Duties

TA: TAs are appointed to directly support instruction. Specific duties vary depending on need of the unit and include: lecturing, leading discussion groups, leading laboratory class sections, tutoring, proctoring examinations, and grading.

RA: RAs are appointed to assist faculty members in research and creative activities, perform administrative or editorial duties directly connected to the project, develop and evaluate instructional materials and/or curricula, or assume responsibilities for a designated research area under the direct supervision of a faculty member.

GSA: GSAs are appointed to assist with administrative duties not directly related to instruction or a research project.

V. Eligibility

A. Enrollment

Students admitted, enrolled, and in good standing in a graduate degree program at ASU are eligible to receive an appointment as an RA/TA/GSA. TAs and RAs must be enrolled at least half-time (6 non-audit hours for credit in Fall and Spring or 1 non-audit hour for credit in Summer). GSAs must be enrolled in at least 1 non-audit credit. Individual graduate programs may have a higher enrollment requirement and students should confirm specific requirements with their programs. Enrollment in undergraduate courses will not count towards enrollment requirements unless approved by the program. Additionally, international students should confirm enrollment requirements by visiting:

issc.asu.edu/f-1j-1-students/maintaining-full-time-enrollment.

Failure to maintain enrollment in the minimum required hours will result in the termination of the appointment.

B. GPA

Graduate students must earn at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA to be eligible to be appointed, continued or reappointed. Graduate degree programs may require a higher GPA. Failure to maintain good academic standing or to maintain the required GPA will result in the termination of the appointment.

C. English Proficiency for International TAs

For the first appointment as a Teaching Assistant/Associate, students whose first language is not English are required to demonstrate their effectiveness in English speaking and comprehension skills for teaching in an ASU classroom before they are assigned teaching assistant responsibilities. The TA appointment is contingent on meeting one of the following requirements (for full certification):

- Take and pass the SPEAK test with a score of 55 or higher. The SPEAK test is administered on ASU's Tempe campus by Global Launch multiple times a year. Only SPEAK scores from Global Launch are allowed.
- Take the IELTS test and receive a score of 8 or higher on the speaking portion of the test.
- Take the TOEFL iBT test and receive a score of 26 or higher on the speaking portion of the test. **
- Successfully complete the ITA Teacher Training Course with a score of "certified."

**Important information about TOEFL waivers: The TOEFL waiver offered to students for admission purposes does not extend to spoken English certification. To become certified to teach, demonstrating spoken English comprehensibility through one of the four above-mentioned methods is required.

For additional certification requirements and to register for the SPEAK test, please visit:
globallaunch.asu.edu/learn-english/other-services/international-teaching-assistant

VI. Financial Aid Impact

Please note that acceptance of any assistantship may impact financial aid eligibility. Please consult Financial Aid and Scholarship Services with any additional questions.

VII. Appointment Duration

Graduate students may be appointed for an academic year, semester or session. Appointments are for a specified duration as outlined in the appointment letter. There is no expectation for continued appointment. Therefore, appointments automatically expire at the end of the appointment period without further notice of termination.

VIII. Appointment Contingent on Funding Availability

The graduate assistant appointment is contingent on the availability of funds to support the appointment which may terminate if funding is no longer available.

IX. Renewal of Appointments

As with new appointments, renewal of appointments are subject to and contingent upon the continuing availability of funds, satisfactory academic progress and performance as determined by a student's academic unit and appointing unit.

X. Graduate Assistant Orientations and Training

Newly appointed graduate assistants receive information helpful to the performance of their roles. There may be orientation and training within their appointment unit. All new appointees in any RA, TA or GSA role will be required to complete all ASU mandatory training(s) relevant to their roles. New TAs are also expected to attend the virtual TA Orientation before the start of the Fall term. Failure to complete the required training(s) could result in the termination of a graduate assistantship.

Returning teaching and research assistants should annually review their individual training records by logging into the relevant system (see “location of training” in grid below) and complete any new ASU training requirements.

Required ASU Training

Before undertaking the responsibilities associated with the role, (e.g., first day of classroom, lab or other student-facing responsibilities), graduate assistants are required to complete the training modules outlined below. All trainings can be found at

graduate.asu.edu/current-students/funding-opportunities/graduate-appointments-and-assistantships/resources-for-students/training-and-orientation.

The following training can be completed **between signing of the Appointment Letter and processing of the RA/TA/GSA position in the ASU payroll system:**

Title of Training	Location of Training	Frequency of Training
Academic Freedom Orientation Lesson	Web-based	Once
Community of Care: Welcome Sun Devils	Canvas course	Once and each time it is updated
Graduate Violence Prevention Course	Canvas course	Once

The following trainings should be completed as soon as possible **after processing of RA/TA/GSA position in the ASU payroll system:**

Title of Training	Location of Training	Frequency of Training
Arizona Public Service Policy	Workday Learning	Once

<u>ASU - Your Duty to Report & Preventing Harassment and Discrimination</u>	Workday Learning	Every 2 years
<u>Community of Care Training for Employees</u>	Workday Learning	As needed
<u>FERPA Tutorial for System Access</u>	Workday Learning	Once
<u>Fire Safety</u>	Workday Learning	Annually
<u>Inclusive Communities</u>	Workday Learning	Every 2 years
<u>Information Security Awareness Training</u>	Workday Learning	Annually
<u>Research and Academic Integrity</u>	Workday Learning	Once
<u>Seeds of Sustainability</u>	Canvas	Once

XI. Workload and Hour Limits

The primary purpose of an appointment is to assist graduate students in successfully completing an academic program and receiving training in professional skills. Because of the expectations placed on graduate students, such as conducting scholarly or creative work and developing as professionals, ASU is mindful of the workload expected of RA/TA/GSAs and requires adherence to all policies limiting the amount of workload associated with RA/TA/GSAs appointments.

The assignment must be consistent with the Full Time Equivalency (FTE) of the appointment; for example, TAs should be given the number of sections and students appropriate for the number of hours per week the assigned FTE allows. RAs may conduct their own research beyond the allowed workload of their appointment, and units may offer credit hours for this research.

If during the appointment, a graduate assistant is offered and would like to accept another appointment or employment opportunity at Arizona State University, they must ensure that the combined appointments will not exceed the allowable FTE as outlined at cfo.asu.edu/aca-faqs-undergraduate-graduate-student-workers.

Graduate assistants may not serve in any ASU role exceeding 50% FTE (20 hours per week) during the Fall and Spring semesters. RA/TA/GSAs may be

appointed up to 100% FTE (40 hours per week) during semester breaks and Summer semester appointments. However, RA/TA/GSAs may not average more than 62.5% FTE (25 hours per week) in the ACA calendar year (October through September) as measured by the Affordable Care Act. Termination will result if this limit is exceeded, and the graduate assistant will not be eligible for reappointment for 26 weeks.

International students on F-1 or J-1 visas may not exceed 20 hours per week (50% FTE) during the fall and spring semesters, while they are concurrently enrolled and cannot hold appointments past degree conferral date. Please refer to current policies on the [ISSC webpage](#).

XII. Unit, Departmental and Program-Specific Terms

The unit in which a graduate assistantship is assigned or the program in which the graduate assistant is enrolled as a student may have additional requirements or expectations. Graduate assistants should refer to the unit academic handbook for their program for additional policies and information. Graduate assistants should work with their supervisors regarding expectations, deadlines, and specific assignments, to understand how they will be supervised, the performance review process, and how to address concerns about workplace and workload issues.

XIII. University Provided Email

Graduate assistants are required to use the MS Exchange for ASU email account and address provided by ASU. All communications from the University will come via the University provided email address and this account should not be forwarded to other email service providers.

XIV. Applicable Laws, Rules, Regulations and Policies

This appointment is subject to all applicable federal and state laws, as well as all rules, regulations, and policies that are set by the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) and Arizona State University. These include, but are not limited to, the Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures and the Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation.

XV. Evaluations

All graduate assistants should receive regular mentoring and feedback from their supervisors throughout their appointment and expect to be evaluated on their performance during their appointment at least one time per year. Evaluations should be viewed as an opportunity to learn how graduate assistants can be more effective in their role. Each program should have their own procedure for

assessment and feedback. Graduate assistants should receive feedback in writing and be allowed to review and respond to the feedback.

Teaching Assistants should also proactively record their own observations on their individual teaching experience, describe their expectations and evaluate what worked and what did not work. Teaching is a craft that improves with practice and with self-reflection.

As with anyone appointed to an assistantship, per [Academic Affairs Manual ACD 401](#), evaluation of performance shall not be based on sex, age, disability, race, color, religion, marital status, veteran status, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation or gender identity.

XVI. Attendance/Absence from Service

Graduate assistants do not earn or accrue any type of paid leave. Dependent on eligibility, graduate assistants may be eligible for paid parental leave. Any circumstances preventing the fulfillment of assigned duties should be discussed with the appointment supervisor in advance. For teaching assistant positions, this should also be discussed with the graduate program chair. Excessive absences may be cause for termination before the end of the appointment period. Graduate assistants should consult with the supervising faculty member and review academic unit handbooks about specific policies regarding absence from service.

XVII. Termination Before End of Appointment Period

Graduate assistants are expected to fulfill their assignment throughout the semester as outlined in their appointment letter unless they receive a revised letter by the appointing unit. If they decide to leave their appointment voluntarily prior to the end of the appointment term, they are required to submit a written letter of resignation to their advisor (or committee chair), and the Graduate Chair or Director of their unit at least one week in advance of the effective date of resignation.

An appointment may terminate based on poor performance, unprofessional conduct, or failure to satisfy any term or condition of the appointment. Reasons for **involuntary** termination may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- change in academic discipline (program)
- academic or scientific misconduct
- poor academic performance or excessive absences
- misconduct in assigned duties
- unsatisfactory performance in assigned duties
- breach of ASU Student Code of Conduct (eoss.asu.edu/dos/srr/codeofconduct)
- incapacitation of the appointment for an extended period of time
- professional misconduct as defined in ASU's Academic Affairs Policies

- and Procedures Manual (asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/)
- misuse of university assets, including but not limited to computing resources (e.g., copyright infringement, viewing pornography)

Within 10 days of the receipt of the notice of termination, the graduate assistant may appeal the decision at the unit and college level via email. The Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate College should be copied on the appeal when submitted by the graduate assistant. The decision made at the unit or college level shall be final.

The early termination of an appointment, whether it results from resignation or involuntary termination, may result in the forfeiture of the stipend, the tuition award, and any other benefits that would have come from the appointment. In such circumstances, graduate assistants will be charged for the full tuition and health insurance amounts. In limited circumstances when the involuntary resignation results from no fault of the student, salary will end as of the date of termination, but the full tuition award for the semester will remain in place.

XVIII. Benefits

A. Stipend

The appointment provides financial support in the form of a stipend which is implemented through Arizona State University's payroll system and paid out in installments on a bi-weekly basis. The bi-weekly pay calendar can be found at: cfo.asu.edu/academic-pay-schedule. Stipend amounts must be at least the [minimum stipend](#) set by the Provost's Office and the amounts and methods of payment may vary by discipline and location.

Graduate assistants are responsible for confirming with the appointing department that they have completed all necessary materials and submitted paperwork to the appropriate university offices to complete the appointment process. Students should confirm and understand this process prior to the start of their appointment.

Taxes

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has determined that the stipend portion of graduate student appointments is compensatory in nature. Stipend compensation distributed to graduate assistants through the payroll system are subject to federal and state income tax withholding. The amount of withholding depends on the completed IRS Form W-4, Employee Withholding Allowance Certificate, and the Arizona Form A-4, Withholding Percentage Election.

It is the student's responsibility to understand the costs of benefits and tax implications of the appointment. Any questions about the tax implications of an appointment should be directed to a qualified tax advisor. ASU staff and faculty do not provide tax advice.

FICA

While wages are normally subject to the current federal FICA tax (Social Security and Medicare), graduate assistants in RA/TA roles are exempt from this tax provided they meet minimum enrollment. Additional information regarding the student FICA tax exemption and enrollment guidelines are online: asu.edu/aad/manuals/fin/fin601.html

Proof of Right to Work in the United States: All New Employees

Federal regulations require that all new ASU employees and affiliates show proof, in person, of right to work in the United States. To ensure that new graduate student appointees receive their first stipend on the first disbursement date of the semester, graduate assistants must complete their work authorization (Form I-9) no later than three business days from their hire date.

The process for completing the I-9 employment eligibility can be found at: cfo.asu.edu/form-i-9-employment-eligibility.

An international student transferring from another school within the United States is responsible for contacting the International Student Advisor on that campus to ensure that the SEVIS transfer is complete. International students transferring from another school are responsible for ensuring appropriate procedures are complete. Upon arriving at ASU, international students must contact the [International Student and Scholars Center](#) (ISSC) at 480-727-4776, issc@asu.edu. International students must check in with ISSC before going to Human Resources to verify authorization to hold an RA/TA appointment or work in any capacity on campus.

B. Tuition

Tuition benefits are dependent upon the assistantship **type**, **workload** and appointment **date**.

- RA/TA appointments that are 50% of full-time effort (FTE) and begin within the first 9 weeks of a regular semester will receive a tuition award for 100% of ASU graduate tuition for the full semester.
- Students appointed to RA/TA positions for 50% FTE in the summer also receive a tuition award for 100% of ASU graduate tuition for the summer semester.
- RA/TA appointments that are 25% of full-time effort (FTE) and begin within the first 9 weeks of a regular semester will receive a

tuition award for a portion of their tuition. The student will be responsible for 50% of the amount of the Arizona base resident tuition costs.

- Students appointed to RA/TA positions for 25% FTE in the summer also receive a tuition award for a portion of their tuition. The student will be responsible for 50% of the Arizona base resident tuition costs.
- GSA appointments do not provide a tuition benefit.

Appointments do not cover university mandatory fees, program tuition and/or fees for the academic year or summer sessions; these are the responsibility of the student. Information about the ASU cost of attendance can be found online at tuition.asu.edu/cost and tuition estimates can be found online at tuition.asu.edu/cost/tuition-estimator.

Tuition awards will be applied as credit to the student billing account and reflected as “RA/TA Remission” or “Tuition Resource Waiver.”

For questions specific to a student account, please contact Student Business Services at tuition.asu.edu/contact

C. Health Insurance

Certain appointments provide premium coverage for ASU individual health insurance if the student elects health insurance coverage for the period stated in the appointment letter. Individual health insurance benefits are dependent upon the assistantship **type**, **workload** and appointment **date**.

- Students with RA/TA appointments that are 50% FTE (combined) and begin within the first nine weeks of classes, and who are enrolled in at least 6 graduate credit hours for the semester will receive this benefit for the duration of the appointment.
- Coverage periods are normally August 16–January 15 and January 16–August 15. Please confirm these dates on the website listed below.
- GSA appointments do not provide a health insurance benefit.

In order to receive this benefit, students must enroll in ASU Student Health Insurance. Sign in at My ASU (asu.edu/myasu). On the Campus Services page, navigate to the Health & Wellness Resources box, then select Health Insurance. For students not meeting minimum eligibility requirements, health insurance is available for purchase to graduate assistants as it is to all graduate students. Students must elect and enroll for health insurance at the time of enrollment of ASU courses; if a student declines coverage or does not elect coverage, they will be without insurance from the university. The university will not cover premiums for any other insurance plan.

Once enrolled, students will be auto-enrolled for consecutive semesters in which they continue to be eligible. Enrollment can be confirmed via student account by checking for the student health insurance fee each semester.

For further information on student health insurance, see eoss.asu.edu/health/billing-insurance/coverage-options. Health services can be provided through ASU Health Services. Please visit eoss.asu.edu/health for more information.

Students enrolled in ASU Online graduate degree programs are not eligible for ASU individual health insurance. However, in an effort to support ASU students, patient advocates are available to assist such students in finding an affordable option to meet their needs. Please visit eoss.asu.edu/health/billing-insurance/patient-advocacy for more information.

D. Parental Leave

RAs/TAs with a .50 FTE research or teaching assistantship (RA/TA) appointment who have completed at least two consecutive academic semesters (excluding summer) service are eligible for up to twelve weeks of paid parental leave for the birth or adoption of a child and will continue to receive their stipend and associated benefits (health insurance and tuition award) during this twelve-week period.

The RA/TA must maintain a minimum enrollment of six credit hours during the term of paid leave. Any portion of the twelve-week period that falls outside the appointment period will reduce the amount of available paid parental leave on a pro-rated basis.

If both parents are postdoctoral scholars or graduate students with a .50 FTE RA/TA appointment who have completed at least one academic year's service, they may choose to split the leave between them. The department is responsible for funding these costs.

If the RA/TA fails to return to their appointment after the expiration of this leave or returns to the appointment but fails to remain for at least 30 days (remaining period of appointment period), the graduate assistant agrees to reimburse ASU the salary paid under this policy. ASU will excuse reimbursement where the failure to return is due to the continuation, recurrence, or onset of a serious health condition of the RA/TA or the child which would otherwise entitle the employee to leave under FMLA; or other circumstances beyond the RA/TA's control.

For further information on parental leave, please visit academicpersonnel.asu.edu/parental-leave .

GSA appointments do not provide a parental leave benefit.

E. Library Privileges

RAs/TAs are entitled to an extended borrowing period of 90 days.

GSA appointments do not provide an extended library borrowing period benefit.

XIX. Mentoring

Mentorship is a stronger predictor of graduate student success than academic aptitude. All graduate students at ASU are encouraged to cultivate broad mentor networks. These should include multiple formal one-on-one advisor relationships with a variety of faculty and professionals in their intended career fields, as well as informal peer mentoring groups for navigating graduate life.

graduate.asu.edu/current-students/enrich-your-experience/mentoring

XX. Professional Development

The Graduate College offers a variety of in-person and asynchronous programs and resources designed to help students progress in their professional journeys toward meaningful careers. Resources for the 24-25 academic year include opportunities to deepen skills in public speaking, mentoring and leadership as well as teaching and learning.

graduate.asu.edu/current-students/enrich-your-experience/professional-development

Schools and units also provide resources that address skill development in teaching and learning, research and data analysis, among other important competencies.