

GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

Assistantships

Graduate Assistantship-Terms and Conditions of Appointment
Termination of Graduate Assistants

Assistantships

Assistantship awards offer a stipend to the student in return for certain specified services to CSU. The stipend is treated as income (subject to withholding taxes) and both CSU and the student agree to a formal appointment when an assistantship is arranged. Both the amount of the stipend and the extent of time commitment vary from case to case and are set forth in the appointment.

Performance of the assistantship duties provides the student with valuable experience which contributes to professional and career development. Most graduate student support at CSU and many other American universities is in the form of assistantships.

Teaching assistantships involve payment for services related to undergraduate instruction. Some form of experience, skill, or aptitude is necessary for appointment. The duties typically involve grading papers, compiling biographies, monitoring laboratories, conducting discussion sections, or teaching an entire class. Some of these duties require that teaching assistants be able to communicate effectively in English. Usually, teaching assistant duties are confined to beginning-level undergraduate classes.

Departments will conduct the ASCSU course survey for each teaching assistant who is the instructor of record for a course. For teaching assistants who are not the instructor of record but with significant undergraduate teaching contact, departments will ensure that an appropriate survey is completed. These surveys and records of other student feedback will be maintained as part of the department's information base and made available to faculty and administration for future assessment of the policy's effectiveness.

Teaching assistants required to take the TOEFL, IELTS, or the PTE Academic for admission will also be evaluated for their ability to communicate orally in English by their departments. The evaluation will occur prior to pedagogical exposure in the undergraduate classroom using a mechanism that is commensurate with the teaching expectations for their positions. A committee, appointed by the department, shall offer evaluative feedback to potential teaching assistants and determine whether they are capable of teaching in the program. This evaluation shall become part of the student's file. Departments will use the results of both the oral evaluation and course surveys, when available, in determining whether a teaching assistant communicates effectively in English. Teaching assistants unable to communicate effectively in English will be given assistance to help them become more proficient before being reevaluated and assigned responsibilities for classroom instruction.

Teaching assistantships are funded by the state of Colorado as part of the resident instruction budget. Teaching assistantships include payment of tuition on behalf of the student as an added benefit.

Research assistantships are basically similar to teaching assistantships except that recipients are given basic research assignments. The precise nature of the duties will vary depending on the nature of the discipline,

the particular projects under way in the department, and the interests and skills of the students. Often the work required is related to the student's course work; in some instances it may directly contribute to thesis, dissertation, or other degree requirements. Generally, research assistantship work is an important part of the process of becoming an active participant in the discipline.

Research assistantships are typically funded through external research grants obtained by members of the faculty. A research assistantship contract may provide for payment of tuition, but this is not necessarily the case.

Residence hall, counseling, and athletic assistantships may be available. Residence hall assistantships sometimes include room, board, and tuition in addition to stipends. Write the Office of Housing and Dining Services (<http://housing.colostate.edu/contact-us/>) for residence hall assistantships.

Graduate Assistantship - Terms and Conditions of Appointment

The following terms and conditions apply to all graduate students being appointed as Graduate Assistants. The Graduate Assistant Appointment and Certification Form generated by the academic department should be signed only after reading the terms and conditions set forth below and those noted on the Graduate Assistant Appointment and Certification Form.

All appointments of a student (the "Student") as a Graduate Assistant (the "Appointment") by Colorado State University (the "University") are effective on the date set forth beside the student's signature on the Graduate Assistant Appointment and Certification Form, subject to final approval ("Final Approval") by the Board of Governors of the Colorado State University System or the individual to whom the Board has delegated such authority (its "delegated representative").

The stipend payable to a Graduate Assistant, as specified on a Graduate Assistant Appointment and Certification Form, is offered in return for services and shall be deemed taxable compensation. Tuition remission, if specified on a Graduate Assistant Appointment and Certification Form, is provided in the form of financial aid, independently of the stipend, as a qualified tuition reduction given for educational purposes under Section 117 of the Internal Revenue Code.

A Graduate Assistant may be appointed as a Support Assistant, a Teaching Assistant, or a Research Assistant, or some combination thereof, as specified on a Graduate Assistant Appointment and Certification Form. Support Assistants provide administrative services; they are typically located in non-academic units like Housing or Athletics, but may be found in any office. Teaching Assistants help in the provision of educational services to undergraduates. Responsibilities may range from grading papers through leading discussions or lab sessions to complete independent teaching of a class. Research Assistants typically work with a professor on a project of importance to scholarship. The particular nature of Student's duties will be specified in writing, to the Student by the student's advisor or a departmental representative.

Full-time graduate students should not be appointed to more than a half-time assistantship or hold a sum of part-time assistantships greater than half-time. A half-time assistantship (.5 FTE) usually involves an average of about 20 hours of service per week of a nominal 40 hour workweek. Stipends will vary by department and by the duties assigned as well as the skills, competencies, and experience exhibited by the

student. However, the stipend for half-time assistants must be paid no less than the Graduate School's officially established minimum monthly amount. Contact the Graduate School for information on the amount of this minimum for any given year. A quarter-time assistantship (.25 FTE) usually involves an average of about 10 hours of service per week of a nominal 40 hour workweek. Those with such assignments, must be paid a minimum of half of this amount. Any other level of appointment (e.g. less than 25% or between 26% and 49%) must be paid at least the prorated established minimum stipend. The level of appointment, amount of stipend and any tuition remission for each Graduate Assistant shall be as set forth on the Graduate Assistant Appointment and Certification Form.

Signature of the Graduate Assistant Appointment and Certification Form by the Student and Final Approval by the Board of Governors of the Colorado State University System or its delegated representative shall constitute a legally binding employment agreement (the "Agreement") between the University and Student. Such Agreement shall be subject to the following terms and conditions::

1. Appointment as a Graduate Assistant is expressly conditioned upon:

- a. Student securing admission to a graduate degree program and the Graduate School, and registering for and completing at least one (1) on-campus credit during each fall and spring semester, and such credits as the appointing department may require each summer term during which the appointment is in effect.
- b. Student's conformance to each of the following: maintaining good academic standing at Colorado State University; maintaining at least a 3.0 grade point average in each of the various categories (regular courses and overall) specified in the Scholastic Standards (<http://catalog.colostate.edu/general-catalog/graduate-bulletin/graduate-study/procedures-requirements-all-degrees/#scholastic-standards>) section of the Graduate and Professional Bulletin after having attained 12 credits of regular coursework or two semesters of graduate work, whichever comes first; not being placed on academic probation; and for non-native speakers of English, taking and obtaining a satisfactory score on prescribed language competency tests.
- c. Continued association with and enrollment in an academic department and the absence of suspension, dismissal, expulsion, or withdrawal from the University, Graduate School, or department.
- d. Student's performance of assigned duties and functions in a timely and competent fashion.
- e. A routine background check, if applicable, is completed and reviewed in compliance with the Colorado State University policy regarding background checks.

Conditions A through C above shall be deemed conditions precedent which must be met by the Student in order to remain eligible for appointment as a Graduate Assistant. Failure to meet conditions A through C above shall render the appointment voidable at the option of the University, which option may be exercised by discontinuing payment of the stipend. Failure to meet the conditions set forth in D and E above may result in termination of the Appointment, subject to Paragraph 5 below. Termination of or election to void the Appointment shall terminate the stipend payable thereunder, although such action shall not result in forfeiture of the tuition remission for the semester in which it occurs.

2. The University and the Student understand and agree that the stipend portion of an Assistantship is not a scholarship award; rather it is an appointment which involves the performance of services in return for

reasonable compensation in the form of stipend. Tuition remission may also be provided in the form of financial aid, independently of the stipend, as a qualified tuition reduction given for educational purposes under Section 117 of the Internal Revenue Code.

3. The term of appointment as a Graduate Assistant and the stipend and tuition remission amounts specified in a Graduate Assistant appointment and Certification Form may reflect the anticipated continuation of the appointment for more than one academic semester, which is set forth as an administrative convenience only. Notwithstanding any such provisions, the term of appointment as a Graduate Assistant and Student's right to receive the stipend and tuition remission during any succeeding academic semester is not guaranteed by the University and no offer of future appointment shall be implied.
4. The University (or the appointing department) reserves the right to terminate the Appointment because of unavailability of funds or other conditions beyond its control upon thirty days written notice to Student, said notice effective when posted in a U.S. Mail Depository with sufficient postage attached thereto. Termination of the appointment shall terminate the stipend payable thereunder, although termination shall not result in forfeiture of the tuition remission for the semester in which such termination occurs.
5. Pursuant to State Statute C.R.S. 24-19-104, all Graduate Assistants are "employees at will" and their employment may be terminated by either party at any time, for any reason or no reason. Termination of at-will employees does not generally require pre-termination due process. However, except for non-renewals of employment following the end of a stated employment period or election to void an appointment due to failure of conditions A through C under Paragraph 1 above, the Provost/Academic Vice President must review and approve any recommendations concerning the termination of a Graduate Assistant Appointment, including a determination, based on advice from the Office of the General Counsel, as to whether any pre-termination due process is appropriate under the circumstances. Approval of the Board of Governors of the Colorado State University System or its delegated representative is required prior to any final action on such terminations. The provisions of this section shall not be interpreted to authorize the termination of any Graduate Assistant for any reason that is contrary to applicable federal, state, or local law. Termination of or an election to void an Assistantship shall be subject to appeal in accordance with the Graduate Appeals Procedure set forth in the Graduate and Professional Bulletin.
6. Payments will be made on the last work day of the month. All payments will be deposited directly in a bank or forwarded to the address indicated on the Earnings Disposition/Address Form. Students must report to their major department to complete the necessary forms.
7. Benefits: Between semesters Graduate Assistants usually concentrate on their research and associated library work. To the extent that the supervising faculty member and department head concur, Graduate Assistants may use such periods for leave. Graduate Assistants are covered by the University's liability insurance and by Workers' Compensation. The Graduate School provides a health insurance contribution to help offset the cost of health insurance to qualifying graduate assistants. See the Graduate School's Assistantship Health Insurance Contribution (<https://graduateschool.colostate.edu/financial/assistantships/assistantship-health-contribution/>) for details and eligibility criteria. Graduate Assistants may also qualify for parental leave benefits. See the Graduate Student Parental Leave policy (<http://>

policylibrary.colostate.edu/policy.aspx?id=743) for eligibility and application form details.

8. The Colorado Uniform Jury Selection and Service Act applied to persons appointed as Graduate Assistants and they must be excused for jury service as required by thereunder.
9. A Graduate Assistant may be required to participate in a retirement program depending on the number of credit hours for which they are enrolled and the number of hours of work required. Contribution to such a retirement program shall follow the University's rules and regulations currently in effect for such enrollment. More detailed information concerning participation in the student retirement plan is available from the Student Employment Services Office.
10. The appointment period specified on the Graduate Assistant Appointment and Certification Form may be renewed by the Department by generating a new Graduate Assistant Appointment and Certification Form requiring Student signature.
11. Increases in the amount of the stipend from that originally indicated on the Graduate Assistant Appointment and Certification Form will not require Student signature.
12. Changes other than those noted on #11 (e.g., type of assistantship, level of service, decrease in stipend, or tuition payment arrangements) require the drawing of a new Graduate Assistant Appointment and Certification Form for student signature.

Termination of Graduate Assistants

Pursuant to State Statute, C.R.S. 24-19-104, all graduate assistants are "employees at will." Their employment is subject to such administrative termination procedures as may be appropriate under the circumstances of each case. Advisors and/or department heads must consult with the Associate Dean of the Graduate School prior to taking any actions concerning terminations of assistantships before the end of the stated employment period. Except for non-renewals of employment following the end of stated employment periods or election to void an appointment as set forth in the terms and conditions applicable to graduate assistant appointments, the Provost/Academic Vice President must review and endorse any recommendation concerning the termination of graduate assistants. Approval of the President or Provost/Academic Vice President as the delegated representatives of the Board of Governors is required for any final action on such terminations. Stipends payable under graduate assistantships shall be terminated upon discontinuance of association with the appointing department, dismissal, placement on academic probation, or withdrawal from CSU. Such actions will not cause forfeiture of the tuition remission for the semester in which such action occurs. The provisions of this section shall not be interpreted to authorize the termination of any graduate assistant for any reason that is contrary to applicable federal, state, or local law.

Termination of an assistantship shall be subject to appeal in accordance with the Graduate Appeals Procedure (http://catalog.colostate.edu/general-catalog/graduate-bulletin/graduate-study/procedures-requirements-all-degrees/evaluation_of_graduate_students_and_graduate_school_appeals_procedure/).