

Policy Title:

Graduate Assistantships – Compensation and Work Obligation

Purpose:

In an effort to support and foster the highest of educational standards for SUNY Cortland's Graduate Assistants and to comply with workload expectations for Graduate Assistants as interpreted by SUNY System Administration, the College places limits on the number of work hours for Graduate Assistants.

This policy also defines compensation in terms of appropriate stipend and tuition remission for graduate assistants.

The purpose of this policy is to have a formal reference document that clarifies the role of Graduate Assistants and supports the University's policy.

Policy:

Graduate Assistants receive a stipend as well as tuition support. Graduate assistantships cover the Fall and Spring semesters only. Work outside of those times should be through temporary service payroll for summer session and extra service payroll for winter session. Graduate students who hold full assistantships are expected to work approximately 20 hours per week while class is in session. Those on half assistantships work approximately 10 hours per week while class is in session.

Definition:

Graduate assistants - graduate students who are formally appointed to a graduate assistant title on regular employee payroll and are represented by the Graduate Students Employee Union (GSEU). They are not graduate students who are appointed to student payroll.

Graduate assistants assist with academic programs and research, but are first and foremost students. Assistantships should aid in the orderly progression toward degree goals and not delay or hinder this progression. The position should be related to the student's overall educational program and the educational programs of the College. The assistantship vacancy announcement must articulate the educational value of the position as it relates to the progression for that student toward his/her degree. It must also require that the student is enrolled in a specific program of study which is related to the position.

Graduate assistants provide support to academic faculty and/or professional staff, and their activities are emphasized as a learning process related to their discipline. The emphasis on graduate assistantships is not necessarily productive employment. Examples of typical duties are listed below:

- Academic departments - providing support for faculty members by assisting in teaching, reading papers and examinations and preparing bibliographies; assisting academic staff in

individual and departmental research activities; other types of non-clerical support for departmental functions.

- Non-academic offices – providing administrative and/or program support to a variety of projects and programs which may include, but are not limited to: assessment, data analysis, student programming development and implementation, web design, development of communication materials (including social media), presentation preparation and delivery, peer advisement/mentoring, supervision of undergraduate student workers; event development and management. The combination of such duties must require graduate assistants to use and apply content knowledge or enhance understanding of the subject matter of their educational program.

Work obligation:

1. Graduate Assistants on full or half assistantships can be offered additional work, with pay, without limitations during the summer and winter intercessions through temporary service payroll.
2. Graduate Assistants on half assistantships can be offered additional work, with pay, up to approximately 11 or 12 hours per week while class is in session payable as extra service through temporary service payroll.
3. Graduate Assistants on full assistantships can be offered additional work up to approximately 1 to 2 hours per week payable as extra service through temporary service payroll.
4. Graduate Assistants may assist faculty with classes and may teach laboratory sections. They are not permitted to teach classes by themselves.
5. Graduate Assistants may teach activity classes as long as the assignment remains in compliance with rules one through four.
6. Supervisors must be diligent in making sure graduate assistants are working within their defined obligation (20 hours per week for a full assistantship; 10 hours per week for a half assistantship).
7. Supervisors must also monitor any extra service performed by graduate assistants to make sure they are within the established limits (1 to 2 hours for full assistantship; 11 to 12 hours for half assistantship).

Compensation:

Graduate assistants are compensated with a stipend amount within an established range and with standard tuition remission as follows:

Level	Stipend Range	Tuition Remission
Full assistantship	\$2,500 to \$3,000 per semester	Six credit hours/semester
Half assistantships	\$1,250 to \$1,500 per semester	Three credit hours/semester

The usual stipend amount will be at the minimum of the stipend range unless the position description warrants a higher level. Position descriptions and accompanying stipend amounts

for academic departments must be approved by the respective dean. Outside of academic departments, position descriptions and accompanying stipend amounts must be approved by the respective vice president. All position descriptions with stipend amounts above the minimum rate must also be approved by Human Resources.

- The base annual compensation for an academic year full graduate assistantship is a \$5,000 stipend plus six credit hours of tuition remission per semester (currently at \$5,435). This equates to \$10,435.
- There are some job characteristics which would support paying over the base level of compensation. They are:
 - Nights/weekends
 - Travel
 - Supervision of student workers
 - Specific expertise and/or certification
- A five percent increase for each characteristic can be supported. The maximum would be the base plus 20 percent, which equals \$6,000 for a full assistantship for a full academic year.
- The maximum can be exceeded if it is caused by a returning student who has received negotiated salary increases.
- Under exceptional circumstances, a request to pay over the maximum must be brought to the Cabinet with justification by the appropriate VP.

Approval: April 13, 2015 President's Cabinet

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