



Office of the Provost

Graduate Student Hiring and Support Guidelines

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I. INTRODUCTION

This guidelines' primary audience is the faculty and staff who operate graduate programs at George Mason University, as well as George Mason's graduate students. These guidelines will be updated on an as-needed basis. Comments about its improvement are welcome. Please direct this correspondence to provpb@gmu.edu.

"George Mason University is committed to providing equal opportunity and an educational and work environment free from any discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, or age. George Mason University shall adhere to all applicable state and federal equal opportunity/affirmative action statutes and regulations." University Policy Number 1201.

DEFINITIONS

Please note: The current University Catalog definitions may differ from what is listed below (based upon 2011-2012 catalog). Current catalog definitions supersede the definitions provided in this document.

Academic Units: George Mason University's eleven schools/colleges/institutes: College of Education and Human Development (CEHD), College of Health and Human Services (CHHS), College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS), College of Science (COS), College of Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA), School of Conflict Analysis and Resolution (SCAR), Krasnow Institute for Advanced Study (KR), School of Law (SOL), School of Management (SOM), School of Public Policy (SPP), and The Volgenau School of Engineering (VSE).

Home Academic Unit: The academic unit where the student's primary program of study is managed, and from where the student's degree will be conferred.

Academic Year: August 25 through May 24 (of the following year). This includes only the fall and spring semesters.

Fellowship (centrally funded): A form of funding for students that does not involve a work component. Funding and eligibility details for each particular fellowship vary. Details can be found in Section VIII of this document.

Good Academic Standing: A graduate student without an Academic Warning or Academic Termination standing.

Graduate Assistantship (GA): A university employment position for graduate students. Categories of employment include: Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA), Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA) and Graduate Professional Assistantship (GPA). Details can be found in Section II of this document.

Full-Time Graduate Assistantship: An assistantship of 20 (or more*) hours per week.

Part-Time Graduate Assistantship: An assistantship of less than 20 hours per week. These appointments are commonly 10 hours per week.

*Prior approval is required for GAs to work over 20 hours per week.

Graduate Course: A course numbered 500 and above.

Graduate Degree Program: A master's, doctoral, or graduate certificate program of study. This does not include students in nondegree status.

Graduate Lectureship (GL): Graduate students who are the instructor of record for a credit-bearing course, and are paid according to the Adjunct Faculty Matrix. Faculty supervision is required. For details, see Section III of this document.

Graduate Student: A student enrolled in a master's, doctoral, graduate certificate, or graduate study nondegree program.

Full-Time Graduate Student: Graduate students are considered full-time if they are:

1. Enrolled in at least nine graduate credits per semester, or
2. Hold a full-time assistantship (20 hours a week) and are enrolled in at least six graduate credits per semester, or
3. Master's students may be enrolled in 1 credit of 799 if they have completed 3 credits of 799 and the student along with their advisor and department chair certify each semester that the student is working full-time on the thesis, or
4. Doctoral students who are enrolled in dissertation credits (either 998 or 999) are considered full-time if they are enrolled in at least 6 credits per semester, regardless of whether they hold an assistantship. Doctoral students who have advanced to candidacy and have completed the minimum number of credits required by the university and their degree program, including the minimum number of credits of 998 and 999, are considered full-time if they are registered for at least 1 credit of 999 and the student along with their advisor and department chair certify each semester that they are working full-time on the dissertation.

To be considered as full-time under the aforementioned clauses, a student must complete and submit the appropriate forms to the Office of the University Registrar prior to the first day of classes for the semester. Students are responsible for following the applicable procedures to ensure that the Office of the University Registrar has approved their full-time status.

Note that different criteria for full-time status may apply for tuition, verification, loan deferral, and financial aid. Contact Student Accounts, the Registrar's Office, and Student Financial Aid, respectively, for more information.

Part-Time Graduate Student: Graduate students are considered part-time if they do not meet or exceed the full-time definition. However, they must be enrolled in at least one graduate credit.

Scholarship: Funding given to a student by a school or agency to cover part or all expenses associated with attending school, for which neither work nor repayment is required. Funding and eligibility details for each particular scholarship vary. For information on scholarships, please visit the Financial Aid website.

Unsatisfactory Grade: A course grade of "C" or below, or a course grade of "Incomplete" (IN).

II. GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP (GA)

- Graduate appointments must be made from the available applicant pool of all students who have requested hiring consideration on their graduate application for admission.
- Each academic unit or department establishes procedures to ensure that students are selected fairly and in accordance with university hiring guidelines. If the hiring department is unsure of its procedures, please contact the dean's office for guidance.
- Students who have completed their degrees should not be employed on a GA (or on a GL). If a department wishes to employ a graduate, it should do so under a non-student wage, classified, or other appropriate appointment.

GA CLASSIFICATIONS

If hiring an international student, also review Section VI of this document

George Mason hires graduate students in various ways to perform varying tasks. Students should be hired under one of these classifications according to the one that is applicable to the student's job responsibilities. If the student's job responsibilities do not fit one of the GA classifications, students can also be hired as a Student Wage; details can be found in Section V of this document.

Graduate Research Assistant (GRA)

- A graduate student participating directly in research or research-support activities under faculty supervision.

Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA)

- A graduate student participating directly in instructional activities under faculty supervision, whether or not the instructor of record.
- GTAs may not teach more than two undergraduate lecture courses, or six semester hours of recitation sections, or nine semester hours of laboratory per semester.
- GTA assignments may also be given to perform activities that are not enrollment related, but which relate to teaching in some way. These activities typically include tutoring, advising, and curriculum development. The specific activity must be described in the offer letter.
- Graduate students must never teach any course that could enroll students in the same program or programs in which the GTA will take courses.
- GTAs are encouraged to review the Center for Teaching Excellence's available information.

Graduate Professional Assistant (GPA)

- A graduate student participating in a non-teaching/non-research position performing work in which they primarily gain experience, practice and guidance in relation to their academic program and that is significantly connected to their fields of study and career preparation.
- Hiring units must submit GPA position descriptions to Human Resources for review and approval prior to making an offer to a student. Units should complete the GPA Position Description Form

found on the Provost's website and email the form and a request for a position number to Ilse Riddick (iriddick@gmu.edu) in HR for review and approval.

GA ELIBIGILITY

Graduate students may be hired by George Mason only if they meet the necessary requirements:

Graduate Research Assistant (GRA)

- Students must be admitted to a graduate degree program at George Mason.
- Students must have full-time enrollment during the semesters they are GRAs (whether their GRA is full-time or part-time). Monitoring the GRA's enrollment will be conducted by the hiring department.
 - Exceptions to the six-hour enrollment required are considered only for students who need fewer than six hours to complete their degree and graduate. If the student falls into this category, the student's graduate coordinator must forward a written request to carry a reduced load to the dean's office by the latest schedule adjustment date.
 - This request should include the student's status in his or her program and the number of remaining hours and specific courses that remain. If all dissertation or thesis hours have been expended, the student must still register for one credit of dissertation or thesis work per semester.
 - F-1 and J-1 international students also need the approval of OIPS before dropping below full-time (as defined in the University Catalog.)
- Students must be in good academic standing, have a minimum 3.0 GPA, and may not have any recent (as defined by the dean's office) unsatisfactory grades at the time the offer letter is created.
- Students must meet George Mason's English proficiency requirements. Individual programs reserve the right to set higher minimum scores. Please visit the *Admissions* section of the current university catalog.
- Students must submit the necessary hiring paperwork; for details, see Section II, Hiring Paperwork, of this document.

Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA)

- Students must be admitted to a graduate degree program at George Mason.
- Students must have full-time enrollment during the semesters they're GTAs (whether their GTA is full-time or part-time). Monitoring the GTA's enrollment will be conducted by the hiring department.
 - Exceptions to the six-hour enrollment required are considered only for students who need fewer than six hours to complete their degree and graduate. If the student falls into this category, the student's graduate coordinator must forward a written request to carry a reduced load to the dean's office by the latest schedule adjustment date.
 - This request should include the student's status in his or her program and the number of remaining hours and specific courses that remain. If all dissertation or thesis hours have been expended, the student must still register for one credit of dissertation or thesis work per semester.
 - F-1 and J-1 international students also need the approval of OIPS before dropping below full-time (as defined in the University Catalog.)

- Students must be in good academic standing, have a minimum 3.0 GPA, and may not have any recent (as defined by the dean's office) unsatisfactory grades at the time the offer letter is created.
- Students must meet George Mason's English proficiency requirements. Individual programs reserve the right to set higher minimum scores. Please visit the *Admissions* section of the current university catalog for these requirements.
 - Additionally, all international GTAs whose native language is not English must take the SPEAK test. Arrangements for the SPEAK test can be made with George Mason's English Language Institute (ELI).
 - Students who score less than 50 out of a possible 60 are required to take 12 hours of tutoring to improve their pronunciation and/or fluency. After the completion of 12 hours of tutoring, students are allowed to retake the test. The ELI tutoring is provided as a free service to George Mason students.
 - The international student's SPEAK test score must be placed in the hiring packet. Students cannot be given a GTA or GL unless they have scored at least 50 out of a possible 60 on the test, but they may perform non-instructional duties such as homework grading, assisting with a lab course, etc.
- Graduate students who hold a master's degree or at least 18 credit hours in the relevant field (or are qualified through professional experience, as defined by the dean's office) may teach undergraduate courses in that field.
 - Students who conduct labs, grade papers, or perform other teaching support services to the instructor of record are not required to have 18 hours of graduate course work in the pertinent field.
- Students must submit the necessary hiring paperwork; for details, see Section II, Hiring Paperwork of this document.

Graduate Professional Assistant (GPA)

- Students must be admitted to a graduate degree program at George Mason.
- Students must have full-time enrollment during the semesters they are GPAs (whether their GPA is full-time or part-time). Monitoring the GPA's enrollment will be conducted by the hiring department.
 - Exceptions to the six-hour enrollment required are considered only for students who need fewer than six hours to complete their degree and graduate. If the student falls into this category, the student's graduate coordinator must forward a written request to carry a reduced load to the dean's office by the latest schedule adjustment date.
 - This request should include the student's status in his or her program and the number of remaining hours and specific courses that remain. If all dissertation or thesis hours have been expended, the student must still register for one credit of dissertation or thesis work per semester.
 - F-1 and J-1 international students also need the approval of OIPS before dropping below full-time (as defined in the University Catalog.)
- Students must be in good academic standing, have a minimum 3.0 GPA, and may not have any recent (as defined by the dean's office) unsatisfactory grades at the time the offer letter is created.

- Students must meet George Mason’s English proficiency requirements. Individual programs reserve the right to set higher minimum scores. Please visit the *Admissions* section of the current university catalog.
- Students must submit the necessary hiring paperwork; for details, see Section II, Hiring Paperwork, of this document.

GA ORIGINAL APPOINTMENTS

Determining the Support Package

The support package will be determined based upon the availability of funds (if there is uncertainty regarding funding, contact the dean’s office).

- The Office of the Provost encourages that a full academic year of support be granted to students prior to the start of the fall semester.
- The support package is outlined and offered to the student via an offer letter (for details, see Section IX of this document).

Term

Full Academic Year: August 25 to May 24

Fall Semester: August 25 to January 9

Spring Semester: January 10 to May 24

Summer Sessions: Three months between May 25 and August 24

- The offer letter must specify if the student will be required to work over university or semester breaks. Visit the Office of the University Registrar’s website for the applicable semester’s academic calendar.

Salary

- Compensation for graduate assistants is determined by the level of skill and prerequisite skill requirements. For minimum compensation requirements, please reference the *Compensation Rates for GTAs, GRAs and GPAs* found on the Provost’s website.
 - These posted compensation rates are for full-time (20 hours per week) assignments. Students who have received approval for appointments of more than 20 hours per week should have their compensation prorated appropriately. Likewise, students who are holding appointments of less than 20 hours should have their compensation also prorated appropriately.

Tuition Support

- Tuition support to graduate assistants can be provided through graduate tuition waivers or through tuition grants. For details, please see Section II, GA Complementary Support, of this document.

Subsidized Health Insurance

- Fully subsidized health insurance is available to eligible students. For details, please see Section II, GA Complementary Support, of this document or visit the Provost’s website.

In-State Tuition Eligibility

- Out-of-state domiciles may be eligible to receive in-state tuition rates. For details, please see Section II, GA Complementary Support, of this document or visit the Provost’s website.

Hiring Paperwork

- All graduate students with a paid assignment must complete all hiring paperwork. Paperwork should be completed within the hiring department unless the hiring department has made other arrangements with HR & Payroll.
- Mason is an E-Verify employer. All employees may be subject to E-Verify.
- International students with paid assignments must make an appointment with the international tax coordinator, located in Fiscal Services, University Hall.
- All employees must enroll for direct deposit via PatriotWeb. See University Policy Number 2201 for more details.
- All original documents completed with the department should be sent to HR & Payroll. All original transcripts should be sent to the Office of the Provost, MS 3A2.
- Copies of the following completed hiring documents should be kept on file by every department that hires the student (per the Decentralized Hiring Policy provided by Human Resources and Payroll):
 1. Supporting hiring documentation (offer letter, key request forms, etc.)
 2. Employment Information Sheet
 3. Commonwealth Drug & Alcohol Policy
 4. Conditions of Employment
 5. Selective Service Form (if hiring a male student)
 6. Original transcript (if a GTA or GL)
 7. Proof of SPEAK Test proficiency (if a GTA or GL)
 - Contact your dean's office for information on your academic unit's internal procedures- the dean's office may desire copies of all or some of the above-mentioned forms.

Electronic Personnel Action Form Process

After receiving the signed offer letter from the student, the hiring department will then enter the employee into the Banner HR system through the Electronic Personnel Action Form process. This will enable the student to receive a payment each pay period.

- Fall assignments must be entered by August 25th to ensure students are paid on time. Spring assignments must be entered by January 10th to ensure students are paid on time.
- Please refer to the previously listed Term dates for appropriate position begin and end dates.
- For assistance with the Electronic Personnel Action Form (EPAF), please contact HR and Payroll.

GA SUMMER APPOINTMENTS

GAs hired during the summer are supported and hired in the same fashion as GAs hired during the academic year. However, here are a few notes of additional guidance:

- The term can be active from one summer session to three (dates between May 25 and August 24).
 - Their compensation should mirror their effort.
- Summer GTAs are compensated according to the Adjunct Faculty Matrix found on the Provost's website.

- Students who receive graduate assistantship appointments for the summer do not have to enroll in summer classes, but their salary will be subject to FICA withholding (unless they are exempt under a special rule that applies to certain F-1 and J-1 students).
 - Students not enrolled in courses may work up to 40 hours per week. Their compensation should be increased accordingly.
- Students who are enrolled full-time during the summer and who hold GAs will not be subject to FICA withholding.
- Full-time status for students enrolled during the summer term is the same as for fall and spring semesters.

GA RE-APPOINTMENTS

- The hiring department or sponsored project's principal investigator prepares and sends an offer letter to the student. (For details, see Section IX of this document).
- If the student wishes to accept the offer, he or she must sign the offer letter and return it to the hiring department by the date specified in the offer letter.
- Forms I-9 for non-immigrants typically expire based on the expiration of the immigration documents on which they are based. I-9 forms must be updated prior to their expiration so that the students may continue uninterrupted employment.
- The student should report to the department or sponsored project director with the signed offer letter. International students will also bring their updated I-9, verified by the NEW Center, if applicable. All forms from the original appointment should still be on file.
- The hiring department will then create the EPAF.

GA TERMINATION

- Graduate assistants who are terminated early, regardless of the reason, should be compensated in direct proportion to the total time worked up to the point of termination. To avoid overpayments, the hiring department must inform HR and Payroll of the early termination as soon as it is practical to do so.
 - Termination EPAFs must be submitted and approved five days prior to the end of the pay period in which the student's last employment date falls.
- Students who do not complete the assignment as described in the offer letter may be removed from the assistantship and lose their tuition support in future terms. See Attachment A of the Graduate Assistant/Lecturer Appointment Letter Template (located on the Provost's website) for more information on the terms and conditions of employment.
 - Tuition charges will be subject to university tuition liability rules if the student withdraws from any of his or her classes.
 - Visit the Office of the University Registrar's website for the applicable semester's academic calendar.
- Students must provide their desire to terminate a GA in writing.

GA RESTRICTIONS

The following restrictions apply to hiring graduate students under any GA classification. Failure to adhere to these restrictions may result in the student being removed from their appointment.

- Full-time or part-time GAs will be awarded only to full-time graduate students.
- Appointments are intended to contribute to the graduate student’s educational experience. Therefore, secretarial or clerical duties, or duties unrelated to the student’s education experience, are inappropriate as part of GA responsibilities.
- If using sponsored funds to support a GTA, prior approval from OSP is required.
- Graduate students will normally be limited to one 20-hour per week GA (or the equivalent). Exceptions can be granted for a maximum of ten additional hours. This exception is granted by the dean of the domestic student’s home academic unit prior to an additional appointment. This is applicable whether the student is appointed in one, or in multiple academic units.
 - F-1 or J-1 visa international students may not work more than 20 hours per week during the fall or spring semester; consult OIPS for details.
- If the student is hired by another academic unit, the home academic unit of the student must approve the additional appointment and its conditions.
- Fellowship and GA/GL funds may be combined to create a financial aid package for an individual student. However, the maximum compensation for a given student should not exceed the levels normally prevailing in the academic unit(s) involved (refer to the dean’s office for guidance).

GA COMPLEMENTARY SUPPORT

Allowable by Classification

- Tuition support to GAs and GLs can be provided through graduate tuition waivers or through tuition grants.
- Being hired into a GA or GL does not guarantee tuition support.
- Students holding GAs or GLs are not eligible for employee tuition waivers.

Tuition Definitions: Table One

For details on tuition definitions, see below

Graduate Assignment	Eligible for Employee Tuition Waiver	Eligible for Graduate Waiver	Eligible for Tuition Grant	Banner Position Prefix
GRA	No	Yes	Yes	GR
GTA	No	Yes	Yes	GA
GPA	No	Yes	Yes	GP
GL	No	Yes	Yes	GL
Summer GRA	No	Yes	Yes	GR
Summer GTA	No	Yes	Yes	GS
Summer GPA	No	Yes	Yes	GP

Full-time George Mason employee with Faculty Adjunct appointment	Yes	No	Yes	PO
Nondegree seeking graduate student with Faculty Adjunct appointment	Yes	No	Yes	PO

Tuition Grants

Tuition grants are funded scholarships that can be awarded to graduate students, regardless of whether the student holds an assistantship or not. If an academic unit possesses sufficient funds separate from the funds allocated by central administration for graduate tuition waivers, it may provide tuition grants to graduate assistants who have not received a full tuition waiver.

- Tuition grants must not be used as a substitute form of compensation; all compensation must be paid through HR and Payroll.
- Tuition grants may be used to fund the Educational Resource Fee.
- Students on a sponsored project can only receive a tuition grant if the student has an assistantship. For additional information, contact the Office of Sponsored Projects.

Tuition grants should be processed as follows:

- Tuition grants should be processed using Banner Workflow.
- The Office of Student Financial Aid will post the grant on the student’s account. The workflow must be received by the Office of Student Financial Aid at least 72 hours before the payment due date for each applicable semester.

Tuition Waivers

Tuition waivers are unfunded scholarships that represent revenue forgone by the university. Tuition waiver funding is approved by the central administration and allocated to the academic units. Tuition waivers are awarded only to students hired by George Mason at the discretion of the academic unit.

- The waivers will vary depending on the amount of tuition dollars allocated to the academic unit. Students must hold a GA or GL appointment in order to be eligible for a tuition waiver, but receipt of such an appointment does not guarantee tuition support in any or every semester.
- Tuition waivers must not be used as a substitute form of compensation; all compensation must be paid through HR and Payroll.
- Tuition waivers may be used to fund the Educational Resource Fee.
- The value of the tuition waiver must be described in the offer letter, and cannot exceed tuition charges.
- To be eligible for a tuition waiver, a student must earn a minimum of \$4,000 from academically related activities during the academic year, be hired as a GA or GL, and take a minimum of six hours of graduate course work during each of the fall and spring semesters.

- Fellowship monies may not be included or used when determining a student's eligibility for tuition waivers.

Tuition waivers should be processed as follows:

- Complete and submit the Departmental Tuition Waiver Authorization form found on the Student Account's website.
- The Office of Student Financial Aid will post the grant on the student's account. The form must be received by the Office of Student Financial Aid at least 72 hours before the payment due date for each applicable semester.

Sponsored Tuition Support

- Whenever possible, the tuition support for GAs and GLs paid from restricted funds will be included as a sponsor cost.
- All other policies and procedures governing university funded GAs and GLs apply.
- In cases where sponsor regulations specifically prohibit the use of restricted funds for tuition support, the academic unit may provide the student with tuition support if it determines that it has sufficient funding.

Subsidized Health Insurance Support

Eligible graduate students can receive up to 100% subsidized health insurance coverage through *Aetna Student Health*. The health insurance premium is charged based upon where the student's salary is being paid: if funded through non-sponsored funds, it will be charged to the Office of the Provost; if funded through sponsored funds, it will be charged to the sponsor. Information pertaining to this program can be found on the Provost's website.

In-State Eligibility for Doctoral and MFA Students

Students meeting the eligibility requirements will be charged at in-state tuition rates and such charges shall be reflected on their student accounts. Academic units will use in-state tuition rates when applying tuition support in conjunction with a student's graduate assistantship position(s).

Eligible students will be given the opportunity to take additional credits above those supported by their assistantship(s) at the academic unit's in-state tuition rate. Charges for additional credits taken will be the financial responsibility of the student and applied to their student account. Information pertaining to this program can be found on the Provost's website.

III. GRADUATE LECTURESHIP

- Graduate appointments must be made from the available applicant pool of all students who have requested hiring consideration on their graduate application for admission.
- Each academic unit or department establishes procedures to ensure that students are selected fairly and in accordance with university hiring guidelines. If the hiring department is unsure of its procedures, please contact the dean's office for guidance.

- Students who have completed their degrees should not be employed on a GL (or on a GA). If a department wishes to employ a graduate, it should do so under a non-student wage, classified, or other appropriate appointment.

GL CLASSIFICATION

If hiring an international student, also review Section VI of this document!

Graduate Lecturers (GLs) are graduate students who are the instructor of record for a credit-bearing course for no more than 3 courses or 10 credit hours per semester. Faculty supervision must still be enforced.

- Graduate students must never teach any course that could enroll students in the same program or programs in which the GL will take courses.
- GLs are encouraged to review the Center for Teaching Excellence's available information.

GL ELIGIBILITY

Graduate students may be hired by George Mason only if they meet the necessary requirements:

- Students must be admitted to a graduate degree program at George Mason.
- Students may have full-time or part-time enrollment during the semesters they're GLs. Monitoring the GL's enrollment will be conducted by the hiring department.
 - Exceptions to the six-hour enrollment required are considered only for students who need fewer than six hours to complete their degree and graduate. If the student falls into this category, the student's graduate coordinator must forward a written request to carry a reduced load to the dean's office by the latest schedule adjustment date.
 - This request should include the student's status in his or her program and the number of remaining hours and specific courses that remain. If all dissertation or thesis hours have been expended, the student must still register for one credit of dissertation or thesis work per semester.
 - F-1 and J-1 international students also need the approval of OIPS before dropping below full-time (as defined in the University Catalog.)
- Students must be in good academic standing, have a minimum 3.0 GPA, and may not have any recent (as defined by the dean's office) unsatisfactory grades at the time the offer letter is created.
- Students must meet George Mason's English proficiency requirements. Please visit the *Admissions* section of the current university catalog for these requirements .
- All international GLs whose native language is not English must take the SPEAK test. Arrangements for the SPEAK test can be made with George Mason's English Language Institute (ELI) .
 - Students who score less than 50 out of a possible 60 are required to take 12 hours of tutoring to improve their pronunciation and/or fluency. After the completion of 12 hours of tutoring, students are allowed to retake the test. The ELI's tutoring is provided as a free service to George Mason students.
 - The international student's SPEAK test score must be placed in the hiring packet. Students cannot be given a GTA or GL unless they have scored at least 50 out of a possible 60 on the test,

but they may perform non-instructional duties such as homework grading, assisting with a lab course, etc.

- A student hired as a GL to teach an undergraduate course must have at least 18 hours of graduate course work in the field in which he or she is to teach. A transcript(s) documenting the required number of graduate hours must accompany the hiring paperwork (even if this is not the student's first appointment).
 - If hired to conduct labs, grade papers, or perform other teaching support services to the faculty member of record are not required to have 18 hours of graduate course work in the pertinent field.
 - Graduate students who hold a master's degree or at least 18 credit hours in the relevant field (or are qualified through professional experience, as deemed by the hiring academic unit) may teach undergraduate courses in that field.
- Students must submit the necessary hiring paperwork; for details, see Section III, Hiring Paperwork of this document.

GL ORIGINAL APPOINTMENTS

Determining the Support Package

The support package will be determined based upon the availability of funds (if there is uncertainty regarding funding, contact the dean's office).

- The Office of the Provost encourages that a full academic year of support be granted to students prior to the start of the fall semester.
- The support package is outlined and offered to the student via an offer letter (for details, see Section IX of this document).

Term

Full Academic Year: August 25 to May 9

Fall Semester: August 25 to December 9

Spring Semester: January 25 to May 9

Summer Sessions: Three months between May 25 and August 24

- The offer letter must specify if the student will be required to work over university or semester breaks. Visit the Office of the University Registrar's website for the applicable semester's academic calendar.

Salary

- GLs are compensated according to the Adjunct Faculty Matrix, which is determined per didactic hour. The Matrix can be found on the Provost's website.

Tuition Support

- Tuition support to graduate assistants can be provided through graduate tuition waivers or through tuition grants. For details, please see Section II, GA Complementary Support, of this document.

Hiring Paperwork

- All graduate students with a paid assignment must complete all hiring paperwork. Paperwork should be completed within the hiring department unless the hiring department has made other arrangements with HR & Payroll.

- Mason is an E-Verify employer. All employees may be subject to E-Verify.
- International students with paid assignments must make an appointment with the international tax coordinator, located in Fiscal Services, University Hall.
- All employees must enroll for direct deposit via PatriotWeb. See University Policy Number 2201 for more details.
- All original documents completed with the department should be sent to HR & Payroll. All original transcripts should be sent to the Office of the Provost, MS 3A2.
- Copies of the following completed hiring documents should be kept on file by every department that hires the student (per the Decentralized Hiring Policy provided by Human Resources and Payroll):
 1. Supporting hiring documentation (offer letter, key request forms, etc.)
 2. Employment Information Sheet
 3. Commonwealth Drug & Alcohol Policy
 4. Conditions of Employment
 5. Selective Service Form (if hiring a male student)
 6. Original transcript (if a GTA or GL)
 7. Proof of SPEAK Test proficiency (if a GTA or GL)
 - Contact your dean's office for information on your academic unit's internal procedures- the dean's office may desire copies of all or some of the above-mentioned forms.

Electronic Personnel Action Form Process

After receiving the signed offer letter from the student, the hiring department will then enter the employee into the Banner HR system through the Electronic Personnel Action Form process. This will enable the student to receive a payment each pay period.

- Fall assignments must be entered by August 25th to ensure students are paid on time. Spring assignments must be entered by January 10th to ensure students are paid on time.
- Please refer to the previously listed Term dates for appropriate position begin and end dates.
- For assistance with the Electronic Personnel Action Form (EPAF), please contact HR and Payroll.

GL SUMMER APPOINTMENTS

GLs hired during the summer are supported and hired in the same fashion as GLs hired during the academic year. However, here are a few notes of additional guidance:

- The term can be active from one summer session to three (dates between May 25 and August 24).
 - Their compensation should mirror their effort.
- Students who receive GL appointments for the summer do not have to enroll in summer classes, but their salary will be subject to FICA withholding (unless they are exempt under a special rule that applies to certain F-1 and J-1 students).
 - Students not enrolled in courses may work up to 40 hours per week. Their compensation should be increased accordingly.

- Students who are enrolled full-time during the summer and who hold GLs will not be subject to FICA withholding.
- Full-time status for students enrolled during the summer term is the same as for fall and spring semesters.

GL RE-APPOINTMENTS

- The hiring department prepares and sends an offer letter to the student (For details, see Section IX of this document).
- If the student wishes to accept the offer, he or she must sign the offer letter and return it to the hiring department by the date specified in the offer letter.
- Forms I-9 for non-immigrants typically expire based on the expiration of the immigration documents on which they are based. I-9 forms must be updated prior to their expiration so that the students may continue uninterrupted employment.
- The student should report to the department with the signed offer letter. International students will also bring their updated I-9, verified by the NEW Center, if applicable. All forms from the original appointment should still be on file.
- The hiring department will then create the EPAF.

GL TERMINATION

- Graduate lecturers who are terminated early, regardless of the reason, should be compensated in direct proportion to the total time worked up to the point of termination. To avoid overpayments, the hiring department must inform HR and Payroll of the early termination as soon as it is practical to do so.
 - Termination EPAFs must be submitted and approved five days prior to the end of the pay period in which the student's last employment date falls.
- Students who do not complete the assignment as described in the offer letter may be removed from the assistantship and lose their tuition support in future terms. See Attachment A of the Graduate Assistant/Lecturer Appointment Letter Template (located on the Provost's website) for more information on the terms and conditions of employment.
 - Tuition charges will be subject to university tuition liability rules if the student withdraws from any of his or her classes.
 - Visit the Office of the University Registrar's website for the applicable semester's academic calendar.
- Students must provide their desire to terminate a GL in writing.

GL RESTRICTIONS

The following restrictions apply to hiring graduate students as GLs. Failure to adhere to these restrictions may result in the student being removed from their appointment.

- Full-time or part-time GLs may be awarded to full-time or part-time graduate students.
- This classification does not count towards eligibility for the graduate student health insurance

subsidy or the in-state tuition eligibility policy.

- Students performing an assistant role may not be assigned as a GL.
- Appointments are intended to contribute to the graduate student's educational experience. Therefore, secretarial or clerical duties or duties unrelated to the student's educational experience, are inappropriate as part of GL responsibilities.
- Graduate students will normally be limited to one 20-hour per week GL (or the equivalent). Exceptions can be granted for a maximum of ten additional hours. This exception is granted by the dean of the domestic student's home academic unit prior to an additional employment. This is applicable whether the student is appointed in one, or in multiple academic units.
 - F-1 or J-1 visa international students may not work more than 20 hours per week during the fall or spring semester; consult OIPS for details.
- If the student is hired by another academic unit, the home academic unit of the student must approve the additional appointment and its conditions.
- Fellowship and GA/GL funds may be combined to create a financial aid package for an individual student. However, the maximum compensation for a given student should not exceed the levels normally prevailing in the academic unit(s) involved.

IV. GRADUATE STUDENTS AS ADJUNCT FACULTY

- Graduate appointments must be made from the available applicant pool of all students who have requested hiring consideration on their graduate application for admission.
- Each department or program establishes procedures to ensure that students are selected fairly and in accordance with university hiring guidelines. If the hiring department is unsure of its procedures, please contact the dean's office for guidance.

ADJUNCT CLASSIFICATION

If hiring an international student, also review Section VI of this document

- This classification hires full-time exempt (ineligible for overtime) George Mason employees who are concurrently enrolled in a graduate degree program. With permission of their George Mason supervisor, they may be awarded adjunct appointments to teach. They are hired to teach as the instructor of record.
- It is rare that a student be assigned to an adjunct appointment instead of a GTA or GL appointment. This classification must be used only when absolutely necessary and only for students with primary employee status.
- Additionally, students enrolled in graduate nondegree status may be awarded adjunct appointments to teach.
- These students may or may not be directly under faculty supervision.

- Students hired under this classification are subject to University Policy Number 2209, Employee Tuition Exemption Benefit.

ADJUNCT ELIGIBILITY

- Students must be in good academic standing, have a minimum 3.0 GPA, and may not have any recent (as defined by the dean’s office) unsatisfactory grades at the time the offer letter is created.

ADJUNCT RESTRICTIONS

- This classification does not count towards eligibility for the graduate student health insurance subsidy or the in-state tuition eligibility policy.
- Non-exempt (overtime eligible) full-time employees may have additional appointments but must consult with HR. Please contact HR and Payroll with any questions.

V. GRADUATE STUDENT WAGE APPOINTMENTS

Graduate wage appointments are posted on HireMason. George Mason departments may post their available positions, and students may apply online.

Each department or program establishes procedures to ensure that students are selected fairly and in accordance with university hiring guidelines.

STUDENT WAGE CLASSIFICATION

If hiring an international student, also review Section VI of this document

Per University Policy Number 2222, this classification of worker is for “students employed by Mason on-campus and paid on an hourly basis”. Student Wage appointments are part-time, and are “...limited to 1500 hours of work in a 365 consecutive day period commencing from the date of hire.”

Please review University Policy Number 2222 for further details regarding this classification.

STUDENT WAGE ELIGIBILITY

Graduate students may only be hired by George Mason if they meet the necessary requirements:

- Students must be enrolled in at least six graduate credits (not including audit courses) each semester they are hired, and must maintain a good academic standing during their employment.

STUDENT WAGE ORIGINAL APPOINTMENTS

Determining the Support Package

- A support package is not available to student wage appointments.

Hiring Paperwork

- All graduate students with a paid assignment must complete all hiring paperwork. Paperwork should be completed within the hiring department unless the hiring department has made other arrangements with HR & Payroll.
- Mason is an E-Verify employer. All employees may be subject to E-Verify.

- International students with paid assignments must make an appointment with the international tax coordinator, located in Fiscal Services, University Hall.
- All employees must enroll for direct deposit via PatriotWeb. See University Policy Number 2201 for more details.
- All original documents completed with the department should be sent to HR & Payroll. All original transcripts should be sent to the Office of the Provost, MS 3A2.
- Copies of the following completed hiring documents should be kept on file by every department that hires the student (per the Decentralized Hiring Policy provided by Human Resources and Payroll):
 1. Supporting hiring documentation (offer letter, key request forms, etc.)
 2. Employment Information Sheet
 3. Commonwealth Drug & Alcohol Policy
 4. Conditions of Employment
 5. Selective Service Form (if hiring a male student)
 - Contact your dean's office for information on your academic unit's internal procedures- the dean's office may desire copies of all or some of the above-mentioned forms.

Electronic Personnel Action Form Process

After receiving the signed offer letter from the student, the hiring department will then enter the employee into the Banner HR system through the Electronic Personnel Action Form process. This will enable the student to receive a payment each pay period.

- Fall assignments must be entered by August 25th to ensure students are paid on time. Spring assignments must be entered by January 10th to ensure students are paid on time.
- Please refer to the previously listed Term dates for appropriate position begin and end dates.
- For assistance with the Electronic Personnel Action Form (EPAF), please contact HR and Payroll.

STUDENT WAGE RE-APPOINTMENTS

The hiring department will enter the employee into the Banner HR system through the Electronic Personnel Action Form process.

STUDENT WAGE TERMINATION

- Graduate wage students who are terminated early, regardless of the reason, should be compensated in direct proportion to the total time worked up to the point of termination. To avoid overpayments, the hiring department must inform HR and Payroll of the early termination as soon as it is practical to do so.
- Students must provide their desire to terminate their wage position in writing.

STUDENT WAGE RESTRICTIONS

- If the individual is not enrolled for course credit, he/she must be hired under another classification.
- This classification is not eligible for the Wage Employee Tuition Waiver, or any tuition support.
- This classification may be terminated from employment without cause.

- This classification provides no guarantee of employment for a particular term.
- This classification can only be held by the student part-time (20 hours per week). During semester breaks, this classification can be held by domestic students full-time (40 hours per week).
- This classification does not count towards eligibility for the graduate student health insurance subsidy or the in-state tuition eligibility policy.

VI. HIRING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS UNDER ANY APPOINTMENT CLASSIFICATION

The Office of International Programs and Services (OIPS) provides the following information for hiring international students:

- F-1 and J-1 students are required by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to take a full course load each fall and spring semester (excluding summer term). This means that the student must be recognized as full-time in accordance with the definition in the University Catalog. Students in their final semester of study may receive permission from OIPS to carry a reduced course load if they are enrolled for all remaining credits required to complete their program of study.
- F-1 and J-1 students who are maintaining their status are permitted to work on-campus for up to **20 hours** per week during semesters. Full-time work is permitted during winter and spring breaks and in the summer, provided that the student is eligible and intends to continue study following the break.
- F-1 and J-1 students are admitted to the U.S. for “duration of status,” that is, to complete an educational program. If a student must remain in an educational program beyond the date originally estimated for completion of the program (as stated on Form I-20 or Form DS-2019), the student must comply with DHS or Department of State (DOS) procedures for a program extension.
 - Delay caused by academic probation or suspension is not an acceptable reason for a program extension.
 - The amount of time indicated on the I-20 for each degree program is based on normal or typical progress. An extension may be requested if the student needs additional time to complete the program, provided that the student has continued to make satisfactory progress and the reason for the delay is beyond the student’s control. Requests for program extensions require the academic advisor’s support; a student who has had one approved program extension must seek approval from the OIPS Director if an additional extension is requested.
- Students may use stipends as proof of financial support for issuance of their I-20/DS-2019. A copy of the offer letter must be sent to OIPS indicating stipend amount and specific tuition benefit.
 - If the student’s financial support is based on a GRA, GTA or GPA, it is assumed that the same level of financial support will be renewed in subsequent years. U.S. law requires the Designated School Official to verify the source of financial support for all years of study prior to issuing an I-20 or DS-2019. In some cases, the stipend will not cover all of the student’s educational and living expenses and may need to be supplemented with personal or family funds or sponsorship by an outside organization. Immigration forms will not be issued until all financial support documents have been submitted and have met estimated expense requirements, including

tuition, maintenance, books, and medical insurance. OIPS uses the figures published and updated annually by Mason's Office of Financial Aid.

- All employees in nonimmigrant status must visit the Office of International Programs and Services (OIPS). OIPS will certify students' eligibility to work on campus and provide documents needed for the Social Security Card Application (if a Social Security Number has not yet been obtained).
 - Students must bring their On Campus Employment Certification (OCEC) form or job offer letter and all immigration documents to OIPS.
 - If J-1 Students are NOT sponsored by Mason, it is not necessary for the students to visit OIPS, however, they should confirm with their program sponsor that they have authorization to work on campus and apply for a social security number.
- F-1 Students who do not have a Social Security Number must obtain an enrollment certification from the Office of the University Registrar that reflects full-time status for the current semester.
- All employees in nonimmigrant status must visit the New Employee Welcome (NEW) Center for verification of employment eligibility (DHS Employment I-9 form and E-verify), registration for the online Foreign National Information Form, and assistance in scheduling a tax appointment with the International Tax Coordinator in Fiscal Services.
 - F-1 and J-1 students must bring proof of identity and evidence of their eligibility to work at George Mason for purposes of completing Form I-9.
 - Forms I-9 for non-immigrants typically expire based on the expiration of the immigration documents on which they are based. I-9 forms must be updated prior to their expiration so that the students may continue uninterrupted employment.
- International students who have completed their program of study are no longer eligible for student-based employment. They may be eligible to work based on Optional Practical Training or Academic Training, but this eligibility should be confirmed with OIPS before a job offer is extended.
- For a checklist for New International Student Employees, visit the New Employee Welcome (NEW) Center on the Human Resources website.

VII. WORK EXPECTATIONS OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

- Full-time graduate assistants are expected to work 20 hours per week during the academic year; part-time graduate assistants are expected to work 10 hours per week during the academic year. Work expectations will be established in the offer letter and will be monitored by the supervising faculty member. The supervising faculty member also has the responsibility to evaluate the graduate assistant's work performance.
- The supervising faculty member may require that a GRA or GPA be available to work two weeks prior to the start of the spring semester. In this situation, the faculty member is not obliged to give compensatory time off during the spring semester.
- If the faculty member needs to have the GRA or GPA work at other points in the holiday period, and the student is able to, the faculty member should give the student compensatory time off during the spring semester.

- GTAs should be available for a planning meeting with their supervisor sometime during the two-week period prior to the start of the semester. GTAs who serve as the instructor of record for a course should be available at the conclusion of the semester to answer questions that might arise about student grades.
- The offer letter template requires that work expectations be expressed to the student.

VIII. GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS

CENTRALLY FUNDED FELLOWSHIPS

Determining the Support Package

- The support package will be determined based upon the availability of funds (if there is uncertainty regarding funding, contact the dean's office).
- The Office of the Provost encourages that a full academic year of support be granted to students prior to the start of the fall semester.
- Each year, the central administration allocates resources to the academic units to fund master's and doctoral-level fellowships. These fellowships are funded through the Virginia Commonwealth Award Program.
- The support package is outlined and offered to the student via an offer letter. For details, see Section IX of this document.
- Academic units must adhere to the following guidelines in the awarding of centrally-allocated fellowships:
 - Fellowships should be awarded only to full-time students.
 - The fellowship support package should be documented in the offer letter.
 - Fellowships are not considered compensation, and no work requirement may be attached to the offer of a fellowship.
 - Within the framework described above, academic units may develop additional criteria for the award of fellowships; the criteria should be outlined in the offer letter.
 - If a fellowship is renewable, conditions for renewal should be stated in the offer letter.
 - All nonimmigrant fellowship recipients, regardless of visa type, must contact OIPS as well as arrange to meet with the international tax coordinator in Fiscal Services, before the award can be processed.

Term

Full Academic Year: August 25 to May 24

Fall Semester: August 25 to January 9

Spring Semester: January 10 to May 24

Summer Sessions: Three months between May 25 and August 24

Stipend

The fellowship stipend may not exceed tuition and required fees per semester.

Tuition Support

The fellowship tuition support may not exceed tuition and required fees per semester.

EXTERNALLY FUNDED FELLOWSHIPS

- Externally funded fellowships are awards that provide support to masters and doctoral students for research, writing, fieldwork, language study, professional development, or independent projects undertaken in conjunction with a degree program. There is no work component or employment relationship with the university associated with an externally funded fellowship. Students apply for fellowships and, when granted, these awards are distributed directly to the student, either by the organization awarding the fellowship or through the university.
- When externally funded fellowships are distributed by the university directly to the student, a sponsored fund will be established and stipends will be processed through Accounts Payable using the Externally Funded Fellowship Payment Form.
- Stipendiary payments to the recipient will be made in monthly installments unless the sponsor requires a different payment schedule. Each payment made requires a new Externally Funded Fellowship Payment Form to be created and sent to Accounts Payable for processing.
- Tuition support provided as part of the fellowship should be processed through Workflow
- Expenses that involve a student reimbursement should be processed using the Externally Funded Fellowship Payment Form.

IX. GRADUATE STUDENT SUPPORT FROM THE OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

FULBRIGHT FELLOWSHIP

The Office of the Provost will provide tuition support to students who have been admitted to degree programs and who have also been awarded Fulbright Fellowships.

- Master's-level fellows are eligible for tuition support for one academic year (two semesters).
- Doctoral-level fellows are eligible for tuition support for two academic years (four semesters).

- The Office of the Provost will prepare an offer letter describing the terms of the support, and the Fulbright Fellow will be required to sign and return the letter to indicate acceptance of the letter's terms.
- The Office of the Provost will post tuition grants of nine credit hours up to the out-of-state rate in each of the fall and spring semesters.
- Renewal of a doctoral-level award is contingent upon the student's remaining in good academic standing, the availability of funding, and renewal of the Fulbright Fellowship.

Tuition grants for Fulbright Fellows come with the following restrictions:

- Tuition grants will not be awarded for courses taken in any summer term.
- Tuition grants may not be used for noncredit courses, undergraduate courses, or course work taken through audit.
- The Fulbright Fellow will be responsible for paying for course work taken in excess of nine credit hours in a given semester.
- Tuition grants do not cover the new student fee, course fees or lab fees.

GRADUATE STUDENT TRAVEL FUND

George Mason University recognizes the importance of professional development for its graduate students. The Graduate Student Travel Fund (GSTF) was created for the purpose of facilitating its students' development outside the classroom. The GSTF is funded by the Office of the Provost. For the most up-to-date information, please review the GSTF website dedicated to this program.

MUSKIE FELLOWSHIP

The Office of the Provost will provide tuition support for graduate Muskie Fellows (not to exceed a maximum amount regardless of the number of fellows supported). Please email provpb@gmu.edu for details.

OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE (OSI) FELLOWSHIP

George Mason University will provide 75 percent tuition support for OSI graduate students each semester they're enrolled in classes at George Mason (OSI will fund the remaining 25 percent of tuition). If the academic unit agrees to fund 50 percent of the tuition amount, the Office of the Provost will fund the remaining 25 percent. Please email provpb@gmu.edu for details.

PEACE CORPS/MASTER'S INTERNATIONAL

Specific degree programs at George Mason participate in the Peace Corps/MI program. For students enrolled in these degree programs and in the Peace Corps/MI program, the Office of the Provost will provide funding for six credits upon the student's return from their volunteer service. In order for the tuition support to be applied, a representative from the graduate degree program must provide proof of volunteer service completion for the student. Please email provpb@gmu.edu for details.

PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARSHIP

The Presidential Scholarship is a program of support for first-time Ph.D. students. It is intended to assist George Mason University in recruiting doctoral students of the highest caliber. For the most up-to-date information, please review the web page dedicated to this program on the Provost's website.

SUBSIDIZED GRADUATE HEALTH INSURANCE

Eligible graduate students can receive up to 100% subsidized health insurance coverage through *Aetna Student Health*. Please review the web pages on the Provost's website dedicated to this program. Please email provpb@gmu.edu for details.

IN-STATE ELIGIBILITY FOR DOCTORAL AND MFA STUDENTS

Eligible nonresident Doctoral and MFA students can be charged at the in-state rates for tuition and fees. Please review the web pages on the Provost's website dedicated to this program. Please email provpb@gmu.edu for details.

X. Appendix A: Relevant Links

- **Academic Calendar:** <http://registrar.gmu.edu/>
- **Adjunct Faculty Matrix:** <http://provost.gmu.edu/faculty-appointments/adjunct-faculty-appointments/>
- **Banner Workflow:** <https://workflow.gmu.edu:4443/wfprod/logon.jsp>
- **Center for Teaching Excellence:** <http://ctfe.gmu.edu>
- **English proficiency requirements** - please visit the *Admission* section of the catalog:
<http://catalog.gmu.edu/>
- **Fellowship Opportunities:** <http://gradfellows.gmu.edu/>
- **GPA Position Description Form:** <http://provost.gmu.edu/graduate-student-appointments/>
- **Graduate Student Compensation Rates:** <http://provost.gmu.edu/graduate-student-appointments/>
- **Graduate Student Travel Fund:** <http://gstf.gmu.edu/>
- **In-State Tuition Eligibility for Doctoral and MFA Students:**
<http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/in-state-eligibility-for-doctoral-and-mfa-students/>
- **New International Student Employees Checklist:**
<http://hr.gmu.edu/welcome/docs/IntlStudentEmployees.pdf>
- **Offer Letter Template (GA/GL):** <http://provost.gmu.edu/graduate-student-appointments/>
- **Offer Letter Template (Adjunct Faculty):** <http://provost.gmu.edu/faculty-appointments/adjunct-faculty-appointments/>
- **Office of International Programs and Services:** <http://oips.gmu.edu/>
- **PatriotWeb:** <https://patriotweb.gmu.edu/>
- **Peace Corps/ Master's International:**
<http://www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm?shell=learn.whyvol.eduben.mastersint.partschool>
- **Senior Approving Officials:** <http://fiscal.gmu.edu/> under Important Links
- **Subsidized Graduate Health Insurance:** <http://provost.gmu.edu/graduate-student-health-insurance/>
- **University Catalog:** <http://catalog.gmu.edu/>
- **University Policies:** <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/>