MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY GRADUATE ASSISTANT

This Manual is intended for Graduate Assistants employed at Marymount University. In addition to answers to ‘commonly asked questions’, various forms and templates are provided in the appendices with suggestions for how to fill them out. The manual is updated regularly.

*AY2019-20*

 *Student Manual*

**Graduate Assistantship Student Handbook**

**2019-2020**

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## Overall organization of Graduate Assistant (GA) program

The graduate assistantship program is overseen by the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies in Academic Affairs. About 85 graduate assistantship (GA) positions are offered annually. Each school and several departments are allotted GA positions. The person identified as the GA supervisor interviews candidates, makes the hiring decision, and oversees the work of the GA.

## Graduate Assistantship Classifications

Graduate assistantships are classified in one of three categories for federal reporting purposes: teaching assistants, research assistants, administrative assistants. The roles and responsibilities of the graduate assistant should enhance the individual graduate students’ academic experience.

IRC §117 allows exemption from taxation of tuition and fee waivers per tax year that exceed $5,250, for graduate assistants primarily conducting teaching or research activities. The University defines a graduate student who is involved in teaching or research activities as follows:

**TEACHING:**  For University tax purposes, teaching activities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

* providing or coordinating classroom instruction, including lab or discussion sessions;
* tutoring students;
* grading tests and assignments;
* developing instructional materials;
* providing artistic instruction or portfolio review;
* accompanying/coaching musical, vocal or athletic performances; and
* proctoring exams.

**RESEARCH:**  For University tax purposes, research activities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

* applying and mastering research concepts, practices, or methods of scholarship:
* conducting experiments;
* organizing or analyzing data;
* presenting findings in either written or oral format;
* collaborating with others in preparing publications; and
* conducting institutional research for an academic or administrative unit.

For those Graduate Assistants who do not spend a majority of their time engaged in either of these groups of activities, they will be classified as Administrative Graduate Assistants, and will be subject to federal taxation for the tuition/fee waiver they receive above $5250 per tax year.

## Length and Timing of GA Appointments

The ‘typical’ assistantship is for one academic year, beginning in the fall semester and continuing through the spring semester. Some assistantships also include a separate summer GA award. There are also a limited number of summer-only assistantships. Occasionally, due to things like graduation and internships a GA position may become available in January. A student may be re-appointed as a GA for up to three years, at the discretion of the department. All GA openings will be posted on the HR website, under ‘graduate assistant postings.’ <https://www.marymountjobs.com/>

## GA Categories: work expectations and tuition remission

* **1/3 GAs** provide 105 hours of GA service each semester: 7 hours of service each week across a 15 week semester (or the equivalent number of hours weekly to reach 105 hrs during the shorter summer session). 1/3 GAs receive a waiver of 3 graduate credits each semester of the assistantship. DPT students are on a ‘flat rate’ tuition (not ‘per credit’).
* **2/3 GAs** provide 210 hours of GA service each semester: 14 hours of service each week across 15 week semester (or the equivalent number of hours weekly to reach 210 hours during the shorter summer session). 2/3 GAs receive a waiver of 6 graduate credits each semester of the assistantship. DPT students are on a ‘flat rate’ tuition (not ‘per credit’).
* **Full-time GAs** provide 300 hours of GA service each semester: 20 hours of service each week across a 15 week semester (or the equivalent number of hours weekly to reach 300 hours during the shorter summer session). A full-time GA receives a waiver of 9 graduate credits each semester of the assistantship.

## Work Schedule of Graduate Assistants

Each semester, students are expected to work the requisite number of hours associated with their GA category: 105, 210, or 300 hours based on their GA category as a 1/3, 2/3, or full-time GA position, respectively. The GA and their supervisor should clarify the schedule at the beginning of the assistantship. Generally, students are not expected to work when they are on a semester break or on a university holiday. However, GAs **ARE** expected to provide the requisite number of hours of work each semester. Describing the work commitment of each GA category in terms of a certain number of hours each week is intended to provide a general sense of the weekly time commitment, not to dictate a specific and rigid weekly schedule.

EXCEPTIONS: Because of the nature of the responsibilities, there are some GA positions that require students to be available during typical ‘student break’ periods or on weekends or evenings. The work schedule should be clearly outlined and discussed with the student to assure he or she can meet these time commitments.

## Time Sheets

GAs **must** complete weekly timesheets to track hours worked. This timesheet is kept by the GA who fills it in **weekly**. The timesheet should be shared with the supervisor **monthly** for review and supervisor signature. The timesheet should also be shared with the Director of Graduate Student Academic Success via the Assignments tab in the Graduate Assistants Canvas Course. Appendix A provides a copy of the required timesheet. Students should download a Word document version of the timesheet (to fill in hours) via from the Graduate Assistant Canvas Course at the beginning of each semester.

At the end of each semester, the completed time-sheet should be given to the supervisor for his or her records and a copy should also be submitted to the Graduate Assistant Canvas Course in the appropriate Assignment location. If for some reason uploading to Canvas does not work, you can scan and send your timesheet to the Office of Graduate Education (email scanned form to jcraig@marymount.edu).

Note: Although the weekly schedule of the GA will likely vary week-to-week, the total number of hours worked each semester should approximate the hours expected according to the GA category (105, 210, or 300 for a 1/3, 2/3, or full-time GA position, respectively). The timesheet simply helps track progress toward providing the required number of hours each semester.

## Qualifications to be a Graduate Assistant

Minimum qualifications all students must meet to be a graduate assistant:

* Accepted into a Marymount graduate program,
* In good academic standing (at least a 3.0 GPA),
* Taking at least 6 graduate credits each semester you serve as a GA.

Additional position-specific qualifications:

Position-specific qualifications often require a student to be enrolled in a specific major or to have specifically identified skills or experiences. All GA openings will be posted on the HR website as they become available, under ‘graduate assistantship postings’ <https://www.marymountjobs.com/>. All position-specific qualifications will be included in the position description posted on the HR website.

## Stipends for Graduate Assistants

GA positions typically **DO NOT** include a monetary stipend. Tuition remission is the mode of reimbursement. A department, in unusual circumstances, may choose to pay a stipend using department funds with the approval of the Dean or Division head.

Occasionally, a graduate student who is on full-tuition scholarship from an outside agency or group would like the opportunity to serve as a graduate assistant. In this situation, the student will receive a small stipend as compensation for the assistantship. A full time GA (20 hours per week of work across 15 week semester) will receive a stipend of $1800 per semester; a 2/3 GA (14 hours per week of work across 15 week semester) will receive a stipend of $1200 per semester; and a 1/3 GA ((7 hours per week of work across 15 week semester) will receive a stipend of $600 per semester.

## Locating and Applying for Assistantships

Students interested in assistantships can go to the HR website, under ‘graduate assistantship postings,’ <https://www.marymountjobs.com/> to locate currently posted position. Your program director, school dean, or associate dean of graduate studies can often also provide insights into positions that might not be posted at the moment but will likely become available in the future.

## Award Letter

The GA award letter becomes the official ‘contract’ with the student and is the mechanism through which student accounts is notified of the tuition waiver. This letter is generated by the Office of Research and Graduate Education using the information provided on the hiring proposal or PAF. The award letter is sent electronically to the student, student accounts, the GA supervisor, and the Director of Graduate Student Academic Success. If you do not receive an award letter or believe the award letter is incorrect, contact the Director of Graduate Student Academic Success (jcraig@marymount.edu; 703-284-5988)

## Required Online Training in Federal Laws Applicable to the Educational Environment

All GAs are required to complete three online training programs ((Title IX, EEO, and FERPA) during the first 60 days of their initial GA appointment. Each program is about 60 minutes long. Our HR office tracks completion. Those not completing the training within 60 days of their initial appointment as a GA may be terminated as a GA. These online training programs assure the university is in compliance with federal requirement for training employees about key federal laws relevant to the educational environment. All employees complete these modules. Each new GA should receive an email notice from our HR office with a link to the online training programs (from the company ‘WeComply’). If you do not receive this link within about 1 week of receiving your award letter, please contact the Office of Research and Graduate Education (jcraig@marymount.edu).

## Resignation from a Graduate Assistantship

Students hired for an academic year are expected to honor the full year commitment. However, the university recognizes that, occasionally, circumstances beyond the student’s control can result in a change of plans. If you find yourself in a position where you need to resign the assistantship, we ask that you give your supervisor as much notice as possible. The least disruptive timing to transition out of a GA position is at the end of the semester. Informing your supervisor of your plan to resign at least one month prior to the end of the semester provides your supervisor with sufficient time to identify a replacement.

If a Graduate Assistant (GA) ends his or her service mid-semester then the tuition waiver will be adjusted accordingly. All students should keep a timesheet (*see section on Timesheets)* that indicates the number of hours worked to date. The number of work hours completed by the student will be calculated. A proportion of tuition equaling the proportion of work completed will continue to be waived. The student will be responsible for the equivalent number of credits represented by the work hours not completed

## Performance Evaluation of Graduate Assistants

A GA performance evaluation form is included as Appendix B in this Manual. The student’s supervisor should complete the GA performance evaluation form at the end of the first semester as a GA, then again annually, and at the end of the last semester as a GA. The supervisor will typically ask the GA to self-assess performance using the same performance instrument. The supervisor and student should meet to discuss the performance evaluation. A copy of the signed evaluation form should be uploaded to the Graduate Assistant Canvas site or should that not be possible, forwarded to the Director of Graduate Student Academic Success at the end of each performance assessment period. A student can be terminated from a GA position for unsatisfactory performance.

## Contact Information (last updated May 2018)

The graduate assistantship program is overseen by the Office of Research and Graduate Education, part of Academic Affairs.

For questions regarding award letters or tuition waiver for a specific student or for general questions about the GA program, please contact Jason Craig, PT, DPhil, Director of Graduate Student Academic Success (jcraig@marymount.edu; 703-284-5988)

##

## Appendix A

### Graduate Assistant Timesheet

GA name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

GA position Title: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **week**  | **Week of:** | **# of hours worked** | **supervisor's signature** |
| 1 |  |   |  |  |
| 2 |  |   |  |  |
| 3 |  |   |  |  |
| 4 |  |   |  weeks 1-4 |   |
| 5 |  |   |  |  |
| 6 |  |   |  |  |
| 7 |  |   |  |  |
| 8 |  |   | weeks 5-8 |   |
| 9 |  |   |  |  |
| 10 |  |   |  |  |
| 11 |  |   |  |  |
| 12 |  |   | weeks 9-12 |   |
| 13 |  |   |  |  |
| 14 |  |   |  |  |
| 15 |  |   |  |  |
| 16 |  |   | weeks 13-16 |   |
|  | Total number hours across the semester  |  |  |  |

This timesheet is to be kept by the GA and filled out weekly by the GA. The timesheet should be shared with the supervisor monthly for review and signature. The timesheet should also be uploaded to the Graduate Assistant Course on Canvas and reviewed by the Director of Graduate Student Academic Success.

At the end of each semester, a **signed** copy of the time sheet should be given to the supervisor for his or her records. A **signed** copy should also be uploaded to the Graduate Assistant Canvas Course under Assignments. The form can also be submitted to the Office of Graduate Education (email scanned form to jcraig@marymount.edu)

Note: Although the weekly schedule of the GA will likely vary week-to-week, the total number of hours worked each semester should approximate the hours expected according to the GA category (1/3: 105hrs, 2/3: 210hrs, or Full: 300hrs, respectively).

## Appendix B

### Graduate Assistant Performance Evaluation Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Semester of Evaluation: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

GA Position (Briefly describe the majority responsibilities of this position):

**Please rate and comment on the student’s performance**

1. **excellent (exceptional performance, well above expectations for the position)**
2. **good (meets expectations for the position)**
3. **fair (Improvements are needed but meeting most expectations)**
4. **unsatisfactory (Not meeting the needs of the position)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Performance category** | **Score (1-4)** | **Comments** |
| Communicates professionally and respectfully  |  |  |
| Is responsible and responsive for assigned work and requests  |  |  |
| Demonstrates the technicalabilities required for position |  |  |
| Is cooperative and collaborative when working with others  |  |  |
| works well independently |  |  |
| Manages time and resources well |  |  |
| Searches out information needed to perform expected tasks |  |  |
| Other GA-related responsibilities (Please identify): |  |  |

Overall Summary of Performance:

Does this student need additional training or specific skills to improve performance? (please describe)

Student’s Statement of the Professional Goals for the upcoming semester/year and how the GA position might contribute to achieving these goals.

**Supervisor’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Supervisor’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

(Please complete at the end of the first semester as a GA, then again annually, and at the end of the last semester as a GA. The supervisor will typically ask the GA to self-assess performance using the same performance instrument. The supervisor and student should meet to discuss the performance evaluation. A copy of the completed form should be sent to the Director of Graduate Student Academic Success; jcraig@marymount.edu.