

*Subject to change, pending additional information from the Office of the Provost & Toulouse Graduate School.*

### GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

#### Eligibility for employment as a salaried Graduate Assistant in the Department of Biological Sciences:

- Graduate student in “good standing” with the University, College and Department
- Research-based degree program (i.e., Ph.D. or MS-thesis) with approved major advisor
- GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Full-time, continuous enrollment (9 graduate credit hours in Fall and Spring) per Toulouse Graduate School.
- International and/or non-native English speakers are required to participate in both a departmental spoken English interview and a Speak Test at IELI (English proficiency screening) \* to be considered for a Teaching Assistantship, as well as identify training needs.

*\*This screening is a State requirement, administered through the Intensive English Language Institute (IELI) prior to the start of classes.*

- Meet eligibility requirements for employment in the U.S.

#### Definitions

Graduate Assistantship = salaried employment as a TA, GSA, or RA

- TA = Teaching Assistant / Teaching Assistantship – typically involves leading weekly laboratory sections
- GSA = Graduate Services Assistant – responsibilities vary; may include laboratory prep or classroom support
- RA = Research Assistant / Research Assistantship – work on research project/s as assigned by PI/lab manager

#### Responsibilities & Expectations

Salaried Graduate Assistants play important roles in the Department of Biological Sciences. The following guidelines and expectations are in place to ensure Graduate Assistants are well-prepared and equipped to successfully fulfill their employment obligations. Questions regarding any item in this document or the offer of employment should be directed to the appropriate supervisor or departmental representative.

#### ***Expectations common to all Salaried Graduate Assistants***

- Attend all orientations.
- Complete all required university, department, and laboratory training by stated deadlines.
- Provide emergency contact information to the unit/departmental office/supervisor.
- Meet with your supervisor to discuss specific expectations.
- Attend and participate in all meetings scheduled by the supervisor.
- Be present and prepared. In the event of an emergency, contact the supervisor at your earliest opportunity.
- Maintain/remediate your area and follow all safety protocols and regulations.
- Report building/room issues to either the Main Office in your building, Instrument Repair Shop or Facilities.
- Learn how to use laboratory instrumentation/equipment *and* office equipment *before* use.
- To avoid potential negative consequences, speak to your PI, a committee member, or the Graduate Advisor *before* dropping a class.
- Maintain regular, frequent communication with supervisors, major advisors and departmental representatives. For example:
  - Planning to travel? *Did you meet with a departmental representative to submit a travel request?*
  - Planning to change graduate programs? *Did you meet with your committee and the Student & Program Coordinator/Graduate secretary?*
  - Planning to graduate? *Did you file for graduation and notify the Student & Program Coordinator/Graduate secretary?*

If the answer is “no” to any of the above, then you will not be traveling, changing graduate programs, or graduating. Communication and forms are required for most actions at the University of North Texas. Nothing happens automatically.

### **Expectations specific to RAs**

Communicate/meet with direct supervisor and co-workers to identify specific expectations.

**Expectations specific to TAs/GSAs** (Note: Not all expectations listed below will apply to both TAs and GSAs. If unsure, ask your direct supervisor.)

As applicable, TAs/GSAs are responsible for the following:

- Attending **mandatory** weekly Mandatory TA meetings
- Three (3) office hours per week (or as directed by supervisor)
- Canvas and/or syllabus updates
- Presentation materials and assessments if/as instructed by the supervisor
- Shadow/Assist veteran TA/GSA
- Be present and prepared for each assignment
- Maintain lab room
  - Arrive early to ensure materials are present
  - Instruct students to clean workstations
  - Remediate workstations at the end of the lab period
  - Additional preparatory duties may be required per the supervisor
  - Report any maintenance issues (clogged sinks, dripping faucets, non-functioning microscopes) to the supervisor and/or Instrument Repair Shop in LIFE A122.
- Schedule training with the appropriate personnel *before* attempting to make copies.
  - Copiers are located in LIFE A127. Only one copier is available for course-related copies. Contact Stockroom personnel in LIFE A114 for training.
  - Copiers are located in ENV 215. Contact office personnel in ENV 215 for training/instructions.
  - To allow for high volume traffic and technical difficulties, copies are to be made no less than 48 hours in advance. Do not leave copies unattended.
- Follow instructions, protocols and safety measures as directed by the supervisor.
- Follow the published schedule of topics, due dates, grade points... **Changing topic dates, due dates, point values, offering extra credit, etc. is NOT acceptable.**
- Promptly notify the direct employment supervisor of any and all situations that affect or may potentially affect the assignment (tardiness, emergencies, student issues, etc.). **Canceling lab is not an option.**
  - Identify a substitute in the event of a planned absence or emergency:
    - At the start of the term, identify a substitute from among fellow TAs/GSAs. Note: The direct supervisor must approve of the substitute selection.
    - Agree upon the form(s) of reciprocation in advance:
      - Reciprocation-in-kind (lab coverage)
      - Monetary reciprocation at the rate of \$25.00/hour/lab (ex. \$75 for a 3-hour lab, regardless of how long the lab meets)
    - Agree upon *when* reciprocation is to be expected (i.e., identify dates on a calendar; payment the following week or after the subsequent paycheck)
    - **Note:** Failure to reciprocate may result in docking of TA/GSA pay.

### **TA Assignment/GSA Appointment Term Details**

TA/GSA appointments extend from one week prior to start of classes (specific date at the discretion of the direct supervisor) through the end of final exam week (specific date at the discretion of the department). Employees are to communicate with the department, the direct supervisor and the major advisor prior to making travel arrangements.

An assignment/appointment is based on 20.0 hours of work per week, or 0.50 Full-Time Equivalency (FTE) employment. As with any professional appointment, the amount of work may vary from week to week. Specific duties will be assigned by the supervisor.

**Graduate Assistant pay** is based on a monthly rate consistent with progression through the degree as stated below:

- \$2136.00/month, Masters
- \$2136.00/month, Pre-ABD Doctoral
- \$2388.00/month, ABD Doctoral

The dollar amounts shown are predicated on having sufficient positions and/or sufficient funds in local fee accounts. Adjustments may be necessary even after signing all offers, acceptances or agreements.

### **Pay Periods – New!**

Semi-monthly pay occurs on the first business day of each month and the 15<sup>th</sup> business day of each month.

Payroll calendars and academic calendars do not align. Pay during the Fall and Spring semesters is distributed over 9 semi-monthly payments as estimated below:

*Fall 2024:* Sep (16)      Oct (1, 15)      Nov (1, 15)      Dec (2, 16)      Jan (2, 15)

*Spring 2025:* Feb (3, 17)      Mar (3, 17)      Apr (1, 15)      May (1, 15)      Jun (2)

*Assistantships are limited during the summer. Students are encouraged to seek alternate employment.*

Direct deposit is a strongly encouraged by the University of North Texas. Even if direct deposit is elected, initial paychecks may be mailed to the home address on file. Address updates may be made at my.unt.edu.

### **Funding Limits**

Funding for assistantships receiving TBP is limited to six long semesters for M.S. students and twelve long semesters for Ph.D. students. The Graduate compensation plan is set by the Office of the Provost and Toulouse Graduate School and is subject to change. <https://vpaa.unt.edu/resources/retention>.

Employment waivers: Non-resident students are eligible for resident tuition via an employment waiver if employed in a 0.50 FTE (20 hours/week) academic position and are compliant with Section 54.063 of the Texas Education Code. The employment waiver will be prepared by TGS on behalf of TBP recipients. Students who are not TBP recipients must request an employment waiver each semester through TGS website.

### **Assignments**

TAs/GSAs will be assigned to courses compatible with their training and experience as allowable. However, department needs supersede individual needs and on-the-job training may be required. Additional responsibilities may be required as indicated by your supervisor or the department. These responsibilities are non-negotiable. While the department appreciates that students have other obligations, for employment purposes, only class conflicts may be considered for alternate assignment requests. If a resolution cannot be reached, the assistantship may be revoked.

### **Conditions for renewal of employment**

- TAs/GSAs hired for the Fall semester will normally be rehired for the following Spring semester under the following provisions, unless the initial term of assistantship was for a single semester only, with no guarantee of continuation:
  - Department need and budget permit rehiring
  - Supervisor recommends renewal
  - Cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher maintained

Note: A grade of D or F in a major or minor field is grounds for automatic termination of the assistantship, even if the cumulative GPA remains 3.0 or higher.

A student who has lost an assistantship for academic reasons may reapply upon raising the GPA to 3.0. Such application will be considered with all new applications and is no guarantee of reinstatement.

  - Satisfactory progress toward the degree (refer to the Graduate Catalog)

- SPOT evaluation scores of 2.5\* or higher and satisfactory completion of all laboratory/ prep/ grading assignments
- No violations of the terms of this document

### **Probation / Termination**

TAs/GSAs who fail to meet the terms of employment described in this document and in the Employment Offer Letter may be placed on probation. The supervisor will meet with the TA/GSA to discuss the terms of probation and will notify the major advisor. The department will prepare a probation letter that will be provided to the TA/GSA and the major advisor copied, as well as filed in the TA/GSA file. The TA/GSA will be allotted a single probationary term during which to demonstrate improvement and remediate the issues that led to the probationary status. The TA/GSA will be reevaluated at the close of the probationary semester. If improvement is insufficient to reinstate good standing, or if the TA/GSA later fails to meet expectations, that may be grounds for termination from employment.

A TA/GSA may be terminated at any time during the term of employment for insubordination, incompetence, moral turpitude, neglect of responsibilities, or failure to properly perform assigned duties.

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**NOTE: Assignments/appointments and/or pay could change during the first twelve class days until enrollment stabilizes and departmental budgets are finalized.**

\*SPOT evaluation scores below 2.5 will be reviewed; continuation of the TA will be made on an individual basis. Lack of improvement over a successive term may be means for revoking the TA.