

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 pass the Speak Test to be considered for a Teaching Assistantship.
This test is a state requirement, administered through the Intensive English Language Institute 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

GSA = Graduate Services Assistant

RA = Research Assistant / Research Assistantship

Expectations

1. TA/GSAs new to the graduate program in the Department of Biological Sciences are expected to attend all required orientations, including reviewing Teaching Excellence Resources.
2. International and/or non-native English speakers are required to pass the Speak Test that is administered through the Intensive English Language Institute in order to be eligible for a Teaching Assistantship. This is a state requirement. Enrollment in IELI classes/workshops may be required.
3. Attendance is **mandatory** for all lab meetings scheduled by the supervisor.
4. TAs are required to hold up to three office hours per week, or as directed by the supervisor.
 - a. TAs are expected to be present and available during scheduled office hours.
 - b. Contact information and office hours are to be provided to each of the following no later than the first week of classes: supervisor(s), department staff, students via syllabus and Blackboard/CANVAS.
5. As applicable, TA/GSAs new to a course/assignment are expected to assist a veteran in a lab earlier in the week/day to better anticipate problems, questions and concerns.
6. TA/GSAs are expected to be punctual, present and prepared for each assignment.
7. TA/GSAs are to prepare all presentation materials and assessments, including quizzes, pre-labs, exams, handouts, etc. as directed by the supervisor. All copying may be completed in LIFE A127 or EESAT 215. Contact Stockroom personnel or student workers in Advising Office for training on the machine in LIFE A127. Note: To allow for high volume traffic and technical difficulties, copies are to be made no less than 48 hours in advance.
8. TA/GSAs are expected to maintain the laboratory by arriving early to ensure materials are present, instructing students to clean workstations, and remediating 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.
9. TA/GSAs are expected to be familiar with and enforce all policies associated with assigned duties.
10. TA/GSAs are expected to follow instructions, protocols and safety measures as directed by the supervisor.
11. TA/GSAs are expected to follow the published schedule of topics. **Changing dates/topics/etc. is not acceptable.**
12. In the event a TA/GSA is unable to be present for an assignment (lab/course), the TA/GSA is responsible for finding a replacement as soon as possible, notifying the supervisor of the substitution, and reciprocating either in kind or monetarily at a rate of \$25.00/hour/lab. Failure to reciprocate may result in docking of TA/GSA pay. Canceling lab is **not** an option.

13. TA/GSAs are expected to notify the direct supervisor of any and all situations that affect or may potentially affect the assignment (tardiness, emergencies, student issues, etc.) promptly (in a time frame identified by the supervisor).

Appointment Term Details

Start date: One week prior to start of classes; specific date at the discretion of Supervisor

End date: End of University final exam week; specific date at the discretion of Department

The appointment is for 20.0 hours 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:

- Level I: First year MS or PhD student with fewer than 18 credits completed \$1937.73
- Level II: MS or Ph.D. students with at least 18 credits completed toward a degree \$2046.59
- Level III: Doctoral candidates – completion of written and oral examinations, and research proposal (ABD); documentation completed and on file with Toulouse Graduate School and Student & Program Coordinator / Graduate Secretary \$2264.31

The dollar amounts shown are predicated on having sufficient positions and/or sufficient funds in local fee accounts. Adjustments may be necessary even after this agreement is signed.

Pay Periods

Monthly pay occurs on the first business day of each month. Pay during the Fall and Spring semesters is distributed in 4.5 monthly payments as shown below:

- Fall: October, November, December & January = full paychecks; February = half paycheck
- Spring: February = half paycheck; March, April, May & June = full paychecks

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

Note: 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 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/graduate-student-recruitment-retention-plan>

Assignments

TA/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. Note: Additional responsibilities may be required as indicated by your supervisor. 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

- TA/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 permits rehiring
 - Supervisor recommends renewal
 - A cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher was 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.

- The student must maintain satisfactory progress toward the degree (refer to the Graduate Catalog)
- Student evaluation scores are above 2.5* and all assignments were conducted in a satisfactory manner
- There have been no violations of the terms of this contract.
- Employment waivers: Non-resident students are eligible for resident tuition via an employment waiver if employed in a 0.50 FTE (20 hrs/wk) academic position and are compliant with Section 54.063 of the Texas Education Code. Students who are **not** TBP recipients must request an employment waiver each semester.

Probation / Termination

TA/GSAs who fail to meet the terms of employment described in this document and in the 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 have one semester to 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, that will be grounds for termination or dismissal of the TA/GSA.

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.

NOTE: Teaching assignments 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.