Employment Terms and Conditions for University of Minnesota Graduate Assistants

Policy and Guideline information pertaining to graduate assistantship employment is available online (http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/gae/), from your hiring department, or from Graduate Assistant Employment. Please be aware you are responsible for knowing the policies and guidelines applicable to your appointment as a graduate assistant.

In addition to the terms and conditions set forth in your graduate assistant appointment letter, graduate assistantships are contingent upon admission to the Graduate School, current registration as a graduate student and satisfactory progress toward a Graduate School degree. In order to hold a graduate assistantship during fall or spring semester, you are required to be registered for credit (audit registration only is not acceptable). For regular assistantships, six credits of registration are required; for Advanced Masters and Ph.D. Candidate positions, one credit is required. If personal circumstances require registration for fewer than six credits, you may apply for an exception. For details, see the above website. Registration during May Intersession and summer term are not required to hold an assistantship.

Registration must be completed by the end of the second week of classes and maintained for the entire semester or your graduate assistantship will be terminated. Withdrawal from all credits will result in termination of your assistantship. If your assistantship is terminated, the hiring department has the option of converting your appointment to a non-student classification for the remainder of that semester only; however, benefits such as your graduate assistant health insurance plan and tuition benefits may be adversely affected.

Tuition benefits will be available to you if you meet eligibility requirements. These benefits are summarized on the following pages. Further details may be found online (http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/gae/).

You may enroll in the Graduate Assistant Health Insurance Plan if you meet eligibility requirements. If you are interested in this coverage, you must enroll through the Graduate Assistant Health Insurance Office located at N323 Boynton Health Service, 612-624-0627.

If you have F-1 or J-1 visa status, federal law prohibits the University from employing you more than 20 hours per week (50% time) during scheduled class periods and finals weeks. Exceptions exist if you have been authorized for ‘practical or academic training.’ Consult with the Office of International Student and Scholar Services over these matters.
TUITION BENEFITS

Student Fees

Tuition benefits do not cover student fees.

Waiver of Nonresident Portion of Tuition

Graduate Assistants who work a minimum of 25% time (10 hours per week) per semester and are properly registered are eligible to receive resident rate tuition during that semester. Resident rate tuition also applies to eligible students’ immediate family members (spouse or registered same sex domestic partner, children, parents, or legal guardian or ward living in the household).

Maximum Benefits per Semester

A graduate assistant appointed 50% time (an average of 20 hours per week) for the full-semester payroll period (which begins before the start of classes and extends beyond finals week) typically receives a tuition benefit equivalent to the Graduate School’s tuition band level (at resident rates). This benefit would cover 6-14 credits per semester. Those in the Advanced Masters or Ph.D. Candidate job classes receive a benefit equal to one credit of Graduate School tuition. Legal Project Assistants with Tuition Benefits receive the equivalent of Law School tuition. Medical Fellows must work 100% time for the full semester to receive the equivalent of the Graduate School’s tuition band level.

Prorated Tuition Benefits

Graduate assistants appointed for less than 50% time or for less than the full semester payroll period will not receive the maximum tuition benefits. Their benefits are prorated according to the total number of hours worked over the 19.5 week payroll semester. Maximum benefits require appointments of at least 390 hours per semester (20 hours x 19.5 weeks). Appointments for fewer than 97.5 hours per semester (equivalent to a 12.5% appointment for the full term) do not qualify for any tuition benefit.

The tuition benefit percentage can be calculated by dividing total semester hours of employment by 390. A full-semester 25% appointment (195 hours) receives half of the Graduate School tuition band level. Full term appointments between 25% and 50% receive prorated tuition benefits, the percentage equivalent to double their appointment percentage (e.g., a 40% appointment receiving 80% tuition benefit).

Appointments Beginning After or Ending Before the Official Semester Appointment Dates

Appointments that begin after or end before the official semester appointment dates will be prorated according to total hours worked for the semester payroll period. The student will have the unearned portion of tuition benefits billed to them, at non-resident rates if applicable. If the shortened appointment falls below the 97.5-hour eligibility threshold (equivalent to a 12.5% time appointment for the full semester period), 100% of the tuition will be billed to the student, at non-resident rates.
Appointments Ending Due to Graduation

If an appointment ends early because of graduation, the student will receive the full tuition benefit awarded for that final term of employment as a graduate assistant. The benefit will not be prorated and charged back to the student.

Summer Tuition Benefits

Nine-month academic year assistantships carry no summer tuition benefit. Summer benefits are earned only from hours of assistantship employment during the 13-week summer period between spring and fall semesters. In order to provide comparable maximum benefits to those earned during an academic year semester, summer benefits accrue at a 50% faster rate; maximum benefits (typically, the Graduate School’s tuition band level) are earned for 260 hours of summer employment (i.e. 20 hours x 13 weeks) and lesser hours are prorated according to that 260 hour norm. The minimum summer appointment threshold for tuition benefits is 65 hours. Benefits are higher for the 9574 job class, Summer Session Teaching Assistant, and are calculated differently. See the GAO website (http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/gae/) for details.

Extended Waiver of Nonresident Portion of Tuition

Former graduate assistants, their immediate family members, and/or domestic partners are eligible to receive extended resident rate reductions if the graduate assistant has held at least two semesters of qualifying appointments (at least 25% time). This benefit is extended to graduate assistants who are no longer employed as graduate assistants for a maximum of four semesters, one term of extended benefit earned for each term of employment. Extended benefits must be used within three years of the last term of assistantship appointment.

Provisional Tuition Benefits

A department may place a graduate assistant on a provisional appointment (flexible hourly) whereby the assistant may receive a tuition benefit at the beginning of the semester based upon an estimation of the number of hours the assistant will work per week. The department shall submit the actual number of hours worked by the assistant at the end of the semester to Graduate Assistant Employment. Any hours worked in excess of the estimated number will result in a tuition benefit credit, if applicable. If fewer hours are worked than the estimated number, the student will be billed for the unearned portion of tuition benefits, at non-resident rates if applicable. If the total number of hours worked per semester falls below the 12.5% time minimum eligibility requirement (97.5 hours) in order to receive a tuition benefit, the student will be billed for the entire tuition benefit received, at non-resident rates if applicable.

This information comes from the University’s Office of Human Resources offer letter template for a Grad Assistant single semester appointment.