Guidelines and Information for Ball State University Graduate Assistants

Effective For Contracts Starting in 2021-22 AY

The terms within these guidelines are to be followed by all graduate assistants. International GA’s should check with the Rinker Center to make sure there are no additional restrictions or policies that impact them in addition to the GA Guidelines.

A. Resolution Regarding Graduate Scholars, Fellows, Trainees, and Assistants (Council of Graduate Schools)

1. Acceptance of an offer of financial support (such as a graduate scholarship, fellowship, traineeship, or assistantship) for the next academic year by a prospective or enrolled graduate student completes an agreement that both student and graduate school expect to honor. In that context, the conditions affecting such offers and their acceptance must be defined carefully and understood by all parties.

2. Ball State University adheres to the Council of Graduate Schools April 15 Resolution. Students are under no obligation to respond to offers of financial support prior to April 15; earlier deadlines for acceptance of such offers violate the intent of this Resolution. Students who want to withdraw from an offer of acceptance of financial support must first inform the program that they are withdrawing or resigning from the offer of financial support that they previously had accepted. Once they have informed the program that they are withdrawing their acceptance of the offer, they then can accept any other offers.

It is further agreed by the institutions and organizations subscribing to the above Resolution that a copy of this Resolution or a link to the URL <https://cgsnet.org/april-15-resolution> should accompany every scholarship, fellowship, traineeship, and assistantship offer.

B. Employment Verification

1. According to the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 and the Immigration Act of 1990 as interpreted by university attorneys, all employees including graduate assistants must have their identity and employment eligibility verified by completing a Form I-9. Ball State University participates in the Federal E-Verify program. The verification (I-9) process must be initiated on or before the first day of work, and must be completed within three (3) business days. If the employee is unable to present the required documents(s) to establish eligibility for section 2 of the I-9 form within the time specified, the employee must produce a receipt showing that he or she has applied for the document(s). In addition, the employee must present the actual document(s) within ninety (90) days of the date of hire. Assistants who are not verified within three (3) business days of the date of employment could have their employment terminated. Verification must be done in person in the Graduate School Office, West Quad Room 203.

C. Eligibility

1. A graduate level student must have completed the bachelor’s degree (and also the master’s degree if required by a doctoral program) before the beginning of the semester or term in which the graduate assistantship begins. Official transcripts must be on file with Graduate Admissions located in the Office of Admissions before a GA contract will be issued unless an exception is made by the Dean of the Graduate School. A first-term student must meet minimum admissions requirements as outlined in the Graduate Catalog in order to be eligible for an assistantship their first semester. Students who receive probationary admission are not eligible for a graduate assistantship while they remain on probation.
2. Students must receive and maintain a minimum cumulative graduate grade point average (3.000 for master’s level or 3.200 for doctoral and specialist level) to continue on the assistantship. Any assistants with an academic year contract whose grades fall below the established minimums at the end of their fall term will be reviewed by the hiring unit to determine if they can continue on the assistantship in the spring semester. The hiring unit will make a recommendation to the dean of the Graduate School either to terminate the contract prior to the spring term or request the assistant be allowed to continue through the end of the contract period. The final decision rests with the Dean of the Graduate School.

3. Graduate assistants whose cumulative grade point average fall below the established minimums and who are allowed to continue through the end of their contract periods cannot be reappointed to a new assistantship contract until their grades reach the required minimums.

4. Graduate students who are offered an assistantship after already completing at least one term of study must also meet the established graduate grade point average minimums (see #2 above) in order to be eligible for a graduate assistantship.

5. Graduate assistants must maintain an on-campus presence during their assistantship. Entirely off-campus assistantship work must be approved in advance by the Dean of the Graduate School.

6. Graduate assistants may work up to 9 additional hours as an hourly Ball State employee while holding an assistantship. Approval of this additional employment must be granted by the student’s advisor, their GA supervisor, and the Graduate School.

7. Full-time graduate assistants may not work more than 20 additional hours above and beyond their 20-hour assistantship, including additional work as a Ball State employee and/or in employment outside of Ball State. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the student’s advisor, their GA supervisor, and the Dean of the Graduate School.

D. Assistantship Responsibilities

1. Stipends paid to graduate assistants are scholarships meant to support their academic progress. Supervisors must assign work to graduate assistants that contributes to their academic and professional development. The work experiences graduate assistants receive should add value to their degree and increase their competitiveness for future employment or academic opportunities.

2. For a student to teach, they must be pursuing a degree a level above the students being taught. Thus master’s-level GAs may not serve as a teaching assistant for master’s-level courses, but they may serve as a teaching assistant for baccalaureate-level courses. Doctoral-level GAs may not serve as a teaching assistant for doctoral-level courses, but they may serve as a teaching assistant for master’s- and baccalaureate-level courses.

3. Graduate Assistants do not work during federal holidays when the University is closed, per the University calendar, and thus they can pro-rate their hours during these periods.

4. The Graduate School’s general expectation is that GA’s do not work over university breaks, and thus they can pro-rate their hours during these periods (e.g., the week of fall break, full-time GAs would work 12 hours). However, some units have special needs that may require GAs to work over university breaks. These requirements should be communicated to the GA clearly in writing by their unit before the GA signs their contract. Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.

E. Stipends and Tuition Remission

1. Graduate assistants receive a stipend amount determined by the funding unit and approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. Graduate assistants appointed for a 5-week summer term will be paid 15% of the hiring unit’s typical academic year base stipend, if an opportunity is available. The hiring unit will make all efforts to clearly state the stipend for each hiring period for each position available.
a. Full-time graduate assistants receive 30 credit hours of tuition remission for fall/spring/summer. Basic graduate tuition and, where applicable, non-resident tuition for these 30 hours will be covered 100%.

b. Full-time graduate assistants receive 15 credit hours of tuition remission for a fall-only or spring-only appointment, and 9 hours for a summer-only appointment.

c. For every semester covered by their contract, GAs will pay the student services fee, all mandatory fees, and any applicable program and course fees.

d. The tuition remission award will be applied to any credit hours that the student is registered for after the normal add/drop period. If a GA withdraws from a course, the hours for that course will still count against the GA’s tuition remission award.

e. If a full-time graduate assistant has held their appointment in fall and spring and has not used all 30 hours of their tuition remission, then they may use the remaining hours of remission to cover summer tuition, even if they do not hold a GA appointment for the summer term. **GAs who do not hold a full-time assistantship in both fall and spring are not eligible to use any remaining hours in the summer.**

f. Full-time academic-year graduate assistants who do hold an appointment in the summer will receive an additional 9 hours of tuition remission (which brings their total available hours of tuition remission to 39).

g. Part-time GAs will receive 50% of the tuition remission credit hours allotted to full-time GAs for the same type of appointment (i.e. academic year or fall/spring/summer only contracts).

h. Current academic course load limits apply in all cases (see G below). If a GA is granted an overload, they will pay for any tuition hours that exceed the regular course load limit for that semester. Students will also be responsible for paying for the tuition for any credit hours that exceed the tuition remission allotment they earn from their assistantship.

i. The university will waive non-resident tuition for all GAs, including part-time GAs. If a GA holds an appointment in fall and spring but not in the summer, the university will waive any non-resident tuition for the summer term.

j. GAs may only enroll in courses that are approved by their program director or advisor and that fulfill degree requirements or electives appropriate to their program of study.

k. GAs can only enroll in undergraduate courses with the approval of their program director. Graduate assistant tuition remission will be applied to both graduate and approved undergraduate courses.

l. Graduate students taking at least one main campus course in an academic semester will automatically be assessed the $76 Health Center fee and have access to the services of the Health Center. Graduate students who are not assessed this fee in a given semester but would like access to the Health Center may contact the Health Center (765-285-8431) and ask to be assessed the fee. The student will be assessed the fee and immediately have access to Health Center services.

2. **Graduate assistants are responsible for paying the student services fee, all mandatory fees, and any applicable program and course fees for every semester covered by their contract.** They will receive an e-bill notification at their BSU email account each time a bill is created. View current tuition and fees and pay online at www.bsu.edu/bursar. Due date for fall is September 1st; spring is January 1st, and summer is June 1st.

3. Graduate assistants are paid bi-weekly during their contract period by direct deposit only. Therefore, they must submit direct deposit forms to the Payroll Office in the Administration Building (AD) Room G29. Pay schedules may be found on the payroll website of Ball State University: www.bsu.edu/payroll.

4. Stipends associated with graduate assistantships are considered taxable income as required by IRS guidelines. Deductions are made for Federal Income Tax, form W-4, and State/Local Income Tax, form WH-4.
5. Please see below for policy and procedures for the remission and billing of tuition and fees for mid-semester assignments and resignations of graduate assistants.

a. **Student filling an assistantship vacancy after the university drop/add period**
   1. No tuition remission is available during the academic semester in which the student is initially appointed. For future semesters, the student will be eligible for the regular tuition remission (per section E above) if they are appointed as an assistant before the end of the drop/add period of that term.

b. **Student vacating an assistantship after the university drop/add period**
   1. If the student vacates their assistantship and simultaneously withdraws from their courses, the student will not be billed for any additional tuition.
   2. If the student vacates their assistantship at any time after the university drop/add period but remains enrolled in courses, the student will be billed tuition at a pro-rated percentage based on the date of their resignation (see percentage table below). If they vacate the assistantship during the Spring term, they will not receive summer tuition remission for that academic year.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Withdraw During Week</th>
<th>Weeks in a Semester or Session</th>
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<th>10</th>
<th>5</th>
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F. **Policy Regarding Resignation/Termination of Assistantships**

1. If an assistant vacates their contract prior to the end of the contract period, the hiring unit should inform the Dean of the Graduate School immediately so that the contract can be cancelled.
2. A hiring unit that requests termination of an assistantship contract prior to the end of the contract period must have informed the assistant in writing of any deficiencies and given the assistant an opportunity to correct the deficiencies within a specified time through a clear remediation plan.
also filed with the Graduate School. If the graduate assistant does not satisfactorily correct the
deficiencies within the designated time, the hiring unit can make a recommendation to the Dean
of the Graduate School to terminate the assistantship. In cases of inappropriate conduct or
academic dishonesty, the department may recommend immediate termination. The final decision
on termination rests with the Dean of the Graduate School.

G. Graduate Academic Course Load Limits for Graduate Assistants

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall and Spring</td>
<td>6 semester hours*</td>
<td>15 semester hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-wk Summer Session</td>
<td>3 semester hours</td>
<td>6 semester hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Summer Terms</td>
<td>6 semester hours</td>
<td>12 semester hours</td>
</tr>
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</table>

* Graduate assistants can only enroll in undergraduate courses with the approval of their program
director. The graduate assistant tuition remission award will be applied to both graduate and approved
undergraduate courses. Undergraduate courses do not count towards the minimum required hours.

H. Graduate Assistant Mandatory Training Sessions and Professional Development

Graduate assistants are required to complete training in a variety of topics, including FERPA (Family
Education Rights and Privacy Act), and prevention and awareness of interpersonal violence including but
not limited to sexual misconduct. Graduate assistants will be contacted regarding these training modules
after they begin their contract.