

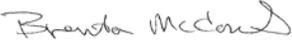


**GRADUATE SCHOOL**

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March 16, 2015

**To:** Deans, Directors, Department Chairs and Heads

**From:** Brenda McComb   
Graduate School Dean

**Subject:** **2015-16 Graduate Assistant Appointment & Salary Guidelines**

The **Graduate Assistant minimum salary level** required by the CGE bargaining agreement in 2015-16 increases by 3% over the 2014-15 rate. **The rate for 2015-16 is \$3,661 full time equivalent (1.0 FTE) per month.** Actual salary amounts are computed by multiplying the annual salary rate by the actual FTE (.20 FTE minimum to .49 maximum).

**Appointment Guidelines**

Appointments of Graduate Teaching Assistants typically are computed on the basis of an academic year (9 months starting September 16 and ending June 15.) Appointments of Graduate Research Assistants typically are computed on the basis of a fiscal year (12 months starting July 1 and ending June 30.) In each instance, an appointment may be for a portion or all of the 9 or 12 month period (9-month basis appointments must start on the 16<sup>th</sup>, end on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each term). Appointments at .20 FTE or above qualify to receive a tuition remission subsidy.

Graduate Assistants are required to perform employment duties at OSU to justify their salaries. For example, Graduate Assistants on 0.30 FTE appointments are expected to provide effort of 156 hours during each 13-week term of their appointment. Graduate Assistants at other FTE levels are expected to provide proportional levels of effort. Care should be taken to ensure that the level of effort is commensurate with the level of FTE for both graduate teaching and graduate research assistants. Salary levels vary among programs.

Although the minimum salary level is the least that is required by the bargaining contract, departments and programs are encouraged to provide salaries to Graduate Assistants beyond the minimum as budgets permit and to provide appropriate differentials based upon experience level.

Departments are required to use the model appointment letters developed by the Office of Human Resources when offering an assistantship. The model letter articulates the details of the appointment (e.g., contract start and end dates, FTE, monthly salary, fees and tuition remission, mandatory graduate assistant health insurance plan). In addition, the department is expected to outline expectations regarding specific work assignments and work schedules. Specification of these details at the onset diminishes the potential for miscommunication later and is good practice.

Graduate Assistant appointments at OSU are ultimately governed by the contract agreement between OSU and the Coalition of Graduate Employees, American Federation of Teachers Local 6069. Contract information and model appointment letters are available on the Office of Human Resources web site: <http://hr.oregonstate.edu/>. Departments should consult the contract and the Office of Human Resources for definitive employment rules and regulations concerning Graduate Assistant appointments.

As specified by the [OSU Tuition Remission Policy](#), all Graduate Assistants are assessed tuition at the resident graduate rate regardless of their residency status. The nonresident tuition differential is waived for nonresident Graduate Assistants. Graduate Assistants enrolled in academic programs with differential tuition rates receive tuition remission at the differentiated rate. Upon termination of the assistantship, a student's original residency status becomes the default for tuition charges assessed beyond the student's appointment period. Although tuition remission accompanies an assistantship and enhances the value of the student's appointment, the tuition remission is not a part of the salary. Therefore, tuition remission is not to be considered in determining the work hours required by the assistant.

All Graduate Assistants are required to be enrolled for a minimum of 12 credits each term of their appointment during the academic year (9 credits during summer session) to be eligible for the Graduate Assistantship salary, tuition remission, health insurance fee subsidies and the quarterly fee remission. For 2014-15, audit registrations, course withdrawals, and INTO-OSU course work may not be used to satisfy the 12-credit enrollment requirement. In addition, Graduate Assistant tuition remission may not be applied to INTO-OSU tuition charges.

### **Administrative-Academic Unit Partnering for Graduate Assistantships**

As specified in the [OSU Tuition Remission Policy](#) only academic units may award tuition remission. Administrative units may award tuition remission indirectly by supplying associated salary dollars to an academic unit to be used to recruit an eligible graduate student. Academic units are defined as "all academic Colleges including the Graduate School and interdisciplinary degree programs reporting to the Dean of the Graduate School." Administrative units may continue to use Graduate Assistants, but they must do so by coupling their salary funds to a tuition remission by partnering with an academic unit/program.

#### Intent of Policy

Graduate Assistant tuition remissions are used as part of financial packages to recruit and retain academically superior graduate students to OSU. To maximize the use of graduate tuition remission resources, only academic programs may determine the quality and competitiveness of graduate students to be recruited to OSU.

#### Guidelines for Administrative and Academic Unit Partnerships

To achieve policy objectives, an administrative unit is required to collaborate with an academic unit *prior to the beginning of the Graduate Assistant hiring process*. The following describes the steps required to engage in administrative and academic unit partnerships for the purpose of hiring Graduate Assistants:

1. The administrative unit must specify the qualifications and skills associated with the Graduate Assistant position to be filled.
2. The administrative unit must contact the academic program(s) most likely to attract a pool of graduate student applicants who will have the desired qualifications/skill set.
3. Establishment of the recruitment pool will be the responsibility of the academic units in which partnerships are being pursued, with the goal of maximizing the recruitment of the best and most qualified graduate students to OSU.
4. Administrative and academic partners will make every effort to engage in this process during the graduate student recruiting season with the goal of making the assistantship offer by the national offer deadline of April 15.
5. The administrative unit will select a graduate student from the recruitment pool established by the academic unit partners.
6. The administrative unit will notify the academic unit in which the graduate student is enrolled that a selection has been made.
7. The academic unit will draft and extend the letter of offer to the Graduate Assistant based on information provided to them by the administrative unit.
8. Once the letter of offer has been signed by all parties, the academic unit will process the appointment paperwork and submit it to the Office of Human Resources.
9. The administrative unit will draft the Graduate Assistant position description and provide a copy to the academic unit.
10. Based on funding source, the administrative unit will either transfer the salary funds to the academic unit in which the student is enrolled or provide the academic unit with an appropriate payment index.
11. The administrative unit will evaluate job performance in consultation with the academic unit to ensure the Graduate Assistant's ongoing academic success and eligibility for appointment renewal.
12. This policy requires a minimum appointment level of 0.20 FTE and a maximum of .49 FTE each term of the appointment. Graduate Assistants are required to enroll for a minimum of 12 credits each term, 9 credits during summer session.

Note: All academic units as defined above have full authority to extend offers and process Graduate Assistantship appointments regardless of the program of enrollment of the appointee. Academic units are encouraged to consult with the student's academic home to ensure the student has been admitted and that their academic progress qualifies for the appointment.

### **CGS Resolution**

The [Resolution](#) adopted by the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) concerning offers of financial support and their acceptance during the graduate student recruitment cycle may be downloaded from the CGS web site ([www.cgsnet.org](http://www.cgsnet.org).) This long-standing policy states that, "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." Offers of financial support include scholarships, fellowships, traineeships, or assistantships. Signing bonuses should also be considered as an offer of financial support. This Resolution also states that, "...acceptance given or left in force after April 15 commits the student not to accept another offer without first obtaining a written release from the institution to which a commitment has been made."

Oregon State University is a participant in this Resolution, and as such, we seek your assistance in complying with its terms. Please read the Resolution carefully so that all parties understand the expectations implicit in agreements for financial support.

### **Inter-institutional Graduate Assistants**

Past agreements OSU had with UO, PSU and WOU for the appointment of Inter-institutional Graduate Assistants are under review and revision based on the OUS Governance Transition effective June 30, 2015. For questions related to inter-institutional Graduate Assistant appointments, contact the Graduate School.