January 28, 2011

Memo to: Deans, Directors, Department Chairs and Heads

From: Martin Fisk, Interim Dean
Graduate School

Subject: 2011-12 Recommended Graduate Assistant Appointment & Stipend Guidelines

Recommended graduate assistant stipend levels have not been increased over 2010-11 rates. Departments and programs are encouraged to build increases into their graduate assistant stipends as budgets permit.

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. No appointment can be for less than 0.20 FTE or more than 0.49 FTE for any academic term.

Graduate assistants not performing service are required to perform duties at OSU to justify their stipends. 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 assure that the level of effort is commensurate with the level of FTE for both graduate teaching and graduate research assistants. [See CGE contract, Article 11, Section 3.]

Departments are required to articulate in each graduate assistant’s letter of offer the details of the appointment (e.g., contract start and end dates, FTE, monthly stipend/salary, tuition remission); highlight information concerning the $300/term salary supplement and the mandatory graduate assistant health insurance plan; and 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.

Model appointment letters are available on the Office of Human Resources web site: http://oregonstate.edu/admin/hr/gradstud/home.html.

Graduate assistantships at a full-time-equivalent appointment of .20 FTE or greater include stipend/salary commensurate with appointment level, graduate tuition remission (currently $3,474/academic year quarter for 12 credit enrollment), an 85% health insurance subsidy for the graduate assistant only (currently $647.10/quarter; dependent coverage available on a self-pay basis), and a $300 per quarter salary supplement (excluding summer session.) Tuition remission rates and health insurance premiums are expected to increase in 2011-12.

As specified by the OSU Tuition Remission Policy, all graduate assistants are assessed tuition at the resident graduate rate regardless of their residency status. In addition, 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 stipend. 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 stipend, tuition remission, an 85% graduate assistant-only health insurance premium subsidy, and the $300/quarter salary supplement. Audit registrations, course withdrawals, and INTO-OSU and E-campus 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 and/or E-campus 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 stipend 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 stipend 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 stipend funds to the academic unit in which the student is enrolled or provide the academic unit with an appropriate payment index (for details by funding source, see “Guidelines for Accounting & Reimbursement-GA Tuition Remission”).
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 he/she has been admitted and his/her academic progress warrants the appointment.

Inter-institutional Graduate Assistants

The following represents an agreement between Oregon State University, University of Oregon, Portland State University and Western Oregon University regarding the employment of graduate students. OUS graduate students employed as graduate assistants on any OUS campus participating in this agreement will be subject to the eligibility requirements, policies and procedures established for graduate appointments by the employing campus. Appointments in which the employing institution is not the student’s academic home institution must receive prior approval by the Graduate Dean/Director of the employing institution.

Appointments of Non-OSU Graduate Student on OSU Graduate Assistantship

Attempts to fill the position from among the pool of OSU enrolled graduate students must be exhausted. All provisions of the OSU Graduate Tuition Remission Policy and the CGE bargaining agreement must be met, including minimum and maximum appointment levels and enrollment requirements. Letters of appointment for non-OSU graduate students must inform the student that as a condition of their continued appointment as a graduate assistant at OSU, he/she must register and maintain a minimum of 12
credits at his/her home institution during all terms of the assistantship (9 credits during summer session.) Should subsequent changes in registration result in enrollment below 12 credits for the term, eligibility for the appointment will be forfeited. It is the student’s responsibility to notify the employing department and the OSU Graduate School of changes in registration that would render the student ineligible for the assistantship and subsequent benefits.

**OUS Graduate Students on Inter-institutional (Split) Appointments**
The OSU portion of a split graduate assistantship must meet all provisions of the OSU Graduate Tuition Remission Policy and the CGE bargaining agreement. The OSU portion of the split appointment must represent a work effort of a minimum .20 FTE (104 hours) during each 13-week period. When combined, the total employment effort for all portions of the split appointment must not exceed .49 FTE (255 hours) during each 13-week period. Graduate students employed on split graduate assistantship appointments must be enrolled for a minimum of 12 credits at OSU (9 credits during summer session.) When all previous conditions have been met, tuition remission will be prorated according to the proportional FTE paid by each institution. In addition, the graduate assistant will be eligible for the OSU graduate assistant salary supplement and health insurance benefit. The health benefit will be offered and paid by OSU according to the policy/plan in effect at the time of the appointment only if the graduate assistant’s other employing institution does not offer a health insurance option.

**Recommended Stipend Guidelines**
A review of the FY11 graduate assistant stipend rates of OSU’s accreditation peers\(^1\) reveals an average minimum 9-month full-time (1.00) annual salary rate of $21,997 with a range between $17,209 and $26,785 when one standard deviation is applied. OSU’s actual FY11 average 9-month full-time annual salary rate is $33,271. For FY12, the OSU recommended minimum 9-month full-time (1.00) annual salary rate is $31,878 and has been developed to advance the institution’s competitiveness for a diverse graduate student body of the highest quality [See Tables 1 and 2 below.] Examples are given for graduate assistants appointed at 0.20 and 0.49 FTE. Adjustments to other FTE levels between 0.20 and 0.49 may be computed as necessary by multiplying the annual salary rate by the appointment FTE of your choice. OSU’s FY12 recommended minimum annual rates have been developed to equalize actual monthly stipends for appointments at 9- and 12-month terms of service, and they are footnoted to reflect the stipend necessary to provide full financial certification for international students appointed at .49 FTE.

The collective bargaining agreement between OSU/OUS and the Coalition of Graduate Employees (CGE) American Federation of Teachers Local 6069 specifies a required minimum full-time equivalent monthly salary rate of $2,811. This rate yields a 9-month full-time annual salary rate of $25,299. Effective September 16, 2011, the required minimum full-time equivalent monthly salary rate will increase to $3,000. This new rate will yield a 9-month full-time annual salary rate of $27,000. While the 2011-12 Graduate School guidelines specify a recommended minimum full-time equivalent monthly salary rate of $3,542 to remain competitive in the global graduate student marketplace, in all cases, the CGE required minimum full-time equivalent monthly salary rate must be met or exceeded.

In addition to the required CGE minimum full-time equivalent monthly salary rate above, the collective bargaining agreement specifies that employees whose rates of pay are between the full-time monthly salary rate of $2,811 and $3,543 (or $3,000 and $3,543 effective September 16, 2011) will receive a three percent (3%) annual increase upon their initial reappointment. [See CGE contract, Article 11, Section 1.]

Actual stipend levels may be determined by multiplying the monthly full-time equivalent by the term of services (i.e., 9 or 12 months) and multiplying the result by the appointment FTE. [example: ($3,685 x 9) \times .20 \text{ FTE} = \$6,633.]

The Graduate School recommends that stipends not be less than the minimum specified in Level I for graduate assistants at either the 9- or 12-month levels (0.20 FTE). Departments and programs are strongly encouraged to provide stipends above these recommended levels as resources permit. Please review FTE and stipend levels to assure that there are no inadvertent gender or ethnic disparities among appointments. Levels II through IV portray recommended stipends that correspond to assignments with increased experience and education requirements.

---
\(^1\)OSU’s accreditation peers consist primarily of Land Grant institutions without medical schools and include Arizona State, Auburn, Purdue, Clemson, Colorado State, Iowa State, Kansas State, North Carolina State, Washington State, in addition to the University of Oregon.
Table 1. 2011-12 Recommended Minimum Graduate Assistant Stipend Levels For 9-Month Appointments
Based on a Recommended Minimum 9-month Full-Time (1.00 FTE) Annual Salary Rate of $31,878

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>.20 FTE (104 hours/term)</th>
<th></th>
<th>.49 FTE (255 hours/term)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Annual Stipend</td>
<td>Monthly Stipend</td>
<td>Quarterly Stipend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA I (beginning graduate)</td>
<td>$6,376</td>
<td>$708</td>
<td>$2,125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA II (one year experience)</td>
<td>$6,503</td>
<td>$723</td>
<td>$2,168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA III (MS or equivalent)</td>
<td>$6,633</td>
<td>$737</td>
<td>$2,211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA IV (oral prelim completed)</td>
<td>$6,766</td>
<td>$752</td>
<td>$2,255</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 All graduate assistants appointed at .20 FTE or greater for the academic term receive tuition remission (currently $3,474/qtr), a $300 salary supplement (excluding summer session), and an 85% health insurance premium subsidy for graduate-assistant-only coverage (currently $647.10/qtr).

2 A minimum annual rate of $30,465 at .49 FTE is needed to satisfy financial certification for 2011-12, if appointed on 9-month basis.

3 Stipend levels vary among programs. Although the minimum recommended stipend is specified, units may elect to offer higher stipends than those shown. Stipends are computed for illustration purposes only, and may be adjusted proportionately for other FTE levels by multiplying the annual salary rate by the desired FTE.

4 Increases of 2% are included in each level above GTA I. Reappointments with a full-time equivalent monthly salary rate of $3,543 or less are eligible for a 3% annual increase as specified by the collective bargaining agreement.

Table 2. 2011-12 Recommended Minimum Graduate Assistant Stipend Levels For 12-Month Appointments
Based on a Recommended Minimum 12-month Full-Time (1.00 FTE) Annual Salary Rate of $42,504

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>.20 FTE (104 hours/term)</th>
<th></th>
<th>.49 FTE (255 hours/term)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Annual Stipend</td>
<td>Monthly Stipend</td>
<td>Quarterly Stipend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA I (beginning graduate)</td>
<td>$8,501</td>
<td>$708</td>
<td>$2,125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA II (one year experience)</td>
<td>$8,671</td>
<td>$723</td>
<td>$2,168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA III (MS or equivalent)</td>
<td>$8,844</td>
<td>$737</td>
<td>$2,211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA IV (oral prelim completed)</td>
<td>$9,021</td>
<td>$752</td>
<td>$2,255</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 All graduate assistants appointed at .20 FTE or greater for the academic term receive tuition remission (currently $3,474/qtr), a $300 salary supplement (excluding summer session), and an 85% health insurance premium subsidy for graduate-assistant-only coverage (currently $647.10/qtr).

2 A minimum annual rate of $31,896 at .49 FTE is needed to satisfy financial certification for 2011-12 and to meet collective bargaining agreement requirements, if appointed on 12-month basis.

3 Stipend levels vary among programs. Although the minimum recommended stipend is specified, units may elect to offer higher stipends than those shown. Stipends are computed for illustration purposes only, and may be adjusted proportionately for other FTE levels by multiplying the annual salary rate by the desired FTE.

4 Increases of 2% are included in each level above GTA I. Reappointments with a full-time equivalent monthly salary rate of $3,543 or less are eligible for a 3% annual increase as specified by the collective bargaining agreement.

NOTE: One year’s experience is defined as:
• Registering for at least three terms as a full-time student here or elsewhere.
• Maintaining satisfactory progress toward the degree.
• Filing an acceptable graduate program.
• The equivalent of a master’s degree is defined by OUS as 45 graduate credits.

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). 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. You may also find helpful the discussion about this topic on the CGS web site at: http://cgsnet.org/Default.aspx?tabid=201. As recommended by CGS, a copy of this Resolution should be provided with each letter of offer, or you may refer students to the CGS web site.

**English Language Standards for Admission and Teaching Assistantships**

Regular admission requires international students to meet minimum TOEFL score requirements of 550 (paper & pencil test) or 213 (computer-based test). Graduate applicants must meet both the following subtest and total scores if Internet-based TOEFL (iBT) scores are submitted:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtest</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Score</strong></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A minimum score of 6.5 on the IELTS may be used as an alternate to the TOEFL test requirement.

Students regularly admitted, admitted conditionally for academic reasons, and/or admitted provisionally as degree-seeking graduate students may qualify for graduate research assistantships. Students admitted for English language conditions may not hold assistantships and are required to participate in language training until they have fully met their conditions.

International graduate teaching assistants (IGTAs) are expected to meet higher English language standards than the minimum required for admission. Departments appointing IGTAs should refer to the English Language Testing and Training Policy for International GTAs.