



OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

USF Graduate Community,

I am pleased to present this updated comprehensive USF ***Graduate Assistant Policies and Guidelines*** handbook. Within these pages you will find clarification of many policies, processes, and procedures that are currently in existence at USF. Some policies have been revised since the last publication of this handbook and represent the continuing emphasis on supporting the highest quality graduate education at USF. This handbook is intended as a resource to Graduate Program Directors, Graduate Coordinators, graduate professional staff, Human Resources, budget officers, and many others.

The Graduate Assistant Policies and Guidelines handbook is comprised of five main sections:

- 1) Graduate Assistantship Overview
- 2) Graduate Assistant Appointments
- 3) Graduate Assistant Benefits
- 4) Graduate Assistant Process Audits
- 5) Graduate Assistant Guidelines Matrix

The policies and guidelines stated within are to be followed by USF Tampa and the regional campuses, including USF Health, unless otherwise stated. The regional campuses and USF Health have separate budgets for tuition and stipends; however, they must follow the overall graduate assistant policies and guidelines set forth by the Office of Graduate Studies.

This handbook will evolve over time as USF's graduate education changes. The handbook is designed to be in place for the academic years of 2011-2015; however, modifications may be made in the interim. If such changes are made all parties will be appropriately notified. I believe this handbook provides the information you will need as you appoint graduate assistants or handle graduate assistant employment issues.

1. Graduate Assistantship Overview

1.1. Graduate Assistantships at the University of South Florida

Graduate Assistantships are intended to recruit quality students to graduate study at USF and to enhance the graduate learning experience. Graduate assistantships exist within academic departments or other university offices on campus. Graduate assistants may teach, conduct research, or perform other tasks that contribute to the student's professional development. Graduate students may be classified as Graduate Assistants (GAs), Graduate Teaching Assistants/Associates (GTAs), Graduate Instructional Assistants (GIAs), and/or Graduate Research Assistants/Associates (GRAs).

All graduate assistants at USF work under a contract negotiated by the Graduate Assistants United (GAU) and the USF Board of Trustees. The GAU is the labor union certified as the exclusive bargaining agent for graduate assistants at USF.

<http://usfweb2.usf.edu/human-resources/pdfs/collective-bargaining/GAU-Agreement-2011-2014.pdf>

This book should be used as a tool to ensure proper administration of graduate assistantships.

1.2 Graduate Assistantship Eligibility

Office of Graduate Studies and University financial resources are used to support full-time, degree-seeking graduate students. Eligibility requirements are applicable to all graduate assistant classification codes regardless of classification code and/or funding source. To receive an assistantship, the graduate student must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Accepted in a graduate degree program;
- Maintain an overall minimum grade point average (GPA) **and** degree program GPA of 3.00;
- Enrolled full-time during the semester(s) appointed as a graduate assistant. Full-time enrollment is considered 9 graduate credit hours in the fall semester, 9 graduate credit hours in the spring semester, and 6 graduate credit hours in the summer semester. If a graduate assistant is enrolled in the last semester of his/her program of study, the number of registered semester hours may be less than the full-time requirement. Graduate assistants must comply with all Office of Graduate Studies enrollment requirements to retain their assistantship as stated in the Office of Graduate Studies Catalog at <http://www.grad.usf.edu/catalog.asp> on our website.

1.3. Graduate Assistant Opportunities

Graduate assistantships are highly competitive. Specific eligibility requirements and application guidelines for graduate assistants are established by the colleges and departments. To apply for an assistantship, students should contact their Graduate Program Director in the department of study. (Refer to the "Contact Information" for the Graduate Program email address and telephone number available under Graduate Programs at <http://www.grad.usf.edu/programs/>.)

Programs that wish to advertise graduate assistant opportunities to the USF student community are encouraged to use the USF Career Center. More information about posting job opportunities can be found at the Career Center Website:

<http://www.career.usf.edu/>

1.4. Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Appointment

The Office of Graduate Studies encourages and strongly recommends that departments hire graduate students to full-time appointments (.50 FTE).

The USF-GAU Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) Article 6.1(A) states “No employee shall be assigned employment responsibilities during a semester that exceed an average of ten (10) hours per week for one-fourth time; thirteen and one third (13.3) hours per week for one-third time; twenty (20) hours per week for a one half time appointment; or thirty (30) hours per week for a three-quarter time appointment. The same proportional relationship applies to all other FTE's”.

1.5. Outside Employment

The Office of Graduate Studies’s philosophy is that full-time graduate assistants with a full-time course load should not pursue **outside employment**. This includes positions on and off campus.

Full-time USF employees, regardless of classification (Temporary, Staff, Administration, or other) are prohibited from simultaneously receiving a graduate assistantship while working full-time.

1.6. Academic Good Standing

All graduate assistants must maintain good academic standing with an overall graduate **and** degree program GPA of 3.00 or higher each term. Inability to maintain good academic standing with the university may result in academic dismissal. Please refer to the Graduate Catalog at <http://www.grad.usf.edu/catalog.asp> and the Academic Probation Policy and Procedures section at <http://www.grad.usf.edu/> for more information.

If a graduate assistant’s overall GPA falls below 3.00, they will automatically be placed on academic probation (P1). Students on academic probation (P1) are eligible to maintain their graduate assistantship for one additional semester. Graduate assistants who advance to the next level of academic probation (P2) will be ineligible to maintain or renew a graduate assistantship, without the consent of their college along with a program improvement plan. Exceptions to this policy will be made only in very rare circumstances on a case-by- case basis, with final approval made by the Office of Graduate Studies Dean or designee. Students on (P3) will not be eligible for a Graduate Assistantship.

Academic standing status can be found on the General Student Screen in Banner, SGASTDN. In addition, the Office of Graduate Studies will provide an Academic Probation Status Report to the colleges at the end of each semester following the Registrar’s processing and posting of grades. This report will list all active students that are on academic probation and the level of probation (P1, P2, or P3). It will also indicate if the student is currently appointed as a graduate assistant.

All graduate assistants must make satisfactory progress toward their degree. Satisfactory progress is determined on a case-by-case basis by the graduate assistant’s Graduate Program Director and/or College Graduate Program Coordinator. If it is determined that satisfactory progress is not being made, even if the student is meeting other requirements (i.e., GPA, fulltime status), the graduate assistant may lose their assistantship.

1.7. Graduate Assistantship Stipends

Graduate assistants appointed in job classification codes 9181, 9182, 9183, 9184, & 9550 are employed as salaried employees and are not eligible for overtime compensation. Graduate assistants appointed in job classification code 9185 are employed as non-exempt hourly employees and will be required to complete time sheets. Non-exempt hourly employees are eligible for overtime compensation for time worked beyond 40 hours in a single work week.

Time clocks shall not be used to record graduate assistant work hours. (Class codes are described on pages 8-17.)

The Graduate Assistant United (GAU) contract located at

<http://usfweb2.usf.edu/human-resources/pdfs/collective-bargaining/GAU-Agreement-2011-2014.pdf> on our website and University policy require minimum stipend allowances as set forth in the contract.

- **Students at the master's level:** Each nine-month employee (19.5 pay periods) on a .50 FTE appointment shall be guaranteed a minimum stipend of \$9,180 (\$11.77 Hour). Appointments greater or less than .50 FTE shall be paid at a stipend rate representing a proportion of this minimum as determined by the fractional FTE appointment and the budgeted weeks of activity.

Effective August 1, 2014 – master's level: Each nine-month employee (19.5 pay periods) on a .50 FTE appointment shall be guaranteed a minimum stipend of \$9,880 (\$12.67 Hour). Appointments greater or less than .50 FTE shall be paid at a stipend rate representing a proportion of this minimum as determined by the fractional FTE appointment and the budgeted weeks of activity.

- **Students at the doctoral level:** Each nine-month employee (19.5 pay periods) on a .50 FTE appointment shall be guaranteed a minimum of \$10,455 (\$13.41 Hour). Appointments greater or less than .50 FTE but no less than .25 FTE shall be paid at a stipend rate representing a proportion of this minimum as determined by the fractional FTE appointment and the budgeted weeks of activity.

Effective August 1, 2014 – doctoral level: Each nine-month employee (19.5 pay periods) on a .50 FTE appointment shall be guaranteed a minimum of \$11,155 (\$14.30 Hour). Appointments greater or less than .50 FTE but no less than .25 FTE shall be paid at a stipend rate representing a proportion of this minimum as determined by the fractional FTE appointment and the budgeted weeks of activity.

Stipend rates vary across disciplines, but cannot be less than the minimum as stated in the GAU contract. Departments are **strongly encouraged** to provide stipends that are considered competitive within their discipline.

Graduate assistantship stipends are paid through the university payroll system. Graduate students who have assistantships will receive biweekly payments following the schedule set by Human Resources Payroll (Refer to <http://usfweb2.usf.edu/HR/pa.htm>). If a student retains multiple assistantship appointments from more than one University office, the student will receive a single payment combining the amounts paid by each office. Graduate Assistants may be appointed up to a maximum of 0.50 FTE for a single assistantship. **Programs who desire to appoint a Graduate Student, in any classification, more than 0.50 FTE up to 0.73 FTE, for single or multiple appointments, must submit justification to the Office of Graduate Studies for approval.** The justification should come from the student's academic advisor (major prof for doctoral) not their supervisor. This is designed to ensure sufficient progress toward degree and that the department is aware of the student's employment activity. When requesting, please address these two questions: **1) how does this additional assignment benefit the student either in terms of elements associated with degree completion or better preparing the student for a future career; and 2) how will this additional assignment impact the time to degree for the student.** Students hired in non-GA positions on campus must also not exceed 0.73 FTE for the combined position and assistantship appointments. These appointments also count towards the total FTE. **Programs who desire to appoint a Graduate Student, in any classification, more than 0.73 FTE, for single or multiple appointments, must submit justification to the Office of Graduate Studies for approval.** Please note there are ACA and budget considerations to take into account in these cases. Please contact our office (Graduate Studies) if you wish to do this.

Graduate assistants should be aware of the Internal Revenue Service guidelines for exemption from FICA. Please contact Human Resources at (813)974-2970 for more information.

1.8. Graduate Assistantship Evaluations

A comprehensive annual performance appraisal for each graduate assistant, whose term of appointment is one (1) semester or longer, shall be evaluated in writing once during each such appointment. The University-wide comprehensive annual performance appraisal format will be used for all appraisals. The employment evaluation shall include evaluation of assigned duties and such other responsibilities as are appropriate to the assignment. Additional consideration will be given to the satisfactory progress towards completion of the degree program according to University policy. Personnel decisions shall take such employment evaluations into account, provided that personnel decisions need not be based solely on written employment performance evaluations. The Graduate Program Director will certify completion of the annual performance appraisal for each employee to the Office of Graduate Studies and send the original document to Human Resources for inclusion in the graduate assistant's personnel file.

1.9. Graduate Student Tuition and Fees

Graduate assistants receive a stipend and are eligible for tuition payment and an employer contribution toward health insurance. Tuition payment refers to the matriculation fees only. The University does not provide payment for the cost of other student fees (i.e., flat fee athletic, flat fee A&S, student union enhancement fee, lab fees, comprehensive new graduate fee). For greater detail, refer to the Financial Aid website: <http://www.usf.edu/finaid>.

Graduate assistants are responsible for paying the student fees assessed to their account. Fees may include, but are not limited to, flat fee athletic, flat fee A&S, student union enhancement fee, lab fees, and/or comprehensive new graduate fee. Students are responsible for paying the balance on their account by the payment deadline published in the academic calendar. Failure to pay on time will result in a late payment charge. To determine fees and balances owed, refer to OASIS at <http://usfonline.admin.usf.edu>.

2. Graduate Assistantship Appointments

2.1. Job Classifications

The University has six classification codes for graduate assistants. They are:

- Graduate Research Assistant (class code 9182)
- Graduate Research Associate (class code 9181)
- Graduate Teaching Assistant (class code 9184)
- Graduate Teaching Associate (class code 9183)
- Graduate Assistant (class code 9185)
- Graduate Instructional Assistant (class code 9550)

Using the class code descriptions and requirements below, the department, college and/or university unit shall select an appropriate graduate assistant job classification code that is both descriptive of the work to be performed by the graduate assistant and for which the graduate student qualifies.

The hiring department will provide the graduate assistant with an offer letter for all appointments and reappointments. A valid letter of offer must accompany the Appointment Status Form (ASF) when it is sent to Human Resources.

It is the responsibility of the hiring unit to ensure that graduate assistants in their department meet the minimum eligibility requirements of the Office of Graduate Studies during each semester that they are employed (refer to the Graduate Assistantship Eligibility section). The hiring unit and the graduate student's academic department are responsible for making sure that the student is enrolled full time and is not on academic probation at the beginning of each semester.

The following graduate assistant job classification codes and qualifications are adapted from the State University System Faculty Classification Specifications and supplemented by the Office of Graduate Studies and Human Resources. Eligibility requirements noted are the Office of Graduate Studies minimums, allowing departments and/or colleges to set additional eligibility requirements as required.

2.2. Graduate Assistantship Position Description

For a position to be classified as a graduate assistantship and for the employee to be eligible for benefits afforded to qualifying graduate assistants, the duties performed **must** directly contribute to the graduate student's program of study. The graduate assistant must perform duties under the supervision of at least one faculty member and/or university employee experienced in the discipline. As a graduate assistant the employee must receive planned, periodic written evaluations (refer to Graduate Assistantship Evaluations). A student must meet **ALL** Office of Graduate Studies eligibility requirements to be hired as a graduate assistant (refer to Graduate Assistantship Eligibility section).

2.3. Appointment Length

Appointments may be for any period of time up to one (1) calendar year. The University shall appoint the majority of the .5 FTE employees in Graduate Assistant positions (9183, 9184, 9185, 9550) to an appointment of at least one (1) academic year, consistent with the faculty calendar (19.5 pay periods). Graduate assistants (9181, 9182) who are supported on grants and contracts will only be appointed for one (1) academic year dependent upon the availability and duration of the grant or contract funding. Please contact Human Resources at (813)974-2970 for more information on appointment dates.

2.4. Out of College Graduate Assistant Appointments

To be appointed as a graduate assistant outside the student's academic department, the position duties **must** be directly related to the student's academic program either through teaching or research experiences or duties related to the student's academic discipline. The graduate assistant must perform duties under the supervision of at least one faculty member and/or university employee experienced in the discipline of the student's major.

The graduate student's academic department will review the duties of a given appointment to determine if they meet the criteria for appointment as a graduate assistant as part of the normal employment process, and thus eligibility for a tuition payment and/or health insurance. Therefore:

- Graduate assistant appointments made by a non-college unit (i.e., CUTR, Academic Affairs, Center for Teaching Enhancement, Academic Computing, Financial Aid) or a college other than the home college of the student must be pre-approved by the student's academic department as being appropriate for a graduate assistant appointment.
- Graduate assistant appointments by a non-college employing unit are required to follow the guidelines set for appointing a graduate assistant.
- Graduate assistant appointments by a college other than the home college of the student are required to follow the guidelines set for appointing a graduate assistant.

All Out of College Graduate Assistant Appointments **must** be approved by the Graduate student's academic department, academic department's college dean (or designee), employing department/unit supervisor, and the Office of Graduate Studies Dean (or designee), in order for the student to be classified as a graduate assistant, and be eligible for tuition payment, and/or health insurance. Refer to the Out of College Graduate Assistant Appointment Approval Form at <http://www.grad.usf.edu/assistantships.php> on our website.

To be eligible for a graduate assistantship, tuition payment, and/or health insurance, these forms must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies no later than the Monday prior to the start of the fall, spring and/or summer C semesters.

The hiring unit will work with the graduate assistant's academic department and college to ensure that the graduate assistant is complying with graduate assistant eligibility criteria (i.e., enrollment status, academic good standing). It is the hiring unit's responsibility to ensure that the graduate assistant is assigned to the appropriate classification code.

2.5. Detailed Graduate Assistantship Job Descriptions and Requirements

2.5.a. Graduate Research Assistants/Associates (9182 & 9181)

Graduate Research Assistants/Associates (GRAs) are to be supported by contracts and grants (C&G). Occasionally, GRAs are supported by department or college non-C&G start-up funds to assist junior faculty.

Graduate Research Assistants/Associates may assist professors with research activities, participate in research efforts in university institutes and centers or in off-campus research projects affiliated with the university, or perform other research-related duties (including literature searches and reviews involving library/electronic resource research).

Graduate Research Assistants/Associates may also be assigned to nonacademic university offices (i.e. Academic Affairs, Office of Decision Support) while performing research duties. In this instance, the Graduate Research Assistants/Associates is typically paid by non-C&G funds.

When appropriate to the discipline, it is **required** that all GRAs complete an Institutional Review Board (IRB) course prior to beginning their research duties. Individual graduate programs will determine if it is necessary for the graduate assistant to complete an IRB course and which IRB course should be taken. Individual graduate programs will monitor their graduate assistant's completion of IRB courses. The Office of Research suggests the following:

Belmont Report: A nine minute video on the Belmont Report produced by the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP). The Belmont report is the foundational document that defines the ethical principles of protection for all human

research subject participants. The video requires RealPlayer to operate and this can be downloaded at the same site where the video is located. The site is: <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/belmontArchive.html>

Online IRB Course: The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has an IRB module that can be accessed from the USF Office of Research website: <http://www.research.usf.edu/cs/irbcourses.htm#foundation>. The course takes approximately 2 hours to complete and includes quizzes at the end of each module. A certificate is awarded upon completion. This course provides a general foundation for the protections accorded to human subjects from a biomedical perspective.

Animal Research IRB: The Office of Lab Animal Welfare (OLAW) has drafted a tutorial that provides a general overview regarding the principles, regulations, structure, and operation of an animal use program. This tutorial can be located at: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/tutorial/index.htm>

2.5.b. Graduate Research Associate (9181)

In general, Graduate Research Associates (9181) are doctoral students or advanced masters-level students with two or more years of research experience. It is **expected** that all GRAs (9181) are supported (i.e., stipend and tuition) through contracts and grants. It is **expected** that principal investigators include the University contribution of the health insurance costs in grants and contracts for Graduate Research Associates. Graduate Research Associates classified as 9181 are appointed as salaried employees and are not eligible for overtime compensation.

The following requirements and duties/roles should be used to determine the 9181 job classification.

Requirements

Graduate Research Associates:

- Must meet the eligibility requirements set by the Office of Graduate Studies (refer to Graduate Assistantship Eligibility section).
- Must have completed a minimum of 30 graduate credit hours.
- Must meet any special qualifications added to the eligibility qualification requirements (i.e., admission to doctoral candidacy). These qualifications are determined and communicated at the department and/or college level.

Duties/Roles

Graduate Research Associates:

- Performs research duties under the supervision of an appropriate faculty member or USF administrator. Such research duties may include, but are not limited to, overseeing lab research, community-based research activities, developing research and evaluation surveys, research design, sampling strategies, collecting data, analyzing data using software analyses programs, writing draft research reports, assisting with grant writing, and/or supervising a research team.
- Are responsible for assisting faculty members with research related to the student's academic program.

2.5.c. Graduate Research Assistant (9182)

In general, Graduate Research Assistants (9182) are masters-level or doctoral-level students in their first two years of study assigned to research duties. It is **expected** that all GRAs (9182) are supported (i.e., stipend and tuition) through contracts and grants. It is **expected** that principal investigators include the University contribution of the health insurance costs in grants and contracts for Graduate Research Assistants. Graduate Research Assistants classified as 9182 are appointed as salaried employees and are not eligible for overtime compensation.

The following requirements and duties/roles should be used to determine the 9182 job classification.

Requirements

Graduate Research Assistants:

- Must meet the eligibility requirements set by the Office of Graduate Studies (refer to Graduate Assistantship Eligibility section).
- Must meet any special qualifications added to the eligibility requirements as determined and communicated at the department and/or college level.

Duties/Roles

Graduate Research Assistants:

- Performs research duties under the supervision of an appropriate faculty member or USF administrator. Such research duties may include, but are not limited to, assisting in lab research, community-based research activities, developing research and evaluation surveys, collecting data, analyzing data using software analyses programs, data presentation, and/or writing draft research reports.
- Are responsible for assisting faculty members with research related to the student's academic program.

2.5.d. Graduate Teaching Assistants/Associates (9184 & 9183)

Graduate Teaching Assistants/Associates may be assigned as classroom teachers, co-teachers, classroom assistants, lab assistants, or other roles directly related to classroom instruction. Most Graduate Teaching Assistants/Associates are paid by academic departments. They may also be employed by the Center for Teaching Enhancement and perform similar teaching assistant/associate duties.

Graduate assistants teaching or assisting in courses should be supervised by at least one faculty member experienced in the discipline.

Graduate Teaching Assistants/Associates may **not** be assigned to teach a graduate course. They may provide support to a qualified faculty/instructor teaching a graduate course, but **may not** be the instructor of record.

A Graduate Teaching Assistant/Associate may **not** assist with teaching a graduate level course that they may subsequently take at some time in their degree program.

It is extremely critical for accreditation purposes that graduate students are appointed appropriately to Graduate Teaching Assistant/Associate job classifications.

The Office of Graduate Studies recommends that all departments require that all GTAs receive pedagogy training and/or attend the Teaching Assistant Workshop conducted by the Academy for Teaching and Learning Excellence. This office typically holds a one day workshop with additional trainings each August prior to the start of the fall semester. See <http://atle.usf.edu>.

PLEASE NOTE: International students from countries where English is **not the official language** who want to be considered for a teaching assistantship must show proficiency in spoken English even if their TOEFL has been waived for admission to a graduate program. They need a minimum score of 26 on the spoken portion of the Internet-based TOEFL (iBT) or 160 on the spoken portion of the TOEIC test administered by ETS (<http://www.ets.org/toeic>).

2.5.e. Graduate Teaching Associate (9183)

In general, Graduate Teaching Associates (9183) are advanced masters-level students or doctoral students who have completed 30 or more graduate credit hours. These students are primarily paid from E & G funds. Graduate Teaching Associates may be designated as a "primary instructor" for an undergraduate course. Graduate Teaching Associates classified as 9183 are appointed as salaried employees and are not eligible for overtime compensation.

The following requirements and duties/roles should be used to determine appointment to the 9183 job classification.

Requirements

Graduate Teaching Associates:

- Must meet the eligibility requirements set by the Office of Graduate Studies (refer to Graduate Assistantship Eligibility section).
- Must achieve a score of at least a score of 50 TSE (SPEAK test), 26 Internet-based TOEFL (iBT), or 160 on the spoken portion of the TOEIC if their native language is not English.
- Must have completed at least 30 graduate credit hours.
- Must meet any special qualifications added to the eligibility qualification requirements (i.e., admission to doctoral candidacy). These qualifications are determined and communicated at the department and/or college level.

Duties/Roles

Graduate Teaching Associates:

- Are responsible for assisting faculty members with teaching, course preparation, and activities related to the student's academic program, such as, but not limited to, teaching an undergraduate level course, co-teaching, being a classroom assistant, teaching lab assistant, or other roles directly related to classroom instruction.
- Perform teaching duties under the supervision of an appropriate faculty member or USF administrator.
- May be assigned to teach an undergraduate course and be designated as the "primary instructor" or "instructor of record."

2.5.f. Graduate Teaching Assistant (9184)

In general, Graduate Teaching Assistants (9184) are masters-level or beginning doctoral level students who have completed 18 graduate credit hours and are assigned teaching duties. These students are primarily paid from E&G funds. Graduate Teaching Assistants may be designated as a "primary instructor" for an undergraduate course. Graduate Teaching Assistants classified as 9184 are appointed as salaried employees and are not eligible for overtime compensation.

The following requirements and duties/roles should be used to determine appointment to the 9184 job classification.

Requirements

Graduate Teaching Assistants:

- Must meet the eligibility requirements set by the Office of Graduate Studies (refer to Graduate Assistantship Eligibility section) Must achieve a score of at least a score of 50 TSE (SPEAK test), 26 Internet-based TOEFL (iBT), or 160 on the spoken portion of the TOEIC if their native language is not English.
- Must have completed a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours.
- Must meet any special qualifications added to the eligibility qualification requirements. These qualifications are determined and communicated at the department and/or college level.

Duties/Roles

Graduate Teaching Assistants:

- Are responsible for assisting faculty members with teaching, course preparation, and activities related to the student's academic program such as, but not limited to, teaching an undergraduate level course, co-teaching, being a classroom assistant, teaching lab assistant, or other roles directly related to classroom instruction.
- Performs teaching duties under the supervision of an appropriate faculty member or USF administrator.
- May be assigned to teach undergraduate courses and designated as a "primary instructor" or "instructor of record."

2.5.g. Graduate Instructional Assistant (9550)

In general, Graduate Instructional Assistants (9550) are masters-level or doctoral-level students who have **not** completed 18 graduate credit hours and who will **assist** with the teaching function. These students are primarily paid from E&G funds. Graduate Instructional Assistants classified as 9550 are appointed as salaried employees and are not eligible for overtime compensation.

A Graduate Instructional Assistant **cannot** be assigned to teach an undergraduate or graduate level course or be the instructor of record.

Primary duties may include, but are not limited to, assisting faculty members with lab teaching and/or recitations, assignment development, assisting faculty members with the use of Blackboard, and other activities supporting direct or indirect student instruction. The following requirements and duties/roles should be used to determine appropriate job classification.

Requirements

Graduate Instructional Assistants:

- Must meet the eligibility requirements set by the Office of Graduate Studies (refer to Graduate Assistantship Eligibility section).
- Performs duties under the supervision of an appropriate faculty member or USF administrator.

Duties/Roles

Graduate Instructional Assistants:

- Are responsible for assisting faculty members with teaching and course preparation, as well as assist in lab teaching and other roles directly related to classroom instruction. The Graduate Instructional Assistant **must not be** the “primary instructor” or the “instructor of record.”
- Must meet any special qualifications added to the eligibility qualification requirements. These qualifications are determined and communicated at the department and/or college level.

2.5.h. Graduate Assistant (9185)

In general, Graduate Assistants (9185) are masters-level or doctoral-level students in the first year of study who do **not** qualify for a Graduate Teaching Assistant/Associate, Graduate Instructional Assistant, or a Graduate Research Assistant/Associate position and are **not** assisting with any teaching or research function.

Graduate assistants employed in class code 9185 are appointed as non-exempt hourly employees and will need to complete a bi-weekly time sheet. Non-exempt hourly employees are eligible for overtime compensation when they work more than 40 hours in one work week. Time clocks shall not be used to record work hours. Approved leave requests should be recorded on a leave record form distributed by HR.

Graduate Assistants (9185) may be employed in college or department offices that perform professional duties outside of teaching or research assignments. Duties performed **must** directly contribute to the graduate student’s program of study. It is the responsibility of the academic unit to ensure duties complement the degree program. Graduate Assistants may be assigned in nonacademic university offices such as the Office of Academic Affairs, Registrar’s Office, Financial Aid Office, Computer Services, and Student Affairs. These graduate assistants are primarily paid from non-C&G funds, often E&G and Auxiliary funds.

Graduate Assistants (9185) **should not** conduct teaching and/or research activities.

If a graduate assistant is assisting with any type of research, including library/Internet literature searches, they should be appointed in the appropriate classification, and not as a Graduate Assistant (9185).

If a graduate assistant is teaching or is assisting with teaching, they should be appointed in the appropriate classification and not as a Graduate Assistant (9185).

If a graduate assistant is assisting with teaching and does not have the number of graduate credit hours to qualify for classification as a Graduate Teaching Assistant (9184), they should be classified as a Graduate Instructional Assistant (9550).

The following requirements and duties/roles should be used to determine the 9185 job classification.

Requirements

Graduate Assistants:

- Must meet the eligibility requirements set by the Office of Graduate Studies (refer to Graduate Assistantship Eligibility section).
- Perform duties under the supervision of an appropriate faculty member or USF administrator.

Duties/Roles

Graduate Assistants:

- Are responsible for assisting faculty members or USF staff with appropriate duties related to the student’s academic program.
- Must meet any special qualifications added to the eligibility as determined and communicated at the department and/or college level and, non-academic unit.

Example of Appropriate 9185 Appointments:

- A Marketing student assisting with the development of marketing materials.
- A College Student Affairs student that is working as Assistant Coordinator or Hall Director in an on-campus residence hall.
- A Computer Science student that is assisting with database development in Academic Computing.
- A Public Health student assisting with health education programming in Student Health

Example of Inappropriate 9185 Appointments:

- A graduate student entering data into a database in the Cashier’s Office.
- A graduate student assisting Physical Plant with lawn maintenance.

A new letter of offer is required, regardless of the period of unemployment, for any of the following six situations:

- A new appointment;
- A reappointment;
- A change in job classification code;
- A change in department;
- A change in supervisor;
- A change in job responsibilities.

A valid letter of offer must accompany the Appointment Status Form (ASF) when it is sent to HR.

Minor changes to a valid, existing graduate assistant appointment involving only FTE, standard hours, compensation, compensation frequency, campus mail point, campus location building/room, or campus phone may be made without a new letter of offer by signature of the graduate assistant in the block on the GEMS appointment status form entitled “Graduate Assistant’s acceptance of changes to the current letter of offer.” Since this entails only a minor change to a valid, existing appointment, the student’s signature

denotes their agreement with the changes to the original letter of offer for the aforementioned items. Details of changes are to be provided in the remarks section.

2.6. Foreign Language Proficiency Requirements for International Teaching Assistants

International Teaching Assistants from countries who are not predominantly English-speaking countries (for a list of countries considered 'English-speaking', consult: <http://usfweb2.usf.edu/admissions/international-language-requirements.html>) must demonstrate proficiency. This has been established as minimum scores of 26 on the spoken portion of the internet-administered TOEFL iBT or of 160 on the spoken portion of the TOEIC. At this point USF is not accepting equivalencies with the IELTS test, as that is not scored by American English speakers. ITAs who fail to meet these requirements, cannot be assigned TA positions that require them to directly interact with students. Therefore, those students should be assigned as Graduate Instructional Assistants (9550 job code), and their assignment should have them performing duties that do not involve face-to-face contact with students.

Students who receive a 23 to 25 on the TOEFL iBT or 130 to 150 on the TOEIC can also be enrolled in the Spoken English for ITAs, which is funded by the Provost, is staffed by an INTO instructor, and is offered in the Fall and Spring semesters. At the end of that class, the students are required to do a Microteaching Demonstration, which has the potential to serve as an alternative to either the iBT or the TOEIC. These presentations are given at the end of each semester and represent an exit assessment given to each student who has earned an 'S' in the course. This assessment will be rated by at least two trained SPEAK raters. The results of the assessment will lead to a recommendation regarding the student's eligibility for a TA-ship. These recommendations may include: 1) no recommendation for TA-ship; more individual development needed; 2) recommendation for conditional TA-ship with additional support; or 3) recommendation for unconditional TA-ship as spoken English is equivalent to a 50+ on SPEAK/TSE. Clearly, if the ITA falls into the third category, they can then be appointed as either a Graduate Teaching Assistant or Associate (9183 and 9184 job codes). These scores will be entered into the Banner system so that the level of proficiency is documented.

3. Graduate Assistant Benefits

3.1. Graduate Assistant Benefits Package

The University is committed to providing a competitive graduate assistant package that includes not only competitive stipend rates, but also tuition payment, and University (or sometimes referred to as employer) contribution toward USF student health insurance premiums to attract the best graduate students to the University of South Florida. GA's are also provided with up to five days of paid leave per semester appointment with supervisor's approval.

3.2. Tuition Payment Eligibility

Graduate assistants must meet all of the Office of Graduate Studies eligibility requirements (refer to Graduate Assistantship Eligibility section) and be appointed for at least .25 FTE (10 hours per week) to be eligible for tuition payment. Each job classification has specific requirements; refer to detailed graduate assistantship classification descriptions to determine eligibility.

A graduate assistant, regardless of job classification code or funding source, is required to work a minimum of 150 hours during the fall or spring appointment, and a minimum of 100 hours during a summer appointment to be eligible for tuition payment. The college, department, and/or unit may retract any tuition paid on behalf of the graduate assistant should the graduate assistant not fulfill their GA responsibilities. In this circumstance, the student will be responsible for tuition payment. The graduate program is responsible for monitoring the fulfillment of graduate assistant duties and hours. If these requirements are not met, the department must appropriately notify the student that they have not fulfilled their GA responsibilities and will have their tuition payment retracted.

Example 1: A GTA (9184) appointed at .25 FTE for the fall semester withdraws from the University or resigns from the assistantship in October and has only completed 100 hours of work. The GTA is liable for the tuition payment provided because they did not fulfill the minimum 150 hour requirement for a fall or spring appointment.

Example 2: A GRA (9182) appointed at .50 FTE for the fall semester and who has committed, via contract, to work 300 hours for the semester (i.e., 20 hours per week for 15 weeks), withdraws from the University or resigns from the assistantship at the end of September and has only completed 120 hours of work. The GRA is liable for the tuition payment provided because they did not fulfill the minimum 150 hour requirement for a fall or spring appointment.

Example 3: A GTA (9184) appointed at .50 FTE for the fall semester is contracted to work 300 hours (i.e., 20 hours per week for 15 weeks), withdraws from the University in week 12, and has completed 240 work hours. This graduate assistant has fulfilled the minimum of 150 hours worked in the fall semester appointment and therefore, tuition payment will not be retracted.

3.3. Tuition Payment Administration

The Office of Graduate Studies currently oversees tuition payment for all Graduate Assistants, regardless of job classification code or funding source, for USF Tampa. The Office of Graduate Studies will monitor tuition payment costs for the USF Tampa (non-USF Health) campus by college and regularly report tuition payments made on the behalf of graduate assistants to the appropriate college.

Regardless of the funding source of the stipend, USF Tampa graduate assistants can expect, at minimum, a tuition payment for the number of credit hours required to hold a graduate assistantship. This is 9 graduate credit hours for the fall semester; 9 graduate credit hours for the spring semester; 6 graduate credit hours for the summer semester.

Tuition payment will only be provided for graduate level coursework except in circumstances where an undergraduate course is required for the degree program. In this case, no more than six 4000 level course hours will be allowed, per Office of Graduate Studies Policy. (Refer to Office of Graduate Studies catalog at <http://www.grad.usf.edu/catalog.asp> on our website).

For more details about graduate tuition payment and fees, refer to <http://usfweb2.usf.edu/uco/cashaccounting/tuition.asp> on our website.

For more details about graduate tuition waivers, refer to <http://www.grad.usf.edu/Tuition-Waiver-Forms-Information.asp> on our website.

3.4. E&G and Auxiliary Funded GA/GIA/GTA Appointments (For USF Tampa only)

Graduate Assistants (9185), Graduate Instructional Assistants (9550), and Graduate Teaching Assistants/Associates (9184 and 9183) funded from non-C&G accounts are eligible to request tuition payment through the Office of Graduate Studies.

Subject to funding availability, tuition payment will be provided for the number of credit hours necessary to hold the graduate assistant appointment (9 graduate credit hours fall; 9 graduate credit hours spring; 6 graduate credit hours summer). There may be instances when the University has the funding to provide tuition payment in excess of the number of hours required to hold the graduate assistantship. This will be handled by exception on a case by case basis. Funding offered for tuition payment beyond full-time requirements will be communicated to the College Associate Deans, Program Directors, and Chairs by the Office of Graduate Studies, upon availability.

3.5. C&G Funded GRA Appointments

Graduate Research Assistants/Associates (9182 and 9181) are **expected** to receive stipend and tuition payment from C&G funds.

For USF Tampa only, verification, in the form of the budget portion of the grant must be provided to the Office of Graduate Studies by the College when a contract or grant will not provide tuition. In these cases, the College must request tuition payment from the Office of Graduate Studies. If approved, the Office of Graduate Studies will provide tuition payment. Refer to the GRA Tuition Payment Request Form. The Office of Graduate Studies must receive requests no later than the Monday prior to the start of the fall, spring and summer semesters.

In some cases, university faculty are provided Graduate Research Assistants/Associates through start-up packages or other agreements in which the GRA's stipend is provided by department E&G or auxiliary funds. In these instances, the College must request tuition payment from the Office of Graduate Studies. If approved, the Office of Graduate Studies will provide tuition payment. The Office of Graduate Studies must receive requests no later than the Monday prior to the start of the fall, spring and summer C semesters.

In some instances, faculty use personal overhead/RO accounts to provide the GRA (9181/9182) stipend. In these cases, the College must request tuition payment from the Office of Graduate Studies. If approved, the Office of Graduate Studies will provide tuition payment. Refer to the GRA Tuition Payment Request Form. The Office of Graduate Studies must receive requests no later than the Monday prior to the start of the fall, spring and summer C semesters.

3.6. Split Graduate Assistant Appointments

It is not uncommon for a graduate student to have multiple graduate assistantship appointments simultaneously. In instances where a graduate student has a Teaching Assistantship (9183 and 9184) and a Research Assistantship (9181 and 9182), it is **required** that the tuition payment be prorated appropriately between the E&G funded teaching assistantship and the C&G funded research assistantship where funds are available. If grant funds are not available or the grant does not support tuition costs at all, the E&G funds should provide the full waiver.

Example: A doctoral student has a .25 FTE Graduate Research Associate (GRA 9181) appointment and her stipend is provided by a federally funded grant. The same doctoral student is also appointed at .25 FTE as a Graduate Teaching Associate (GTA 9183). The second stipend is provided by the department in which she is receiving her degree. The C&G where funded must provide 50% of the student's tuition and 50% of the employer contribution toward health insurance costs in the near future. The university (i.e., Office of Graduate Studies) will provide the remaining 50% of the tuition and employer contribution toward health insurance costs.

3.7. Out of College Graduate Assistant Appointments

Approved Out of College graduate assistants not funded through a contract or grant will be eligible for tuition payment through the Office of Graduate Studies if their academic home resides within USF Tampa Academic Affairs. For example, if a USF Tampa Arts & Sciences student is working in the College of Medicine, he/she will be eligible for tuition payment through the Office of Graduate Studies. However, if a College of Public Health (COPH) Student is working at the Student Health Service Center, he/she will not be eligible for tuition payment through the Office of Graduate Studies. The COPH student is eligible for tuition payment and for health insurance; however, both must be provided for through USF Health. Refer to Out of College Appointments section for more detail.

3.8. Request for Non-Tuition Payment

A graduate assistant may request to not receive tuition payment. This is acceptable; however, documentation with the student's signature must accompany this request. Even though requesting to not receive tuition payment, the Graduate Assistant will still be required to meet all the Office of Graduate Studies eligibility requirements and classification code requirements to maintain their specific graduate assistant assignment.

3.9. Increased Stipend Rates to Compensate for Tuition and Student Health Insurance

Departments, colleges, and/or non-academic units may increase a graduate assistant's stipend to compensate for tuition and health insurance expenses. Graduate assistants receiving an increased stipend **must** be advised, in writing, by the hiring unit that the increase is for compensation of tuition and health insurance expenses, and should they receive an assistantship where the tuition and health insurance is provided by the University, the stipend rate may be affected.

3.10. Health Insurance Coverage

One benefit of being a Graduate Assistant (Class Code 9181, 9182, 9183, 9184, 9185 or 9550) is eligibility to receive a subsidy from the university to help offset part of the cost of individual health insurance and make it more affordable for GAs who participates in the USF Student Health Insurance Plan. For details about the insurance, refer to <http://www.grad.usf.edu/health-insurance.asp> on our website. GAs must enroll in the Plan during the Open Enrollment period to be eligible and insurable for the semester(s) of employment, and must maintain eligibility throughout the semester(s).

Payment of the University contribution will be discontinued under the following circumstances:

- Cessation of the appointment; **or**,
- Reduction of the total appointment(s) to less than .25 FTE; **or**,
- Completion of the hours specified for the degree requirements of the program in which the employee is enrolled; **or**,
- Failure of the employee to pay the employee portion of the insurance premium when due.

When hiring graduate assistants, the graduate programs should be apprised of time limitations of open enrollment in the student health insurance plan for the student to be eligible and insurable for the semester of employment. A frequently asked question section (FAQ) designed to address questions surrounding the University contribution and payroll deduction option may be accessed from <http://www.grad.usf.edu/health-insurance.asp> on our website.

Student Health Services (SHS) Insurance Office (located in the SHS Annex) administers the student insurance programs and should be contacted regarding questions about the content of the plan (i.e., coverage, benefits, claim's procedures, etc.). The SHS Insurance Office can be contacted at 974-5407 or by email at insurance@shs.usf.edu.

3.11. Department or College Health Insurance Contribution

A department and/or college may pay the remaining portion of the health insurance cost directly to the insurance company on behalf of a graduate student by registering with the Student Health Insurance Office and receiving a departmental code to allow their students to enroll online, and the department to be billed directly. For questions or to register your department, contact the Student Health Insurance Office at (813) 974-5407 or by email at insurance@shs.usf.edu.

4. Graduate Assistant Process Audits

4.1. Graduate Assistant Appointment and Tuition Payment Audits

The Office of Graduate Studies will conduct the following audits for the USF Tampa campus each semester to ensure compliance with the Office of Graduate Studies's guidelines and policies regarding graduate assistants:

- **The Graduate Assistant Appointment FTE (full-time equivalent) Status Audit** confirms that graduate assistants are meeting the .25 FTE requirements necessary to receive tuition payment. This audit will be performed during week 5 of each semester. Colleges will be notified if they have any students who are receiving tuition payment yet are appointed less than .25 FTE.
- **The Registration Status Audit** determines which graduate assistants are not meeting the full-time time requirement of 9 graduate credit hours respectively for the fall and spring semesters; 6 graduate credit hours for the summer semester. Graduate assistants indicated by their college to be either in their last semester of study or have an exemption of full-time enrollment status (see Exemption of Full-time Enrollment Status section), will be granted an exception to this policy. This audit will be performed during week 5 of each semester. Colleges will be notified so action can be taken to bring enrollment status up to required fulltime status.
- **The Academic Probation Status Audit** will verify that graduate assistants are not on academic probation level P2 or P3. During week 5 of every semester a report will be sent to each college. This report will list all graduate assistants that are on academic probation. Graduate assistants on P1 will be eligible to maintain their graduate assistantship for the remainder of the semester. Graduate Assistants on P2 will not be permitted to retain their graduate assistantship unless the student has been granted an approved exception. Graduate Assistants on P3 will not be permitted to retain their graduate assistantship. The Office of Graduate Studies will notify the student in writing that they are no longer meeting the minimum eligibility requirements and the date that they will be terminated if they no longer qualify.

The following may result in a tuition charge to the Department and/or College:

- Graduate assistantship is funded through a contract or grant but receives tuition payment through E&G funds without approval of the Office of Graduate Studies; and/or,
- Tuition is paid from E&G funds for graduate assistants that do not meet the eligibility requirements for a graduate assistantship (i.e., under .25 FTE, P2 or P3 academic probation, or not enrolled full-time).

4.2. The Health Insurance Audit

These audits are provided by the Office of Human Resources, will be conducted bi-weekly to determine the graduate assistant's eligibility for the employer contribution health insurance. Health insurance may be discontinued for the following reasons:

- Cessation of the appointment; or
- Reduction of the appointment to less than .25 FTE; or
- Falling below full-time enrollment, or
- Failure of the employee to pay the employee portion of the insurance premium when due.

If there are questions regarding employer contribution for health insurance, contact Le'Danjeanette Frazier, Human Resources Benefits at (813)974-2970.

5. Graduate Assistant Guidelines Matrix

	Research Assistant	Research Associate	Teaching Assistant	Teaching Associate	Graduate Assistant	Graduate Instructional Assistant
	9182	9181	9184	9183	9185	9550
Accepted & classified as a degree seeking student	X	X	X	X	X	X
Overall & program GPA \geq 3.00 (NO P2 or P3 status)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Enrolled full-time 9/9/6	X	X	X	X	X	X
Duties directly related to student's program of study	X	X	X	X	X	X
Planned evaluations	X	X	X	X	X	X
9 month, 12 month semester or summer/fall/spring appointment	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support from grants & contracts required	X	X				
Overtime eligibility					X	
Research duties	X	X				
Masters-level student	X	X	X	X	X	X
Doctoral-level student	X	X	X	X	X	X
2 years of research experience		X				
Completed a minimum of 30 graduate credit hours		X		X		
Completed a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours			X			
Minimum score of 50 TSE (SPEAK test), 26 Internet-based TOEFL (iBT), 160 on the spoken portion of the TOEIC			X	X		
May be a primary instructor for undergraduate courses			X	X		
Assist with teaching functions; Not primary instructor						X
Nonexempt hourly, submit timesheet					X	
Salaried employee	X	X	X	X		X