

Graduate Assistantship Recommendation and Approval Form

Graduate assistantships approved through this form receive the tuition/fee waiver benefit appropriate for the position. No Tuition/fee waiver benefits are accorded in intersession or summer. After approvals are given, the Office of Graduate Studies issues a contract to the student. See back/p. 2 of this form for explanations and policies.

Student's Name (print): _____ Student's ID: _____
 Student's Program of Study: _____ Program level (circle one): – masters -- doctoral _____
 Name of student's dissertation/thesis/project advisor (if already determined) _____

Description of the Assistantship Offer

Teaching Assistantship Course Number and Section Number _____
 Full-time — 20 hours/week during academic year
 Part-Time -- Hours/week: _____ (minimum of ten hours per week for tuition/partial fee waiver benefits)
 academic year fall only spring only
 Stipend amount: _____

Department must verify that the English/communication skills of the prospective TA are sufficient before hiring the student. **TOEFL scores are not sufficient verification.** See back/p. 2 of this form.

Department Verification (signature): _____ Date: _____
 Description of verification method used: _____

The start and end date for teaching assistantships is set by the Office of the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies

Research Assistantship
 Full-time — 20 hours/week during academic year; may be up to 40 hours/week during intersession, spring break, and/or summer. Please specify number of hours per week if greater than 20 during intersession, spring break, and summer – _____
 Part-Time -- Hours/week: _____ (minimum of ten hours per week for tuition/partial fee waiver benefits)
 Stipend amount: _____

Start Date - _____ End Date - _____
 Eligible for **Research Assistantship full CSF waiver. We will review for compliance with terms of the policy** (see back/p.2).

Grant name _____

Graduate Assistantship
 Full-time — 20 hours/week during academic year; may be up to 40 hours/week during intersession, spring break, and/or summer. Please specify number of hours per week if greater than 20 during intersession, spring break, and summer – _____
 Part-Time -- Hours/week: _____ (minimum of ten hours per week for tuition/partial fee waiver benefits)
 Stipend amount: _____

Start Date - _____ End Date - _____
The Unit seeking to hire the student must attach a Job Description. Work must satisfy criteria stated in the waiver policies.

Approving the Student for Graduate Program Eligibility

The student is qualified to assume the duties, is in good academic standing, and is making progress toward the degree. The duties are relevant to and appropriate for the student's academic program. The department approves her/him for an assistantship:

Graduate Program Director/Chairperson: _____ Date: _____

Approving Funding for the Assistantship

Description of Funding Source (i.e., CSF, NSF, NIH, etc): _____ Speedtype: _____

Approval by the funding source manager (e.g., Grant PI, Dept. Chairperson, or other unit's fund supervisor)
 Printed name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Approval by the College Dean or Unit Director as appropriate
 Printed name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Approval by the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies: _____ Date: _____

Graduate Assistantship Recommendation and Approval – Policies and Procedures

Process of Approvals

Departments should offer assistantships as early as they can; for many new students, receipt of an assistantship makes the difference in a decision whether to attend. For new students, whenever possible we'd like to offer admission and assistantship concurrently.

For each student receiving an assistantship, the offering department should fill in this form. Move it forward to obtain the required signatures. The final approval is that of the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies, after which a contract will be issued to the student.

Timing: Annual, Fall, and Spring semester assistantships are awarded for the entire year or semester and carry a partial waiver of academic charges. For this reason, the student must commence the work for the assistantship at an appropriate time early in the semester. Assistantships are not granted in fall for assignments commencing after October 1 or in spring for those commencing after March 1.

Relationship to Student Employment

The contract issued by the office of Graduate Studies is the official contract between the university and the student concerning the terms and expectations of the assistantship; and when issued, it authorizes the Bursar to apply the appropriate waivers of academic charges.

Additional steps must occur for the student to be put on the payroll. For this, the student takes a Student Employment Form, appropriately filled in and signed by the department/unit making the hire, to the Student Employment Office in Financial Aid. Students need to be aware that this office will require the student show a social security number or appropriate documentation that a SS number is pending. The student must also show the documents needed to complete the I-9 form, such as driver's license, birth certificate, or passport and immigration papers. Information about the hiring process may be found at http://www.umassd.edu/graduate/ga_hiring_process2008.doc

Terms and Conditions (From the UMass Dartmouth Waiver Policy)

An assistantship--be it in the form of a Teaching, Research, or general Graduate Assistantship--is accompanied by a waiver of tuition charges for the period of the assistantship award (no tuition/fee waiver benefits are accorded in intersession or summer), provided it is at least a half-time assistantship (10 hours/week). A full-time graduate assistant works 20 hours/week.

Graduate assistants pay campus fees, those for non-Massachusetts residents being adjusted to the in-state rates, but they receive a partial waiver of the academic fee (curriculum support fee); a table of CSF fee charges and waivers is approved each year by the chancellor. The tuition/fee waiver provided to each graduate assistant is a scholarship award, whereas the stipend is compensation for services rendered. The partial CSF waivers are pro-rated to give less benefit to those whose assistantships are less than full-time.

Assistantships are awarded competitively. On the recommendation of the Graduate Council, the Provost determines each year a minimum stipend for a full-time academic year graduate assistantship (for 2008-2009, that minimum is \$6,000, with \$7,000 recommended).

Accepting an assistantship indicates an intention on the part of the student to complete a degree program at UMass Dartmouth. Assistantships represent a substantial investment by the university and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Graduate assistants are expected to make progress toward their degrees and be in good academic standing, in order to retain their assistantship or to receive a subsequent award. Many departments have specific requirements for academic and/or professional performance. Good performance of the duties of the assistantship is also required. The assistantship contract issued to the student states the general requirements as well as the stipend, tuition and fee waiver amounts, general work assignment, and hours/week.

Although it is possible for an individual student to combine two 10-hour assignments into an assistantship, in addition to meeting the criteria above, the resulting package of duties needs to be approved by the student's department as having a coherent purpose.

To encourage faculty to obtain more research grants and enable them to attract and retain higher quality students, **students supported by funded external grants as graduate research assistants**, in addition to being waived from paying tuition and a portion of their CSF, may be accorded a waiver for the full CSF amount. To receive this waiver the program and student shall satisfy the following conditions:

- The assistantship must qualify as an assistantship by UMass Dartmouth's assistantship policies.
- The assistantship shall be a full-time assistantship and the student a full-time student.
- The student shall be in a program track that involves writing a thesis or dissertation.
- The stipend from the grant-supported research assistantship shall be at least \$15,000.

A precise definition of "funded external grants" must be followed. For example, this policy does not extend this waiver to students supported on service or economic development grants or on Foundation grants or contracts. The Provost makes final determinations of eligibility.

Requirement that the Work Be Appropriate to Graduate Studies (From the UMass Dartmouth Waiver Policy)

The specific duties for a graduate assistantship vary according to the unit offering the award, the student's field of study, and whether it is for the general purpose of teaching assistance ("TA"), research assistance ("RA"), or general administrative assistance ("GA"). The duties performed shall be at a professional level appropriate to the student's academic field, as approved by the student's department. For example, a Professional Writing graduate student could have an assistantship which involves substantial original writing or designing; but just clerical duties would not be appropriate. Duties regularly done by undergraduate students, such as peer tutoring or elementary web design, cannot be the basis of a graduate assistantship.

Teaching Assistants' English Communication Ability (Approved by Chancellor as recommended by Faculty Senate)

Teaching assistantships that place graduate students in the classroom will not be awarded without a personal interview or other direct evidence beyond the TOEFL of their ability to teach English-speaking students. The form requesting a contract from the Office of Graduate Studies should demonstrate that such evidence has been collected. In each department with teaching assistants, the graduate program director will work with faculty supervising TAs to design and implement a program of training and supervision. Training should include techniques of oral and written communication with students, the conduct and structure of labs and recitations, safety issues (if applicable) and grading policies. The training and supervision policy must incorporate an assessment component for continuous improvement that includes feedback from the students being taught. To ensure continuing attention, each graduate program director will report through his or her chairperson to the academic dean at least once a year. The Provost/designee will discuss the training programs and assessment results with the academic deans annually.