

GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE STUDENT ASSISTANTSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Effective November 23, 2022

CLARIFICATIONS

These guidelines and/or regulations are not applicable to the School of Law.

Use of the titles Teaching Fellow, Teaching Assistant, Studio Assistant, Clinical Assistant, Instructional Assistant, Research Assistant, Distinguished Doctoral Fellow, Distinguished Art Fellow, Doctoral Fellow, Graduate Researcher, and Graduate Assistant are reserved for graduate students who are awarded a formal assistantship appointment through the Office of the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies. These positions include possible tuition credit. Appropriate titles for other student workers include Graders, Laboratory Aids, Clerical Aids, etc. These workers may be hired without formal contracts as hourly employees.

Any request for modification or recommendation for termination of an award must be forwarded to the Office of the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies with appropriate justification for consideration.

DEFINITIONS

During the academic year, a full-time appointment requires twenty hours of service per week. There are two categories for part-time appointments: three-quarter requires fifteen to nineteen hours of service per week and half-time requires ten to fourteen hours of service per week. All assistantships and fellowships require a minimum of ten hours of service per week. The maximum total award a student may receive under an assistantship appointment is twenty hours per week when classes are in session (i.e., until all final semester grades are due) and forty hours per week when classes are not in session.

Full-time enrollment status for a graduate student is registration in nine (9) or more credits per semester toward degree requirements. Part-time enrollment status for a graduate student is registration in fewer than nine (9) credits per semester toward degree requirements.

The academic year starts on September 1 and ends on May 31 of each calendar year (starting and ending dates in contracts go by payroll weeks, which could differ slightly from the academic calendar). Payroll weeks begin on Sunday and end on Saturday. Recommendation forms and contracts will automatically be adjusted to reflect this practice.

TYPES OF ASSISTANTSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Teaching Assistants: matriculated graduate students who serve in the capacity of a Teaching Fellow, Teaching Assistant, or Instructional Assistant for a course which is listed within the course offerings of the University as maintained and posted by the Office of the Registrar.

- **Teaching Fellow** – serves as instructor of record in the course(s) for lecture sections and holds office hours.
- **Teaching Assistant** – teaches lab sessions or leads discussion of a lecture course and holds office hours. Teaching Assistant assignments must lead to a reduction in contact hours for faculty through direct instruction, as in the case of lab instruction, or through reduction of sections by increasing section sizes and holding recitations. Recitation instruction will be regarded as a valid Teaching Assistant assignment for courses with enrollments in excess of fifty (50).
- **Instructional Assistant** – fulfills the duties of a Teaching Fellow or Teaching Assistant and is supported consistent with the stipend requirements of these guidelines but has received assistantship/fellowship support for the maximum time allowable and, is therefore, no longer eligible for tuition benefits.

Studio Assistants: matriculated graduate students in the Master of Fine Arts program who perform support functions relevant to the student's field of study at a professional level.

Clinical Assistants: matriculated students in the graduate level Nursing programs who present training applications and oversee practice of those applications in a laboratory setting prior to the students undertaking hands-on experience in the clinical settings.

Research Assistants: matriculated graduate students who conduct research as part of their thesis or dissertation under faculty supervision toward attainment of a graduate degree.

- **Research Assistants** – students who serve or are supported in the following capacities: Distinguished Doctoral Fellow, Distinguished Art Fellow, Doctoral Fellow, Research Assistant, as well as external fellowships and support as determined on a case by case basis.
- **Graduate Researcher** – fulfills the duties of a Research Assistant and is supported consistent with the stipend requirements of these guidelines but has received assistantship/fellowship support for the maximum time allowable and, is therefore, no longer eligible for tuition benefits.

Graduate Assistants: matriculated graduate students who serve as graders, prepare labs, develop assignments or exams, proctor exams, or perform other supporting roles for instructors of record. Graduate Assistants may also perform administrative or support functions relevant to the student's field of study at a professional level. Job descriptions are required for Graduate Assistants and the final determination of appropriateness of both duties and level is at the discretion of the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies.

TYPES AND LEVELS OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT

For the following, there is a nomination process (see <https://www.umassd.edu/graduate/>).

Distinguished Doctoral Fellowships: very limited number of full-time, multi-year fellowships for truly distinguished graduate students supported by the Office of the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies. There are very rare instances when such an appointment may be supported through other funding sources. Distinguished Doctoral Fellows receive \$24,000 per calendar year as stipend plus full tuition and college fee credit for up to four years subject to maintaining full-time enrollment, a minimum GPA of 3.5, and satisfactory progress toward completion of degree requirements. Written nominations are accepted from the appropriate Graduate Program Director or faculty advisor with the endorsement of the Graduate Program Director. The nomination deadline is February 15th for the following academic year. These fellowships are reserved for new students accepted into one of the doctoral programs.

Doctoral Fellowships: limited number of one-year fellowships for excellent graduate students supported by the Office of the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies. It is expected that the support for all other years of the student's eligibility for financial support be provided by her/his advisor or program/ department. There are very rare instances when such an appointment may be supported through other funding sources. Doctoral Fellows receive \$20,000 per academic year as stipend plus full tuition and college fee credit for one year of a doctoral program subject to maintaining full-time enrollment, a minimum GPA of 3.5, and satisfactory progress toward completion of degree requirements. Written nominations are accepted from the appropriate Graduate Program Director or faculty advisor with the endorsement of the Graduate Program Director. Nominations are accepted on an on-going basis. Priority is given to new students. In very rare cases, such fellowships may be awarded to high performing continuing students.

Distinguished Art Fellowships: very limited number of full-time, multi-year fellowships for truly distinguished artists in the Master of Fine Arts program. Distinguished Art Fellows receive \$17,000 per calendar year as stipend plus full tuition and college fee credit for up to three years subject to maintaining full-time enrollment, a minimum GPA of 3.5, and satisfactory progress toward completion of degree requirements. Written nominations are accepted in consultation with the Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts. The nomination deadline is March 1st, unless determined to be earlier at the discretion of the Dean of the College, for the following academic year. These fellowships are reserved for new students accepted into the Master of Fine Arts program.

Doctoral Support: limited number of full or partial tuition credit awards without a stipend for full-time new or continuing doctoral students for one year at any point during the program of study. Written nominations are accepted from the appropriate Graduate Program Director or faculty advisor with the endorsement of the Graduate Program Director on an on-going basis. Priority is given to students who have not had significant institutional support.

Doctoral Bridge Fellowships: very limited number of fellowships supported by the Office of the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies for a maximum duration of one year during external funding gaps. The level of stipend depends on the funding level before the external grant expired and the student's stage of completion of requirements in the doctoral program. Tuition credit may be provided as part of Bridge Fellowships.

Dissertation Writing Support: provided by the Office of the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies. Dissertation Writing Support is intended to help students in the final semester of their doctoral program focus on writing their dissertation and complete their degree. Because of resource limitations, the support is provided to a limited number of students on a competitive basis. Academic standing as well as history of University financial support to the student are some of the factors used to evaluate nominations. For guidelines and criteria as well as the nomination process and deadlines, see <https://www.umassd.edu/graduate/student-resources/>.

For the following, the program makes recommendations that are approved by the college dean and the Office of Graduate Studies. The Office of the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies issues contract letters summarizing the amount of stipend, dates of appointment, and the associated tuition credits. Separately, placements are created by program/department administrative staff in CORSAIR Jobs to initiate bi-weekly stipend payments.

Teaching Fellowships: in most instances, supported by the department offering the course. Doctoral level Teaching Fellows receive at least \$16,000 (\$12,000 minimum for master's level with the exception of programs in the College of Visual and Performing Arts which have a minimum of \$10,200) per academic year as stipend plus full tuition credit for a full-time appointment (20 hours per week).

Teaching Assistantships: in most instances, supported by the department offering the course. Doctoral level Teaching Assistants receive at least \$14,000 (\$12,000 minimum for master's level with the exception of programs in the College of Visual and Performing Arts which have a minimum of \$10,200) per academic year as stipend plus full tuition credit for 20 hours per week appointment.

Instructional Assistants: in most instances, supported by the department offering the course. The stipend levels are consistent with the corresponding Teaching Fellow or Teaching Assistant appointments.

Studio Assistantships: supported by the College of Visual and Performing Arts. Full-time Studio Assistants receive a minimum of \$10,200 per academic year as stipend plus partial tuition credit for 20 hours per week appointment.

Clinical Assistantships: supported by the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. Full-time Clinical Assistants receive a minimum of \$12,000 per academic year as stipend plus full tuition credit.

Research Assistants: supported by externally or internally funded grants awarded to UMass Dartmouth faculty and staff. Doctoral level Research Assistants receive a minimum stipend of \$16,500 for an academic year, inclusive of intersession and spring break, for 20 hour-per-week appointments. For master's level, the minimum stipend is \$12,000 for 20 hours per week appointment and \$12,600 if the number of hours per week is increased to 40 during intersession and spring break. Summer support, if provided, requires additional stipend, the level of which is dependent upon the number of hours per week the student is expected to commit.

Graduate Researcher: supported by externally or internally funded grants awarded to UMass Dartmouth faculty and staff. The stipend levels are consistent with Research Assistant appointments.

Graduate Assistantships: stipend support provided by the hiring department or unit. Graduate Assistants receive partial tuition credit and a minimum of \$8,000 per academic year as stipend for 20 hours per week appointment provided the total number of hours per academic year does not exceed 533.

External Fellowships: supported by external funding agencies and corporations such as Fulbright Fellowships, National Science Foundation Fellowships, Tufts Nursing Educator Fellowships, Raytheon Fellowships. Benefits and terms for these appointments vary. Final determination of eligibility for tuition credit and the percentage of the credit will be made by the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies.

TUITION CREDIT

In all cases, enrollment is reviewed by the Office of the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies to determine whether or not a course is eligible to count toward degree requirements. If not, the course will be excluded from any tuition credits and the student is responsible for the full tuition cost for that course. Students with a full-time teaching assistantship who are enrolled in more than nine credits may be asked to reduce their enrollment to no more than nine credits. Teaching responsibilities in addition to full-time enrollment is already a heavy work and academic load to manage. Students enrolled in more than twelve credits, regardless of the type of assistantship, or whether it is full- or part-time, will be asked to reduce their enrollment to no more than twelve credits if the extra credits are deemed excessive; if the student does not reduce their enrollment as requested, they may be responsible for payment of tuition corresponding to the extra credits.

Full-time appointments are for 20 hours per week. Part-time appointments are either three-quarter (fifteen to nineteen hours per week) or half-time (ten to fourteen hours per week). The credit percentages listed below apply to the tuition charge only; students are responsible for all other charges (see <https://www.umassd.edu/graduate/tuition-fees/>). Some assistantship tuition credit percentages depend on a student's residency status as determined by the Registrar (see table below).

Tuition Credit Percentages

Type and Residency	Full-time (20 hrs/wk)	Three-quarter (15-19 hrs/wk)	Half-time (10-14 hrs/wk)
Teaching, Clinical, Research			
Instate	100.00%	75.00%	50.00%
Out of state	100.00%	75.00%	50.00%
Proximity	100.00%	75.00%	50.00%
Studio			
Instate	58.00%	43.50%	29.00%
Out of state	66.00%	49.50%	33.00%
Proximity	60.00%	45.00%	30.00%
Graduate			
Instate	18.00%	13.50%	9.00%
Out of state	32.00%	24.00%	16.00%
Proximity	20.00%	15.00%	10.00%

Teaching Assistants, Teaching Fellows, and Clinical Assistants

Irrespective of their residency, students with full-time teaching assistantships, teaching fellowships, or clinical assistantships will receive 100% tuition credit. Students working fifteen to nineteen hours per week will receive 75% tuition credit. Students working ten to fourteen hours per week will receive 50% tuition credit.

Research Assistants

Irrespective of their residency, students with full-time research assistantships will receive 100% tuition credit. Students working fifteen to nineteen hours per week will receive 75% tuition credit. Students working ten to fourteen hours per week will receive 50% tuition credit.

Studio Assistants

Studio Assistants receive partial tuition credits based on residency; the remaining portion of the tuition charge is the responsibility of the student.

- In-state residency: students with full-time studio assistantships will receive tuition credit equal to 58% of the total tuition charge. Students working fifteen to nineteen hours per week will receive 43.5% tuition credit. Students working ten to fourteen hours per week will receive 29% tuition credit.
- Out-of-state residency: students with full-time studio assistantships will receive tuition credit equal to 66% of the total tuition charge. Students working fifteen to nineteen hours per week will receive 49.5% tuition credit. Students working ten to fourteen hours per week will receive 33% tuition credit.
- Proximity or regional residency: students with full-time studio assistantships will receive tuition credit equal to 60% of the total tuition charge. Students working fifteen to nineteen hours per week will receive 45% tuition credit. Students working ten to fourteen hours per week will receive 30% tuition credit.

Graduate Assistants

Graduate Assistants receive partial tuition credits based on residency; the remaining portion of the tuition charge is the responsibility of the student.

- In-state residency: students with full-time graduate assistantships will receive tuition credit equal to 18% of the total tuition charge. Students working fifteen to nineteen hours per week will receive 13.5% tuition credit. Students working ten to fourteen hours per week will receive 9% tuition credit.
- Out-of-state residency: students with full-time graduate assistantships will receive tuition credit equal to 32% of the total tuition charge. Students working fifteen to nineteen hours per week will receive 24% tuition credit. Students working ten to fourteen hours per week will receive 16% tuition credit.
- Proximity or regional residency: students with full-time graduate assistantships will receive tuition credit equal to 20% of the total tuition charge. Students working fifteen to nineteen hours per week will receive 15% tuition credit. Students working ten to fourteen hours per week will receive 10% tuition credit.

HEALTH INSURANCE FOR TEACHING AND RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

The health insurance premium for academic year 2022-2023 is \$3,076.00 and is subject to change each academic year. Starting in academic year 2022-2023, Teaching Assistants (Teaching Assistants, Teaching Fellows, Studio Assistants, and Clinical Assistants) who deliver or assist in the delivery of regular courses AND Research Assistants (Research Assistants, Distinguished Doctoral Fellows, Doctoral Fellows, Distinguished Art Fellows) with approved contracts for 10 hours per week or more will be eligible to receive the university health insurance premium subsidy. The University or external grant will pay 50% of the individual health insurance premium for the semester the student is employed in an eligible position by the university and the student is responsible for the remaining balance. The subsidy applies to university-offered individual health insurance plans only. The health insurance subsidy may have tax implications for recipients.

OTHER GUIDELINES

- In general, no assistantship/fellowship financial support from university sources is provided to part-time students unless their services in either teaching or research represent a critical need for the University/program, or students no longer need a full-time load of course work during their last semester/year.
- Failure to maintain full-time enrollment at any point during the duration of an assistantship/fellowship appointment, without a waiver of the requirement, may result in the reversal of any tuition benefits that have been credited and the student will become responsible for payment of the charges.
- In order to receive and maintain tuition credit benefits, students must work in the assistantship position for a minimum of twelve weeks per semester. The Office of the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies will send a message each semester to relevant administrative staff and faculty indicating the date by which students must begin working as well as when recommendation forms are due. Benefits awarded to students who do not meet the twelve-week requirement may be rescinded.
- Students enrolled in certificate programs or non-degree status are not eligible for any assistantship/fellowship financial support from university funding sources.
- Students who have GPA below 3.0 are not eligible for assistantships or fellowships.
- The maximum length of time for assistantship/fellowship financial support from university sources through all categories except Research Assistants is two years for a master's degree program (three years for a three-year professional terminal master's program) or four years for a doctoral degree program. Research Assistantship support is limited to a maximum of three years for master's students and six years for doctoral students who enter the program with a bachelor's degree and five years for those who enter the program with a master's degree. All awards throughout the student's program of study at a given level are included in the calculation of maximum time for assistantship/fellowship financial support.
- The University only establishes the minimum levels of assistantship/fellowship stipends. Principal Investigators, departments, and colleges can enhance the support packages.
- A mixed package of TA, RA and GA support with full or partial tuition credit is allowed as long as the total number of hours does not exceed twenty per week while classes are in session.
- Students in accelerated undergraduate and graduate programs are not eligible for assistantships/fellowships or tuition credit until they have completed all the requirements for their undergraduate degree and have been matriculated to the graduate level of study.
- For courses taken through Online and Continuing Education: students who have Teaching, Research, or Clinical Assistantships that provide full tuition credit will be accorded full tuition credit for course that are eligible to count toward degree requirements. In addition, students enrolled in on-line courses with a full tuition credit benefit will receive a credit for the on-line technology fee. Students who have a Teaching, Research, Clinical or Studio Assistantship that provides partial tuition credit will be accorded partial tuition credit of the same percentage. There is no on-line technology fee benefit for students with partial tuition credit benefits. For students awarded a Graduate Assistantship, there is no tuition credit benefit for courses taken through Online and Continuing Education. Students are responsible for paying all other charges associated with enrollment in courses through Online and Continuing Education.
- The start date and end date cited in assistantship/fellowship contracts is all inclusive with the exception of Teaching Assistants. The start and end dates for Teaching Assistant appointments are set by the Office of the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies; there is no work commitment during intersession for those students who have teaching/fellowship assistantship contracts.
- By federal regulation, all individuals receiving compensation must demonstrate eligibility to work in the United States via the I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification form.