



# Graduate Assistant Employment Handbook

## Policies and Procedures

Revised August 2024







# Graduate Studies

# Policies and Procedures

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## Graduate Assistant Appointment

Graduate Assistants are appointed by the hiring department or office to Graduate Studies. Once Graduate Studies receives the hiring paperwork and determines academic eligibility, the GA will be contacted. The GA will receive an email to their UCM student email address containing the next steps to be taken to accept the appointment. The GA must complete and accept their employment offer letter from the office of Graduate Studies. Graduate Assistants will need to complete the following forms with the Office of Human Resources: I-9, Direct Deposit, W-4, Personnel Data Sheet, and Emergency Contact Form. These forms must be signed in person at the Office of Human Resources.

## Eligibility

To be eligible for a Graduate Assistantship at the University of Central Missouri, a student must be accepted into their graduate degree program and have a minimum undergraduate GPA of 2.7 or a graduate GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. All available Graduate Assistantship positions on UCM's campus are listed at: [jobs.ucmo.edu](http://jobs.ucmo.edu)

Students interested in applying for an assistantship position will complete and submit the job application (located at: [jobs.ucmo.edu](http://jobs.ucmo.edu)), and upload three letters of reference and academic transcripts. Students must provide accurate and true information on their application; falsifying information will result in the dismissal of the job application. Once the completed application is submitted, it is sent to the hiring department or office for review.

International students who have not completed their primary and their secondary education in a nation or territory where English is the primary language must have completed one term of enrollment in a public institution of higher education in the state of Missouri and successfully completed the Speaking Proficiency English Assessment Test (SPEAK) before they can be appointed as a teaching assistant. An international student in their first term of study may apply for any other type of assistantship offered, so long as they meet the skills required to fulfill the job.

## Work Commitment

Full time Graduate Assistants are expected to work 20 hours per week during their dates of employment. Depending on the size of assistantship (half-time or quarter-time); hours per week may vary (10 hours or 5 hours respectively). It is possible to be appointed to more than one partial graduate assistantship position so long as the combined employment does not exceed 20 hours. A GA may not volunteer “extra hours” while employed or be asked to work more time than what they can be paid. Graduate Assistants are not allowed to work as a GA prior to (or after) their specified dates of employment. GAs must complete all required hiring documents with the Office of Human Resources prior to their first day of work.

According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, international students are limited to a maximum of 20 hours of work per week during the fall and spring semester while classes are in session.

If a Graduate Assistant feels at any time that their work responsibilities cannot be completed during the 20 hours, they should express their concerns with their supervisor immediately to discuss alternative solutions. Working in excess of the 20-hour limit is not permissible. On no occasion should the Graduate Assistant’s workload interfere with their academic study (missing classes/examinations).

The University of Central Missouri defines a work week: Sunday, 12:00:01 a.m. through Saturday, 12:00:00 midnight. If the University is scheduled to be closed (for holidays/weather-related closures), Graduate Assistants are not expected to work or make up the hours they were scheduled to work. Employees are encouraged to sign up for TextCaster alerts through the University to receive prompt notifications about school closings and delays.

## Break Periods

Federal law does not require lunch or coffee breaks, however, if the hiring department or office does allow their GA to take breaks, they must adhere to UCM’s break period policy. According to the UCM Human Resources Procedure Manual section on [Special Compensation Calculations](#): Break Periods, “Breaks are a privilege granted to ensure staff are given a brief rest. Breaks are optional if workload and/or staff size do not accommodate them.... Since break period time is compensable time, employees must not be absent from their workstations beyond the 15-minute period. Breaks may not be used in conjunction with non-compensable time, to adjust the starting or ending time for the workday, or leave time.”





Assistants must also enroll in the minimum number of graduate credit hours each semester to maintain their assistantship.

## Compensation

The current pay rate for the stipend and scholarships are available at the Graduate Studies Office. Graduate Assistants are eligible to receive a graduate tuition waiver, a gr



## Graduate Assistant Rehire

Graduate Assistant appointments are made for one semester at a time as determined by the department or office. GAs can be re-appointed or rehired for additional semesters. A GA wanting re-appointment should contact their supervisor to let them know they would like to be reconsidered for additional semesters. If the department or office chooses to re-appoint the GA, a rehire approval form will need to be submitted to the Graduate Studies Office.

If a GA is working on a Master's degree, they can hold an assistantship for no more than a total of four semesters. After a Master's degree is conferred and the GA is working on an Education Specialist degree, they can hold an assistantship for no more than a total of three semesters. Any summer GA appointments do not count against the maximum number of semesters one can hold an assistantship.

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## Orientation

Graduate Studies will host an online orientation, using Blackboard, for all new Graduate Assistants during each semester of the school year. It is mandatory that any new GA complete the online training and orientation modules. Individual departments or offices in which GAs are hired will also provide training and orientation concerning the GA's specific position.

## Teaching Assistants

Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) or Teaching Assistants (TAs), in addition to Graduate Studies' online orientation, are highly recommended to attend the New Faculty Symposium in the fall semester. It is recommended that TAs attend all the workshops offered to improve their teaching experience and ability to support student success.

TAs are expected to comply with all University academic policies.

## University Property

All equipment, keys, manuals, and books issued to Graduate Assistants become teit on(a)4 (12 (a)4 ( )TJ-0.004 T

# Resources

Graduate Studies, a complete website for GAs at: <https://www.ucmo.edu/offices/graduate-studies/index.php>

Office of Human Resources:

<https://www.ucmo.edu/offices/human-resources/employment/index.php>

A list of available assistantship openings on campus can be found at: <https://jobs.ucmo.edu/>

The Graduate Catalog: <https://catalog.ucmo.edu/>

Student Financial Services:

<https://www.ucmo.edu/future-students/tuition-costs-and-financial-aid/index.php>

Graduate Student Funding and Scholarships:

<https://www.ucmo.edu/future-students/tuition-costs-and-financial-aid/graduate-student-funding>