

Eligibility Requirements for Graduate Assistant Appointments

MEMO TO: Graduate Assistants

FROM: Dennis Armistead, Executive Director, Faculty Personnel Services



Below please find a summary of current requirements for graduate assistants.

A. **Work Authorization** (for new employees or those with expiring work authorizations only)

****IMPORTANT**** On or before your first day of employment, you must come to the Office of Faculty Personnel Services in 308 Warriner Hall to complete an Employment Eligibility Verification (I-9) form to verify both your identity and authorization to work. **This form must be completed in person and your offer of employment is contingent upon you producing appropriate documentation.** Please review the acceptable documents ([here](#)) you must bring to substantiate your ability to begin employment.

B. **Eligibility Requirements for Appointment** (Individual departments may establish additional criteria for graduate assistantships.)

- (1) Graduate assistants must be admitted for graduate study at Central Michigan University.
- (2) Graduate assistants with appointments for the fall and/or spring semesters must register for and maintain a minimum of six semester hours of graduate credit at CMU during each semester of the assistantship. The Office of Graduate Studies will evaluate requests for exceptions on a case-by-case basis. A graduate assistant with a summer appointment must register for and maintain a minimum of one semester hour of graduate credit at CMU. Departments and/or Colleges may require enrollment in a greater number of hours but may not establish a lower minimum.
- (3) Graduate assistants must maintain at least a cumulative 3.00 GPA in all graduate work. A request for an exception supported by appropriate rationale must be submitted by the department chairperson to the Office of Graduate Studies for approval. More than one Incomplete (I) grade per semester is grounds for termination.
- (4) Graduate assistants are expected to perform departmentally assigned duties in a satisfactory manner. As part of those duties, individuals are expected to attend graduate assistant training activities planned by their department and/or the Office of Graduate Studies. The determination of satisfactory performance rests with the department and failure to perform satisfactorily is grounds for termination.
- (5) Graduate assistants are expected to comply with the policies, practices, and regulations of the University. Failure to do so is grounds for termination.
- (6) All new graduate assistants are required to complete an online Graduate Assistant Training program which includes important information regarding policies, services, responsibilities, and training requirements. All new international graduate assistants who are classified as teaching graduate assistants will be offered the opportunity to attend a supplemental fall training program. An email will be sent to your CMU email account by the Office of Graduate Studies with additional information regarding all training.

C. Compensation

- (1) Initial stipends for individual graduate assistants will be determined by the department/college.
- (2) Graduate assistants appointed to less than a full-time equated graduate assistantship or appointed for less than an entire academic year will receive prorated stipends.
- (3) Graduate assistants are paid on the bi-weekly payroll schedule with Thursday pay dates. During the 2024 fall semester, graduate assistant stipends will be paid over nine (9) pay periods, beginning with the first pay date of September 12, 2024, and ending with the last pay date of January 2, 2025. Spring 2025 graduate assistant stipends will be paid over eight (8) pay periods, beginning with the first pay date of January 30, 2025, and ending with the last pay date of May 8, 2025. **NOTE: Graduate assistants do not have work expectations during the December 22, 2024 – January 4, 2025, pay period; as such, graduate assistants will not receive pay on the January 16, 2025, pay date.**
- (4) The Summary of Benefits document explains the tuition waiver benefit, and other benefits available to graduate assistants. An online tuition waiver request must be submitted to utilize the tuition waiver benefit.

D. Other

- (1) In order to comply with federal health care reform requirements, work hours for non-benefit eligible employees are restricted to a maximum of 50 hours per pay period during the academic year. All assignments, including work for multiple departments or as a student employee, count as work toward the total workload. Research conducted by graduate research assistants as part of the graduate assistantship, shall not exceed 40 hours per pay period, except as it relates to the graduate student's education, such as dissertation related research.
- (2) Effective with the beginning of the assistantship and continuing through the subsequent summer, graduate assistants are classified as residents (U.S.) for tuition purposes; graduate assistants who are enrolled in doctoral programs are classified as residents (U.S.) for the balance of their program.
- (3) Earnings from graduate assistantships are not counted as financial aid for purposes of qualifying for Guaranteed Student Loans. However, graduate assistant earnings are considered employment resources to apply against need for other financial aid programs.
- (4) If you completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), you MUST inform the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid (OSFA) of the number of hours of tuition waiver you will receive. **Tuition assistance is considered financial aid and will reduce your student loan eligibility.** The amount of your financial aid (loans) cannot exceed the CMU cost of attendance minus your tuition remission as a Graduate Assistant. Failure to inform the OSFA will result in a reduction to your student loan eligibility after you may have already received a refund for the semester. Contact the OSFA at (888) 392-0007 for additional information.
- (5) Graduate assistants who resign or terminate an assistantship prior to completing the full term of their appointment may forfeit a portion of the tuition benefit. In this circumstance, the tuition waiver benefit will be prorated based on the percentage of appointment fulfilled and may result in a balance due on the student's account, for which the student will be responsible.