



2024-25 Academic Year



## The Graduate School Staff

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**GRAND VALLEY**  
**STATE UNIVERSITY**  

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**THE GRADUATE SCHOOL**

# Supervisor Orientation

GA Benefits & Responsibilities

The GA Experience

GA Contract, Policies, & Procedures

University Policies

# What is a Graduate Assistantship?



*Financial support in exchange for contractual work experience that supports the GA's graduate education*



*Experience (research, teaching, application) that complements the GA's program of study*



*An opportunity for the GA to build technical and professional skills and knowledge*



*Initial steps for the GA towards a chosen career or discovery of possible career paths, including doctoral studies*

# What are the benefits of a GVSU GA?

*Half-time, AY = 9 cr hr (4.5 cr hrs in Fall; 4.5 cr hrs in Winter)*

*Full-time, AY = 18 cr hr (9 cr hrs in Fall; 9 cr hrs in Winter)*

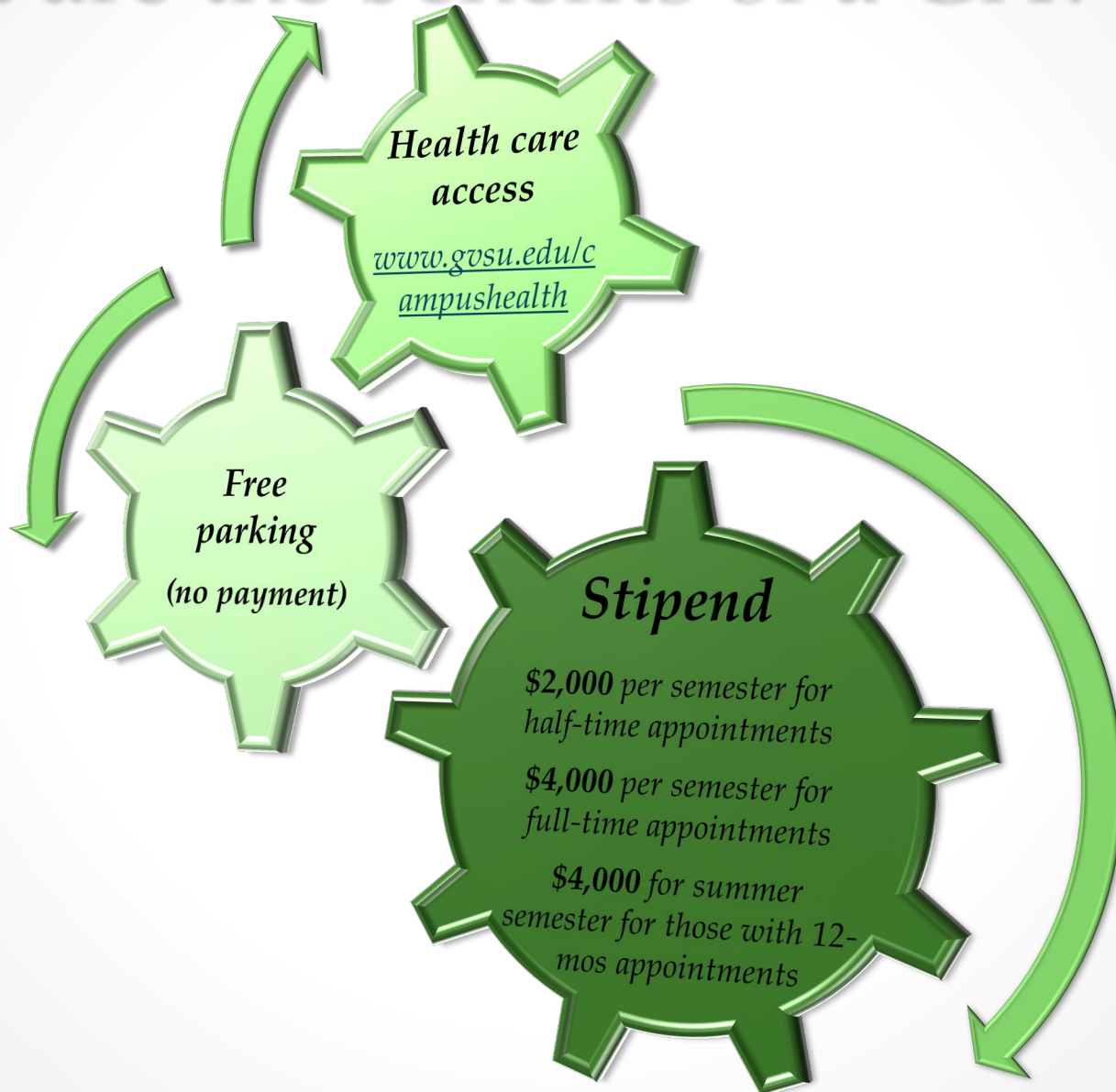
***Tuition Remission  
Varies by  
Appointment Length***

*Full-Time, Extended = 21 cr hr (9 cr hrs in Fall; 9 cr hrs in Winter; 3 cr hr in summer)*

*Full-time, Extended = 24 cr hr (9 cr hrs in Fall; 9 cr hrs in Winter; 6 cr hrs in summer)*

*Tuition waivers are not applicable to UG courses (< 500 number)*

# What are the benefits of a GA?



# What are the responsibilities of a GA?

To provide skills and services to faculty members/units/offices to enhance teaching, scholarship, service or other outcomes of the unit to which assigned...

**Half-time  
appointments  
= 10 clock  
hours/week  
(150 hours)**

**Full time  
appointments  
= 20 clock  
hours/week  
(300 hours)**

**Must maintain  
good academic  
standing  
(3.0 gpa)**

# Essential information for GAs

## *Pay periods are on Student Employment website*

- *1<sup>st</sup> payday ~ 3 weeks after start date*
- *Direct deposit*
- *Appointments  $\geq$  9 months, pay periods are scheduled through breaks*

## *Length of employment*

*GA start/end dates vary and must be indicated on GA contract*

## *Vacation*

*GAs do not receive vacation other than university breaks and holidays*

## *Tax requirements*

- *Federal and Michigan (I-9 & W-4 forms)*
- *GAs must file a city tax form if working in GR, Muskegon, TC, Detroit, regardless of residence*
- *Tuition waiver is taxable income if assignment is not research or teaching*





Questions at this point?

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# Supervisor Orientation

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# The GA Orientation...

- Participate in **mandatory** Graduate School orientation
- Unit/office orientation
- Introduce staff/faculty
- Gain information regarding job responsibilities and assignments
- Learn what's expected of the GA position

**Importance of going through orientation**

**Ask questions...**

- *What have previous GA experiences been like?*
- *How will I be evaluated – methodology & frequency?*
- *Could this GA position be renewed?*
- *How are complaints & grievances resolved?*

# GA Task Assignment & Completion

Tasks assigned should challenge the GA to levels of success that can be reached by building new and better skills...

*What if this is not the case for you?*

- *Seek challenge and take the initiative to talk to your supervisor*
- *Don't settle for the minimum as the 'standard of excellence'*
- *A GA is a learning experience, not just a job, so seize the opportunity*

*Respect timelines and deadlines and comply with them*

*Demonstrate progress toward independence of decision-making*

# Supervision and Feedback

The level of supervision provided to your GA changes, depending on outcomes.

As GA skills/outcomes improve, supervision may be less necessary

The level of supervision may vary over the course of the GA appointment (early, middle, late)

*Supervision should be available to you if you need it; if not, take the initiative to ask for it*

All supervisors should provide feedback (formal and informal) on a regular basis.

Weekly meetings as needed

Seek opportunities to provide your GA feedback

Without feedback, how do GAs improve?

Primary Supervision should be given by Professional Staff or Faculty Member

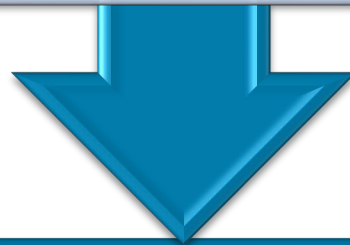
# Evaluation

Every GA should undergo some form of evaluation process before ending the appointment

Process could be **formative**, focusing on strengths and areas to improve; could be done regularly, at mid-point and/or conclusion

Process could be **summative** (more formal; "here's how you did...")

Could be structured evaluation with GA knowing the areas assessed



*GAs evaluate their supervisors by providing honest, open comments and suggestions for improvement of the GA experience to the Graduate School*

*Graduate School sends GAs an online evaluation for completion at the end of the semester/academic year*



Questions at this point?

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# Supervisor Orientation

GA Benefits &  
Responsibilities

The GA  
Experience

GA Contract,  
Policies, &  
Procedures

University  
Policies



# GA Contracts

## General information

- The Graduate School must approve GA position descriptions annually
  - Job postings must have an approved position description
  - Contracts will not be processed without an approved position description
- All GA job postings must be posted in Workday
- All GAs must be hired through Workday
- GA contracts should be completed no later than one (1) week prior to the start of the semester

To be eligible for a GA position, a student must be:

- Fully admitted (not conditionally or provisionally admitted) to a graduate degree program
- Classified as a graduate student
- In good academic standing (gpa  $\geq$  3.0)
- Enrolled in at least the minimum required credits for GA contract (half-time: 5 credits; full-time: 9 credits)

# GA Contracts

Necessary  
information to  
know before  
completing GA  
contract

- GA position classification: Research, Instruction, Other
- How GA position is funded:
  - Base budget, Special Projects, grant, internal/external
  - Necessary worktags (cost center, fund, program, etc.)
- Contract length:
  - Standard (15 weeks/semester; 30 weeks/academic year)
  - Extended (30 weeks/academic year; 4 additional weeks)
  - Full-Year (start of Fall semester through end of following Spring/Summer semester)

How to hire GA  
in Workday

- Create new GA job requisition in Workday, use the “Complete Hire” process
- Use “Direct Hire a GA” process when hiring returning GA or a direct hire for the position
- Job aids can be found on Student Employment website [here](#), scroll down to “Hiring Students”, “Graduate Assistants”

# GA Contract Tuition Waiver

Tuition  
Waiver  
information  
that must  
be sent to  
Graduate  
School

- GA's name
- GA's G-number
- GA's degree program
- Hiring unit
- How tuition waiver is funded (financial aid, grant, internal source, external source)
- FDM (and worktags if applicable) to be charged for tuition waiver IF funded by a source other than financial aid
- Contract length (start and end dates)
- Appointment effort (Full/Half time)
- Any special notes pertaining to tuition waiver
- TUTION WAIVER WILL NOT BE APPLIED WITHOUT THIS INFORMATION

# GA Contracts

Important  
information  
to  
communicate  
to your GA

- Hiring units provide an offer letter to GAs hired through Direct Hire process
  - Include all pertinent information to position
    - Contract length, start and end dates
    - Stipend amount
    - Tuition credits waiver
    - Position classification
    - GA and supervisor sign offer the letter
- Provide ALL GAs with a copy of the approved position description
- New GAs must complete the **mandatory** New GA Orientation prior to starting their GA position
- Create a system with GA for tracking GA hours

# COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR GA

Most GA hiring issues could be avoided if  
the GA and supervisor communicate  
contract information



# GA Policies & Procedures

*Forms that  
need to be  
completed to  
be paid*

- **I-9**
  - Requires original documentation for proof
  - Should file at least 3 days prior to employment start date
- **W-4**
  - Grand Rapids W-4 confuses students when asked...“what percentage of your work will occur in Grand Rapids?”
  - 100% if the work is on a downtown campus (Health Campus or Pew Campus)

*Stipend  
payment*

- **Direct Deposit**
  - Sign up for direct deposit online through myBanner
  - Enter bank information on “Employee” tab
- **GAs without direct deposit will automatically be issued a pay card.** Each pay day their stipend payment will be ‘loaded’ onto the card.

# GA Policies & Procedures

*Forms  
that need  
to be  
completed  
in order to  
start work*

- *Students cannot work on campus until their I-9 form is complete.*
- *Student must show their ORIGINAL identifying documents in order to complete the I-9 Form. No photos, copies, or emails.*
- *Must bring in either 1 document from List A (e.g., Passport) OR 1 document from List B (e.g., driver's license or student ID) ALONG WITH a List C document (e.g., birth certificate or social security card).*
- *This is a commonly misunderstood step and causes frustration for students who only bring a driver's license.*

# Tuition

*Students are responsible for tuition costs that the GA tuition waiver does not cover*

- *For example, ½ time GA must pay for any credits beyond 4.5 credit hours*
- *Tuition must be paid before the tuition deadline or automatic course drops will occur*

*If students pay their tuition before the waiver is applied, it may take several weeks for the refund to be processed*

*If a credit card is used, a refund will be credited to your account by the next billing cycle (~ 2-4 wks)*



# Work Assignment

*GA work assignments should correspond with the approved job description*

*Some minor deviation may be allowed based on the needs of the hiring unit*

*GAs should not use their personal computers or personal or student email addresses*

*Supervisors are responsible for requesting a computer/email login for their GAs*

*GAs may not be used in place of clerical staff - assignment should enhance the GA's academic experience*

*Routine filing, copying, answering phones, are not to be regular duties*

*GAs may work remotely with supervisor approval*

*The GA and supervisor should create a plan for tracking work hours to ensure assignments are completed*

- ***Class attendance is the first priority for all GAs***
  - GAs are not expected to work when they have a class
  - Supervisors and GAs should discuss work arrangements once the GA's class schedule is finalized, to determine what days and hours the student will work
- ***Break and lunch schedules should be discussed with the supervisor***
  - Short breaks ( $\leq 15$  min) are typically counted towards work hours
  - Lunch breaks ( $> 30$  min) are not considered part of work hours
- ***With supervisor approval, GAs may work fewer hours during any given week to accommodate exam schedules, academic matters, and urgent personal matters***
  - Arrangements to make up missed hours should be agreed upon by the GA and the supervisor

# Work Schedule



# Additional On-Campus Employment



- *GA contracts are for 10 (half-time) or 20 (full-time) hours per week of employment*
- *GAs may not have any other employment at GVSU during the GA appointment without approval from the Graduate Program Director (GPD), the Graduate School, and Student Employment*
- *GAs who are approved for additional employment may not exceed 25 hours per week total (GA hours + additional work hours  $\leq$  25 hrs)*
- *GAs who are seeking or are offered additional work should:*
  - *Ask the hiring supervisor to contact the Graduate School for approval and to confirm the number of work hours requested*
  - *Ask their GPD to provide a statement of support for the additional employment to the Graduate School to ensure the GA's academic success and work/life balance*
  - *International students must consult with the Padnos International Center before accepting an additional on-campus job*

- GAs with AY appointments are expected to work when classes are in session. GAs do **not** work:
  - Wednesday before Thanksgiving
  - Martin Luther King Day
  - During fall break, winter break, spring break or between Winter and Spring/Summer semesters
- Hiring units **may** require their GA to work during such breaks **if they have a substantial need and the GA is informed of this expectation at the time of hiring**



## Vacation & Time Off

- Units may determine their own dress code for GAs
- GAs should dress according to their unit culture and nature of their work...e.g., in an office setting, business casual is expected
- GAs whose positions require physical activity or laboratory work may dress appropriately

## Dress Code & Appearance



## *Cancellation of Appointment*



- *Circumstances may occur that require a GA to resign*
  - *Whenever possible, two weeks' notice should be given by the GA to the supervisor and the Graduate School*
  - *Assignments should be completed to the best of the GA's ability prior to departure*
  - *The stipend will be discontinued at completion of the GA's last day of employment*
  - *Tuition will be pro-rated and the GA will be billed for the portion of the semester tuition that remains after resignation*
- **Hiring units must notify the Graduate School if a GA leaves their position**

## *Termination of Appointment*



- *If a supervisor wishes to terminate a GA for cause (e.g., the student was unable to satisfactorily perform the duties of the assistantship), the hiring unit must do the following:*
  1. *Create a performance improvement plan*
  2. *Allow an opportunity for improvement*
  3. *Consult with the Graduate School*
  4. *Notify the student of termination in writing and provide a copy of the termination notice to the Graduate School*

*Complaints may include, but are not limited to issues such as job expectations not outlined in the position description, arbitrary or capricious behavior, or termination of the GA*

*GA complaints should be addressed locally, by the supervisor's office or unit, whenever possible*

*At times, it may be necessary for a GA to file an appeal related to their position/complaint*

- *GA-related disputes or concerns should be directed to the appointing officer who may intervene or refer the issue to the appropriate university office*

*Unresolved complaints may be appealed to the Graduate School*

**GA Complaint  
Process**

## Do...

- *Ask questions when needed*
- *Become informed of unit/office cultures*
- *Communicate professionally*
- *Take initiative – go ‘above and beyond’*
- *Seek out opportunities to build skills and abilities*
- *Ask what else you could do to help*
- *Follow GVSU policies and procedures*
- *Be professional in your job*
- *Get to know your supervisor*
- *Fulfill your contract hours*
- *Contact the Graduate School with any questions about tuition, payroll, paperwork, or policies*
- *Enjoy the experience!*

## Don't...

- *Do the bare minimum to get by, make sure to exceed expectations*
- *Ignore rules and procedures in your office, unit, classroom, laboratory*
- *Skip on your contract hours; a GA is not a scholarship*
- *Be discourteous or disrespectful to the University Community or dress inappropriately*
- *Compare your GA experience directly with others as there may be differences in assignments, responsibilities, supervision, etc.*





Questions at this point?



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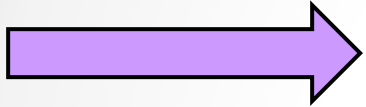
University Policies

# University Policies

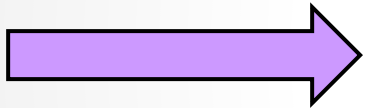


*Graduate Assistants are expected to adhere to all university policies as representatives of the GVSU community*

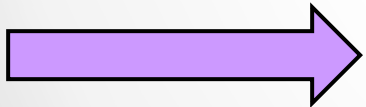
# Commitment to Inclusion & Equity and Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Policy



*All members of the community are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that does not infringe upon the rights of others*



*University encourages diversity and provides equal opportunity in education, employment, all of its programs, and the use of its facilities*



*Members of the university community, including students, employees, faculty, staff, administrators, Board members, consultants, vendors, others engaged to do business with the University, candidates for employment or admissions, and visitors or guests have the right to be free from acts of harassment and discrimination, including sexual misconduct, as defined by the policy*

# Anti-Harassment Policy

**Harassment is unprofessional conduct that could reasonably be understood as:**

**1**

*Having the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment*

**2**

*Having the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or access to educational activities and programs*

**3**

*Otherwise adversely affecting an individual's employment opportunities or access to educational activities and programs*

# Anti-Harassment Policy

*Any person who violates the University's Anti-Harassment Policy may be subject to a range of sanctions which could include, but is not limited to, dismissal, according to due process, from University employment*

*Harassment about age, color, disability, familial status, height, marital status, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, veteran status, or weight is a violation of university policy*

*Violators may also be subject to civil action or criminal prosecution because harassment and other discriminatory behavior may violate state or federal laws*

# Confidentiality, Data & Security Policy

*Individuals with authorized access to GVSU's computer resources, information system, records or files are given access to use the University's data or files solely for the business of the University. Specifically, individuals should:*

*Access data solely in order to perform his or her job responsibilities*

*Not seek personal benefit or permit others to benefit from any data that has come to them through their work assignments*

*Not release University data other than what is required in completion of job responsibilities*

*Not exhibit or divulge the content of any record, file or information system to any person except as it is related to the completion of their job responsibilities*

# Confidentiality, Data & Security Policy

*Individuals are not permitted to operate or request others to operate any University data equipment for personal business, to make unauthorized copies of University software or related documentation, or use such equipment for any reason not specifically required by the individual's job description*



# Title IX Compliance

*Title IX states no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any GVSU educational programming or activity*

*All GAs will get an email to complete Title IX training. This is required of all employees. The email will come from the Office Civil Rights and Title IX in the Division of Inclusion and Equity*

- *FERPA pertains to everyone who works at GVSU and we are bound by professional ethics to safeguard the integrity and confidentiality of student information*
- *Use a specific “need to know” approach when accessing student records: there must be a legitimate university-related educational or administrative interest and a need to review an education record in order to fulfill one’s professional responsibility*
- *The information may not be disclosed to anyone who does not need this information to do their job at the university*

## **Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)**

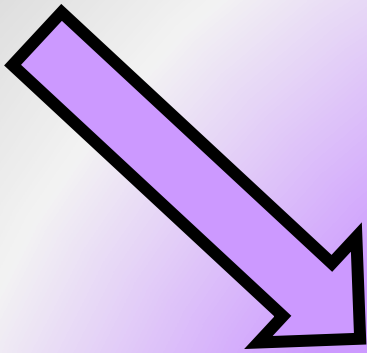
# Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

*GVSU promotes the inclusion of individuals with disabilities as part of our commitment to creating a diverse, intercultural community*

*GVSU complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended by the ADA Amendment Act (2008) and other applicable federal and state laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability*

*GVSU will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities upon request*

- *ADA act recognizes and protects the civil rights of people with disabilities*
- *ADA covers a wide range of disability, from physical conditions affecting mobility, stamina, sight, hearing, and speech to conditions such as emotional illness and learning disorders*



*A complete list of University Policies can be found by searching for “University Policies” on the GVSU home page or by going directly to this website:*

*<https://www.gvsu.edu/policies>*



# Questions?

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