

***Effective Date: July 1, 1997***

**Purpose:**

To authorize and designate an operational policies and procedures manual for the University; to define policy initiating authorities; and to develop a standard policy format, approval, and dissemination process.

**Policy Statement:**

The *Wichita State University Policies and Procedures Manual* is to include policies and procedures applicable to the entire University. The President, Vice Presidents, General Counsel, Faculty Senate, Unclassified Professional Senate, Classified Senate, and Student Government Association are hereby designated as policy initiating authorities. All policies require review and approval by the President prior to implementation and/or inclusion in the manual.

The *Wichita State University Policies and Procedures Manual* governs in those instances where policies or procedures published in other University or college documents differ from those stated in the manual. The *Wichita State University Policies and Procedures Manual* is subject to applicable federal and state laws and regulations and the *Kansas Board of Regents Policy and Procedures Manual*.

**Implementation:**

The *Wichita State University Policies and Procedures Manual* will have an effective date of July 1, 1997. All previous print versions of the policies and procedures manual are obsolete and should be discarded.

8.04 / Graduate Assistantships

This policy covers three types of graduate assistantship appointments. Those types are defined below and include Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTA), Graduate Research Assistantships (GRA) and Graduate Staff Assistantships (GSA).

**I. TYPES OF GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS**

**Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA):**

The primary function of a graduate teaching assistant (GTA) is either to provide direct instruction or to assist instruction. Both functions require GTAs to have the latitude to make independent decisions, use judgment and exercise discretion when dealing with student matters. GTAs providing direct instruction have responsibility for specific courses, sections, or laboratories. They may be instructors of record for courses to which they are assigned. GTAs whose role is to assist instruction may help faculty members prepare lectures or course materials, supervise or coordinate recitations, problem solving sessions or laboratory sections. In either case, the main purpose and responsibility of GTAs is to impart knowledge or training to students at Wichita State University.

GTAs who provide direct instruction are expected to follow departmental teaching guidelines, lesson plans, or syllabi. Responsibilities may include literature review; preparation of course lectures, laboratory/computer assignments, and/or course materials; monitoring of attendance; and preparing, administering and grading of daily assignments, examinations and clinical supervision. GTAs may be given the authority by their departments to assign final course grades.

GTAs whose function is to assist instruction may help faculty members prepare lectures, course materials, quizzes and tests, and supervise or coordinate recitations, problem solving sessions or

laboratory sections. The student may monitor classroom examinations written by the instructor. If assigned to grade test papers, or other types of examination, this must be included as a part of the overall GTA assisting position and cannot be the only duty assigned.

**Graduate Research Assistants (GRA):**

The primary function of a graduate research assistant (GRA) is to assist faculty members in their scholarly and/or creative activities. Duties may include basic scientific research using laboratory facilities, computer programming or operation, data collection, correlation and preliminary interpretation of data, statistical analysis of data and writing preliminary reports, bibliographical work, assisting musicians or artists, or faculty involved in health-related research. GRAs have the latitude to make decisions involving judgment and/or discretionary choices when collecting data, performing experiments, operating equipment, assisting in studios or laboratories. GRAs may be needed to order supplies and equipment, maintain inventories, trouble-shoot equipment or experiments. GRAs are obliged to follow department research guidelines or experimental protocols established by the faculty member in charge of the scholarly activity. GRAs may assist with experiments at field locations.

**Graduate Staff Assistants (GSA):**

The primary function of a graduate staff assistant (GSA) is to assist in non-teaching and non-research activities. Specific duties of the GSA vary widely, depending on the administrative or academic unit to which they are assigned, but should be at a level to make use of their education and abilities. Although GSAs may assist in various offices, their function is to perform more than the usual receptionist/secretary duties. Computer data entry, record maintenance, reports and survey preparation, correlating data, answering specific questions, are some of the duties GSAs will typically perform. Some GSAs may have musical performance as their principal assignment. GSAs responsibilities may also include interacting with students, faculty, administrators, alumni, and visitors to the University. For this reason GSAs have the latitude to make decisions involving judgment and/or discretionary choices in accomplishing these duties.

**II. LEVELS OF ASSISTANTSHIPS**

Assistantship levels are based on the approximate number of hours per week needed to complete the assignment and are expressed as percentages of a full-time appointment (EFT), where 1.0 EFT is equivalent to 40 hours per week. Eligibility for certain benefits is based on the assistantship level.

**Typical Assistantship Levels**

<b>EFT</b>	<b>HOURS / WEEK</b>
.50	20
.40	16
.25	10

**III. BENEFITS**

**1. Stipends.** The actual dollar amount of an assistant stipend varies according to the length of the appointment, the number of hours per week required by the appointment, and the funding base within each program area. Assistantships for twenty hours of work per week for a nine-month period typically range from \$5,000 to \$12,000.

**2. Payroll Period.** Payroll checks are issued biweekly according to the University payment cycle for the appointment period. Actual beginning date of the graduate assistant appointment may not coincide with the actual date of reporting. If Friday (payday) is a holiday, paychecks will be issued on the closest preceding workday.

**3. Non-Resident to Resident Tuition.** Non-resident graduate assistants (GTA, GRA, and GSA) who have an appointment of .40 EFT (approximately 16 hour per week assignment) or greater, are eligible, pursuant to regulations promulgated by the Kansas Board of Regents, for waiver of non-resident tuition to resident tuition. This tuition waiver is for the actual semester of appointment and does not include waiver of student fees. Graduate assistants must provide service from the 20th day of the semester through the remainder of the semester to be eligible for the non-resident to resident tuition waiver.

**Summer.** Graduate students who were granted a waiver of non-resident tuition to resident tuition in the preceding fall and spring semesters also receive this benefit in the summer, whether or not they hold a summer appointment.

In order to be eligible for a waiver of non-resident tuition to resident tuition in the summer, graduate assistants who were not granted this waiver in the preceding fall and spring semesters must hold an appointment for at least four weeks during the summer months, June, July, and August.

**4. Waiver of In-State Tuition.** Graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) are eligible for full or partial waiver of in-state tuition (for courses numbered 500 and above), according to the following table, pursuant to budget instructions from the Kansas Board of Regents:

EFT	APPROX. HOURS / WEEK	IN-STATE TUITION WAIVED	
		GTA-direct instruction	GTA-indirect instruction
.50	20	100%	75%
.40	16	75%	55%
.25*	10	50%	35%

This waiver is granted for the actual semester of appointment and does not include waiver of student fees. Graduate teaching assistants must be employed from the 20th day of the semester through the remainder of the semester to be eligible for in-state tuition waiver.

\* Non-resident GTAs holding appointments which total less than .40 EFT are responsible for the balance of their tuition assessed at the non-resident rate, since they do not qualify for the waiver of non-resident tuition to resident tuition.

**Summer.** To be eligible for an in-state tuition waiver during the summer, graduate teaching assistants must hold an appointment for at least four weeks during the summer months.

**5. University Sponsored Health Insurance.** The University will contribute toward the cost of the University-sponsored health insurance plan for eligible graduate assistants (GTA, GRA, or GSA). To be eligible for University contributions, graduate assistants must hold an appointment, or a combination of appointments, totaling .50 EFT, for the entire academic year (nine months, fall and spring semesters, August through May). The University will provide its contribution for the summer months if the graduate assistant participated in the program during the preceding fall and spring semesters AND has a continuous .50 EFT appointment for at least eight weeks during the summer months, June, July, and August. Brochures outlining the costs and benefits of the

University-sponsored health plans are available in the Student Health Center, Office of Human Resources, Office of Student Affairs, and the Graduate School office.

**6. Bookstore Discounts.** Graduate assistants are currently eligible for a 10% discount on textbooks at the RSC Bookstore. Presentation of a Shocker Card and a paid fee receipt or appointment notice are required at the time of purchase to receive the discount.

**7. Social Security.** Graduate assistants are exempt from social security deductions while enrolled. If graduate assistants are employed, but not enrolled during the summer, social security will be deducted. Questions regarding deductions should be directed to the Payroll Office, Jardine Hall 201.

**8. Workers Compensation.** The University provides coverage through state workers compensation self-insurance fund. Questions regarding this coverage should be directed to the Office of Employee Relations and Training in the Office of Human Resources.

#### **IV. ELIGIBILITY AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS**

##### **Academic Requirements for Graduate Assistantships - Academic Year:**

To be eligible for a graduate assistantship during the academic year, graduate students must: be admitted to, or have current status in, the Graduate School in a degree program in good academic standing (not on probation), and must maintain good academic standing (not placed on probation) throughout the period of appointment.

enroll as a full-time student (nine credit hours in fall or spring) during each semester of appointment. The chair or graduate coordinator of the department may grant an exception to allow graduate assistant to be enrolled in 6-8 hours in fall or spring.

##### **Academic Requirements for Graduate Assistantships - Summer:**

To be eligible for graduate assistantship during the summer, graduate students must: be admitted to, or have current status in, the Graduate School in a degree program in good academic standing (not on probation), and be enrolled in at least three credit hours during the summer. (Enrollment may be waived if the graduate student held an appointment as a graduate assistant during the preceding spring semester.)

##### **Non-compliance:**

Failure to maintain enrollment or to comply with academic requirements will result in termination. The appointing department is responsible for monitoring the student's compliance with enrollment and academic requirements and must terminate the appointment at the end of the payroll period in which it becomes known enrollment or academic requirements have not been maintained.

##### **Maximum Hours of Work - Academic Year:**

Domestic students and international students on F-1 and J-1 visas may work no more than 20 hours per week while classes are in session and no more than a total of 40 hours per week during finals week and break periods. The total of 20 hours per week consists of any combination of campus work including assistantships, work-study, hourly student employment, and cooperative education.

##### **Maximum Hours of Work - Summer:**

Summer appointments must not exceed 40 hours per week.

##### **Spoken English Certification:**

All graduate assistants, whether native or nonnative speakers of English who have teaching responsibilities that fit the Regents definition must have their spoken English evaluated by a departmental assessment committee. The committee will be appointed by the department chair or director and will be composed of at least three members: two faculty members and one student. The committee will judge the graduate assistant's spoken English according to the

Spoken English Screening Form (SESF) scale of 1-4. A ratio of 1 or 2 indicates competency in spoken English and is required for appointing the candidate. If one member of the assessment committee rates the candidate's spoken English at 3 or 4, the candidate must take the Test of Spoken English (TSE) or the SPEAK (institutional version of the TSE). The TSE may be taken at any authorized site. The score for the SPEAK test will be accepted from Wichita State only. The candidate will be responsible for the cost of either the TSE or the SPEAK test. Graduate assistants who are nonnative speakers of English, and who have teaching responsibilities as defined by the Board of Regents, that is, "classroom or laboratory instructional responsibilities and/or direct tutorial or advisement contact" must submit a minimum score of 50 on the TSE test.

**Visas:**

International students on F-2 visas are not eligible for appointment until they receive an F-1 status.

**Orientation Workshop:**

Newly hired GTAs are required to participate in the annual GTA Orientation Workshop sponsored by the Graduate School. This two-day workshop normally takes place before the beginning of fall classes. Follow-up workshops during the academic year may be scheduled as well. The purpose of the workshop is to prepare graduate students for their role in providing instruction to WSU students.

## **V. APPOINTING GRADUATE ASSISTANTS**

**Recruitment:**

1. The Graduate School aims for the GA population at WSU to represent the diversity of students in the general population, and encourages conscious and affirmative efforts to recruit and appoint members of the protected classes.
2. When possible and appropriate, vacancies for graduate assistantships should be advertised for a minimum of two weeks.
3. Vacancies should be listed with Office of Career Services, the Graduate School and other offices and agencies as appropriate to effect diversity within the Graduate School, and posted on the departmental bulletin board.
4. Vacancy announcements should include:
  - a statement that admission to full or conditional standing in a graduate degree program is required
  - a statement that students admitted on probation or placed on probation after admission are not eligible
  - the start date and length of appointment
  - responsibilities (teaching, research, etc.)
  - required qualifications
  - procedure for applying (to include submission of an application letter)
  - application deadline
  - to whom the application should be sent
  - notification deadline
  - statement of the University's nondiscrimination policy from the Office of Equal Opportunity Employment

**Review of Applications and Selection Criteria:**

Graduate assistantship applications are reviewed according to previously established criteria, such as academic records, experience, time available for work by applicants, financial need, relationship of assistantship work to the student's program, special abilities of the student (such as foreign language or computer skills, experience in operating research equipment). Applicants

will not be considered if they fail to submit an application letter that addresses their qualifications relative to the appointment qualifications. All applicants should be officially notified in writing of the decision about their application as soon as possible after decisions are made.

**Appointment Eligibility Verification:**

All offers of appointment must include notification that the appointment is subject to proof of appointment eligibility as required by the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. All appointees must have a valid social security number. No one may be added to the payroll until the following documents are on file in Human Resources:

I-9 (Social security card may not be used as evidence of employment eligibility for non-citizens. Employment may not begin any earlier than the date the I-9 is signed.)

I-9 Release Consent Form

Substance Abuse Policy Affirmation Form

W-4

Oath (Must be notarized)

Employee Information Form

ADA Form (optional)

New hire report

**Multiple Assistant Award Guidelines:**

Departments proposing to offer an assistantship to a student shall first determine if another campus unit already employs the student for the same time period. Departments can determine this information by viewing the Student Employment Eligibility (STUE) screen. Multiple assistantships cannot require a student to work beyond the maximum number of 20 hours per week. Multiple appointments consist of any combination of campus work including assistantships, work-study appointments, hourly student employment, and Cooperative Education positions. In general, the award of multiple assistantships to a single student must be guided by reasonable academic, ethical, and logical standards of conduct and education.

No graduate assistant appointments are permitted for a period when the recipient would also be employed full-time outside the University unless:

The provider of funding for the fellowship/assistantship or scholarship specifically allows such employment.

The educational merits of the situation are attested to in writing to the college dean.

The Budget Review Officer for the unit making the award specifically approves the arrangement.

**Appointment Deadlines:**

Graduate assistants may be appointed at any time based on departmental, unit or project director needs and availability of funding. The date of appointment may affect eligibility for certain benefits.

WSU is a signatory to a national agreement establishing a policy regarding acceptance of assistantship offers. Students who accept an assistantship offer from an institution on or after April 15 must obtain a written release from this institution before accepting a different assistantship offer. For offers extended on or after April 15, students should be advised that the offer is contingent upon release from any existing assistantship commitment. After accepting a WSU assistantship offer, students are required to obtain a written release from the appointing department or unit before accepting a different WSU offer.

**Appointment Offer:**

The appointment offer will include all conditions of service listed on the Graduate Teaching/Research Assistant Appointment Authorization form. All appointment offers must indicate that the offer is contingent upon providing verification for employment eligibility as required by the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 and approval from the Graduate

School. The Graduate Teaching/Research Assistant Appointment Authorization form is available from Human Resources.

**Graduate Assistant Appointment Notice:**

In order to appoint a graduate assistant, the appointing department must submit a Graduate Teaching/Research Assistant Employment Authorization form (OHR 131). After approval, the Graduate School will send a Graduate Assistant Appointment Notice to the recommended graduate assistant for signature. Upon return of the signed appointment notice, copies will be distributed to the department and academic dean. Human Resources will distribute copies of the Appointment Authorization form.

The Graduate School will assure that a person meets all eligibility requirements and is not scheduled to provide service for more than the maximum hours allowed. When the Graduate School determines a person is in violation of requirements, the appointing department will be notified of the need to resolve the problem.

**Reappointment:**

Conditions and procedures for reappointment should be made clear to graduate assistants at the time the offer of a position is made; however, there should be no expectation or indication of reappointment. Graduate assistants should be informed if reapplication is required, and whether the application will be given priority or considered on an equal basis with new applicants. Other considerations for reappointment include the academic standing of the graduate assistant, clearing of conditions of admission, progress toward a graduate degree, the results of formal evaluation of performance, and any performance review documentation that appraised how the assistant discharged his/her duties.

**VI. EVALUATION OF GRADUATE ASSISTANTS**

**Change of Status and Termination:**

Any changes of status in salary, funding account, or termination must be processed through a Change of Status form (Form 132, available from Human Resources). If a graduate assistant's employment is terminated before the completion of at least one-half of the employment period, the benefits will be lost. The benefits will be prorated if termination occurs after one-half of the appointment period lapses.

Should it become necessary to consider the termination of a graduate assistant prior to the end of the appointment period, any such consideration must be communicated to the person involved as early as possible. The concerns, which form the basis for consideration, should be spelled out in the communication.

The department/unit should describe types of behavior that can lead to termination of the appointment. Should there be reason to terminate a graduate assistant before the end of the appointment period, the Department Budget Officer, Budget Review Officer and Dean of the Graduate School must approve the termination in writing before the graduate assistant is notified.

**Performance Expectations:**

Departments or units employing graduate assistants will provide information about responsibilities, expectations, workspace, support services, etc. Departmental policies and procedures should be described and discussed and matters such as method of payment, remission of tuition (if applicable) and resignation should be addressed. Standards of professional behavior expected in carrying out the terms of the appointment should be made in writing. Graduate assistants should be informed that their assistantship can be terminated prior to expiration of the period of service if the terms of the appointment are not met.

**Performance Evaluation:**

Departments and other units hiring graduate assistants are responsible for assessment of their performance. Procedures for making such assessments should be clearly spelled out and

communicated to graduate assistants in writing. Performance assessment is an ongoing activity throughout the term of the appointment. Should problems with performance arise during the period of the assistantship, the responsible official in the appointing unit should meet with the graduate assistant and any other involved faculty or unit personnel and review the situation with specific directions and conditions issued in writing relative to continuation of the appointment. The extent of the formality of such reviews depends upon the seriousness of the problem. Personnel matters related to a graduate assistant appointment, such as performance assessment, must be done in confidential settings with concern for the individual involved as well as for the appointing unit.

**Grievance Procedures:**

Graduate assistants will be notified in writing of all decisions that affect their status as assistants. This will include advance notification of evaluation procedures and a summary of the evaluation.

The graduate assistant will be notified in writing of any complaints received by the faculty supervisor. Department Chair, Academic Dean or Graduate Dean concerning the graduate assistant's performance of duties. The graduate assistant will be given an opportunity to respond to such complaints.

If discipline or termination is recommended, the graduate assistant may initiate a grievance to appeal the decision through the channels specified in the policy. At every step in the grievance or appeal process, the graduate assistant will be provided a fair and impartial process.

Opportunity will be provided for academic judgment and procedures to resolve problems within the academic community.

Graduate assistants who have an employment dispute should try to resolve the problem first with the immediate supervisor, then the department chair or college dean. If those efforts are unsuccessful, students should contact the Dean of the Graduate School for assistance in resolving the problem. The decisions of the Dean of the Graduate School on employment issues are final. The guideline of Grievance Procedures for Graduate Students is available in the Graduate School Office, Jardine Hall, Room 107.

In cases involving sexual harassment, refer to the University policy on Prohibiting Sexual Harassment located at Section 3.06 of the *WSU Policies and Procedures Manual*.

**VII. IMPLEMENTATION**

This policy shall be included in the *WSU Policies and Procedures Manual* and shared with appropriate constituencies of the University.

The Dean of the Graduate School shall have primary responsibility for publication, dissemination and implementation of this University policy.

**Revision Date:**

September 9, 1998

September 13, 2001

March 12, 2003 effective August 4, 2003