

Graduate Traineeship Overview

Description

Traineeship assignments form part of the student's professional training and are viewed as integral to the student's academic development. The Graduate Trainee (GTRN) receives academic credit or satisfies a degree requirement by participating in a traineeship. A description of activities related to the traineeship should map both to the granted funding source and the student's academic program requirements and/or culminating project/research.

Tasks for this role could include research or scholarly activities under the direction of a RIT faculty member, such as:

- Engage in literature searches
- Perform data analysis
- Design an experiment
- Assist in a faculty member's laboratory
- Activities related to professional development, community projects, mentoring, or career training
- Curricular or teaching activities related to the student's degree program

Details:

- This is a student, non-employee position; no employment relationship exists between the student and the University. Since no employment relationship exists, the student is not subject to Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) or New York labor law.
- Student receives a stipend or subsistence allowance paid bi-weekly
- A GTRN cannot exceed 100% effort, which is the equivalent of 20 hours per week. This time limit does not include time spent by the GTRN on their own research to satisfy the requirements for an advanced degree.
- Students in this role may receive tuition remission. Tuition remission is uncommon for master's students and is dependent on available funding. More information about tuition remission is available [here](#).

Position requirements

1. The student receives academic credit or satisfies a degree requirement by participating in a traineeship.
2. Student is a full-time or full-time equivalent graduate student at RIT's Henrietta campus
3. Student is conducting original, professional-level research, which is generally associated with fulfilling the requirements of external grants
4. Student is under the close supervision of RIT faculty/staff
5. The research environment is provided by RIT
6. If a GTRN is at 100% effort, they cannot hold a work position on campus (i.e., GRA, GTA, GA)

Student Stipends

- Students in GTRN positions do not receive wages or a salary. GTRNs receive a bi-weekly stipend payment.
- Stipends may be calculated based on a percentage effort expected from the GTRNs, but stipend payments are not based on actual hours worked.
- Deductions to stipends may not be made based on a GTRN's performance or hours worked. If concern arises regarding satisfactory progress on the traineeship's goals, faculty must address the concern with the student to facilitate successful progress.
- Stipend rates should fall within RIT's GRA stipend rates for graduate students defined in the Graduate Assistant Payrates document posted on the student employment website under [Graduate Assistant Guides](#). The ranges have been developed so that colleges and graduate programs can provide competitive support to graduate assistants within their discipline.

- Summer stipend ranges are calculated by dividing the academic year rate by 9 months and multiplying by 3 summer months.
- The recommended compensation levels and tuition remission limitations do not apply to federal and non-federal programs that specifically support graduate and post-doctoral study and research training such as the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program, NIH National Research Service Award, and GEM Fellowship programs.
- GTRNs are entitled to time off during break weeks between academic terms and observed University holidays. Academic terms are considered active times for research and training and requests for time off are granted at the sole discretion of the faculty advisor. Stipend payments cannot be reduced or modified for leave, vacation, or sick time.
- *Tax Treatment:* For U.S. citizens and resident aliens, stipends do not generally have tax taken out at the time of payment but may be taxable and reportable at the time of your tax return filing. For non-resident aliens, Fellowship, Traineeship, and External Funding are taxed at the time of payment. The GTRN will receive a Form 1099 (U.S. residents) and/or 1042S (international students). The academic department should advise the GTRN of their U.S. tax reporting responsibility when the appointment is offered. More information is available [here](#).
 - International students will receive an email from support@online-tax.net with instructions on how to retrieve it.
 - 1042-S forms will be available through the GLACIER system, <https://online-tax.net/>

Student Actions for a GTRN position

The approximate set-up and approval time for a GTRN is one week, though this could be extended for international students who need to complete actions in Glacier. It is recommended to begin setup for a new GTRN two weeks before its start. Students will need to take the following actions for a GTRN position.

1. Confirm you are enrolled full time or full-time equivalent for the term
2. Ensure your current address in SIS is up to date and a U.S. address. Students must keep SIS up to date with current address information.
3. Complete all steps in your task list in Workday including setting up direct deposit.
4. Complete any Glacier paperwork (international students)
5. Accept the GTRN position

Questions and Contacts

- For questions about student's GTRN position or payment contact studentemployment@rit.edu
- For questions about the GTRN position or expectations contact your faculty advisor
- Guidelines and forms for GTRN supervisors are available at <https://www.rit.edu/careerservices/employers/on-campus-supervisors>
- On campus employment information for students <https://www.rit.edu/careerservices/students/on-campus-employment>

Graduate Traineeship FAQ

FAQ

Why are GRAs and GTRNs not considered employees?

Both GRA and Graduate Trainees (GTRN) are positions held by graduate students. Activities in these roles are directly related to the student's program of study and are performed under the supervision of a faculty member who provides training on a research project, or under the close supervision of faculty/staff who provide training that would be given in an educational environment. Both positions are typically funded through external grants or contracts. GRA and GTRN positions receive a stipend and, usually, tuition remission, in support of their study and participation in the position.

The primary beneficiary of the activities in these positions is the student, as their participation in the GRA or GTRN satisfies a degree requirement, or they receive credit toward their degree, such as the research activities contribute to their research credits and thesis or dissertation research.

How is the GTRN different from a GRA?

These positions are more similar than different. However, GTRN activities can expand beyond research projects and may include activities related to professional development, career training, and curricular activities related to the requirements of the graduate student's degree program.

How is a GTRN different from a GTA?

There are several ways these positions are different.

- GTA positions are employment and receive a salary; GTRN positions are not employees and receive a stipend.
- The funding for the traineeship position comes from an external grant or contract where the activities of the position must clearly align with the students' program of study and the student receives academic credit or satisfies a degree requirement by participating in the traineeship.
- RIT does not gain immediate benefits from the activities of the trainees, and a traineeship position does not replace activities that would be done by an RIT employee.
- A GTRN must be closely supervised by a RIT faculty or staff and cannot be the instructor of record for a course. While a GTRN may participate in training activities related to teaching, teaching is not the primary duty of a GTRN, and they cannot displace an instructor or Graduate Teaching Assistant employment position by their participation in teaching-related activities.

Why are payments held up?

The most common reasons a GTRN payment is held up are: (1) the position is still going through approvals, you can track its progress in Workday, (2) the student has not yet accepted the offer letter in workday, (3) the student has not completed all tasks for the position in Workday, including setting up direct deposit, (4) all tasks were not completed before the first pay period end date, (5) student has not submitted their Glacier information (for international students), or (6) the student is not at full-time or full-time equivalent (FTE) status and needs to either register for courses or complete the FTE form. Once the issue is resolved, the student will receive the back payments.

Can a graduate student be in a GTRN and a GRA or GTA at the same time?

While uncommon, yes, a graduate student can be in a GTRN, GRA, Graduate Teaching Assistant, and/or Graduate Assistantship position concurrently. The effort of all positions

cannot exceed 100% or 20 hours per week during the academic year. Supervisors and students must follow the requirements, set-up, and tracking for each position. The student will receive a salary and/or stipend based on each position.

Can a student be in a GTRN position while they are in a fellowship program?

In some cases, receiving financial support from one source prohibits additional support from another. If a student is already receiving fellowship support, the Graduate Program Director should contact [Sponsored Programs Accounting](#) (SPA) before offering a graduate traineeship, especially if either the fellowship or GTRN appointment is federally-funded.

Both merit-based scholarships and tuition remission are non-taxable payments made to a graduate student for qualified education expenses such as tuition and fees. Both payments are made directly to a student's account by the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships. Students in graduate assistantships (GRA, GTA, GA, or GTRN) can receive both tuition remission and a merit-based scholarship.

Graduate assistantship policy requires students to be matriculated and enrolled full-time in a graduate program. What should be done when a student is completing their thesis or dissertation and no longer taking classes?

To receive tuition remission and/or a stipend/payment in a graduate assistantship position (GRA, GTRN, GTA, GA), the student must be registered for the equivalent of 9 credit hours through a combination of course credit and equivalency as defined by the Registrar's Office. The academic department should send a completed [Full-time Equivalency Form](#) to the Registrar's Office.

Can a GTRN appointment continue into the summer semester?

Yes, students can be in GTRN positions in the summer. Departments may need to complete an [FTE form](#) to demonstrate full time equivalency for the student in the summer if the student is in a continuation of thesis or research course. If the student is not in a research or continuation of research course enrollment in the summer, approval for a summer GTRN must be granted by the Dean of the Graduate School through the Workday approval process.

Can an international student work another job on or off campus while in a GTRN position?

International students should consult with [International Student Services](#) before participating in any form of off-campus employment. More information is available at their website: <https://www.rit.edu/iss/employment>