

Graduate Assistant Employment Policies and Job Classification Information

In response to the growing number of graduate programs at the University, and to ensure compliance with external regulations, the Office of the Dean of Graduate Education has implemented policies and procedures for the administration of graduate assistantships. The information below summarizes the University's graduate assistant employment policies. Job classification information as it pertains to graduate assistantships is also included.

Policies Regarding Graduate Assistantship Appointments

1. Students who receive a graduate assistantship, and will be placed in one of the job classifications listed below, must be matriculated in an RIT graduate degree program and enrolled in courses toward the completion of a graduate degree during the graduate assistantship period.
2. Typical assistantships are for one academic year – September through May. A separate appointment may be made for the summer session. Occasionally, assistantships may be for one academic term only.
3. Five graduate assistant job classifications have been created to ensure consistent treatment of students with similar job responsibilities including rates of pay and stipend amounts as well as whether the positions are subject to provisions of the U.S. Department of Labor Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).
 - a. Refer to the [Graduate Assistant Job Classification and Pay Rates](#) document for information about the FLSA classification, hourly rates and semi-monthly salaries and stipends paid to graduate assistants based on the job classification and job title.
4. The maximum number of hours a Graduate Assistant may work in a graduate assistantship position (or a combination of assistantships) is 20 hours a week. Typical assistantships are not less than 10 hours per week (refer to the table at the bottom of the page).
5. A Graduate Assistant may be appointed to another student job classification (either graduate or a regular student position), up to a combined total of 20 hours per week while enrolled in classes.
6. The U.S. Department of Labor has clarified, (consistent with the 1994 Opinion of the Wage and Hour Administrator), that Graduate Assistants who perform research related to their course of study are considered “students”, not “employees”. Other requirements include performing the research under the direction of an RIT faculty member in a

research environment provided/supported by RIT. Since an employer-employee relationship does not exist, these Graduate Research Assistants (GRA Masters and PhD) are not subject to FLSA provisions.

7. For Federal effort reporting purposes, a full-time assistantship (½ FTE) is one in which the Graduate Assistant works 20 hours per week during the academic quarter. The assistantship is proportionate to the number of hours worked per week (i.e., ½-time assistantship = 10 hours per week). A 20-hour appointment is equal to 100% effort (for purposes of Federal effort reporting requirements).
8. Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs) are considered primarily students and receive a stipend or subsistence allowance. This non-compensatory payment enables GRAs to devote themselves full time to the pursuit of a graduate degree. While the illustrations based on a full-time graduate assistantship appointment refer to 100% effort as approximately 20 hours per week, GRAs will likely devote significantly more time to their academic research. A more accurate description of expectations for a Graduate Research Assistants is that of 100% of their effort, at least 50% should be dedicated to the research activities associated with their full-time GRA appointment.
9. As part of their assistantship, Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA) and Graduate Research Assistants (GRA) who receive a full-time appointment may also receive tuition remission of 50% of the University’s published tuition rates. The amount of tuition remission is proportionate to the number of hours worked per week (i.e., ½ time assistantship = 50% standard tuition remission ÷ 2). In addition to tuition remission, GTAs and GRAs may receive merit-based scholarships. Refer to the [Graduate Assistant Tuition Remission Policy](#) for more information.
10. Wages for graduate students classified as Graduate Assistants, Graduate Grading Assistants and Graduate Teaching Assistants are not allowable on sponsored projects (Project 30000 – 32999 and A0000 – P2999).
11. When tuition remission for a Graduate Research Assistant is charged to a federally-funded sponsored project, the amount must be consistent with the policy of the University. In addition, the tuition remission amount must be proportionate to the level of effort (number of hours “worked”) charged to the sponsored project. Refer to the table below:

Level of Effort	Standard Tuition Remission Charged to the Project	Stipend Charged to the Project
100% (20 hours per week)	50%	100%
75% (15 hours per week)	75% of standard amount	75% of standard amount
50% (10 hours per week)	50% of standard amount	50% of standard amount

12. When tuition remission is charged to a sponsored project, it will be excluded from the application of indirect (F&A) costs.

Graduate Assistantship Job Classifications

1. Graduate Assistant (GA) – Performs professional level administrative support functions or special projects for an academic department (usually within the student’s academic program)
 - ✓ Matriculated in an RIT Masters degree program; attends classes full-time (9 credit hours)
 - ✓ Process hiring paperwork through the Student Employment Office
 - ✓ FLSA Classification – Hourly paid employee; must track hours in the University timekeeping system. Wages paid biweekly based on actual hours worked via the regular bi-weekly payroll process
 - ✓ General ledger object code 71130
 - ✓ 20 maximum hours during the academic quarter
 - ✓ May work more during break weeks between academic terms quarter; hours over 40 are paid at 1 ½ times the hourly rate

2. Graduate Grading Assistant (GGA) – Assists a faculty member with grading of student assignments
 - ✓ Matriculated in an RIT Masters or PhD degree program; attends classes full-time (9 credit hours)
 - ✓ FLSA Classification – Hourly paid employee; must track hours in the University timekeeping system. Wages paid biweekly based on actual hours worked via the regular bi-weekly payroll process
 - ✓ Process hiring paperwork through the Student Employment Office
 - ✓ General ledger object code 71135
 - ✓ 20 maximum hours during the academic quarter
 - ✓ May work more during break weeks between academic terms quarter; hours over 40 are paid at 1 ½ times the hourly rate

3. Graduate Technical Assistant (GTechA) – Provides technical assistance with systems, desktops and server related issues and/or in the day-to-day operation of computer labs
 - ✓ Matriculated in an RIT Masters or PhD degree program; attends classes full-time (9 credit hours)
 - ✓ FLSA Classification – Hourly paid employee; must track hours in the University timekeeping system. Wages paid biweekly based on actual hours worked via the regular bi-weekly payroll process
 - ✓ Process hiring paperwork through the Student Employment Office
 - ✓ General ledger object code 71140
 - ✓ 20 maximum hours during the academic quarter
 - ✓ May work more during break weeks between academic terms; hours over 40 are paid at 1 ½ times the hourly rate

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4. Graduate Teaching Assistant Masters and PhD (GTA Masters and PhD) – In addition to conducting classroom instruction 1 hour per week, assists the faculty member with a variety of instruction and classroom-related tasks
 - ✓ Matriculated in an RIT Masters or PhD degree program; attends classes full-time (9 credit hours)
 - ✓ FLSA Classification – Exempt employee; paid a salary via the regular semi-monthly payroll process
 - ✓ Process hiring paperwork through the Student Employment Office
 - ✓ General ledger object code 71145

5. Graduate Research Assistant –Masters and PhD (GRA –Masters and PhD) – Conducts original, professional-level research in their field of study which is primarily for the purpose of fulfilling the requirements for an advanced degree. No employee-employer relationship exists between the student and the University.
 - ✓ Matriculated in an RIT Masters or PhD degree program; attends classes full-time (9 credit hours)
 - ✓ FLSA Classification – Since no employment relationship exists, the student is not subject to FLSA provisions
 - ✓ Process stipend through the Accounts Payable Office
 - ✓ General ledger object codes: 82570 – Stipend Masters – Graduate Research Assistants and 82575 – Stipend PhD – Graduate Research Assistants

Other Available Information Related to Graduate Assistantships

The following additional information regarding graduate assistantships is also available:

- ✓ [Graduate Assistant Tuition Remission Policy](#)
- ✓ [Graduate Assistant Job Classifications and Pay Rates](#)
- ✓ [Graduate Assistant Job Duties](#)
- ✓ [Payments Made to Graduate Students – Definitions](#)
- ✓ [Payments Made to Graduate Students – Processing Departments, Procedures & Forms](#)
- ✓ [Payments Made to Graduate Students – Federal and NYS Tax Treatment](#)
- ✓ [Payments Made to Graduate Students – Allowability on Sponsored Projects](#)
- ✓ [Payments made to Graduate Students – Frequently Asked Questions](#)