

## **Guidelines for Graduate Students Working or Conducting Research Remotely Information for Graduate Directors**

RIT graduate students are often accepted into degree programs that provide them with a stipend to conduct research or a salary for work or teaching. When these payments are given, it is with the understanding that the student would be performing the work, teaching or research under the supervision of a faculty member while in residence on the Henrietta campus. Under some circumstances, graduate students can be granted permission to work or conduct research from a remote location. This document provides guidance to supervisors and graduate program directors regarding the approval process for remote work or research. These guidelines are for graduate students in GA, GTA and GRA positions. The guidelines do not apply to students traveling for conferences, educational purposes, or for the student's own research (e.g. thesis research, dissertation research).

### **Graduate Assistantships (GA) or Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTA)**

Below is a summary of the RIT Domestic Remote Work for Student Employees policy. The full policy is available for review [here](#).

Remote work is work that is completed within the United States and outside of New York State or in New York City. Student employees may be allowed to work remotely in the United States for no more than 30 consecutive days in a calendar year. International GA and GTA work is not permitted due to the many issues and complications related to foreign labor laws, taxes, and authorizations that vary from country to country. Therefore, students cannot be hired as a GA or GTA to work internationally.

If a student is working remotely for more than the 30 consecutive days, a [Student Employee Remote Work Request Form](#) must be submitted, with supervisor and dean approval, to the Student Employment Office so that wage and hour laws of the city and state where the student is working are followed. Students must meet student employment eligibility requirements regardless of where they are located.

These include:

- Completed I-9 on file
- Registered full time

It is at the discretion of the department to allow remote work in the United States. The Student Employment office must verify the remote work request by confirming the student's eligibility for student work and work requirements for the remote work location. Approval is not guaranteed. Students in GA and GTA positions working remotely are expected to perform meaningful work and have frequent communication with their direct supervisors to ensure they are meeting their work requirements. If a student is in an hourly GA role they must report their actual hours worked to the minute (i.e., not scheduled hours) to whomever is responsible for entering the student's hours into Kronos. It is the responsibility of the department or school to know if a student is working remotely.

## **Graduate Research Assistantships (GRA) or Other Graduate Students Receiving Research Stipends**

In the United States, Graduate Research Assistants are considered students (not employees) and receive a stipend for their research efforts. As indicated previously, when GRA stipends are awarded the expectation is that the student will conduct the research on the Henrietta campus and under the supervision of a faculty member.

It is at the discretion of the department to allow remote work in the United States. Remote GRA students are expected to have frequent communication with their direct supervisors to ensure they are meeting their research requirements. In addition, the [GRA Domestic Remote Research Request Form](#) must be completed and submitted to [studentemployment@rit.edu](mailto:studentemployment@rit.edu).

Generally, GRAs may not perform research assistant duties from an international location. The reason for this position is that there are many complicated considerations that vary from country to country, related to international research and payment. Issues with conducting research internationally may include but are not limited to:

- Foreign tax and reporting requirements - although GRAs are not considered employees in the U.S., foreign regulations may differ.
- Foreign labor and employee rights and benefits
- Work visas and permits
- Privacy laws
- Contractual obligations (i.e., sponsored research)
- Asset protection

In rare situations, where international remote work is essential to successfully conduct the research, a PI or Graduate Director can request approval for an exception. All expenses associated with evaluating the costs of remote work and/or implementing the international remote work arrangement must be borne by the research project or the unit (department or college) in which the requesting faculty supervisor resides.

The graduate program director or direct supervisor must complete the [GRA International Remote Research Request Form](#) which must be signed off by the Office of Sponsored Research Services, Office of Compliance and Ethics, and then approved by the Graduate Director/PI, College Dean, AVP/Graduate Dean, and the Provost, prior to submission to [studentemployment@rit.edu](mailto:studentemployment@rit.edu). This will start the process of assessing whether international remote work is possible in the potential host country.

There will be costs associated with assessment for approval and implementing GRA stipend payments for international research. These costs are the responsibility of the department, college, or research project funding. Approval will be granted on a very limited basis and review time of the circumstances related to the international work or research could take multiple weeks.

### **Additional Considerations**

- There can be export control issues with students transporting RIT equipment internationally. Any RIT equipment that would be used for GRA research internationally,

including laptops, must be listed on the [GRA International Remote Research Request Form](#) for the Office of Compliance and Ethics to review and approve.

- RIT cannot make payments for research conducted in certain restricted countries including: North Korea, Crimea territory of the Ukraine, Cuba, and Iran.
- The [GRA Domestic Remote Research Request Form](#) and the [GRA International Remote Research Request Form](#) (available on the [Graduate School Toolkit](#)) do not replace the process or any other requirements for a student to be in a GRA position.

## **Summary**

Graduate students working in GA and GTA positions can work remotely in the United States for no more than 30 consecutive days in a calendar year. Students working remotely must meet student employment eligibility requirements and follow policies of student employment. International GA and GTA work is not permitted

There are many potential issues with students engaging in research from an international locale. Therefore, graduate students who are GRAs are expected to conduct research on the Henrietta campus, however, they may conduct research remotely in the United States with approval of their Dean. If there are unique circumstances that would require a student to conduct research internationally, approval by the Office of Compliance and Ethics, Office of the VPR, and the Provost is required and the department or research project funding must incur the expenses related to the international research assessment and implementation.