



**GRADUATE
SCHOOL**

**GRADUATE ASSISTANT APPOINTMENT MANUAL
FOR FACULTY & STAFF**

Revised January 2016

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INTRODUCTION

The Graduate Assistant Appointment Manual provides guidelines, policies, and procedures for the appointment of graduate assistants. This manual does not address any matters related to the processing of graduate assistant appointments through HR Oracle.

The Graduate School welcomes suggestions for improving the information available in this procedures manual.

The [Graduate and Professional Bulletin](#) will reflect the most up-to-date policies regarding graduate assistant appointments.

DEFINITIONS

Assistantships: Assistantship awards offer a stipend to the student in return for certain specified services to the University. The stipend is treated as income (subject to withholding taxes) and both the University and the student agree to a formal contract when an assistantship is arranged (the Graduate Assistant Appointment and Certification Form, GAAC).

Census Date: A University established date that is used to record enrollment statistics. This date is typically the 12th day of the semester.

Central Funds: Funds provided by the Administration for the payment of teaching assistant tuition and tuition premiums.

CR: Continuous Registration. All graduate students are required to be continuously registered in the fall and spring semester throughout their degree programs either by registering for any graduate credit-bearing course or by registering for a Continuous Registration (CR) status. To hold a graduate assistantship, registration of at least one on-campus credit is required during the fall and spring semesters and such credits as the appointing department may require each summer term during which the appointment is in effect. CR is not a valid form of registration if a student is holding a graduate assistantship during the fall and spring semesters.

DPSA: [Department Payment to Student Account](#). This form is used to deposit into a student's account a graduate assistant payment, a discretionary scholarship, or a sponsor designated scholarship. Funds are typically for the payment of tuition, but departments can also pay fees, health insurance, and other incidentals as a form of a scholarship.

GAAC: Graduate Assistant Appointment and Certification Form. This is a document generated by the department from HR Oracle and once it is printed and signed by all parties (the student and department), it becomes a legally binding contract.

GAAR: Graduate Assistant Appointment Report. Using HR Payroll information, this report is generated each fall and spring semester and includes all graduate assistants on record appointed through Human Resources by the department. This report is sent to the department heads for certification of all of the current graduate assistants.

GRA: Graduate Research Assistantships are basically similar to teaching assistantships except that recipients are given basic research assignments. The precise nature of the duties will vary depending on the nature of the discipline, the particular projects under way in the department, and the interests and skills of the students. Research assistantships are typically funded through external research grants obtained by members of the faculty. A research assistantship contract may provide for payment of base tuition.

GSA: Graduate Support Assistants provide administrative services and are typically found in a dormitory, counseling center, athletic department, or administrative offices.

GTA: Graduate Teaching Assistantships involve payment for services related to undergraduate instruction. The duties typically involve grading papers, compiling biographies, and monitoring laboratories, conducting discussion sections, or teaching an entire class. Teaching assistantships are funded by the state of Colorado as part of the resident instruction budget. Teaching assistantships include payment of base tuition on behalf of the student as an added benefit. The level of tuition support is relative to the fraction of the appointment (see half-time appointment and other definitions below).

Half-Time Appointments: If a GTA works 20 or more hours per week, the GTA receives the full cost of his or her base tuition. If a GTA works less than 20 hours per week, tuition is prorated according to his or her corresponding HR Oracle assignment FTE.

HR Oracle: Human Resources system used to appoint graduate assistants.

Minimum Stipend: A University established monthly minimum amount that a graduate assistant must be paid.

Quarter-Time Appointments: If a GTA works less than 20 hours per week, his or her base tuition is prorated according to their corresponding HR Oracle assignment FTE. The level of tuition support is commensurate with the level of appointment: Half-time assistantship = full base tuition; quarter-time assistantship = $\frac{1}{2}$ base tuition.

Sponsor Invoices: Billing statement generated by Accounts Receivable Operations, which includes all graduate assistants who will receive payment of base tuition.

Suspend: This status is used for anyone who is not eligible for Leave Without Pay and who will not be working for a short period of time, but who is still employed by the University without pay — salary has been suspended.

Terminate: The 'Initiate Assignment Termination' status in HR Oracle is used to end an assignment for an employee that will no longer be employed in that job. Because all graduate assistants are “employees at will,” there is specific policy that must be adhered to as noted on the Graduate Assistantship – Terms and Conditions of Appointment found in the *Graduate & Professional Bulletin*:

<http://catalog.colostate.edu/general-catalog/graduate-bulletin/financial-support/>

Tuition Premiums: Graduate Research Assistantship, Fellowship Grant Trainee, and Graduate Veterinary Resident Tuition Premium payments of the difference between resident and non-resident tuition are designed to assist new non-resident graduate students with GRA, FGT, or GVR appointments. Please contact the Graduate School for current Tuition Premium policies. Tuition Premiums remove any financial disincentive for researchers to give support to non-residents.

GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES ON GRADUATE ASSISTANT APPOINTMENTS

1. To be eligible to hold a graduate assistant appointment, all of the following must be met:
 - a. Student securing admission to a graduate degree program and the Graduate School, and registering for and completing at least 1 on-campus credit during each fall and spring semester, and such credits as the appointing department may require each summer term during which the appointment is in effect.
 - b. Student's conformance to each of the following: maintaining good academic standing at Colorado State University; maintaining at least a 3.0 grade point average in each of the various categories (regular courses and overall) specified in the "Scholastic Standards" section of the [Graduate and Professional Bulletin](#) after having attained 12 credits of regular coursework or two semesters of graduate work, whichever comes first; not being placed on academic probation; and for non-native speakers of English, taking and obtaining a satisfactory score on prescribed language competency tests.
 - c. Continued association with and enrollment in an academic department and the absence of suspension, dismissal, expulsion, or withdrawal from the University, Graduate School or department.
 - d. Students having the appropriate visa status and work permissions to permit performance as a Graduate Assistant.
 - e. Student's performance of assigned duties and functions in a timely and competent fashion.
 - f. A routine background check, if applicable, is completed and reviewed in compliance with the Colorado State University Policy Regarding Background Checks.
2. To be eligible for tuition remission, appointments must be made by University Census date (12 days into the semester). At Census, a Graduate Assistant Appointment Report (GAAR) will be generated (see University Critical Dates). Appointments made after Census typically do not qualify for the payment of tuition from Central accounts. If extenuating circumstances exist, appointments and the payment of tuition may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
3. After the GAAR is finalized and submitted to the Graduate School, Job Title changes (i.e. GTA to GRA) that affect tuition paid or a request to pay tuition from Central Accounts require written justification from the Chair of the department and may be considered on a case-by-case basis. If tuition has been paid from a Central Account and the Job Title change causes the student to be ineligible for tuition payment from a Central Account, departments will be responsible for the tuition payment. For all changes, include written justification in HR Oracle – click on the Add Comments button which is located on the last page prior to submitting into the approval process.
4. Length of appointment: Appointments made after the University Census date or are for less than 4 months typically do not qualify for tuition remission from Central Funds. If extenuating circumstances exist, appointments and the payment of tuition may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

5. Concurrent appointments within the same department require two Graduate Assistant Appointment and Certification Forms (GAACs), one for each appointment type. Concurrent appointments with two departments also require two GAACs.
6. Minimum stipend as set by the University is met for each graduate assistant appointment.
7. Students terminated for not performing assigned duties and functions in a timely and competent fashion must be given due process (see #5 in the [Graduate Assistantship – Terms and Conditions of Appointment](#) found in the Graduate & Professional Bulletin). These actions require Provost approval.
8. The University reserves the right to terminate the student's appointment due to lack of funds; this action requires 30 day written notice to the student (see #4 in the [Graduate Assistantship – Terms and Conditions of Appointment](#) found in the Graduate & Professional Bulletin).
9. A new signed GAAC Form is required if there is a change:
 - in appointing department,
 - in the type of assistantship (GTA, GSA, GRA),
 - in the level of service (half-time, quarter-time),
 - there is a decrease in the student's stipend, or
 - in tuition payment arrangements.

GTA TUITION REMISSION AND TUITION PREMIUMS

Graduate Teaching Assistantships are funded by the state of Colorado as part of the resident instruction budget. Teaching assistantships include payment of base tuition on behalf of the student as an added benefit. Each College is allocated a budget for GTA tuition remission.

The level of tuition support is commensurate with the level of appointment: Half-time assistantship = full tuition; quarter-time assistantship = $\frac{1}{2}$ tuition.

Tuition Premiums: Graduate Research Assistantship, Fellowship Grant Trainee, and Graduate Veterinary Resident Tuition Premium payments of the difference between resident and non-resident base tuition are designed to assist new non-resident graduate students with GRA, FGT, or GVR appointments. Please contact the Graduate School for current Tuition Premium policies. Tuition Premiums remove any financial disincentive for researchers to give support to non-residents.

- Such payments will be made through an account administered by the Graduate School for qualified appointments to GRA, FGT, or GVR positions.
- Qualification is possible for new graduate students appointed to GRA, FGT, or GVR positions during their first year while they are establishing resident status and does not extend beyond the first two semesters (please contact Graduate School for policy regarding International GRAs beyond first two semesters) following matriculation-enrollment in a graduate program at Colorado State University.
- GRAs, FGTs, and GVRs who qualify for tuition premium and are employed for less than half-time, are eligible to receive tuition premium based on their appointment effort (e.g. if appointed as a quarter-time GRA, they are entitled to $\frac{1}{2}$ of the tuition premium).
- For disproportionately split appointments, the percent effort will be used to determine the amount of tuition premium to be paid by the Graduate School (e.g. 20% GTA and 80% GRA; 80% of the difference between resident and non-resident tuition will be covered by the Graduate School).

ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT PROCESS –
ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT OFFER AND INITIAL ORACLE APPOINTMENT

1. A Letter, Notice of Graduate Assistantship Nomination, or a sample Graduate Assistant Appointment and Certification Form (GAAC) can be used to extend an offer to an admitted graduate student (see GUIDELINES FOR DEPARTMENT LETTERS OF OFFER on page 13).
2. Once the student accepts the offer, the Department will initiate the HR Oracle Appointment Process (visit the Human Resource Services website for more information: <http://www.hrs.colostate.edu>).
3. Departments will print the GAAC Form from HR Oracle or may use the initial sample GAAC Form that was used to extend the offer if no changes are made.
4. Department Head Signature is obtained.
5. Department will assure that the student has read the [Graduate Assistantship - Terms and Conditions of Appointment](#) found in the Graduate & Professional Bulletin, obtain the student's signature, give a copy of the signed GAAC Form to the student, and file the original signed GAAC Form at the department.

GRADUATE SCHOOL APPROVAL PROCESS – GRADUATE SCHOOL VERIFIES AND APPROVES APPOINTMENTS

Graduate School verifies the following information:

1. Appointments are made by University Census date (see University Critical Dates) – Tuition will not be paid from Central Accounts if appointments are made after Census.
2. Students have secured admission to a graduate program and the Graduate School.
3. Students are registered for at least 1 on-campus credit during each fall and spring semester, and such credits as the appointing department may require each summer term during which the appointment is in effect.
4. Students maintain at least a 3.0 grade point average in each of the various categories (regular courses and overall) specified in the “Scholastic Standards” section of the [Graduate and Professional Bulletin](#) after having attained 12 credits of regular coursework or two semesters of graduate work, whichever comes first, and not being placed on academic probation.
5. Continued association with and enrollment in an academic program of study and the absence of suspension, dismissal, expulsion, or withdrawal from the University, Graduate School, or department.
6. Students must receive a minimum stipend as set by the University.
7. Length of appointment.
8. The lawful presence requirement is listed as either “Complete” or “Not Required” in the student’s record in ARIESweb.

Graduate School rejects or suspends appointments if:

- The student is not registered for the minimum requirement (see #3 above).
- The student’s grade point average is less than 3.0 after having attained 12 credits of regular coursework or two semesters of graduate work, whichever comes first; the student is on probation or is dismissed (see #4 and #5 above).
- If there is a change in a student’s appointment and detailed justification is not listed in the comments section in HR Oracle verifying that the student is aware and approves of the change in appointment, and that there is a new signed Graduate Assistant Appointment and Certification Form (GAAC) on file at the department.
- The student has not yet completed the lawful presence requirement (see #8 above).
- The student has not yet secured admission into a graduate degree program and the Graduate School (see #2 above).
- Detailed justification and/or comment regarding why a student is being terminated has not been recorded in HR Oracle by the department.

- Appointments being terminated and/or suspended prior to the end of the contract period require a very clear statement regarding the action, and in some cases, documentation will be required to substantiate the termination or suspension that will ultimately convert to a termination after three months.
 - a. Lack of funds – contract states that the University (or the appointing department) reserves the right to terminate the Appointment because of unavailability of funds or other conditions beyond its control upon thirty days written notice to Student. In such cases, documentation must be available to verify that student was given proper notice (see #4 in the [Graduate Assistantship – Terms and Conditions of Appointment](#) found in the Graduate & Professional Bulletin).
 - b. Except for non-renewals of employment following the end of a stated employment period or election to void an Appointment due to failure of conditions A-D (see [Graduate Assistantship – Terms and Conditions of Appointment](#) found in the Graduate & Professional Bulletin), the Provost/Academic Vice President must review and approve any recommendations concerning the termination of a graduate assistant appointment. The Graduate School must have sufficient information to be able to distinguish whether this is an action that requires Provost approval or whether there is a legitimate reason to “terminate” the appointment, such as in the case of graduation, student’s GPA being below 3.0, students leaves the University, or student changes majors/department. Students terminated for not performing assigned duties and functions in a timely and competent fashion must be given due process (see #5 in the [Graduate Assistantship – Terms and Conditions of Appointment](#) found in the Graduate & Professional Bulletin). These actions require Provost approval.

Graduate School approves appointments:

1. Once items 1 through 8 above are verified, the Graduate School approves the appointments through HR Oracle.
2. Graduate School creates a Graduate Assistant Appointment Report (GAAR) using HR data.
3. Graduate School sends the GAAR to each department for verification and department head signature certifying:
 - Each student has read the [Graduate Assistantship – Terms & Conditions of Appointment](#) found in the Graduate & Professional Bulletin,
 - A copy of the GAAC Form that has been signed by both the student and department is given to the student, and
 - The original GAAC Form that has been signed by both the student and department is filed at the department.
4. Graduate School will use the GAAR to verify and pay tuition as submitted on Sponsor Invoices.

ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE OPERATIONS PROCESS

The assessment of tuition typically begins in July for Fall semester, and December for Spring. Student statements are generated reflecting the amount of tuition each student is responsible for paying. All students having tuition paid on their behalf should be identified by the established deadline dates set by Accounts Receivable Operations (ARO) in order to avoid tuition being included in the minimum amount due reflected on their statements. In mid June and mid November, ARO will request a list of student names that will have tuition paid on their behalf. Lists are due back to ARO in early July and early December.

1. ARO requests that the department submit list of student names that will have tuition paid on their behalf (see ARIES Critical Dates Calendar). Students who are listed will have their tuition moved to a department sponsor account.
2. Financial Aid Office is informed of the tuition payment on behalf of the students.
3. ARO assigns a Sponsor Number and moves tuition charges from student's account to a department account.
4. ARO creates Sponsor Invoices for department payment of tuition.
5. ARO sends Sponsor Invoices to departments for account numbers.
6. Departments forward Sponsor Invoices to College Offices for approval.
7. College Offices forward Sponsor Invoices to the Graduate School for approval.
8. The Graduate School uses the signed GAAR that is submitted by the department to review and approve the department's Sponsor Invoices. The Graduate School forwards the Sponsor Invoices to ARO for final processing.
 - NOTE: A delay in the submission of the signed GAAR to the Graduate School will result in a delay in the processing of the department's Sponsor Invoices. If the Sponsor Invoices are delayed, the tuition will be reverted back onto the students' accounts. This would result in the department having to address any changes that are made to each individual student's account.
9. To pay tuition for students who are not on Sponsor Invoices, departments must process a [Department Payment to Student Account](#) (DPSA) Form.

For more information regarding this process, please contact [Accounts Receivable Operations](#).

GUIDELINES FOR DEPARTMENT LETTERS OF OFFER

Please do not develop departmental contracts; the Graduate Assistant Appointment Certification Form (GAAC) is the only legally binding form.

Departments may issue a sample GAAC Form or a Notice of Graduate Assistantship Nomination to extend an offer to an admitted graduate student.

Letters of offer should include language that states that the student is nominated for an assistantship contingent upon completion of all the necessary formal documents, signature on the GAAC Form, and formal University approval.

GRADUATE ASSISTANT APPOINTMENT FORMS & REPORTS

- [Graduate Assistant Appointment and Certification Form](#) (GAAC): This is a sample of the GAAC Form.
- [Notice of Graduate Assistantship Nomination](#)
- [Graduate Assistant - Terms and Condition of Appointment](#)
- [Graduate Assistant Appointment Report](#) (GAAR): This is a sample of the GAAR Form.
- [Department Payment to Student Account](#) (DPSA): This is an Accounts Receivable Operations Form and questions regarding policy/procedures should be directed to them.

WEBSITES AND OTHER REFERENCES

Graduate School Website: <http://www.graduateschool.colostate.edu>

Graduate and Professional Bulletin: <http://www.graduateschool.colostate.edu/faculty-staff/bulletin.aspx>

ARIES Critical Dates Calendar: <http://www.aroweb.colostate.edu/aroweb/deptresources.aspx>

Oracle information: <http://www.hrs.colostate.edu>

Human Resources Manual: <http://www.hrs.colostate.edu/policies/hrs-manual.html>

University Critical Dates: <http://registrar.colostate.edu/faculty-staff/important-dates/>

AT-A-GLANCE PROCESS – GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP APPOINTMENTS

1. Department makes offer to Student; student accepts.
2. Department initiates the appointment through HR Oracle, and submits the appointment through the HR Oracle approval hierarchy.
3. Department prints Graduate Assistant Appointment and Certification Form (GAAC).
4. Department obtains department head and student signature.
5. Department gives copy of signed GAAC Form to student and files original signed GAAC Form at department.
6. ARO requests names of students who will have base tuition paid on their behalf to establish Sponsor Invoices and remove tuition charge from student's account.
7. Graduate School verifies Oracle appointments for minimum requirements and approves or rejects appointments.
8. Graduate School sends approved appointments to HR for final approval.
9. Graduate School generates Graduate Assistant Appointment Report (GAAR) and sends to departments for department head signature.
10. Departments send the signed GAAR back to the Graduate School.
11. Mid-semester, ARO sends Sponsor Invoices to departments for the payment of tuition.
12. Graduate School receives signed Sponsor Invoices from the departments, verifies student eligibility using the signed GAARs, and approves Invoices.
13. Graduate School sends Invoices to ARO and tuition charges are reflected on accounting reports.

FLOW CHART

