GRADUATE ASSISTANT APPOINTMENT MANUAL
FOR FACULTY & STAFF
Revised August 2017

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INTRODUCTION

The Graduate Assistant Appointment Manual provides guidelines, policies, and procedures for appointing graduate assistants. This manual does not address 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* reflects the most up-to-date policies regarding graduate assistant appointments.

DEFINITIONS

Assistantships: Assistantship provide a stipend to the student in return for specified services to the University. The stipend is treated as income and subject to withholding taxes) 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. Only available for Resident Instruction credits when funding is provided by the Graduate School.

CR: Continuous Registration (CR). 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 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 Form: [Department Payment to Student Account](#) Form. This form is used to deposit a graduate assistant payment, a discretionary scholarship, or a sponsor designated scholarship into student accounts. 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 Form: Graduate Assistant Appointment and Certification Form. This is a document generated by the department from HR Oracle. Once it is printed and signed by all parties (the student and department), it becomes a legally binding contract. The department is required to maintain this documentation.

GAAR Report: 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 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 employed in a dormitory, counseling center, athletic department, or administrative offices.

GTA: Graduate Teaching Assistantships receive payment for services related to undergraduate instruction. The duties typically involve grading papers, compiling biographies, 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 base tuition (for RI credits). If a GTA works 120 hours per week, the GTA receives 50% of base tuition (for RI credits) which is provided when utilizing college FTE allotment. Base tuition does not include payment of differential tuition or other fees.

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

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

Quarter-Time Appointments: If a GTA works 10 hours per week, their (for RI credits) the level of base tuition support is relative to the level of appointment: Half-time assistantship = full base tuition; quarter-time assistantship = ½ base tuition. Base tuition does not include payment of differential tuition or other fees.

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

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 admitted to a graduate degree program and the Graduate School, registering for and completing at least 1 Residential Instruction 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 allow employment 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 (e.g., 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 receives an FTE allotment for GTA tuition remission. **Coverage is not allowable for On-line Plus courses, differential tuition, or other associated fees.**

The level of tuition support is relative to the level of appointment: Half-time assistantship = full tuition; quarter-time assistantship = ½ tuition.

GRA TUITION PREMIUMS

Graduate Research Assistants paid from restricted funds (53, 64) or state-appropriated funds (13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19) may be eligible for the benefits of the GRA Tuition Premium Program Policy.

To be eligible for the GRA Tuition Premium Program, domestic and international non-resident students must be enrolled in a minimum of five resident-instruction credits and must meet all assistantship requirements as noted in the Graduate & Professional Bulletin, Graduate Assistantship – Terms & Conditions of Appointment. **CSU Online credits do not meet the eligibility requirements for the program.**

For students employed as **.5FTE GRA (20 hours/week)**, the Graduate School will pay the tuition premium, difference between resident and non-resident tuition. For students employed in capacities less than .5FTE, the Graduate School will pay a prorated amount. For example, for students employed as **.25FTE (10 hours/week)**, CSU will pay half of the tuition premium.

- The Tuition Premium Program covers resident-instruction tuition only. It does not cover CSU Online tuition, nor does it cover fees or differential tuition.

- All GRAs must be enrolled in at least one resident-instruction credit to hold a position; however, students enrolled in less than five credits will not be eligible for the GRA Tuition Premium Program.

RESTRICTIONS SPECIFIC TO DOMESTIC NON-RESIDENT STUDENTS

- CSU will provide the Tuition Premium for domestic non-resident students during their first fall and spring semesters; hiring department funding sources will be expected to pay stipends and the resident portion of tuition.

- Such students will be expected to establish residency during their first year at CSU.

- If students do NOT establish residency, hiring department funding sources or the students will be required to pay the difference between non-resident and resident tuition during the second year and thereafter or until the student establishes state residency. (The Tuition Premium Program will not be available after year one to domestic non-resident students.) The hiring departmental sources will be expected to continue to pay the stipend and the resident tuition portion.

ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT PROCESS –
ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT OFFER AND INITIAL ORACLE APPOINTMENT

1. A Notice of Graduate Assistantship Nomination letter, 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) – Base 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.

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).
- When changes are made to a student's appointment and detailed justification is not listed in the comments section in HR Oracle, the appointment will be disapproved. Comments must be included to verify 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 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, student left 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 6 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 that:
   - Each student has read the Graduate Assistantship – Terms & Conditions of Appointment found in the Graduate & Professional Bulletin,
   - A copy of the GAAC Form, signed by both the student and department is given to the student, and
   - The original GAAC Form, 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 July and mid December, ARO will request a list of student names that will have tuition paid on their behalf. Lists are uploaded into ARO's sponsor billing portal.

1. ARO requests that the department uploads a list of student names that will have tuition paid on their behalf (see ARIES Critical Dates Calendar). Students who are uploaded 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 distributes Sponsor Invoices using the ARO portal to departments for Kuali 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
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. Approved appointments are routed 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 uploaded Sponsor Invoices from the departments, verifies student eligibility using the signed GAARs, and approves Invoices.
13. Graduate School routes Invoices to ARO and tuition charges are reflected on accounting reports.

FLOW CHART

Academic Department Offers Appointment

Initiate HR Oracle appointment process

- Print GAAC Form
- Obtain required signatures

File signed GAAC Form at Department & give a copy to student

Send Oracle appointment to College for approval

Send Oracle appointment to Graduate School for approval

Changes to appointment that require Graduate School approval and reprinting of Certification Form (GAAC)
- Change in appointment type (i.e. GTA to GRA)
- Decrease in stipend
- Change in level of service (i.e. half-time to quarter-time)
- Change in appointing department
- Change in tuition payment arrangements

Graduate School creates GAAR & sends to depts. for certification. GAAR is used to record appointments. Departments return signed GAAR to Graduate School.

Prepare lists of students to identify those having base tuition paid on their behalf (July/Fall & December/Spring)

Uploads List to Accounts Receivable Operations

Inform Financial Aid receipt of award

Accounts Receivable assigns Sponsor Number & removes tuition charge from student's account

Create Sponsor Invoices for tuition payment

Graduate School verifies:
- Academic status (GPA/Probation/Dismissed)
- Registration for at least 1 on-campus credit for fall & spring semesters
- Minimum stipend is met
- Student is admitted to a grad. program

Graduate School sends to HR for final approval

Stipends will be suspended or appointments will be rejected by the Graduate School if:
- Not registered for at least 1 on-campus credit for fall & spring semesters
- GPA less than 3.0, on probation or dismissed
- No detailed justification and/or comment regarding termination/change of appointment
- Student has not been admitted to a graduate program

Graduate School Tuition Payment Process

Pull data from HR Tables of all appointed Graduate assistants

Match and pull registration information

Match and pull Sponsor Invoice & tuition information

Graduate School combines lists to create an official listing of graduate assistant types, registration information, & pays tuition as noted on Sponsor Invoices if requirements are met.