

4.1 Assistantships, Fellowships, Traineeships, and Grants

Students admitted to the Graduate School may be awarded financial support in the form of an assistantship or fellowship (sometimes referred to as a traineeship). These programs provide financial support to enable students to focus their work on their degrees. Student's assignments should be in direct or general support of the teaching, research or extension missions of the university for the mutual benefit of the graduate students and his/her graduate program.

A. Eligibility

In order to be eligible for graduate teaching, research, or extension assistantships and fellowships (traineeships), students must be admitted into the Graduate School in full graduate standing and be enrolled in the fall and spring semesters. Students must also be in good academic standing (with a 3.000 grade point average or higher), unless granted an exception by the Graduate School. Some fellowships (traineeships) have additional eligibility requirements, e.g., a GPA higher than 3.000 or a specific research focus. It is the responsibility of the student to consult the Director of Graduate Programs (DGP) for information on specific eligibility requirements. Graduate Certificate Students are eligible for appointment as Graduate Service Assistants but not research, teaching or extension assistantships.

The position of the Graduate School is that any graduate student holding a graduate research, teaching, or extension assistantship requiring 20 hours of work per week or more (i.e. half-time or greater) must, as a condition of such assistantship, maintain his/her status as a full-time student, and therefore, should not be otherwise employed. The reason for this position is to encourage students to work on their degrees rather than part-time jobs and to ensure that additional employment is approved by the student's department. If a department wishes to increase a graduate assistant's financial support, the stipend should be increased. If additional time is required, the student's FTE should be adjusted accordingly. International graduate students on F-1 and J-1 visas are limited to 20 hours of service work per week.

B. Definitions

The following definitions have been recommended by the Administrative Board of the Graduate School and approved by the Graduate School. Graduate departments and programs have the responsibility of determining whether or not the assignments given to their graduate student assistants are in direct or general support of the teaching, research or extension missions of the university.

1. Graduate Teaching Assistant – A student who is appointed in an academic department or program and
 - a. directly participates in the teaching mission of the unit as instructor of record, lab instructor, recitation leader, lab or lecture assistant, or who has responsibilities in direct support of classroom instruction in the unit, such as setting up labs or working in an instructional computer lab; or

- b. provides general support to the teaching mission of the department or program.
2. Graduate Research Assistant – A student who is appointed in an academic department or program and
 - a. directly participates in the research mission of the unit, or an on-campus or off-campus organization that is affiliated with the unit, in the design of experiments, data collection, analysis, or reporting of research results in the student's field of study, where research may, but is not required to, contribute directly to the student's thesis or dissertation; or
 - b. provides general support to the research mission of the unit or discipline.
3. Graduate Extension Assistant – A student who is appointed in an academic department or program and
 - a. directly participates in the extension, outreach and engagement mission of the unit, or an on-campus or off-campus organization that is affiliated with the unit, in the design of projects, data collection, analysis, application, or reporting of results in the student's field of study, where these activities may, but are not required to, contribute directly to the student's thesis or dissertation; or
 - b. supports the extension, outreach and engagement mission of the unit or discipline, including substantive interaction with individuals or groups beyond the university.
4. Graduate Services Assistant – A student who is appointed to a position that serves the university outside of an academic department or program's teaching or research mission during the academic year.
5. Graduate Fellow (Trainee) -A student who is provided a stipend that has no corresponding service obligation. Stipends from graduate fellowships (traineeships) are based on academic scholarship and/or financial need criteria. Students may contact the DGP for information on fellowships (traineeships) that may also provide tuition, fees and/ or educational expense allowances.

C. Responsibilities

1. Graduate Teaching Assistants – A 1/2-time Graduate Teaching Assistant is required to spend approximately 20 hours per week fulfilling assigned teaching responsibilities associated with the stipend. These duties may be independent of teaching activities that contribute to the requirements of the degree program. Time commitment for students whose appointment is less than or greater than 1/2-time are in the same proportion to a 40-hour week as that of the 1/2-time appointment, i.e., 10 hours for a 1/4-time appointment and 30 hours for a 3/4-time appointment.
 - a. Orientation to Teaching for New Graduate Teaching Assistants. All new Graduate Teaching Assistants and other graduate students with newly assigned teaching responsibilities are required to attend a University-wide Teaching Orientation, which has traditionally been held each August, shortly before classes start. The Orientation is sponsored by the Graduate School.
 - b. International Teaching Assistant (ITA) Screening. All International Teaching Assistants (ITAs) whose responsibilities include significant interaction with undergraduates in a classroom or laboratory must be screened for oral English proficiency before they are permitted to assume these responsibilities. If the screening process indicates that an ITA needs to improve his or her spoken English significantly in order to communicate effectively with his or her students, he or she must take FLE 400 (American English Pronunciation for International Students) or FLE 401 (Oral Communication and Teaching

Skills for International Teaching Assistants) before being re-screened. Screening sessions for new and continuing ITAs are held each August, November, January, and April. DGPs and Graduate Services Coordinators will receive a request that they sign up students online for the SPEAK test six to eight weeks prior to each screening. It is the responsibility of the DGPs or Graduate Services Coordinators to notify the students of their test date, time, and location.

The Spoken English Assessment Test (SPEAK), an institutional version of the Educational Testing Service's Test of Spoken English, screens ITAs for proficiency in oral English. Administered in the Foreign Language Laboratory and rated by specialists in English as a Second Language, the SPEAK test consists of a series of prompts for which each student's responses are recorded. No special preparation is necessary. After each student's test is graded, scores are posted on a secure website for departmental access. The score will determine what responsibilities each ITA may assume.

Depending on their scores, ITAs may be cleared for either lead teaching responsibility in a classroom or lab or for limited teaching responsibility in settings where a faculty member or experienced TA has primary teaching responsibility. If an ITA is cleared only for limited teaching responsibility, before being assigned full responsibility for a class, lab, discussion section, etc., he or she must take FLE 400 or FLE 401, be re-screened, and achieve the score appropriate for full teaching responsibility. ITAs whose scores indicate that their spoken English must improve before they can assume even limited teaching responsibilities should not be assigned any duties that require significant verbal interaction with undergraduates. If their departments wish them to assume either limited or full teaching responsibilities, these students must first take FLE 400 and/or 401 and then be re-screened and achieve the appropriate score for either limited or full responsibility.

2. Graduate Research Assistants – A 1/2-time Graduate Research Assistant is required to spend approximately 20 hours per week fulfilling the assigned research responsibilities associated with the stipend. These duties may be independent of research activities that contribute to the requirements of the degree program. Time commitment for students whose appointment is less than or greater than 1/2-time are in the same proportion to a 40-hour week as that of the 1/2-time appointment, i.e., 10 hours for a 1/4-time appointment and 30 hours for a 3/4-time appointment.
3. Graduate Extension Assistants – A 1/2-time Graduate Extension Assistant is required to spend approximately 20 hours per week fulfilling his/her assigned extension, outreach and engagement responsibilities associated with the stipend. This may be independent of time spent in research or teaching or extension, outreach and engagement activities that are part of the academic requirements of the degree program. Time commitment for students whose appointment is less than or greater than 1/2-time are in the same proportion to a 40-hour week as that of the 1/2-time appointment, i.e. 10 hours for a 1/4-time appointment and 30 hours for a 3/4-time appointment.
4. Graduate Services Assistants – A 1/2-time Graduate Services Assistant is required to spend approximately 20 hours per week fulfilling assigned responsibilities associated with the stipend. Commonly, the duties are independent of time spent in research or teaching activities contributing to the requirements of the degree program. Time commitment for students whose appointment is less

than or greater than half-time are in the same proportion to a 40-hour week as that of the 1/2-time appointment, i.e., 10 hours for a 1/4-time appointment and 30 hours for a 3/4-time appointment.

5. Graduate Fellows (Trainees) – Graduate fellows (trainees) have no service obligation. However, they must fulfill all research and teaching requirements of their degree programs and, in many cases, additional requirements stipulated by their fellowship (traineeship) programs.

D. Benefits of Assistantships and Fellowships

1. Graduate Teaching Assistants, Graduate Research Assistants, Graduate Extension Assistants, and Graduate Fellows (Trainees) are provided health insurance through the Graduate Student Health Insurance (GSHI) Plan under the conditions specified in the Graduate Student Support Plan.
2. Graduate Teaching Assistants, Graduate Research Assistants, Graduate Extension Assistants, and Graduate Fellows (Trainees) are provided in-state tuition and tuition remission as specified in the Graduate Student Support Plan (<https://grad.ncsu.edu/students/gssp/>).
3. The Graduate Student Support Plan excludes the participation of Graduate Services Assistants in health insurance, instate tuition and tuition remission benefits.
4. Student assistants, i.e., biweekly appointees, will under no conditions be eligible for the health insurance plan or the tuition benefits of the Graduate Student Support Plan.
5. Many fellowships and traineeships include "cost-of-education" (COE) or "educational enhancement" funds in addition to funds for stipends, tuition, and health insurance. The Graduate School processes all expenditures of these funds. By the first of September, the Graduate School Fellowship Office sends each department/program a list of all its current Fellows (Trainees) who have access to COE funds. These funds may be used for research- and course-related books, supplies, equipment, and travel. Fellows are informed of this support in their award letters and are provided instructions as to making expenditures.