

Graduate Teaching Assistantships

Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) are appointed in an academic department or program to provide support to the teaching mission of the department or program. GTAs enhance student understanding of the content and pedagogy of the discipline and extend faculty resources and their contribution to the teaching mission of the University. GTAs work under faculty guidance and are assigned a variety of instructional responsibilities depending on their educational background and experience.

A Graduate Teaching Assistantship is considered a full-time effort with 50% of the student's time engaged in compensated work. The student is expected to devote the balance of time to his/her studies. This balance is in line with the dual role of a graduate assistantship: to promote the student's progress toward a graduate degree and to invest these resources in activities that help accomplish the teaching/research mission of the University. To that end, a full-time assistantship has a maximum average of 20 hours compensated work per week during the fall and spring semesters. In the summer, teaching assistantships can be for 40 hours of compensated work per week, on average, as long as a student is not enrolled in classes.

Three types of Graduate Teaching Assistantships

Instructional Support

- GTAs in this role support instruction by grading course work, guest lecturing, facilitating lab sections, proctoring exams, holding office hours, tutoring within a tutoring center, or other duties required for effective instruction. The discerning criterion is support for the instruction of students, not administrative support of the department or unit.

Instructor

- GTAs in this role perform some or all of the duties of an *Instructional Support GTA* and in addition are responsible for various aspects of a course section, following a course design prepared by another instructor, possibly the instructor of record of the course.
- As instructors, GTAs should be available to attend the assigned class and engage directly with students.

Instructor of Record

- GTAs in this role perform some/all of the duties of the *Instructor GTA* and, in addition, have overall responsibility for the development / implementation of the syllabus, the achievement of student learning outcomes included as part of the syllabus, and for issuing grades.

- A GTA in the role of *Instructor of Record* is subject to the Criteria for Accreditation of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and UNC Policy Manual section 400.3.5[G]: Guidelines on Training, Monitoring and Evaluation of Graduate Teaching Assistants.
- GTAs in the role of *Instructor of Record* must have earned at least 18 graduate semester hours in their teaching discipline, be under the direct supervision of a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, receive regular in-service training and be evaluated regularly.

GTA Policies Set by UNC, SACS and the U.S. Department of Labor

- UNC Charlotte will follow policies set by the UNC system¹ (Policy Manual 400.3.5[G]), by SACS² for accreditation, and relevant federal labor laws (FLSA overtime pay rules³).
- Students for whom English is a second language may be appointed as GTAs only when the English Language Training Institute certifies that the applicant's proficiency in oral and written communication indicates that the appointment is appropriate (see language proficiency requirement in UNC Policy Manual section 400.3.5[G]).
- GTAs must be graduate students in good standing in their programs (UNC Policy Manual section 400.3.5[G]).
- Each graduate assistant is assigned a supervisor, who should directly oversee the responsibilities of the TA. The supervisor is responsible for evaluating the graduate assistant for effectiveness in carrying out the assigned duties and responsibilities as measured against the performance standards for the appointment (UNC Policy Manual 400.3.5[G]).

Graduate Research Assistantships

Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs) are enrolled students who demonstrate good research potential, are seeking a degree at the master's or doctoral level and are appointed to assist a faculty member in the conduct of academic research. GRAs are appointed in an academic department or program to directly participate in the research mission of the unit, or an on-campus or off-campus organization that is affiliated with the unit. Participation includes practices that are commonly accepted as research in the disciplinary field, including but not limited to the design of experiments, data collection, analysis, the application of research-based practice, 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.

A GRA conducts academic research that may contribute to the student's academic milestones.

A Graduate Research Assistantship is considered a full-time effort with 50% of the time engaged in compensated work. The student is expected to devote the balance of time to his/her

¹ <https://www.northcarolina.edu/apps/policy/index.php>

² <http://sacscoc.org/>

³ <https://www.dol.gov/whd/overtime/whdfs17s.pdf>

studies. This balance is in line with the dual role of a graduate assistantship: to promote the student's progress toward a graduate degree and to invest these resources in activities that help accomplish the teaching/research mission of the University. To that end, a full-time assistantship has a maximum of 20 hours compensated work per week during the fall and spring semesters. In the summer, research assistantships can be for 40 hours of compensated work per week, on average, as long as a student is not enrolled in classes.

Stipulations about GRA Appointments

- Work expectations must not exceed the number of hours in the contract.
- A GRA is assigned a supervisor who is a faculty member involved in the research project. The student's supervisor has the responsibility both to ensure that assigned duties contribute to the student's graduate education and to guide the research assistant through the assigned duties (see U.S. Department of Labor FLSA Fact Sheet 17S⁴ for federal guidelines, pages 3-4: Student-Employees).
- The supervisor is responsible for evaluating the GRA for effectiveness in carrying out the assigned duties and responsibilities as measured against the performance standards for the appointment.
- The supervisor must hold Regular or Associate Graduate Faculty status⁵.

⁴ <https://www.dol.gov/whd/overtime/whdfs17s.pdf>

⁵ <https://graduateschool.uncc.edu/faculty-and-staff-resources/faculty-appointment>