

Graduate Assistantship Orientation

Fall 2021

Illinois Human Resources and The Graduate College



UNIVERSITY OF
ILLINOIS
URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Presenters

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Type of Assistantships

Research Assistant

- Primarily involve applying and mastering research concepts, practices, or methods of scholarship.

Pre-Professional Grad Assistant

- Primarily gain experience, practice, or guidance that is significantly connected to their fields of study and career preparation

Teaching Assistant

- Primarily in support of instruction

Administrative Grad Assistant

- Support of administrative functions



Graduate Employees' Organization (GEO)

Positions covered under the GEO Collective Bargaining Agreement

Positions not covered under the GEO Collective Bargaining Agreement

Teaching Assistants (TA)

Per the contract, 8 units require a TA experience; the first TA semester is exempt from the GEO

Research Assistants (RA)

Administrative Grad Assistants (GA)

Pre-Professional Grad Assistants (PGA)



GEO Union Dues

Employees are not required to join the union, but may elect to do so by signing a GEO member card

Member dues are paid via payroll deduction

Member dues fees are determined by the GEO

- Dues are 2% of gross pay when holding a covered position
- \$8/month when holding a non-covered position



Tuition Waiver Generating Assistantships

Student Status

- Must be degree-seeking student in good standing in academic program

Registration

- Required in Fall and Spring
- May be required by academic program in Summer

FTE

- Total Assistantship FTE 25 - 67%

Duration

- $\frac{3}{4}$ of academic term, defined as 91 days FA & SP, 41 Summer (Summer I TA only, 21 days)
- Term = first day of classes through last day of finals



Information for International Students

50% FTE Maximum

- May not work more than 20 hours/week (from all jobs) when classes are in session
- May work additional hours in break periods when classes are not in session (usually hourly positions)

TAs providing instruction must have demonstrated Oral English Proficiency to hold the appointment



What do you get with an Assistantship?

- Monthly Wages
- Tuition and fee coverage
- Subsidized health insurance
- University paid dental insurance
- University paid vision insurance
- Sick leave
- Holidays
- Vacation (12-month assistantships only)



What is included in a tuition waiver-generating appointment?

Tuition

- Waiver
- Base or full - type dependent on academic unit
<http://www.grad.illinois.edu/gradhandbook/2/chapter7/tuition-waivers>

Fees

- 100% Health service fee – access to McKinley Health Center and Counseling Center
- 87% Health insurance fee
- 25% Health insurance fee of one dependent, if elected
- Academic Facilities Maintenance Fund Assessment (AFMFA) fee
- Library/Technology fee
- Service fee

*LEEP offered through an online program through the School of Information Sciences and, as such, may not qualify for some of the benefits.



Wages

Paid monthly on the 16th of each month

16th = Saturday or Sunday, paid on Friday

Pay period is 16th of month to 15th of following month

Minimum rates for wages are set each year

GEO contract determines TA and GA minima

Campus administration sets RA and PGA minima

IHR monitors and ensures pay is at or above the minima

Units can have internal pay structures but must comply with campus and contract minima



Wages (Continued)

Must be paid via direct deposit

New employees have 30 days to provide direct deposit information

Failure to provide banking information results in pay being provided via paycard

<https://www.hr.uillinois.edu/>

Pay Tab

- Provide bank information

- Access earnings statements

- Provide tax withholding information (W-4)



Appointment Percentages

Total appointment limited to 67%

Can have smaller percentage appointments, that aggregate to no more than 67%

Assistantships are professional level appointments, percent time is not rigidly equivalent to hours/week

50% FTE assistant expected to provide an average of 20 hours/week over the course of the full appointment period

Administrative GA positions are FLSA non-exempt and must keep record of actual hours worked

Electronic timesheet can be found at:

<https://www.hr.uillinois.edu/cms/One.aspx?portalId=4292&pageId=5613>



Overtime Pay

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) determines whether a position/employee is eligible to be paid overtime.

TAs, RAs, and PGAs are FLSA exempt and therefore not eligible to receive overtime compensation

Administrative GA positions are non-exempt and eligible for overtime if more than 40 hours are worked in a single week

Required to keep record of actual hours worked

Electronic timesheet can be found at:

<https://www.hr.uillinois.edu/cms/One.aspx?portalId=4292&pageId=5613>



Health Benefits

McKinley Health Center

Office visits with doctors, nurse practitioners, mental health therapists and health educators, as well as most x-rays and laboratory tests at no additional out-of-pocket expense. Many immunizations and medications are offered at low cost or no cost.

May enroll a spouse or domestic partner

Student Health Insurance

United Health Care is provider

Coverage period begins **August 20, 2021**

May enroll dependents

Enrollment period ends **October 1, 2021**

Student Health Insurance Office

1109 S. Lincoln Street, McKinley Health Center, Room 29, Urbana, IL



Dental

Delta Dental is provider

Assistants automatically enrolled

Coverage period begins **September 1, 2021**

May enroll dependents

For Fall: **Sept 1 – Sept 30, 2021**

For Spring: **Feb 1 – Feb 28, 2022**

<http://www.deltadentalil.com/>

For more information and access to forms:

<http://www.grad.illinois.edu/current/dental.htm>



Vision

- **EyeMed Vision Care is provider**

Assistants automatically enrolled

Coverage period begins **September 1, 2021**

May enroll dependents

For Fall: **Sept 1 – Sept 30, 2021**

For Spring: **Feb 1- Feb 28, 2022**

For more information and access to forms:

<http://www.grad.illinois.edu/current/vision.htm>



Paid Leave

Paid Sick leave

Maximum 13 non-cumulative days per year

6 ½ days for a semester appointment

Days are equal to your “work day”, not set at 8 hours

Paid Vacation

Eligible only if appointment is for 12 month duration

24 days per year (August 16 – August 15)

Days are equal to your “*work day*”, not set at 8 hours



Paid Leave (Continued)

Bereavement Leave

Up to 3 days paid leave upon death of

Immediate family

Same-sex domestic partner

Co-party w/ the assistant to a civil union

Household member

In-law

Grandparents and/or grandchildren

1 day paid leave upon death of

Other relative than above who is not a member of your household



Other Leaves

Jury Duty

Paid release time for the duration of jury duty

May retain funds paid for jury duty compensation

Leave without Pay

May request an unpaid leave without pay

Approval at sole discretion of the University (except for parental accommodation period)

Military Leave

Granted in accordance with the Illinois Military Leave of Absence Act

Contact the Labor & Employee Relations Office if need arises



Other Leaves (Continued)

Parental Accommodation

The contract provides “Parental Accommodation” provisions.

Eligible assistants are entitled to up to 6 weeks of parental accommodation period following the birth of a child, or upon either the initial placement or the legal adoption of a child under 18 years of age. Eligible assistants are those who hold an active appointment at the time the parental leave is taken. In addition, the eligible assistant’s entitlement to leave expires at the end of the appointment in which the qualifying event occurs. The leave is to be taken in blocks of time, the first of which is a paid 2 week block of time that must be taken immediately following the birth or placement of a child. The remaining 4 week block time may be taken at any time during that appointment period with advance notice to the unit.

The parental accommodation period may be comprised of a two week paid Parental Leave, use of paid sick leave in accordance with Article XX, Section B of the contract, and a request of personal unpaid leave of absence.

If an assistant does not have enough paid sick leave to cover the six (6) weeks of parental accommodation, a request to make up the balance of the six week period with an unpaid leave of absence must be approved.



Other Leaves (Continued)

Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

Must have 12 months of University employment

Must have at least 1250 hours of service in the last 12 months

Serious medical condition of self or immediate family member

Birth, Adoption or foster care

If eligible, FMLA provides 12 weeks of leave, leave not required to be paid

Additionally, University Family Medical Leave (UFML) policy covers leave for the serious health condition of a civil union partner

Workers' Compensation

Covered under the University's plan

On the job, accidental injuries

Report the accidental injury to your supervisor

Seek medical treatment

Complete the injury report form



Holidays

2021-2022 University Holidays

Independence Day

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day

Day after Thanksgiving

Christmas Day (December 27)

Day after Christmas Day (December 28)

Gift Days (December 24, 29, 30, & 31, 2020)

New Year's Day

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Memorial Day

Juneteenth (Friday)



Terms of Appointment

Offer letter

Can be email

Details

- FTE %
- Assistantship type, including noting if covered by GEO
- Wages
- Appointment dates (duration)
- Supervisor in the unit
- Major responsibilities of the position
- Policy under which the tuition waiver for a student is governed
- Child Care resources available via a website
- Oral English Proficiency requirement of international students



Terms of Appointment (Continued)

Renewal of Appointments

Unit determined

Units encouraged to confirm plans as soon as practicable, preferably at least 30 days before the start of the Fall or Spring appointment

Resignation

Assistants required to give a minimum 14-day notice of resignation

Written release from appointing unit if resignation is sought in order to accept a different unit's assistantship

Termination

Failure to enroll, maintain academic eligibility or withdraws from University

Disciplinary reasons following a prescribed process



Taxation of Tuition Waivers

Those Teaching Assistants (TA) or Research Assistants (RA) who receive a tuition and partial fee waiver as a result of their TA or RA appointment will typically not have their tuition and service fee waivers taxed.

University has a 127 plan, which is an educational assistance program that exempts the first \$5,250 (per calendar year) of the tuition and service fee waivers.

Cumulative Graduate Assistant (GA) or Pre-Professional Graduate Assistant (PGA) tuition and service waivers in a calendar year exceeding \$5,250 are considered taxable benefits.

Tuition and service fee waivers for Graduate Assistants (GA) and Pre-Professional Graduate Assistants (PGA) are considered taxable income if 51% or more of all of her/his assistantship appointments combined are either a GA or PGA.



Taxation of Tuition Waivers Impact

Additional withholding from your paycheck for any value above the \$5,250 limit.

Possibility of paycheck reduction. This will depend on the value of the tuition and service fee waiver and the pay the PGA or GA receives for the services they perform for the University.

Effective January 1, 2012 federal income taxes withheld at graduated federal tax rates. This change should reduce the amount of tax withholdings for the majority of affected students. The amount of decrease in tax withholdings for each student will vary significantly.

Taxability of Certain Assistantship Tuition and Service Fee Waivers:

<http://www.obfs.uillinois.edu/payroll/tuition-fee-waivers/>

Monthly and Bi-weekly Tuition Benefit Net Pay Calculator:

<http://www.obfs.uillinois.edu/payroll/>



Student Employee FICA Exception

Internal Revenue Code – exception from FICA withholdings (Social Security and Medicare)

In general, the educational aspects of the relationship between the student and the University must be predominant over the service aspect, otherwise the student may be subject to FICA withholdings. <http://www.obfs.uillinois.edu/payroll/tax-information/fica/student-employee-exception/>

Registration status and possible impact:

- Part-time student status (less than half-time)
- Late registration
- Drop classes



Additional Responsibilities

Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (ANCRA)

All University employees are required to complete education program and sign acknowledgement form

Annual Ethics Training/Certification Requirement

All University employees are required by state law to successfully complete annual Ethics training by a state determined deadline

Pay careful attention to notices and deadlines; generally notified via email with unit staff responsible for monitoring completion

Absences

Learn unit expectations for notification and coverage procedures



Emergency Preparedness

Review the Campus Emergency Response Plan

<http://police.illinois.edu/emergency-preparedness/campus-emergency-operations-plan/>

Enroll in Illini-Alert (Emergency Notification System)

All @illinois.edu email addresses are automatically enrolled

Log in to <http://emergency.illinois.edu> to add your cell phone number for text messages and a secondary email address

What to Do in An Emergency

Call 911 using any campus landline phone, a cell phone, or Skype* (it's no longer necessary to dial the first 9 to get an outside line before dialing 911)

Refer to the Campus Emergency Response Guide



Campus Resources

Labor & Employee Relations Office

- Terms of your appointment
- General employee relations concerns
- Pay issues
- **Contact Information: 217-333-3105; ihr-ler@mx.uillinois.edu**

Office for Access and Equity (OAE)

Concerns about possible discrimination/harassment

Sexual

Gender

Race

Disability

Age



Campus Resources (Continued)

Your Appointing Unit

Best place to start with any question

Graduate College

Academic program

Tuition and fee waiver policies

Payroll Customer Service Office

Tax or pay questions: UIUC (217) 265-6363 or paying@uillinois.edu

GEO (GAs and TAs)

If holding a GEO covered position, the bargaining agreement provides a formal grievance procedure



Helpful Links

Illinois Human Resources

<http://humanresources.illinois.edu/>

Graduate College

<http://www.grad.illinois.edu/>

Graduate Handbook

<http://www.grad.illinois.edu/gradhandbook>

- Tuition Waivers
- Campus Assistantship Policies



Helpful Links (Continued)

Office of the Registrar

Fee Assessment Information

<http://registrar.illinois.edu/financial/tuition.html>

Student Insurance Office

<http://www.si.illinois.edu/>

Delta Dental graduate student plan

<http://www.grad.illinois.edu/current/dental.htm>

EyeMed graduate student plan


<http://www.grad.illinois.edu/current/vision.htm>

Research IT Portal Resources and Trainings

<https://researchit.illinois.edu/>



Tobacco Free Campus



Smoking and the use of all non-combustible tobacco products and non-FDA approved nicotine delivery devices and products is prohibited on all campus property, both indoors and outdoors, and in university-owned vehicles and in privately owned vehicles parked on campus property. The advertising, sale, and free sampling of tobacco products and non-FDA approved nicotine delivery devices and products are prohibited on campus property. Littering the remains of tobacco and non-FDA approved nicotine delivery devices or products or any other related waste products on campus property are prohibited. No individual subject to this policy may discriminate or retaliate in any manner against any person who makes a complaint of a violation of this policy or who provides information concerning a violation of this policy to any person or governing authority.

Purpose: The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign recognizes its responsibility to serve as a leader in promoting a healthy, smoke- and tobacco-free environment for all students, employees, and visitors to its campus. In light of the increasing weight of scientific evidence of the harm created by tobacco use, the campus shall be entirely tobacco and smoke free. The purpose of this policy is to promote the health, well-being, and safety of students, employees, and visitors at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign



Thank You!



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