

Bemidji State University

Graduate Assistantship Guidelines

Students who need assistance in funding their graduate education should consider the possibility of a graduate assistantship. Students who are awarded an assistantship receive a stipend plus tuition waiver during their appointment. Typical assignments might be teaching introductory classes, working as lab or research assistants, or serving in departments or specific administrative offices of the University.

All graduate students who wish to participate in a graduate assistantship must meet the requirements according to the specified guidelines. There may be significant differences between an assistantship during the academic year and a summer assistantship.

Guidelines

- **The Nature of the Appointment**

Students appointed to graduate assistantships shall be employed to perform specific professional assignments such as assisting with an educational project, teaching, or research. The maximum number of clock hours for full-time non-teaching graduate assistants is twenty (20) hours per week. Graduate assistants whose primary assignment is instruction shall teach no more than four (4) credit hours per semester. If the graduate assistantship is for a purpose other than those professional assignments listed above, approval must be received before an appointment is made by the Director, School of Graduate Studies.

- **Reappointment**

All reappointments are contingent upon satisfying all academic progress requirements and the availability of funding. In addition, each department/program/area may have requirements regarding assistantship renewal in addition to the academic requirements contained in the current graduate bulletin.

- **Academic Criteria**

All graduate students who have been admitted to graduate studies for the purpose of pursuing course work that will normally lead to a master's degree are eligible for consideration. An undergraduate cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.75, or the equivalent, is required for all programs of study. Individual programs may have higher minimum GPA requirements. Please contact the School of Graduate Studies about program specific requirements. Students who have been "provisionally" admitted to graduate studies may not be eligible for a graduate assistantship until all provisions attached to admission have been satisfied. All provisionally admitted graduate students receiving an assistantship will be reviewed each semester for continuation. A provisionally admitted student may not fall below a 3.00 GPA. Graduate students who have previously been awarded a master's degree are eligible for consideration if readmitted for the purpose of pursuing either a second designation or an additional master's degree.

Compensation

- **Submission of Appointment Form**

Departments/programs are required to submit the Graduate Assistant Appointment Form, provided by the School of Graduate Studies, **no later than the tenth instructional day of the semester** in which the appointment becomes effective if students are to receive full compensation.

- **Resident Tuition Status**

Graduate assistants will receive in-state resident tuition status. Students appointed to graduate assistant positions are considered residents of Minnesota for the purpose of determining tuition during the period of the appointment.

- **Stipend**

The stipend for full-time graduate assistants is \$9,500 for the academic year (two [2] semesters). This amount will be equally allocated during each semester (20 pay periods). Assistantships are financed out of the general University budget, department funds, or external grants. Starting in 2022 graduate assistant salaries will be evaluated every four years. In an effort to keep salaries in line with cost of living increases, the University will provide a justifiable explanation of the salary adjustment, or lack thereof, to the BSUFA Graduate committee for distribution to current graduate assistants. University justification shall include a comparison of recent graduate assistant salary increases to cost of living and graduate tuition increases over the same timeframe. Some departments may offer additional stipends and tuition waivers based on non-University funding. Contact individual departments for more information.

- **Tuition Award**

Full-time graduate assistants whose funding is provided by the University will receive a tuition waiver for up to fifteen (15) credits during the academic year. Students can distribute these credits over the Fall and Spring semesters as they choose. Students planning on taking less than six (6) credits in any semester should check with the Financial Aid Office to make sure they meet all requirements related to fulltime status.

Half-time graduate assistants will receive a total tuition waiver of up to six (6) graduate semester hours over the entire academic year and can distribute these credits as they choose.

Summer graduate assistants will receive a tuition waiver of up to three (3) graduate credits for the entire summer.

The tuition awards described above shall apply to graduate course work only. There is no carry-over of a tuition waiver from one academic year to the next. No student can have a graduate assistant that is funded by the BSU allocation for more than 5 semesters. Summer graduate assistantships are not part of the BSU allocation and must be funded by the department or other outside funding.

Attention: Effective January 1, 1995, universities may need to add the value of all graduate tuition waivers to the employees' **TAXABLE** income. If it is determined that the tuition waiver for a particular Assistantship is taxable, the dollar value of the graduate tuition waiver will need to be added to the student's paycheck. Taxes will be taken on the tuition waiver amount, including Federal, State, and FICA. The value of the waiver will be divided over as many paychecks as possible each semester to lessen the tax burden on each paycheck. The value of the waiver WILL be included in the student's taxable earnings on their W-2 for the year. If there are questions about this process please contact Marilyn Lanners (mlanners@bemidjistate.edu).

- **Additional Credits/Student Fees**

Graduate students are required to pay tuition for all semester hours beyond the tuition waiver and are responsible for the payment of all student fees. LATE FEES WILL BE ASSESSED and are the responsibility of the student.

- **Graduate Assistantships with Other Forms of Financial Aid**

While the School of Graduate Studies designates that 6 credit hours per semester is a full-time load for graduate assistants, the Financial Aid office recognizes that **federal loans are based on a load of 9 credit hours per semester**. If graduate students wish to receive financial assistance beyond a graduate assistantship, they will need to complete **nine (9) credit hours per semester for a full-time load** and no less than **(5) credit hours per semester for a half-time load** to remain eligible for additional financial aid. **Please note:** Funding from graduate assistantships can affect student loan eligibility. Students seeking need-based loans from the University's financial aid office for additional costs may find the total amount they can borrow reduced by the tuition assistance of their graduate assistantship.

- **Health Insurance**

Graduate assistants are not covered by the University's faculty, staff and administrative insurance policies. Please reference the [Insurance](#) section of the [Student Center for Health and Counseling website](#) for additional information.

- **Retirement**

Graduate assistants do not contribute to the Teacher's Retirement Fund.

- **Social Security**

Graduate Assistants are not covered by Social Security.

- **Other Employment at BSU**

While graduate students participate in a graduate assistantship, **they are not eligible to work in other departments or positions on campus unless it is part of their current assistantship position** (e.g. the assistantship time is split between two offices, but the student receives only one total award). This excludes departments run by off-campus companies, such as food services and the BSU book store.

Academic Progress Requirements

- **Minimum Semester Hours**

The minimum course load to be carried by a full-time graduate assistant is six (6) graduate credits. Additional credits taken in any given semester may NOT be carried forward to satisfy minimum requirements in other semesters, except for a graduate assistant who has completed all course work but has not completed the research project or thesis. In all such cases, however, the department chair or program director is required to provide the School of Graduate Studies with the intended period of time that an assistantship is to be retained. Approval of all such assistantships is subject to approval by the Director, School of Graduate Studies.

- **Cumulative Grade Point Average**

A 3.00 GPA ("B" average) must be maintained for all course work attempted. Graduate assistants that do not satisfy the minimum requirements will receive one additional semester to satisfy any deficiency.

- **Incomplete and In-progress Courses**

Graduate assistants are not permitted to carry forward more than three (3) semester credits of incomplete ("I") or in progress ("IP") grade designations from a prior semester or summer, with the exception of thesis, research paper, or internship/practicum credits. Students who have satisfied all course work requirements, with the exception of research paper or thesis credits, should contact the School of Graduate Studies regarding the minimum semester hours and grade point average requirements.

- **Any failure to satisfy these academic requirements, or the falsification of any information, may result in the termination of the GA appointment.**

For more information on Graduate Assistantship positions, visit the [School of Graduate Studies website](#) or

email grad@bemidjistate.edu.

Bemidji State University is an equal opportunity educator and employer.

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