



Graduate Student Hiring on Sponsored Projects

Office of Research and the Graduate School
October 11, 2024



Agenda

- Introduction
- Significant Changes in the Context of the SGEU Contract
 - Workload and Expectations
 - Hiring Options
 - Minimum Stipend Levels and Tuition Remission for RA Appointments
 - Stipulations for Hourly Work
 - Paid Time Off
- Special Considerations for Sponsored Projects
- Q&A

Who is in the bargaining unit (union)?

- Graduate Assistants
 - TA, RA, Admin
- Hourly employees are not part of the SGEU contract.
- Future contract: covering graduate food and library workers

Workload and Work Expectations

- Full-time appointment *up to* 20 hours per week on average
- Specific hours may fluctuate week-to-week
- Supervisors must make reasonable efforts to accommodate academic commitments
- Contract does not speak to academic requirements (i.e., classwork, thesis, dissertation). Academic expectations specified by graduate program.
- Contract does not impose a limit on the amount of work necessary for a student to make satisfactory academic progress toward their degree.

Hiring Options

- RA Appointments
- Hourly RA (less than 10 hours/week)
- Hourly Project Aide
- Second Job

RA Appointments

- Academic Year (AY) RA Appointments
 - Full AY or one-semester (fall or spring) only
 - 20, 15, or 10 hours/week
 - A student can hold two 10-hour assistantships
- Tuition Remission
 - Ph.D. students only
- Summer RA Appointments
 - Pay rates: Equivalent to AY assistantship hourly rate

Minimum AY Full-Assistantship Stipend (9-month, 20 hrs/wk)

Ph.D.

Academic Year	Amount	Hourly Rate
2024-2025	\$28,000	\$35.90
2025-2026	\$28,750	\$36.86
2026-2027	\$29,500	\$37.82
2027-2028	\$30,000	\$38.46

Master's

Academic Year	Amount	Hourly Rate
2024-2025	\$24,000	\$30.77
2025-2026	\$24,250	\$31.09
2026-2027	\$24,750	\$31.73
2027-2028	\$25,000	\$32.05

Mandatory Annual Percentage Increases

Effective fall semester 2024, for those Graduate Assistants who are paid a stipend at or above the minimum, they shall receive an annual stipend increase of the following percentage each year:

Academic Year	Annual Percentage Increase for Stipend Above Minimum
2024-2025	4.0%
2025-2026	3.0%
2026-2027	2.75%
2027-2028	2.75%

Stipend Amounts: Future Years on Sponsored Projects

- Use customary increase (3%) for budgeting purposes, provided a sponsor does not have a specific prohibition against inflationary salary increases for future year commitments.
- As with all employees, applicable amount during the project period will be employee-specific.

Start and End Dates

Assistantship Appointment	Start and End Dates
Academic year	8/16 - 5/15
Fall only	8/16 - 12/31
Spring only	1/1 - 5/15
Summer	5/16 - 8/15

- Union contract requirements
 - Students should be sent their appointment letters 60 days prior to start date whenever possible.
 - Graduate School must provide the union with a full, accurate list of students on assistantships prior to the start of the semester.
- Options for when assistantship and sponsored-project dates do not align
 - Departmental bridge funds
 - Pre-award spending if allowable, forward funding, or no-cost extension (may require sponsor prior approval)

What about paying grad students on an hourly basis?

- If primary funding mechanism in the department is GA-ships, hourly positions are generally not advised.
- Hourly employees are not part of the SGEU contract.
- Can still hire hourly if:
 - Duties are distinct from RA work and require no specialty knowledge or experience (FAQ 1)
 - Duties are typical of RA work but limited to less than 10 hours per week (FAQ 2)

Second Jobs

- Eligibility
 - A student with an assistantship can hold a second, hourly job
 - Maximum of 30 hours combined work per week
 - Must be in good academic standing
- Requires prior approvals
- International students (F-1 visa holders) cannot work more than 20 hours per week during the academic year

Hourly Roles Summary

	RA	Project Aide	Second Job
Eligibility	Perform typical RA duties	Provide basic administrative support for research projects	See previous slide
Sample Duties	Assist with research tasks, data collection, and analysis	Scheduling, data entry, following manualized instructions for lab protocol	Role dependent (RA or Project Aide)
Pay Rate	Same hourly rate as AY assistantship	\$18-\$20/hour	Role dependent (RA or Project Aide)
Maximum Hours	Less than 10 per week	Generally no more than 20	Maximum 30 hours combined work per week
Working Title	"Grad Asst- RA- less than 10hrs"	"Project Aide"	"Grad Asst- RA- second job" or "Project Aide- second job"

Summer RA

- Less than 10 hours
 - Student may be hired hourly at the appropriate hourly rate.
- 10 hours or more
 - Students must be hired as an RA and must be issued an appointment letter.
 - Start and end dates must fall on or within 5/16 and 8/15.
 - The stipend pay rate for summer RA positions must be equal to the pay rate for the current academic year.

Example: A student's stipend during the academic year was \$28,000, or at an hourly rate of \$35.90 ($\$28,000 / 39 \text{ weeks} / 20 \text{ hrs}$). Using the same hourly rate for a summer RA-ship 10 hours per week for 4 weeks, the stipend would be \$1,436 ($(\$35.90 * 10 \text{ hrs}) * 4 \text{ weeks}$).

Paid Time Off: Sick Time and Holidays

- Current sick time policy stays in force (56 hours per calendar year).
- GAs are not required to work on University Holidays (including Bonus Days and Orange Appreciation Day).
- If the University closes for inclement weather, GAs will generally be required to perform their duties remotely.
- Supervisors may determine that GA constitutes a “holiday essential personnel” or “closing essential personnel.” Supervisors must inform students in advance and distribute responsibilities evenly among GAs under their supervision.

Paid Time Off: Vacation Time

- GA with a 20-hour appointment entitled to 4 days of vacation time in each academic semester.
- GA with less than 20-hour appointment receive vacation time reduced pro rata.
- One day is equivalent to eight hours of vacation.
- Vacation time may be used in either **4-hour increments** or **8-hour increments only**.
- Scheduled by mutual agreement of the GA and supervisor. Approval in writing 30 days prior.

Allowability of Vacation and Sick Time on Sponsored Projects

- Vacation and sick time are allowable as direct costs to sponsored projects, provided they are paid in compliance with University policy, award terms and conditions, and in proportion to the effort certified on the project.

Paid Time Off: Family and Medical Leave

- Up to eight (8) weeks of parental leave without reduced stipend
- Eligible twice during their time as graduate student but not beyond 5th year
- Eligible for leave if GA has become a parent through birth or adoption; must be in good academic standing; currently registered full time; leave must be taken immediately after the event in consecutive weeks and requested 12 weeks in advance or as soon as possible

Extended Leaves on Sponsored Projects

- Extended leaves follow established University policies depending on the employee category, in this case leave policies specific to Graduate Assistants.
- Maternity leaves are paid directly through disability benefits which are incorporated into the University fringe benefit rates.
- HR transitions the employee receiving the benefits into a disability pay status, which is then paid through a central HR fund covered by the fringe benefit pool.
- Maternity leaves, parental leaves, and other forms of disability benefits **are not** allowable as direct expenses on sponsored awards.
- PIs and departmental research administrators/budget managers should review payroll to ensure that HR has transitioned the leave status accordingly.



Questions and Discussion

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