



GTA Job Descriptions and Time Limits

Active coordination of university-wide teaching capacity must be balanced with available resources. **Growing undergraduate enrollment and elevated costs of graduate positions requires that our institutional Graduate Teaching Assistant positions be carefully allocated to effectively insure teaching capacity.** The Office of Graduate Education regularly checks with the colleges to make sure that GTA resources are being utilized effectively in support of teaching needs. This effort helps ensure that assignments of graduate student support from the Office of Graduate Education addresses teaching needs within courses experiencing large enrollments or other high instruction needs.

Where needed, we will assign GTA teaching support to departments with high teaching need in order to fulfill the University's undergraduate teaching mission. For example, engineering students could be assigned to teach sections of entry-level mathematics or physics. **Note that these guidelines do not apply to other sources of graduate student financial aid, including GTA-ships funded by college or department resources, research assistantships from external research grants or various scholarship funds, which may be subject to other restrictions.*

Job duties for OGE-funded GTAs

Graduate students inject enthusiasm, imagination, and commitment into university classrooms and simultaneously strengthen their own understanding and confidence. As teaching assistants, they complement research and academic productivity with the ability to inspire undergraduates. Recent efforts at UW (USP and STEM and Science initiatives) target reduced class size to enhance student engagement via active learning. These initiatives increase the opportunity for GTAs to contribute to the undergraduate teaching mission. **Every graduate student deserves the opportunity and challenge of sharing new scientific understanding through academic instruction.** Per UW's [Graduate Fellowships and Assistantships](#) policy, graduate students who receive a full GA position, of any type, are expected to work an average of 20 hours per week for their stipend. Weekly work hours for graduate students on full graduate assistant stipends are an expectation beyond their own research/scholarly activities that contribute to attaining their degree. **As a general principle, the Office of Graduate Education will not allocate state-funded GA positions for use as full-time de facto research assistants; teaching is an essential component of all GTAs' job duties.**

We continue to require that all OGE-funded GTA job assignments must include teaching contributions in all semesters of funding:

Notable contributions to traditional teaching related activities should include a mixture of classroom activities such as lecturing or guiding independent classes or labs or leading discussion sections. These activities may be combined with supportive activities outside the classroom. *Supportive activities alone do not provide a sufficient teaching experience.* The supportive activities below must be coupled with classroom teaching experiences.

- mentoring students individually or in groups, including holding office hours
- supporting instructional labs
- supplemental instruction sessions
- preparation of course materials such as tests or study guides, laboratory exercises or demonstrations
- assisting or leading field trips
- involvement in assessment
- grading - although grading is an essential aspect of teaching, this duty should not be the sole responsibility of an OGE-supported GTA. Higher teaching needs certainly exist across the campus. Moreover, a GTA whose job consists entirely of grading is not being afforded the opportunity for meaningful face-to-face pedagogical interactions with students. For these reasons, state-supported GAs should spend no more than half-time (10 hours for a full GTA) in grading.
- assisting in development of new courses
- facilitating professional clinics
- support for educational outreach

Departments or programs that have questions regarding the teaching activities of GTAs should contact the Office of Graduate Education to ensure there is a clear understanding of the teaching role of their state-supported students.

Research support for individual faculty members by our state-funded graduate students is an important aspect of their education. UW expects that all graduate students will perform original research for their master's thesis or doctoral dissertation in addition to any teaching duties related to their GTA-ships.

Time limits for OGE funding of GAs

Efficient time to degree is an academic responsibility and is one universal indicator of academic integrity and productivity. UW is committed to encouraging timely completion of graduate degrees to optimize a young scholar's professional growth and contributions. OGE limits the length of state support to graduate assistants as follows:

- Masters students are allowed up to two (2) years of state-funded support
- Masters students who enroll in a dual-major degree (i.e. ENR/JD) are allowed up to 2.5 years of state-funded support
- Doctoral students who enter a program with a master's degree in hand will be allowed up to three (3) years of state-funded support
- Doctoral students entering a program with a bachelor's degree only can be supported for as many as five (5) years on a state-funded GA

COVID-19 Pandemic Exception on GTA Time Limits. Graduate students enrolled during the COVID-19 pandemic may have up to an additional three semesters of OGE GTA funding beyond the standard time limits given above.

Performance evaluations for state-funded GAs

Per UW's [Graduate Fellowships and Assistantships](#) policy, academic units should evaluate the performance of their OGE-funded GTAs at least annually (the same applies to all GAs). Students are expected to be making adequate progress towards their degree and fulfilling their teaching duties responsibly. **Teaching roles of all GTA's must be documented by designating them appropriately in Banner. Additionally, teaching activities for all GTAs should be reported by departments, directly to the Dean and the Office of Graduate Education each semester.** An assistantship may be terminated if the student does not perform adequately (for example, not teaching, not making sufficient progress or being unable to pass the language requirements for the assistantship). If such an assignment change occurs in between semesters, departments may reassign the remaining portion of the assistantship if another qualified student is available. If such an assignment change occurs during a semester, departments must consult with their Dean and the Office of Graduate Education before making a reassignment. If no reassignment of GTA funding is made by the department, the GTA line reverts to the Dean or the Office of Graduate Education for reallocation.