

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA



GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP HANDBOOK

FEBRUARY, 2018

Introduction

In 2007, the Academic Board of UEW approved a proposal for the appointment of Graduate Assistants in the various departments.

Though some departments have appointed Graduate Assistants who are helping in the teaching and research work of the departments, there is no document to guide their terms of engagement, hence the need to develop this hand book.

This book is intended to provide information about the various policies and procedures that are used for awarding graduate assistantship positions in UEW.

Who is a Graduate Assistant?

A Graduate Assistant is a graduate student appointed to the job title, **Graduate Teaching Assistant** and **Research Assistant**. These are defined according to the emphasis placed on the student employee's teaching or research responsibilities.

Throughout this text, Graduate Teaching Assistants and Graduate Research Assistants are referred to as Graduate Assistants.

Objectives for Appointing Graduate Assistant

Graduate assistantships provide:

- Ways to recruit academically outstanding students who will contribute to the growth of the department/programmes.
- Work experiences for graduate students that will contribute to their professional development in academic and business settings.

General Eligibility Requirements

Graduate Assistantship appointments are normally given to students who have shown superior aptitude in their field of study and who appear likely to render a high quality of service to the university by their teaching and research activities.

In order to be eligible for a Graduate Assistantship in UEW, a student must satisfy all of the requirements listed below:

- The student must be admitted to a full-time graduate degree programme with regular graduate standing.
- Student must pass the first year with a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0.
- Student must make satisfactory academic progress toward completing the degree objective, as defined by the departments and the limits for the degree.
- The age limit for a student to be appointed for Graduate Assistantship shall be 30 years.

Application Procedures

Applications for Graduate Assistantship should be made directly to the department in which that applicant desires to take the assistantship.

The Head of Department recommends the student to the Faculty Appointment and Promotion Committee for approval. On approval, the name is submitted for consideration by the Appointment and Promotion Committee. Appointment letters are issued to successful applicants by the Division of Human Resource.

Letters of Appointment

Upon appointment, each Graduate Assistant will receive an appointment letter that contains detailed information concerning the terms and expectations of the Graduate Assistant.

The appointment letter and supporting documents will include information about:

1. Length of the appointment
2. Starting and end dates of the appointment
3. Compensation
4. Expected duties
5. The person to whom the Graduate Assistant is responsible.
6. Teaching and research load
7. Review procedures
8. Acceptance deadline date

Compensation

A Graduate Assistant shall receive:

- A monthly allowance (consistent with rates payable to Senior/Principal Administrative Assistants UEW)
- A waiver of Academic Facility User Fees (AFUF)
- A waiver of Residential Facility User Fees (RFUS)

Other benefits enjoyed by the Graduate Assistant are determined by the unique needs of the academic units, the particular responsibilities of the Graduate Assistant, the availability of funds and the specific priorities of the university.

Positions and Responsibilities

Graduate Assistants are assigned duties that commensurate with their experience and qualifications, and with the needs of the departments.

Responsibilities vary and may include: teaching and classroom support; research and grant support; technology support and tutoring services. Graduate Assistants will be given a written description of their responsibilities. However, the supervisor retains the flexibility to adjust these responsibilities throughout the term to meet emerging needs.

Workload of Graduate Assistants

The primary purpose of a Graduate Assistant appointment is to aid the student in the successful completion of an academic programme. For this reason, appointment of Graduate Assistants is subject to certain restrictions.

The University generally limits the workload of graduate assistantships in order to ensure that students can complete their degrees within the appropriate limit. Graduate Assistantship is 50% full time equivalent (FTE) which is six hours a week.

Request for appointment totals exceeding 50% FTE should come from the student's academic department and must be approved by the student's supervisor and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Length of Graduate Assistantship

Academic departments are encouraged to set limitations on the number of years a student may hold a graduate assistantship. These limitations should be stated in the student's appointment letter.

In general, the School of Graduate Studies expects that a Graduate Assistant will not be approved for more than the number of years required to complete the programme of study.

Re-application for Graduate Assistantship

Review of graduate assistantship is not automatic or guaranteed. Factors determining the decision to reappoint a graduate assistantship may include:

1. Satisfactory academic performance.
2. Satisfactory performance of assigned assistantship responsibilities and duties.
3. Availability of fund
4. Departmental or university limits on the number of years for which an assistantship may be renewed.
5. Specific department/university needs, constraints and policies, including efforts to allow a large number of qualified students to benefit from assistantship.

Supervision of Graduate Assistants

Graduate Assistant status calls for consultation and guidance from those with more teaching experience and academic preparation. The Head of Department should designate one or more persons to supervise all graduate assistants performances. Supervisory duties include periodic observation of the graduate assistant's teaching and meeting to discuss those observations.

Consultations regarding grading, preparing examinations and other aspects of teaching should occur where necessary. The supervisor also may be called upon to aid graduate assistants in resolving disputes concerning evaluation or misconduct of the graduate assistant's students.

Evaluation of Graduate Assistants

The performance of Graduate Assistants in their assigned responsibilities is expected to be of the highest quality throughout the terms of appointment. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to develop criteria for work expectations and to provide written feedback to the Graduate Assistants regarding their performance or assistantship.

Conduct and Professional Behaviour

Graduate Assistants are expected to conduct themselves with the same sensitivity and thoughtfulness that they would expect to receive from others in all of their interactions with students, faculty and other members of the university community. A Graduate Assistant's teaching and research activities are subject to ethical precepts and code of academic profession, on the laws of Ghana regarding its employees and to the university policies that govern institutional obligations. Violations of any of these standards constitute the basis for disciplinary action in accordance with procedures set forth in UEW's policies.

In the event of violations involving their conduct while serving as Graduate Assistants, sanctions applicable to Senior Staff will apply.

Termination of Assistantship

If a graduate assistant's performance is unsatisfactory, the department will inform the Graduate Assistant. Except in the case of gross misconduct which warrants immediate suspension in the judgment of the appointing authority, an attempt should be made to help the graduate assistant improve his or her performance before the department begins procedures for termination.

If the graduate assistantship is to be terminated prior to the end of the period, the Division of Human Resource should advise the student in writing of the reasons for the action. Copies of the notice should be sent to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

The reasons for which the termination is requested will normally include, but not limited to the following:

- Academic misconduct(as established under the terms of the academic misconduct code)
- Poor academic performance or excessive absence from work.

- Misconduct in instructional or research duties.
- Unsatisfactory performance in instructional or research duties.
- Incapacitation of the graduate assistant for an excessive period of time.

If a Graduate Assistant believes that the termination is unwarranted, he or she may file an appeal. If a Graduate Assistant's appeal is filed, the Graduate Assistant will continue in regular duty until the date of the hearing, unless gross misconducts exist which in the judgment of the appointing authority, warrants immediate suspension.

If a Graduate Assistant's appeal is not filed within the specified period of time, the opportunity for hearing will be waived and the termination will become effective immediately.

Graduate Assistant Appeals

A Graduate Assistant may appeal a termination of an assistantship or other employment grievance. It is recommended that, before filing an appeal the Graduate Assistant makes an appointment to discuss the matter with the Dean of Graduate Studies.

To initiate the appeal process, the graduate assistant must present a written statement of appeal to the Graduate Dean within two weeks from the date of the incident causing the grievance. This statement should describe the action being appealed, the evidence supporting the appeal and the relief sought.

Decisions made by the Appeals Board will be considered as recommendations to the appointing authority which has the final responsibility for such employment concerns. The appointing authority will notify the parties of the final resolution of the dispute. Any appeal of this decision should be made to the Appointing Authority within two weeks.

Changes to Policies and Procedures

Graduate Assistants shall be apprised of any changes to relevant policies and procedures on a timely and ongoing basis. These changes will be updated in the Graduate Assistantship Handbook.