

Graduate Assistantships

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Graduate assistantship policy

The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse offers a variety of graduate assistantships (GAs). Graduate assistantships include teaching (TA), research (RA), and program (PA) assistantships. Graduate assistantships are awarded by the academic program/departments and by a number of other campus offices. Only students who are admitted and remain in good academic standing (<http://catalog.uwlax.edu/graduate/academicpolicies/academiceligibility/>) are eligible for a graduate assistantship. The student must have completed a bachelor's degree and be enrolled at UWL for graduate credit or for GRC 799 to be eligible. Online graduate students are eligible for GAs. Graduate assistantships are awarded on a very competitive basis according to the requirements of the position. Students may be awarded a graduate assistantship for no more than four semesters and two summers. Requests for exceptions to this policy should be submitted to the dean of the college in which the graduate program resides.

Interested applicants and current students should communicate directly with the department of intended degree work for more information about graduate assistantships. The Financial Aid Office does not administer the graduate assistantship program.

Assistantships are available to resident and non-resident students. All students enrolled in on-campus graduate programs and employed as graduate assistants on campus will at the minimum receive a waiver for a small portion of their resident tuition each semester, but remaining tuition and fees are not waived for most graduate assistants. A limited number of non-resident tuition waivers are available, which cover some or all of a student's non-resident tuition costs. The in-state portion of graduate tuition is not covered by a non-resident tuition waiver.

Teaching assistant positions are available in several departments which include a payment to cover a portion or all of in-state tuition costs.

Awards may be made for assistantships which require up to 20 hours of responsibilities per week during each semester of the academic year. Those with 14 or fewer assigned hours may carry up to 15 hours of graduate credit and those with 15- to 20-hour assignments should not exceed 12 graduate credits each semester. Summer assistantships may be available.

UWL complies with the Council of Graduate Schools' *Resolution Regarding Graduate Scholars, Fellows, Trainees, and Assistants* which follows:

"Acceptance of an offer of financial support (such as graduate scholarship, fellowship, traineeship, or assistantship) for the next academic year by a prospective or enrolled graduate student completes an agreement that both student and graduate school expect to honor in that context. The conditions affecting such offers and their acceptance must be defined carefully and understood by all parties.

Students are under no obligation to respond to offers of financial support prior to April 15; earlier deadlines for acceptance of such offers violate the intent of this Resolution.¹ In those instances in which a student accepts an offer before April 15, and subsequently desires to withdraw that acceptance, the student may submit

in writing a resignation of the appointment at any time through April 15. However, an acceptance given or left in force after April 15 commits the student not to accept another offer without first obtaining a written release from the institution to which a commitment has been made. Similarly, an offer by an institution after April 15 is conditional on presentation by the student of the written release from any previously accepted offer. It is further agreed by the institutions and organization subscribing to the above Resolution that a copy of this Resolution should accompany every scholarship, fellowship, traineeship, and assistantship offer."

¹ This deadline assumes a program begins in fall semester. Programs beginning earlier may have an earlier acceptance date.

Additional related information

Financial Aid: Graduate financial aid is awarded based on university enrollment status of degree seeking student. Students must be enrolled in at least five credits within a single semester or five credits during the summer to be eligible for financial aid. Students must be enrolled in at least nine credits within a single semester or nine credits during the summer to be considered full-time. Credits must be applicable to the student's declared degree program. Financial aid is reduced accordingly for students enrolled less than full-time, but at least half-time (five credits).

International students

International students interested in an assistantship must also satisfy the enrollment requirements of their student visa. More details can be found under the international graduate student credit load (<http://catalog.uwlax.edu/graduate/academicpolicies/registrationschedules/#load-international>) section of the catalog.

Teacher assistantship policy

Guidelines for teaching assistant positions

The title "teaching assistant" (TA) is appropriate for graduate students assigned teaching duties within an academic program under the direct supervision of a faculty member in that program. In general, the duties of a teaching assistantship are more demanding than those of a graduate assistantship, and teaching assistants demonstrate a higher level of knowledge and experience in their field than students serving as graduate assistants.²

Duties of a teaching assistant include independently teaching classes and/or facilitating course laboratories. Additionally:

1. TA appointments must be 50%.
2. The 50% workload may not be more than seven scheduled classroom contact hours/semester.
3. Courses and laboratories taught by teaching assistants are counted in the academic workload measurements of the department.
4. When appropriate, courses taught by TAs may be scheduled with the TA listed as instructor of record.
5. TAs must be compensated at a rate higher than GAs due to their increased workload and expectations.

Student eligibility

To be eligible for a teaching assistant position, a graduate student must:

1. Be a currently enrolled graduate student in good academic standing.
2. Be enrolled in at least five graduate credits, except for the student's last semester. During that last semester, the student need take

only the credits needed for graduation. If no credits are needed, the student must register for GRC 799.³

3. Demonstrate evidence of continuous progress toward a degree prior to and during the assignment.
4. If a non-native English speaker, demonstrate proficiency in spoken English (as per UW System Administrative Policy 1255 (<https://www.wisconsin.edu/uw-policies/uw-system-administrative-policies/teaching-assistants-selection-training-and-evaluation/>)).
5. Meet any additional college or departmental requirements for a TA. Students should discuss those additional requirements with their program director.

Requests for exceptions to any of these policies should be directed to the dean of the student's college.

Departmental obligations

Departments that utilize teaching assistants must have written policies specific to the department's needs and expectations. These policies must be approved by the college and made available to graduate students.

1. A department with TAs must establish in writing minimum standards for selection, training and evaluation of teaching assistants that conform with UW System Administrative Policy 1255 (<https://www.wisconsin.edu/uw-policies/uw-system-administrative-policies/teaching-assistants-selection-training-and-evaluation/>).
 - a. Standards must explain the selection process and the required training and/or experience that are to be conditions of employment. They should differentiate standards between GAs and TAs.
 - b. Standards must also describe the department's process for the training, supervision and evaluation of TAs each semester.
2. A department with TAs must have written policies explaining the specific duties of teaching assistants within the department, and what courses a teaching assistant is eligible to teach.

² As defined in Wis. Stat. § 111.81 (19m), teaching assistant means a graduate student enrolled in the University of Wisconsin system who is regularly assigned teaching and related responsibilities, other than manual or clerical responsibilities, under the supervision of a member of the faculty as defined in s. 36.05(8).

³ Students need to be aware that the number of credits for a TA position are independent of requirements for financial aid and international student visas.