Office of Sponsored Research Policy 01
Graduate Assistantship Policy

*Initially approved: May 23, 2013*

*Policy Topic: Graduate Assistantship*

*Administering Office: Office of Sponsored Research*

I. POLICY STATEMENT

Kettering University may award a Graduate Assistantship to a qualified graduate student. The Graduate Assistantship program is managed by the detailed guidelines included in this policy.

II. DEFINITIONS

A Graduate Assistantship is defined as academically-related employment for a fully admitted graduate student at Kettering University. A Graduate Assistant can refer to either a Graduate Teaching Assistants (TAs) or a Graduate Research Assistants (RAs).

**Teaching Assistants Duties Defined:**

- The duties of TAs are performed under the direction and supervision of a faculty advisor.
- Specific duties may include assisting a professor with instruction in his/her courses by obtaining course materials, teaching segments of courses, establishing or monitoring web sites, making handouts, creating PowerPoint slides, grading undergraduate assignments, suggesting readings or activities for possible course adoption, co-teaching undergraduate courses or teaching undergraduate laboratories.
- The specific duties of TAs will vary among professors and departments.

TAs may be required to start their work commitment prior to the beginning of the academic term to assist with class-preparation. TAs usually complete their formal duties for the term when final projects or examinations have been graded. In general, the teaching assistantship requires 20 hours per week throughout the term; however, the actual time TAs devote to their assignments will vary. For example, a new TA may find that grading initially requires more time than 20 hours but with experience, less time is required. The hours spent in preparation, classroom time, laboratory time, and grading will differ week-to-week, and among professors. TAs are expected to ensure that the time commitment is met, and that sufficient time is available for the academic requirements of the graduate classes.

**Research Assistants Defined:**

- The duties of RAs are performed under the direction and supervision of a faculty advisor.
- Specific duties may include assisting faculty with various research projects by supporting faculty member's academic or sponsored research, conducting database searches for literature, writing literature reviews, analyzing quantitative/qualitative data, collecting data, co-authoring publications, maintaining referencing databases, assisting with publication formatting, editing articles, researching requests for grant proposals, or presenting co-authored publications at conferences.
- The duties of RAs vary according to the nature of the research project and the source of the funding.

It is not unusual for work on research projects and course work on material that is directly related to the RAs thesis to merge, resulting in a time commitment greater than 20 hours. Additionally, when classes are not in session, RAs shall follow the faculty advisors instructions regarding work.
III. DETAILS/PROCEDURES

Eligibility Requirements and Student Responsibilities

An entering graduate student may be awarded an assistantship on the basis of academic potential. The student is expected to have achieved an undergraduate grade point average of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale and to be fully admitted to the Graduate Program. Graduate Assistantships are only available to students who have not already received a master’s degree, from any university.

A Graduate Assistant is expected to remain in good academic standing and receive satisfactory Performance Reviews. The Graduate Assistant must work the required 20 hours per week and attend mandatory meetings held by the Office of Sponsored Research. If a Graduate Assistant needs to miss class and work time, approval by the faculty advisor must be received and the Office of Sponsored Research must be notified. Graduate students are considered full-time students by the University when registered for 8 credits.

Undergraduate students who apply to the BS/MS program must apply under Option 1 (BS Thesis), to be considered for a graduate assistantship. Details are outlined in the Kettering University Graduate Programs Catalog.

Administration of the Graduate Assistantship

Graduate Assistants at Kettering University are employed through the Office of Sponsored Research, although the Graduate Assistant is directly supervised by the faculty advisor. The faculty advisor determines the Graduate Assistant assignment and supervises his or her work. The faculty advisor is a source of information for details of the project. The Office of Sponsored Research is the source for details pertaining to the assistantship. Course registration for each academic term is a manual process through the OSR; on-line registration is not available to Graduate Assistants.

Appointment and Duration of Employment

Graduate Assistants are appointed for 15-18 months as determined by their program. Graduate Assistants, once appointed, must maintain a grade point average of 3.0 or better, continue to register as a full time student (8 credit hours), and perform satisfactorily in their teaching or research duties. This appointment can be terminated if the Graduate Assistant is not showing satisfactory performance, normal progress toward a graduate degree or not meeting the minimum academic requirement.

The Human Resources Department will notify the graduate student in letter of appointment. This letter provides pertinent information on the terms of the assistantship.

Performance Evaluations

Each term the faculty advisor is responsible for completing a performance evaluation form. The form will be emailed to the graduate assistant at the beginning of 6th week of the term, and is to be returned to the Office of Sponsored Research by the end of 7th week. The form is completed during a discussion between faculty advisor and the Graduate Assistant. The performance evaluation form will reside in the graduate assistant’s file held in the Office of Sponsored Research.

Stipend, Tuition Waiver and Mandatory Fees

All stipends for Graduate Assistants are pre-determined by Kettering University. Currently, the stipend is $3,600 per term.
A graduate assistant will receive 8 credits of tuition waiver per term as a standard benefit, with a maximum of 40 credits paid for the lifetime of the assistantship. If a thesis is required, the tuition waiver will include up to one thesis extension. The student is responsible for the graduation fee.

Health Insurance

Graduate Assistants are required to have a health benefits program. Proof of insurance must be provided when requested by the Office of Sponsored Research. Students not providing proof of adequate medical coverage will be enrolled in the Kettering University Student Health & Accident Plan, administered through AIG at a cost to the student. F-1 Visa holders are required to purchase the Kettering University Student Health & Accident Plan. Policies are issued for the academic year. Upon request, the policy can be prorated based on months remaining in the academic year. For information on coverage, please contact the University Wellness Center Office at 810-762-9650.

International Students

All international students appointed to a Graduate Assistant position must have the appropriate visa and be completely aware of all immigration requirements. If the required documentation is not provided, your appointment will be void.

Facilities

Departments generally provide the Graduate Assistant with suitable workspace, laboratory space, and office space. Also, the Graduate Assistant usually has access to desks, file space, mail-boxes, computers, telephones, and copy machines or services. Contact the individual department for more specific information.

Termination

Graduate Assistants are expected to meet the standards of performance described at their appointment and to maintain satisfactory academic progress toward their degree. Failure to meet either set of standards can lead to termination of the assistantship. Immediate termination may be invoked for serious misbehavior or failure to perform. The following guidelines will be followed when immediate termination is not warranted:

1. Counsel between faculty advisor and Office of Sponsored Research resulting in the Graduate Assistant “on probation”.
2. Probation requires a weekly meeting between the faculty advisor and the Graduate Assistant. A Probation Form must be completed and returned to the Office of Sponsored Research to be placed in the Graduate Assistant’s file.
3. If the Graduate Assistant receives four consecutive reviews rated as satisfactory, the Graduate Assistant will be returned to “good standing”.
4. If the Graduate Assistant receives four consecutive reviews rated as unsatisfactory, the Graduate Assistant will be terminated.

A Graduate Assistant who believes that his or her graduate assistantship has been terminated unjustly may appeal the decision in writing to the Provost within 30 days. The Provost will make the final decision regarding termination of the appointment.

IV. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed and revised as necessary every four (4) years.

V. RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Graduate Assistant Documents (http://www.kettering.edu/research/office-sponsored-research-0/graduate-assistant-program)