

# GRADUATE ASSISTANT CHECKLIST

## Appointment Considerations

- a. Students may be appointed to the following positions:
- Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA):** Serves as a teacher of record, Assigns final grades, Paid from Faculty Salaries budget line, Specific course(s) taught must be specified on PTF, Receives a workload report with work units for class(es) taught
- Graduate Assistant (GAS):** Works in direct support of instruction, Paid from Faculty Salaries budget line, Receives a workload report showing 0 work units, Work units are assigned as a sub-administrative assignment, Cannot be paid from course fee or distance education accounts
- Graduate Assistant (GAW):** Assists with administrative duties, Paid from Wages budget line, All tutors are paid from wages, Must be used for course fees and distance education instructional support
- Graduate Research Assistant (GRA):** Involved in designated research, Must be used on 19 accounts, Paid from Wages budget line in the grant
- b. To find an available Assistantship, students should get in touch with their department, a department related to their field of study, or a university support services office. Also, visit Career Connections (<https://careerconnections.twu.edu/>) to search for assistantship opportunities
- c. Students apply for an assistantship through TWU Connect (<https://careerconnections.twu.edu/resources/twu-connect-handshake/>) and Handshake (<https://twu.joinhandshake.com/login/>).
- d. The department will verify the following qualifications for graduate assistants:
- The student must be admitted to the Graduate School as a degree-seeking student.
  - The student must be enrolled in the minimum SCH required for an assistantship.
  - The student must be in good academic standing at TWU. A student who is on scholastic probation may not hold a graduate assistantship.
  - A student is not permitted to work more than .50 FTE (20 hours per week) at TWU in any combination of graduate assistantship (wages or salary), graduate teaching assistantship, or graduate research assistantship.
- e. Special criteria for **graduate teaching assistants** assigned primary responsibility for teaching a course for credit and assigning final grades to include the following:
- The student must have completed at least 18 semester hours of graduate credit in the teaching field. (The hiring department must submit a Certification of Graduate Teaching Assistant Academic Preparation (<https://twu.edu/gradschool/graduate-assistants/applying-for-graduate-assistantships/>) listing the University, Course Prefix & No., Course Title, Semester Credit Hours, Date & Grade. The hiring department must submit the completed Certification of Graduate Teaching Assistant Academic Preparation (<https://twu.edu/gradschool/graduate-assistants/applying-for-graduate-assistantships/>) to the Graduate School before the student's PTF as a GTA can be approved and processed.)
  - International students must present a TOEFL iBT Speaking score of 26 or higher, an IELTS Speaking Test score of 7.5 or higher, a Pearson Test of English (PTE)-Academic score of 53 or above, or a MELAB Speaking Test score of 4 or higher in order to hold a graduate teaching assistantship. The International Student and Scholar Services (<http://www.twu.edu/international-education/>) website lists English-speaking countries and exemptions.
- The component leader must complete the form, "Certification of Graduate Teaching Assistant Academic Preparation (<https://www.twu.edu/gradschool/forms/>)" and send it to the Graduate School at the time of appointment.
  - Each graduate teaching assistant must be assigned a mentor to guide her/him in the teaching role. The mentor is also responsible for assessing the GTA's teaching performance each semester. Component leaders should assure that each GTA is evaluated by the mentor.
- f. Graduate Assistants **may not** be appointed concurrently as adjunct faculty.
- g. Graduate Assistants **may not** be appointed concurrently as student assistants. In rare cases, the Dean of the Graduate School may approve an exception, when the request comes from the program unit head.
- h. The minimum course load for which graduate assistants must be enrolled during long semesters is 5 semester credit hours, for both a .25 or .50 FTE. Departments may require a greater minimum number of hours. For enrollments less than 5 hours, a letter from the dean or program unit head to the Graduate School requesting approval to enroll for fewer hours and explaining the reason for the request is required. Students in thesis, dissertation, student teaching, practicum or internship hours may register for a minimum of 3 hours. (Note: Students enrolled for less than 5 hours must pay FICA tax unless enrolled in their last semester.)
- The minimum course load for which graduate assistants must be enrolled for summer is 5 semester credit hours for .50 FTE and 3 semester credit hours for a .25 FTE. Summer enrollment includes enrollment any time during summer I, summer II, and/or summer III terms (6/1-8/31).
  - The department will contact the student with an employment offer after checking the student's qualifications. (If the graduate student is an F-1 visa student, contact must be made with International Student and Scholar Services (<http://www.twu.edu/international-education/>) so that the assistantship may be used to figure the student's financial support. Send a copy of the graduate assistantship award letter to International Student and Scholar Services (<http://www.twu.edu/international-education/>) so that it may be included with the student's I-20.)
  - The department will verify they have available funds for appointing a graduate assistant. **If funds are not available in the appropriate budget line, a budget transfer should be processed.**

## Preparing and Processing PTFs

- The department will prepare a personnel transaction form (PTF) using the electronic template accessed through Phoenix.
- In order to ensure a graduate assistant is paid, please follow the deadline dates published on the Payroll website in the office of Human Resources (<https://twu.edu/humanresources/>). In order to approve the PTF, the Graduate School must determine that the assistant is registered for the appropriate number of hours. Please encourage students to register early. **Approval for assistants not yet registered cannot be forwarded to Academic Financial Services and will be returned to the department.**

- c. The pay scales (<https://www.twu.edu/gradschool/graduate-assistants/applying-for-graduate-assistantships/>) on the Graduate School website are to be used when completing the PTF. Note that the appointment salary on PTFs for Fall, Spring, and Academic year is always the 9-month salary, although the actual length of employment may be for a different period of time. On summer PTFs, the 3-month salary is the base.
  - d. The PTF must include the student's ID number and a description of the graduate assistant's specific duties. If the assistant is a GTA, the specific courses taught must be listed. (The hiring department must submit a Certification of Graduate Teaching Assistant Academic Preparation (<https://twu.edu/gradschool/graduate-assistants/applying-for-graduate-assistantships/>) listing the University, Course Prefix & No., Course Title, Semester Credit Hours, Date & Grade, and Field. The hiring department must submit the completed Certification of Graduate Teaching Assistant Academic Preparation (<https://twu.edu/gradschool/graduate-assistants/applying-for-graduate-assistantships/>) to the Graduate School before the student's PTF as a GTA can be approved and processed.)
  - e. The component leader should send a memo to the Graduate School explaining the reasons for requesting approval if any of the following apply:
    - i. The student will be enrolled for less than the required semester hours.
    - ii. The student will be employed more than half-time.
    - iii. The Student will be employed in a department other than her/his major.
  - f. For a GTA, the hiring department must submit a Certification of Graduate Teaching Assistant Academic Preparation (<https://twu.edu/gradschool/graduate-assistants/applying-for-graduate-assistantships/>) listing the University, Course Prefix & No., Course Title, Semester Credit Hours, Date & Grade, and Field. The hiring department must submit the completed Certification of Graduate Teaching Assistant Academic Preparation (<https://twu.edu/gradschool/graduate-assistants/applying-for-graduate-assistantships/>) to the Graduate School before the student's PTF as a GTA can be approved and processed.)
  - g. The component leader will approve the PTF and send it to the Graduate School for approval. The Graduate School will verify the following requirements:
    - i. Admission to a graduate program
    - ii. Student is in good academic status
    - iii. Student registration for the required number of hours
    - iv. Whether the student is international or a permanent resident
  - h. The Graduate School will approve the PTF and forward it to the Director of Academic Financial Services.
- The student should complete the **Request for In-State Tuition Form (<https://www.twu.edu/gradschool/graduate-assistants/applying-for-graduate-assistantships/>) for Graduate Assistants**, have it signed by the component leader, and forward it to the Graduate School (<https://twu.edu/gradschool/>) as an e-mail attachment. The form must be submitted by the 12th class day of long semesters, the 4th class day of summer sessions, and the 2nd class day of the 13-week, 3-week, and 7-week sessions. Graduate School personnel will approve the request for in-state tuition and forward the form to the Registrar's Office.
- c. All Graduate Assistants (both new and returning) are required to complete Graduate Assistant Orientation/Training annually, usually just prior to or immediately after the start of the Fall semester. The Graduate School will send an email to departments/students with a link to the online Graduate Assistant Orientation/Training.
  - d. All **new GTAs** must also complete a separate Orientation provided by the Graduate School administered through Canvas.
  - e. Each GTA must have a mentor who evaluates her/his teaching during the semester.

## After Appointment

- a. The department should send the graduate assistant to the Office of Human Resources (<https://twu.edu/humanresources/>) to complete the necessary forms to assure payment and insurance coverage, if applicable. **The student must complete Human Resources paperwork prior to or within the first 3 days of employment by federal law.**
- b. An out of state graduate assistant is entitled to register by paying the tuition and other fees or charges required for Texas residents without regard to the length of time the assistant has resided in Texas if: a) is enrolled in a minimum of 5 semester credit hours, b) the assistant is employed at least one-half time (.50 FTE), and c) is working in a position which relates to her/his degree program.