

Approvals

GAPC: 2020-09-30

EC: 2020-10-05

Senate:

TO: Graduate Academic Policies Committee

FROM: Barry Milligan, Interim Dean, Graduate School

DATE: October 3, 2019

SUBJECT: Proposed Revisions to Policy 5120

The text below, with tracked changes, reflects the following proposed revisions to Policy 5120, presented for the approval of GAPC:

- An attempt to make terminology more consistent and compact throughout (e.g., "supervising units" vs. "departments, programs, or offices");
- An attempt more consistently to characterize graduate assistantships as educational support packages vs. work-for-hire, which includes the incorporation of language from applicable HR policies not previously reflected in 5120;
- An attempt to clarify longstanding practice re: pay periods, concurrent employment, etc., which has not previously been clearly reflected in the policy;
- Elimination of repeated information and/or relocation of information to the most logical points in the policy;
- The relocation of language describing administrative processes to a separate site to be hyperlinked to the policy at the appropriate points, as indicated (the proposed text for that linked site is included below the policy language);
- Accurate reference to the recently renamed Oral English Proficiency (OEP) test.

Graduate Assistants

Policy Number

5120

Executive Responsibility

Dean of Graduate School
Faculty Senate

Functional Responsibility

Graduate School

5120.1 Graduate Assistantships

Graduate Assistantships combine an educational experience and a financial support package for full-time graduate students, whose primary occupation is the pursuit of their degrees, and include tuition remission and a minimum stipend. Assistantship duties should be related to the student's degree program, and the experience should advance the student's educational objectives.

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Assistantships are overseen by faculty members and support primarily academic goals. Graduate Assistantships are distinct from scholarships or student employment.

5120.2 Periods of Appointment

Graduate assistants supported in whole or in part by Wright State University typically receive appointments for two semesters beginning in the Fall. If funds are available, an agreement may be issued to the student for the summer term at the same per-term stipend as the assistant received during the previous academic year. Periods of appointment extend from the beginning of the first full month of the academic term to the end of its last month as follows:

Semester	Full Term	A Term	B Term
Fall	Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec	N/A	N/A
Spring	Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr	N/A	N/A
Summer	May, Jun, Jul, Aug	May, Jun	Jun, Jul

Graduate assistants are actively appointed for the entirety of every calendar month covered by the assistantship agreement, and the per-semester stipend is paid in equal monthly installments. Graduate assistantship support may be provided for up to a maximum of two years for master's students and, additionally, up to five years of assistantship may be provided for doctoral students. To receive continued support, assistants must meet requirements for satisfactory progress per 5120.5 below.

Continued support of a graduate assistant beyond the normal period requires special approval by the Dean of the Graduate School.

5120.3 Stipends

There are minimum stipend amounts for an academic year (eight-month) appointment for graduate assistants (current rates are listed at [URL]). Higher stipend levels paid from WSU funds may be granted with the approval of the appropriate college/school dean and the Graduate School. Higher stipend levels paid from external grants and contracts may be granted as indicated in a budget approved by the external sponsor. Funds for all stipends will be contained within the sponsoring college/school budget or an externally funded WSU account.

The stipend is subject to all appropriate withholding taxes.

5120.4 Tuition Remission

Students under an assistantship agreement are eligible for tuition remission covering instructional fees applicable to the student's program (not including laboratory or other program fees). Tuition will be applied electronically once the student is registered for the appropriate number of hours.

Tuition remissions are not authorized for audited courses. Tuition remissions are not authorized for undergraduate courses, unless the courses are clearly indicated on an approved program of study. Funds for all tuition remissions, including summer term tuition remissions, will be contained within the sponsoring college/school budget or an externally or separately funded WSU account. Students

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Commented [BEM1]: Note the language that previously followed in this location has now been moved to 5120.5.

Deleted: perform satisfactorily in both degree requirements and their assistantship duties. Satisfactory progress toward a degree means at least the following:¶

Deleted: <#>-full-time registration status (at least six semester hours) for students who have six or more hours of remaining course work;¶
<#>registration for the specific hours indicated on an approved program of study for students who either a) have fewer than six hours of remaining course work to complete, or b) have completed all course requirements and are completing remaining degree requirements;¶
<#>a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0;¶
<#>following an approved program of study, and fulfilling other academic requirements as determined by the program. ¶
<#>Failure to meet these standards, or failure to perform satisfactorily as a graduate assistant, will be grounds for cancellation of the assistantship agreement.¶

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Deleted: Students who had assistantship agreements for the preceding academic year (Fall through Spring) ...

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who have completed their graduate degree program are not authorized to receive a Summer Term tuition remission.

Graduate assistants not completing the terms of their assistantship agreements in a given academic term are subject to reimbursing the university for part or all of the tuition that was remitted. In addition, a graduate assistant dropping courses after the refund date, without permission of the department/program and the Graduate School, is subject to reimbursing the university for the fees that were remitted for the dropped courses.

5120.5 Requirements for Satisfactory Progress

Graduate assistants (GAs), graduate teaching assistants (GTAs), and graduate research assistants (GRAs) must perform satisfactorily in both degree requirements and their assistantship duties. Satisfactory progress toward a degree means at least the following:

- Full-time registration status (at least six semester hours) for students who have six or more hours of remaining course work;
- Registration for the specific hours indicated on an approved program of study for students who either a) have fewer than six hours of remaining course work to complete, or b) have completed all course requirements and are completing remaining degree requirements;
- A cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0;
- Adherence to an approved program of study and fulfillment of other academic requirements as determined by the program.

However, individual departments and/or programs may establish a higher minimum. Failure to meet these standards, or failure to perform satisfactorily as a graduate assistant, will be grounds for cancellation of the assistantship agreement.

Full-time assistants normally devote a minimum of 20 hours per week to assistantship duties (for the purpose of assistantships, an assignment of twenty hours of duties per week is considered a full-time appointment). The supervising unit should specify any other conditions, including specific duties, hours during which those duties should be performed, expectations between academic terms, and the individual supervisor to whom the assistant will report. Such conditions should be stated in writing within the Graduate Student Assistantship Agreement.

5120.6 Hour Limit

Assistantship duties may cover a maximum of 28 hours per week for domestic students. International students who are graduate assistants are permitted by the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to perform associated duties for no more than twenty hours per week during an academic term. Full-time assistants, domestic and international, normally devote a minimum of 20 hours per week to assistantship duties.

5120.7 Concurrent Appointments

Students may NOT hold concurrent active appointments with the Graduate School and the Office of Student Employment.

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Students may have only one assistantship agreement at a time.

No supplemental agreements will be accepted.

Superseding agreements may be submitted at any time during the semester.

5120.8 Oral English Proficiency Test

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Because Ohio Law requires that all teaching assistants who provide classroom instruction to students be orally proficient in English (ORC 3345.281), all WSU graduate assistants who have teaching responsibilities (including graduate assistants and graduate research assistants who provide instructional or other direct-contact student services in either the classroom or laboratory) must establish that they are proficient in spoken English before they will be allowed to sign their assistantship agreements. Oral proficiency in English may be established either by a) confirmed citizenship of a country where English is the primary language (a current list is published at <https://www.wright.edu/graduate-school/academics/english-official-language>) and demonstrated proficiency during a brief oral interview with the university representative overseeing the signing of the assistantship agreement, or b) a score of at least 250 (Category 1) on Wright State's Oral English Proficiency Test (OEP), administered by Wright State's Department of English Language and Literatures.

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Students with an OEP score of 210 to 249 (Category 2) will be allowed to teach if they are supervised by a department advisor and simultaneously enrolled in the International Teaching Assistants' Workshop. Students who score 209 or less (Category 3) will not be authorized to teach. Students may take the OEP only once per term, and must wait at least five weeks between testing dates. Students should contact the Department of English Language and Literatures for OEP information and registration. Students will be required to provide positive identification (including a picture I.D.) to register and to take the OEP. If possible, the OEP should be completed no later than the end of the term preceding the intended assumption of assistantship duties. Results of testing administered between terms or during the term in which teaching duties actually begin may not be available in time for the assistantship agreement to be processed. The English Department will report OEP results directly to the Graduate School, which will promptly provide the results to the appropriate academic programs and students.

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5120.9 Off-Campus Employment

Graduate assistants must abide by the policies of the employing program or department regarding off-campus employment. Generally, to hold off-campus employment, a graduate assistant must have written permission from the program or department sponsoring the assistantship.

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In addition to meeting the criteria above, international students who are graduate assistants must gain approval from the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) before accepting off-campus employment. Questions concerning off-campus employment should be addressed to the University Center for International Education.

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5120.10 Application Procedures for Graduate Assistantships

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Assistantships are available in a variety of supervising units (departments, programs, and some administrative offices). Students should contact the supervising units in which they would like to hold assistantships to request applications and discuss opportunities.

The application and contract process is outlined at [URL-A].

5120.11 Students' Responsibilities for Assistantship Processing

- A. International students who have been granted a graduate teaching assistantship, and who do not have a previous degree earned in a country where English is the official language of instruction in higher education (a current list of which is published at <https://www.wright.edu/graduate-school/academics/english-official-language>), must meet the requirements detailed above in 5120.8.
- B. International students with F-1 or J-1 visas wishing to be approved for assistantship duties must follow the process described at [URL-A].
- C. All students must contact the Graduate School in order to finalize the assistantship agreement after they have been notified that the assistantship agreement is ready for final processing. Further details regarding this process may be found at [URL-A].
- D. All students must be registered for the appropriate number of hours each term before tuition can be applied to the student's bursar account.

5120.12 Continuing Assistantships

- A. Supervising units desiring to retain the same student graduate assistant for a subsequent appointment period must send a new assistantship agreement to the Graduate School covering the new appointment period.
- B. If a graduate assistant wishes to continue as a graduate assistant but in a different supervising unit, he/she must be appointed by that new supervising unit, which must send a new assistantship agreement to the Graduate School covering the new appointment period.

5120.13 Graduate Assistant Evaluation

Supervising units are responsible for evaluating the performance of all graduate assistants' duties. Supervisors should complete evaluations each academic term, or upon termination of the assistantship agreements, and should submit them to the Department Chair/Program Director at the end of the term, or upon termination of the assistantship agreements.

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[Proposed text for hyperlinked page:]

Graduate Assistantship Agreement Procedures

The graduate assistantship agreement process is as follows:

1. Students submit applications to the units supervising the assistantships. Students may apply for more than one assistantship, but they may ultimately be awarded only one assistantship at a time.
2. The supervising unit determines whether applicants are eligible for an assistantship and meet the requirements detailed in Policy 5120.5, then offers assistantships to chosen applicants, specifying appropriate deadlines for acceptance. Wright State University is committed to abiding by the Council on Graduate Schools' (CGS') guideline that prospective students be given until April 15 to accept any assistantship offer.
3. Supervising units complete a Graduate Assistantship Agreement for each student they wish to engage, secure the approval of the appropriate college dean or designated representative, and send the forms to the Graduate School for final processing. Agreements should reach the Graduate School at least five weeks before the beginning of the semester so all processing may be completed in time for assistants to be paid during the first regularly scheduled pay period.
4. Because the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 requires all employers to verify employment eligibility of anyone employed after November 6, 1986, all newly hired graduate assistants must visit the office of Human Resources (HR) to complete and sign an Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 before the first day of employment, preferably earlier; in no case may the completion date be later than three business days after the first day of employment. The Graduate School will not finalize assistantship agreements for any students who have not successfully filed an I-9 with HR. Students should be prepared for I-9 completion with proper documentation as follows:
 - a. Proof of citizenship or legal alien status and eligibility to work in the U.S., as described on the back page of the I-9. Students unable to provide a document from List A on Form I-9 must provide at least one document each from List B and List C.
 - b. For International students with visas, a valid passport and form I-94 as proof of legal alien status.
5. International students who hold F-1/J-1 visas and are seeking on-campus assistantship duties must apply for a Social Security card following these steps:
 - i. The student works with the University Center for International Education (UCIE) to complete an employment verification form.
 - ii. The student submits the completed employment verification form to the [Social Security Administration](#) along with an application for a Social Security card.
 - iii. Students may work while the Social Security application is being processed, provided that, before beginning any assistantship duties, they have presented to the Graduate School the receipt that shows they have applied for a Social Security card. Students must present an official Social Security card to the Graduate School before the second pay period.
2. After students have been notified that the assistantship agreement is ready for final processing, they must contact the Graduate School at (937) 775-2976 for an appointment to sign the assistantship agreement. Since there are deadlines for insuring the timely payment of stipends, students are encouraged to make an appointment as soon as possible after being notified.

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During the appointment with the Graduate School, students will complete the required tax forms and sign the assistantship agreement. Tuition will subsequently be applied electronically for the designated semester.

3. The Graduate School is responsible for the following elements required to complete the agreements:
 - a. Completion of Internal Revenue Service (IRS) forms
 - b. Completion of Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS) forms
 - c. Verification that the applicant is orally proficient in English.
 - d. Application of tuition remission
 - e. Input of the appropriate information into the Banner HR/Payroll system

The Graduate School reviews the assistantship agreements and corrects minor typographical, grammatical, or other non-substantive errors. More substantive alterations will be referred to the academic unit/department/office that prepared the agreement. Corrected or revised agreements must be signed by the student, acknowledging the changes, and shall be brought to the attention of principal investigators and/or concerned parties.