

***Graduate Assistantships  
A Guide for Graduate Students***



***Madonna University  
Graduate School***

Livonia, Michigan

## *The Mission of the Graduate School*

The Madonna University Graduate School promotes excellence in graduate education by articulating a vision of inspired leadership, scholarship, and service for students, faculty, and the University. We seek to develop and support dynamic programs that emphasize core values of intellectual inquiry, integrity, professionalism, and promotion of the common good.

### **Values**

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Respect for the dignity of each person

Peace and justice

Reverence for creation

Education for truth and service

## *Welcome to Madonna University*

Congratulations on being selected for a Graduate Assistantship at Madonna University. We are pleased that you have chosen Madonna University for your graduate education. The Graduate Assistantship is an important role in the university that allows graduate students to expand their experiences toward becoming competent, polished and confident professionals.

This Graduate Assistantship Guide is designed to provide you with useful information about the types of graduate assistantships, the on-boarding process and guidelines to help your assistantship experience be successful. The guide is not a replacement for the university or college handbooks, bulletins and other policies and procedures established by the university. Please consult and know about the locations of policies, procedures and regulations detailed in other University publications.

If you have questions or concerns not addressed in this guide, please reach out to your supervisor, graduate advisor and/or the Graduate School Office.

Wishing you the very best in your role as a Graduate Assistant (GA) and in pursuit of your graduate degree!

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## Introduction

The Graduate Assistantship Guidebook provides information for graduate assistants (GAs) and supervisors as well as the academic and administrative support you will receive under the Graduate Assistantship program. This guide is in addition to materials and guidance provided by academic and operational units in which graduate assistants serve the university.

### **Benefits of Graduate Assistantships**

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The purpose of the graduate assistantship program is to help facilitate progress towards earning a graduate degree. The program provides financial support to graduate students. All graduate assistantships should be beneficial to both the graduate student and the academic or teaching unit.

The academic or teaching unit receives assistance from the GA who in turn receives experience and mentorship in research or teaching, in an effort to facilitate professional development. Graduate assistantships are available for either nine (9) or twelve (12) months. GA awards are granted for a designated semester in which the student is enrolled.

Academic and non-academic departments are responsible for recommending students for assistantship awards, establishing the job description, work schedule (not to exceed 20 hours per week), and semester evaluation of the assistantship experience.

### **Student Benefits of Graduate Assistantships**

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Students will be able to:

- Gain expertise in the field of study
- Enhance research skills
- Develop leadership skills
- Acquire teaching skills
- Acquire administrative experience in the academic setting
- Receive tuition and remuneration to assist with educational expenses
- Experience an opportunity to influence undergraduate students
- Enhance their connection with other graduate students/GAs
- Enjoy an opportunity to contribute to the office/department/school/college, and university

# Graduate Assistantships

## Types of Assistantships

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### Administrative Assistantship (AA)

Academic and non-academic units may employ Graduate Administrative Assistants (AAs). The AA generally serves the department/unit/office in an administrative support role. Duties may vary by department or office but will generally include some or all of the following: responsibility for project support, clerical assistance, research and/or data management; gathering, organizing information; assisting with project/program implementation and or evaluation.

### Coaching Assistantship (CA)

The CA assists a Head Coach with the administration of one or more intercollegiate teams. Duties vary by sport and may include some or all of the following: coaching and instruction, recruitment and evaluation, travel management, roster management, and athletic administration.

### Teaching Assistantship (TA)

The TA serves the department under the direction and close supervision of a full-time faculty member. Duties may vary by discipline or department but will generally include some or all of the following: teaching responsibility for a laboratory, clinical or discussion session of a course, assisting a faculty member in the grading, advising, and course-related administrative duties.

## Eligibility

To be eligible for the Graduate Assistantship, students must meet all eligibility requirements listed below. Students are not eligible to be a GA for a department to which they have been denied. The following minimal requirements must be met.

Requirements:

- Be eligible for **regular** admission to a Graduate degree program
- Maintain enrollment in at least six (6) graduate semester hours of graduate degree coursework consistent with their plan of study
- International students must maintain enrollment in at least nine (9) semester hours during both fall and winter semesters
- Maintain a GPA of 3.0 or better
- Demonstrate satisfactory academic progress
- Adhere to the University Code of Conduct
- Perform GA duties satisfactorily, as evaluated by their immediate supervisor/department designee

## Enrollment Verification

Graduate assistants must be enrolled in courses at least one week prior to the start of the semester in order for their appointment and compensation to be processed in a timely manner.

Enrollment will be verified at the beginning of each term.

Graduate assistants must gain/maintain regular admission status in a graduate degree-granting program at Madonna University.

### Graduate Assistants must:

- Register for a minimum of six (6) credits during the fall and winter terms
- International students must register for a minimum of nine (9) credits during the fall and winter terms
- Maintain good academic standing and a minimum GPA of 3.0
- Must adhere to the University Code of Conduct

Note: Domestic graduate students must maintain at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  time enrollment status.

| Enrollment status | Semester hours per term |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Full-time         | 9 or more               |
| 3/4 time          | 6-8                     |
| Half-time         | 4-5                     |

### Verification of Employment Eligibility and Identity (Form I-9)

The Immigration and Control Act of 1986 requires all employers to verify each new employee's identity and employment eligibility. The Graduate School Senior Coordinator must complete a Form I-9 for each new graduate assistant within three working days of the effective date of the Agreement/Appointment form.

Instructions for completion are on the reverse side of the form and documentation must be verified with the graduate assistant in person. The original, completed Form I-9 must be forwarded to Human Resources with the Agreement/Appointment form or within three days of the effective date of the appointment.

Funds will not be issued until the completed Form I-9 is received in Human Resources.

## Employment eligibility for International Students Studying in the United States on F-1 Student Visa:

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1. Students need to be in valid F-1 student status.
2. Students can work on campus up to 20 hours a week during the regular semesters. Students can work more than 20 hours a week during breaks, such as Winter Break or Summer Vacation, in order to make up hours for weeks they were unable to get 20 hours of work time in. The goal is to average 20 hours per week over the course of the academic year.

In addition to completing Form I-9 verification, F-1 international students need to submit the following documents to the office of Human Resources and to the Graduate School to verify employment eligibility in the United States:

1. Copy of the student's current valid passport
2. Copy of the student's current valid I-20
3. Copy of the student's Social Security Card

### Oral English Proficiency Assessment

Assessment of oral English proficiency is required, and must be verified, for student applicants who are non-native speakers of English.

One of the following three criteria must be met to be considered:

- 1) Meet the English Language Proficiency requirements at Madonna University. Those include applicants with:
  - Baccalaureate degree from accredited college or university in the United States, Canada (English-language institutions only), the Bahamas, Guyana, Jamaica, Great Britain, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand; or South Africa (English-language institutions only); or
  - Full four years of attendance at and graduation from a U.S. high school with standard-track English; or
  - Internet based TOEFL (iBT, Test of English as a Foreign Language) with a minimum score of 80 with a minimum sub score of 21 in Listening and 25 in speaking; or
  - TOEFL paper-and-pencil test with a minimum score of 550, and accompanied by the Test of Written English (TWE) with a minimum score of 5; or
  - MET score of 71 or higher on all parts; or
  - IELTS score of 6.5+ with a minimum sub score of 6.5 in speaking and listening; or
  - PTE Academic score of 53.
- 2) Have successfully completed the advanced level of ESL classes at Madonna University; or
- 3) Be verified by the Madonna University ESL Program assessment. A copy of the test score must be submitted to the Graduate School with the contract before the contract can be processed.

The requirement to demonstrate oral English language proficiency applies to the following groups of applicants, and exists to assure that their knowledge of English is sufficient for successful completion of assigned duties:

- F-1 Visa students, who are non-native speakers of English;
- Students whose first language is not English (regardless of immigration status)

## Assistantship Scholarship Award

Graduate assistantships are awarded as financial support for eligible graduate students. They are intended to facilitate progress toward the earning of a graduate degree. GA awards are granted for a designated semester in which the student is enrolled.

Graduate assistantships are available for an academic year appointment. New graduate assistantships typically begin in the fall semester. Individual academic and non-academic departments are responsible for recommending students for assistantship awards, establishing a job description, work schedule, and evaluation of the assistantship experience.

### Compensation

Graduate assistants will receive employment compensation at a designated hourly rate and a tuition waiver up to 18 s.h. per academic year (not to exceed 9 s.h. in the fall semester), which will include textbooks/course materials. Although the tuition waiver includes textbooks/course materials, it will not cover these related book fees: Print upgrade charges, shipping charges, course material adjustments, and late/unreturned rentals. Once the 18 s.h. per academic year tuition waiver has been exhausted, graduate assistants will be responsible for paying tuition out-of-pocket. The 18 s.h. per academic year tuition waiver must be taken during the contract period and cannot be rolled over into a subsequent year.

### Note:

- 1) If a student begins their assistantship at a time other than the first day of the fall term, their tuition waiver will be prorated to their start date.
- 2) Tuition is a taxable benefit and state and federal taxes will be deducted from the Graduate Assistant's pay check to cover the projected taxes.
- 3) If the GA drops out of courses and or the university, the scholarship is forfeited and repayment of the scholarship funds will be required.

### Work Expectations

Graduate assistants are expected to average a maximum of 20 work hours per week and to limit total hours to 1,040 per year. A graduate assistant's work schedule must not exceed 20 hours per week.

### Time Cards

The graduate assistant is responsible for clocking in and out daily through UltiPro to submit their work time to their supervisor bi-weekly via UltiPro according to the pay schedule. The supervisor will approve and electronically submit the time card to the payroll department via UltiPro.



## *Duties and Responsibilities*

Graduate assistants are hired in an administrative, coaching or teaching capacity. Examples of typical work include recruitment, advising, assessment efforts, student success support, retention programs, program development, policy development, administrative support for assigned projects and staff training. Duties must be clearly communicated by the supervisor to the student. Supervisors are expected to provide a complete job description to the Graduate School for posting and to the student.

### *Appointment Contract*

Graduate Assistantship appointments are made on a yearly basis. New appointments generally begin in the fall term. If a student begins their appointment at the start of another term, their tuition waiver will be prorated to the date of hire.

All new and returning graduate assistants are required to sign an Appointment Form in August, at least one week prior to the start of the academic year. To acquire reappointment, the graduate assistant must maintain good standing, have performed satisfactorily in their assistantship role and be recommended for reappointment by their supervisor.

### *Job Description*

Each department with a GA appointment will provide the GA with a job description. The job description outlines a summary of the job, essential duties and responsibilities.

### *Supervision*

The GA is under the direct supervision of the department that made their appointment. The department determines the GA's assignments, supervises their work, evaluates their performance and makes a recommendation for or against departmental reappointment. The GA will have a designated supervisor within the department to whom they report.

## Training and Support

All graduate assistants will be provided with information to enroll in Madonna University's required employee training through Vector Training Solutions, the University's training management system. GAs must complete all assigned training courses within the first semester of appointment. The courses will be identified upon appointment.

Additionally, each department will provide training pertinent to the GA's duties and responsibilities. Training activities may vary by department and job description. Each department is responsible for a plan that ensures graduate assistant support as well as opportunity for professional development. The department will also provide the graduate assistant with resources (access to office space, computers, telephones, supplies, etc.) as appropriate to assigned duties.

**Note:** GAs assisting with research activities are required to complete Research Integrity Training, accessible at [Madonna.edu/academics/research](http://Madonna.edu/academics/research).

## Renewal of Appointment

Graduate Assistantships can be renewed annually, in accordance with the date indicated on the GA contract. GAs seeking a second year of scholarship support should contact their supervisor or access the Graduate School webpage to locate open GA positions. See *Applying for a Graduate Assistantship* for additional information.

Returning GAs are required to sign an Appointment Form in August, at least one week prior to the start of the academic year. To acquire reappointment, the graduate assistant must maintain good standing, performed satisfactorily in their assistantship role and received a recommendation for re-appointment from their departmental supervisor.

## Maximum Time for Appointment

A graduate student may only hold an assistantship as long as they have not accumulated more credits than required for the degree in which the assistantship was awarded. Graduate Assistantships for master's students are for up to three years. Doctoral students may hold an assistantship for up to four years.

## Resignation or Termination before End of Appointment

A graduate assistant may resign by submitting a written notification to their supervisor and the Graduate School indicating their last day of work. If the GA resigns during the semester or is terminated after registration is completed, they may be required to reimburse the University for their prorated tuition. Additionally, they become ineligible for future employment as a graduate assistant and all other compensation will be suspended, as of the date of their resignation/termination.

Graduate Assistantship appointments are contingent upon and subject to satisfactory performance of assigned duties as determined by the appointing department. Appointments may be terminated for cause before their expiration under certain conditions. Before termination of appointment for unsatisfactory performance, graduate assistants must receive from their immediate supervisor a written notice of specific deficiencies in performance, as well as detailed suggestions for improvement.

Causes for termination of the GA appointment before the end of the contract period include, but are not limited to:

- GA fails to perform duties in a satisfactory manner and/or unacceptable conduct
- GA violates provisions of appointment/contract
- GA fails to meet requirements such as maintaining good academic standing (3.00 minimum GPA)
- University funds cease to be available for Graduate Assistantships

## Grievance Procedure

The graduate student grievance procedure is designed to offer a means to resolve disagreements related to interpretation of University or department policies for students enrolled in graduate courses at the University. This procedure is also followed by students who wish to appeal their grade or other issue.

For grievance procedure guidelines please see the Madonna University Graduate Catalog.

The Graduate Student Appeal Request form may be obtained from the department chairperson, the Graduate School, or the portal at: [MYPORTAL > STUDENTS > FIND MY FORM > APPEAL REQUEST FORM](#).

## Other Simultaneous Employment, Scholarships and or Awards

Graduate assistants are not allowed to be employed in another capacity at the University.

Students receiving GA funds may have limits on additional scholarships and awards that may be received. Students should seek clarification with the MU Financial Aid and Student Accounts offices.

# Processes for Graduate Assistantship Appointment

## Applying for a Graduate Assistantship

Applicants may seek a graduate assistantship through a departmental posting or on Handshake, the university's job posting platform. The Handshake link is available within the job posting on the Madonna website and the Graduate School webpage <https://www.madonna.edu/admissions/graduate/graduate-assistantship/>.

Applications, resumes, letters of recommendation and any other material requested by the hiring department must be uploaded and submitted through the Handshake system.

## Interview with Department

The hiring department selects potential candidates for interview and conducts interviews. Once the hiring decision is made, the department notifies the selected candidate and conveys their selection to the Graduate School Senior Coordinator.

## On-Boarding with the Graduate School

Upon receiving notice of a selected candidate, the Graduate School Senior Coordinator will send notification to the Office of Financial Aid of selected student's name for assessment for Graduate Assistant Award.

The Graduate School Senior Coordinator will contact students selected for Graduate Assistantships and schedule an on-boarding meeting. Students will need to provide the following documents/information:

1. Photo identification
2. Social security number
3. Course registration information

At this meeting, students will provide the completed following documents:

- Confidentiality Agreement
- All GAs must complete an "Employment Eligibility Verification" form (I-9) no later than their first work day. For document completion students are required to present original documents from the "List of Acceptable Documents" to prove their identity and authorization to work in the United States. Information from the documents will be submitted to the federal E-Verify system for verification
- All GAs are required to complete a federal W-4 form and a Michigan MI-W4 form. These forms only need to be completed once, unless there is a lapse of more than one year in employment, tax exemption claim or change in deductions
- Additionally, at this meeting, the student will review and sign the Graduate Assistant Appointment/Contract form

## Human Resources Information

### Payroll

GAs should contact Madonna University Payroll Department for questions regarding bi-weekly paychecks.

The graduate assistant is responsible for submitting a time card to their supervisor bi-weekly through UltiPro according to the pay schedule. The supervisor will approve and submit the time card to the payroll department through UltiPro.

### Tax Implications

The first \$5,250 of tuition compensation is tax exempt per calendar year, based on IRC Code 127. Any tuition compensation over \$5,250 is subject to all payroll taxes. This may result in a tax liability at year's end.

**Example:** If a student receives a tuition credit of \$8,940, \$5,250 of the amount will be tax-exempt, leaving a tax liability for the remaining \$3,690.

**Note:** Graduate assistants are encouraged to consult their tax advisor concerning their possible tax liability.

### Parking

Graduate assistants are issued a complimentary employee-parking permit for their exclusive use. Permits are not transferable from vehicle to vehicle or person to person. The sale of permits to other individuals, as well as altering a valid permit or displaying a copied/fraudulent permit, is strictly prohibited. Persons who knowingly acquire, use, or display an employee-parking permit not consistent with their current status may be subject to citations, disciplinary action and/or revocation of parking privileges. All employees are required to register their vehicles with Campus Safety via the MyParking Portal on MYPortal, and properly display a valid parking permit. Failure to abide by the parking rules and regulations may result in the revocation of parking privileges.

### Holiday/Vacation/Sick Leave/Health Insurance

The GA appointment is a temporary appointment. These positions do not qualify for paid vacation, sick leave, emergency leave, holiday pay, or health insurance.



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