

Illinois State University
Graduate Assistant Handbook

2011-2012

(Last Updated: August 16, 2011)

This handbook should provide answers to most of the common questions about graduate assistantships at Illinois State University. If you cannot find the answer to your question in this handbook, please contact Human Resources, (309) 438-8844. E-mail inquiries may be sent to sacraig@ilstu.edu. Supplemental data and updates of the information in this handbook may be found on the Graduate School web site at <http://www.grad.ilstu.edu>.

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Graduate Assistantships at Illinois State University

Graduate assistantships are provided as financial support for selected graduate students. They are intended to facilitate progress towards a graduate degree and assistantship regulations and procedures are designed to promote this academic objective. Such factors as satisfactory academic progress and time to degree are some of the considerations for retaining assistantships. Likewise, work assignments should complement or contribute to academic objectives and should not lead to unsatisfactory academic performance or interfere with completion of a degree in a timely fashion. While graduate assistants have work responsibilities, they are students first and foremost. Appointing units who are not in a position to help contribute to the student's academic objectives should not offer a graduate assistantship.

Assistantships also provide tuition fellowships in recognition of the scholarly accomplishments of the graduate assistant. Students who are not eligible to hold a graduate assistantship cannot receive these tuition fellowships. However, they may be eligible for Graduate Tuition Waiver Awards (listed under Grants and Scholarships, Graduate Catalog). In addition, students not eligible to hold a graduate assistantship may work as regular student employees.

International Students

If you are an international student the rules/laws for your visa status may place limits on your employment eligibility. Students are responsible for knowing and following all applicable visa status rules/laws. If you are not certain whether your visa status allows you to accept an assistantship or additional work hours, contact the Office of International Studies and Programs immediately for clarification. The University cannot grant exceptions to visa status rules/laws.

Types of Assistantships

Graduate assistants may serve in one or more assistantship categories: (a) teaching; (b) research; (c) graduate practicum; (d) residential living; and (e) administrative/operational.

Teaching Assistantships

Graduate teaching assistants primary duties should be in support of instruction including but not limited to responsibilities such as serving as a primary or secondary teaching instructor in a class or laboratory, assisting a faculty member with teaching-related tasks, grading student assignments which require knowledge of subjects taught in a class or laboratory, meeting with and/or tutoring students, holding office hours, preparing instructional materials, and assisting during class and/or lab, etc. Graduate teaching assistants are generally supported through academic departments/schools that receive funds allocated for those purposes through the University's budget process.

Research Assistantships

Graduate research assistants are generally assigned to individual faculty members to assist with their research. The nature of the assistance varies by discipline and can involve a variety of activities such as library work, proposal writing, data gathering, and data analysis. Research

assistants may be funded with departmental/school monies, but frequently are funded through externally obtained grants and contracts.

Graduate Practicum (externally supported professional placements)

Graduate students who qualify for graduate assistantships may participate in the Illinois State University Graduate Practicum Placement Program under the sponsorship of an external sponsor and a faculty or full-time staff member. Typically, faculty/staff make initial arrangements for graduate student placements with an external sponsor. The Research and Sponsored Programs office administers the contractual and student appointment process. These particular practicum involve a stipend paid by the external sponsor and a tuition fellowship through the University and are not the same as 498 Professional Practice which is taken for credit. The Graduate Practicum placement form may be found at

http://www.rsp.ilstu.edu/documents/finalgrad_practicum_programform.pdf

Residential Living Assistantships

This type of Assistantship is no longer being offered effective the 2010-2011 Academic Year.

Administrative/Operational Assistantships

The responsibilities for graduate administrative/operational assistants are varied, can be located in many campus-wide administrative units, and include such functions as administrative/professional duties, computer support, program planning, etc.

Criteria for Obtaining an Assistantship

To be eligible for an assistantship, students must be fully admitted as a degree student in a graduate academic program or have a minimum of 120 undergraduate hours if in an integrated degree program. Newly admitted graduate students must have a minimum 2.8 admit GPA for appointment as a GA. Continuing graduate students must have a minimum 3.0 graduate GPA. Students must also be enrolled full-time (minimum of 9 credit hours per semester) during the contract period (with the exception of summer contracts). Students-at-Large (SAL) or certificate only students are not eligible for assistantships. University employees, other than student employees, are not eligible for graduate assistant appointments. Teaching assistants whose native language is not English must (a) have a recommended speaking score of 26 or higher, but no less than 23, on the TOEFL iBT; (b) or submit the results of and receive a passing score on the Test of Spoken English (TSE) prior to arrival on campus; or (c) be evaluated on campus. Departments may conduct the evaluation interviews themselves, or they may contact the campus English Language Institute for assistance in verifying English proficiency. The Higher Education Instructors Oral English Proficiency Act of 1987 requires oral proficiency in the English language among all classroom instructors at public institutions of higher education in Illinois. Details are located at <http://www.registrar.ilstu.edu/crd/englishlanguageproficiency.shtml>

Since graduate assistants are considered employees, they must be eligible to work and are required to complete an I-9 for employment verification purposes. All international students complete this form in the Office of Human Resources, 101 Nelson Smith Building.

What Graduate Assistantships Include

Monthly Stipend

The monthly stipend varies in amount depending upon the percentage appointment/number of hours required for the assistantship, student status (e.g., masters, doctoral), source of the funding (general revenue, external grants), or nature of the assistantship assignment.

Minimum stipends for Graduate Assistants for the 2010-2011 academic year are listed below. These stipends became effective 7/1/09, and at this time are not projected to change for 2011-2012.

	TA/RA/Practicum	Administrative/Operational	
<i>Master's student</i>			
Part-time:	15-25%	Generally 6-10 Hrs	\$425
Full-time:	26-50%	Generally 11-20 hrs	\$850
<i>Doctoral student who is enrolled in first or second year of study:</i>			
Part-time:	15-25%	Generally 6-10 Hrs	\$525
Full-time:	26-50%	Generally 11-20 hrs	\$1050
<i>Doctoral student who has completed 2 years of full-time graduate study</i>			
Part-time:	15-25%	Generally 6-10 Hrs	\$625
Full-time:	26-50%	Generally 11-20 hrs	\$1250

Full-time graduate assistantships can be appointed up to 50% (TA/RA/Practicum)/ generally 20 hours per week (Administrative/Operational). Depending on the nature of the assignment, a full-time graduate assistantship position requiring less than 50% (TA/RA/Practicum)/ generally 20 hours per week (Administrative/Operational) may be appropriate, but an assistantship would not be considered full-time with less than 28% (TA/RA/Practicum)/generally 11 hours per week (Administrative/Operational). Under some circumstances, a limited number of part-time appointments will be permitted. Graduate assistantships are only available for appointments of 15% (TA/RA/Practicum)/generally 6 hours per week (Administrative/Operational) or more.

The number of part-time graduate assistantship appointments (15-25% TA/RA/Practicum, generally 6-10 hours per week Administrative/Operational) should not exceed the number of full-time (28-50% TA/RA/Practicum, generally 11-20 hours per week Administrative/Operational) appointments in each department.

Requests for assistantships for 51% or more Graduate Practicum or less than 12 week appointments for fall or spring for any GA position, are only granted under exceptional circumstances and must be pre-approved by the Graduate School. (See *Other Employment*) Graduate assistants should not be concurrently enrolled in 498 Professional Practice. For exceptions, contact the Graduate School.

Arrangements should be made with the Payroll Office (Hovey Hall 101) for direct deposit with participating banks. Students without direct deposit arrangements pick up their checks at Student Accounts, 607 W. Dry Grove.

The stipend is considered as income and could reduce the amount of loans if a student has also applied for financial aid. In addition, the stipend as a payment for services is subject to federal and state tax.

Tuition Fellowship

Graduate assistants are eligible for a tuition fellowship during the semester or term that they hold an appointment. Tuition fellowships are awarded by the Graduate School. Unlike monthly stipends, tuition fellowships do not require that compensating services be rendered. Although the tuition will be waived, the assistant will be required to pay other fees assessed. In addition, Internal Revenue Service regulations consider anything of value provided to an employee by an employer to be a form of compensation. The tuition fellowship falls under these regulations. As such, IRS Code requires educational assistance to any graduate student (*excluding those in teaching or research positions*) in excess of \$5,250 annually be added to employee's taxable wages. Educational assistance in excess of the excludable amount (\$5,250) is subject to Federal, State, Social Security, and Medicare taxes. Any tuition fellowship classified as taxable income will be included on the appropriate pay periods. Both the amount of taxable income associated with the waiver and the taxes that are withheld with respect to such income are reported annually on Form W-2.

The insurance fee will be automatically assessed for all graduate assistants registered for 9 or more credit hours by the 15th day fall/spring (6 or more credit hours by the 8th day of summer session). Students with early or late start dates can purchase insurance by paying the fee to the Student Insurance Office within 15 days of the start date. See the Insurance section for additional information, including details on the Student Health Insurance reimbursement policy effective Fall 2009.

Tuition fellowships for the summer term (up to 12 hours) are provided for students holding an assistantship during the summer term or for at least a full spring or fall semester prior to the summer term unless he/she graduates. Students do not receive a summer stipend unless they work as a graduate assistant in the summer term.

“Prior Summer” Tuition Fellowships

Under certain conditions, departments/schools may request that the "summer after" tuition fellowship be applied instead to the summer before the student holds the fall appointment. Assistants who are approved to use the fellowship in the summer before it is earned will **not** have any tuition fellowship to use for the following summer, regardless of whether they are appointed for fall only or for fall and spring.

For a "prior summer" tuition fellowship, the following memo must arrive at the Graduate School in hard copy *before the last day of the summer session for which tuition is to be waived. Requests that arrive after the summer term has ended will not be considered.*

In anticipation of a qualifying fall assistantship, the (name of department/school) requests a "prior summer" tuition fellowship for summer of (year) for (student) (UID number). We understand that regardless of how many hours the student takes this summer there will be NO tuition fellowship left for (summer of following year,) even if the student is appointed as a GA for both fall and spring.

(If the student is appointed to a summer term assistantship next year a new tuition fellowship will accompany that appointment. If the student is appointed for a future fall semester and again meets all qualifications for "summer prior" tuition, another request may be submitted.)

The request must be signed by both the student and the chair or graduate coordinator, and include e-mail addresses for each person.

All of the following conditions must also be met by that date:

1. The student must be admitted to the Graduate School.
2. The student must meet all eligibility requirements to hold a graduate assistantship, including pre-registration for the minimum GA course load.
3. All GA appointment paperwork, including the I-9 and accepted offer, must be submitted to HR.

The Graduate School and HR will confirm that all requirements have been met, and if so will notify the department/school and student that the "prior summer" fellowship has been authorized.

Fees **are not** included as a standard part of the assistantship package and are paid by the student.

Tuition fellowships are considered a resource and part of the financial aid package. As such they could reduce the amount of loans if a student has applied for financial aid and could reduce the amount of loan dollars a student is eligible to receive or may have already received if the assistantship is approved after the student loan has been awarded. Students who receive tuition fellowships after their loans have been disbursed may have to repay all or part of their loans depending on the total loan received and the amount of financial aid for which they are eligible. Tuition fellowships are exempt from taxation because they are provided in recognition of the graduate assistant's academic accomplishments, rather than directly for services provided.

Other Benefits

Other benefits vary by unit and type of assistantship, but could include access to services of the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology (CTLT), training and orientation, and assigned work space/communication resources.

Retirement Plan/Savings

Illinois State University offers a 403(b) Retirement Savings Plan (http://www.hr.ilstu.edu/benefits/tax_savings/index.shtml) which is available to all employees, including graduate assistants. To discuss further, please contact Human Resources at 438-8311.

Locating and Applying for Assistantships

The primary source of contact for assistantships is the academic department/school to which a student is admitted. The graduate program coordinator in each academic unit should be able to provide additional departmental/school assistantship information. Graduate assistantships are also available through administrative units and in residence halls.

Graduate students have the ability to search and apply for assistantships online with our Online Recruiting System, <http://www.IllinoisState.edu/jobs>. This system provides a central location for graduate assistants to search for open assistantships and replaces the former paper application process.

Graduate Assistant Offer

In 1965, the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) approved the following resolution regarding offers of financial assistance such as graduate assistantships and tuition fellowships. The resolution places certain responsibilities on both the student and the institution. The Graduate School endorses this resolution. Questions regarding the application of this resolution should be addressed to the Graduate School.

“Acceptance of an offer of financial support (such as a 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 the Resolution. 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.”

The appointing unit will make the assistantship offer in writing, by way of e-mail, using the appropriate GA Standard Offer Letter. The offer letters may be found at: www.hr.ilstu.edu/formstatoz/ under letter “G.” The potential graduate assistant should accept or decline the offer in writing, by way of e-mail, as well. Any changes to the Standard Offer Letter, other than those indicated in the letter, must be approved in advance by Human Resources.

Department chairs/school directors, unit administrators, as part of the appointment procedure, need to inform International Admissions of any assistantship offers including financial details. Assistantships impact an international student’s declaration of finances needed to issue an F-1 visa.

Graduate Assistant Appointments

The Graduate School and the Office of Financial Aid encourage writing student offers for the academic year (August 16 to May 15) to reduce possible interruption in financial aid for graduate assistants.

Teaching assistantships generally require students to be on the same schedule as faculty. This means being on campus at least one week before the start of classes for orientation and training and remaining on duty through the final examination period. Responsibilities for some assistantships, e.g., research or administrative/operational assistantships, could include being available during academic program break periods when the University is open. Graduate assistants are not expected to provide services or make up time when the University is on academic closure. Hours, time-off, absences, etc should be agreed upon between the GA and the appointing unit ahead of time.

An appointment notification can be issued if a student is in default on a student loan, but the default must be cleared in 6 months or the appointment will be terminated. To clear a default a student must obtain a letter from the loan institution which states that the student is making regular payments on the loan and present such proof to the Graduate School. If a student's educational loan has been deferred until completion of his/her graduate study, then the student would not be considered in default of a loan.

GA contracts are not renewable. Employment beyond the dates specified in the GA's current contract results only from a new offer letter and acceptance. The availability of additional semesters of support depends upon factors including but not limited to job performance, academic progress and time to degree, availability of funds, and unit priorities. Units may also set limits on the total number of semesters of GA support for a given degree and/or decline to fund students whose enrollment time (with or without GA support) has exceeded the program's expectations for degree completion.

Graduate Assistant Assignments

Graduate assistantships are provided as financial support for selected graduate students. They are intended to facilitate progress towards a graduate degree and assistantship regulations and procedures are designed to promote this academic objective. Such factors as satisfactory academic progress and time to degree are considerations for retaining assistantships. Likewise, work assignments should complement or contribute to academic objectives and should not lead to unsatisfactory academic performance or interfere with completion of a degree in a timely fashion. While graduate assistants have work responsibilities, they are students first and foremost.

The assistantship category of employment is intended to support full time graduate study; work assignments that do not fulfill that requirement in Fall/Spring should not be offered as assistantships. Human Resources can assist units in determining whether such assignments should be student employment, Civil Service, or some other category.

Work assignments should be such that the student's formal degree work is enhanced. Master's degree students, if assigned to instructional responsibilities, must be supervised by regular faculty

members. For assistantships as part of the Graduate Practicum Placement Program, work experience is provided in a professional setting related to the student's discipline.

If graduate assistants have concerns regarding their hours or duties, the normal procedure is to discuss the matter with their supervisor, graduate coordinator, or department chair/school director/unit administrator. If, for substantive reasons it seems appropriate, students may then contact Human Resources and/or the Graduate School.

Maintaining the Assistantship

Students need to (a) meet the performance criteria expected by the unit providing the assistantship; (b) enroll for 9-12 credit hours (graduate or undergraduate hours including audits, pass/fail, deferred or credit) for spring and fall semesters; (c) maintain an overall minimum GPA of 3.0; and (d) make satisfactory progress towards degree completion as outlined in the Graduate Plan of Study.

Students on summer appointments do not need to register for summer session, but need to maintain insurance coverage. See Insurance section.

Please note that the Financial Aid Office requires registration of 9 graduate semester hours for fall/spring and 6 in the summer to qualify for full-time financial aid, with part-time requiring 5 in the fall/spring and 3 in the summer.

Exceptions to Academic Load

An assistant wanting to take less than 9 hours must have a recommendation by his or her department/school graduate coordinator, in writing, approved by the Graduate School prior to registration. Departments/schools submit the Graduate Assistant Course Load Waiver Request form (PERS 938) to the Graduate School. In the case of an appointing unit that is not the student's department/school, the appointing unit must complete the Course Load Waiver form and forward to the graduate assistant's academic department/school for approval before the Graduate School will consider the request. Course load exceptions will not be granted to accommodate preference for part-time enrollment, anticipation of especially demanding courses or assistantship duties, lack of sufficient course offerings in the student's department in a given semester, or scheduling of other employment. Requests to accommodate a documented disability must be handled through the Office of Disability Concerns,

As an example of a commonly approved exception to the 9-12 credit hour requirement, assistants who are beginning the final semester of their program, have filed for graduation, and who need fewer than 9 hours of courses to fulfill their graduation requirements may seek a one-time waiver to reduce their load to the number of hours required for degree completion.

NOTE:

Graduate assistants registering for less than 9 credit hours in fall or spring or 6 credit hours in summer will not have the insurance fee automatically assessed. Those graduate assistants must contact the Student Insurance Office before the 15th calendar day of each semester and the 8th calendar day of the summer session to pay premiums. Students are eligible to purchase coverage for no more than four consecutive terms including summer. Students with early or late start dates

can purchase insurance by paying the fee to the Student Insurance Office within 15 days of the start date.

Responsibilities of Appointing Unit

Appointing units are to provide appropriate supervision, training, working conditions, and sufficient resources for graduate assistants to perform the duties assigned. Performance assessment procedures should be included as part of the assistantship process and should be shared by the supervisor with the student.

Responsibilities of the Graduate Assistant

The graduate assistant is to perform the duties assigned in a satisfactory manner, keeping supervisors informed of special circumstances such as absences which might affect others.

Resignation

Students may resign from an assistantship if they determine they cannot meet the conditions of their appointment, (e.g., leaving the University before the appointment ends, illness, etc.) This resignation should be in writing from the graduate assistant indicating his/her last day of work (including his/her signature) to the responsible administrator in the appointing unit. If the student resigns on or before August 31 in fall semester/January 31 in spring semester, he/she will not receive a tuition fellowship regardless of when the resignation paperwork is submitted to Human Resources. For example, if a student submits a resignation letter or e-mail indicating he/she last worked on August 22, the tuition fellowship for the fall and summer semesters will be removed. The appointing unit will forward a copy of the letter or e-mail to Human Resources, Attn: Shirley Craig, Campus Box 1300 or to sacraig@ilstu.edu. Graduate Practicum students need to submit a written resignation to their external agency sponsor, as well as their faculty/staff supervisor. The faculty/staff supervisor is responsible for alerting the Research and Sponsored Programs Office of the resignation and having the academic department/school forward a copy of the resignation letter or e-mail to Human Resources, Attn: Shirley Craig, Campus Box 1300 or sacraig@ilstu.edu

Termination

Not meeting the criteria below may result in termination of the assistantship. Appointing units may contact the Graduate School for exceptions in special cases. The criteria for termination are:

1. Failure to maintain an overall graduate GPA of 3.0 while on an assistantship.

If a graduate assistant's semester GPA falls below 3.00 but the cumulative GPA remains at 3.00 or higher, departments/schools should consider whether continuation of the assistantship will interfere with the graduate assistant's future academic progress in the degree program. The Graduate School will not review this decision. If a graduate assistant's cumulative average drops below 3.00, the assistantship should be terminated by the appointing unit. In special circumstances, a request for an exception can be made by e-mail to the Graduate School who will forward the final exception decision to Human Resources.

2. Failure to enroll in 9-12 credit hours of course work for each semester while on an assistantship in the spring and fall unless an exception to academic load has been approved. (See Exceptions to Academic Load section). Please note that the Financial Aid Office requires registration of 9 graduate semester hours in fall/spring and 6 in summer to qualify for full time financial aid, and with part-time requiring 5 in fall/spring and 3 in summer.
3. Failure to make satisfactory progress towards degree completion in a timely fashion: e.g., master's students on assistantship must complete a degree within a two- to three-year period.
4. Being in default of a student loan which has not been cleared within 6 months of having signed an assistantship appointment notification, and
5. Failure to meet the performance criteria expected by the unit providing the assistantship.
6. Failure to uphold Graduate School, unit/department, and/or University policies, including policies on academic integrity in the Graduate Assistant's own academic work.

For termination under any of the Items No. 1-4 above, the appointing unit or the Graduate School may terminate the assistantship.

For termination under Items No. 5-6, the termination is processed through the Labor and Employee Relations section of Human Resources. Graduate Assistants are afforded due process if the termination is related to items 5 and 6 above. Due process requires that the student be informed of the reasons for the proposed termination and be provided an opportunity to respond before the termination is finalized. Units considering termination of a Graduate Assistant for reasons 5 or 6 should begin by contacting Labor and Employee Relations staff at Human Resources. A member of the Labor and Employee Relations staff will advise and assist the unit in:

1. Framing a notification to the GA, outlining the reasons for the potential termination and informing the GA of the means and deadline for any response.
2. Reviewing the GA's response (if any) and reaching a decision.
3. Notifying the GA of the outcome.

Fees

Graduate assistants are responsible for payment of all student fees owed to the University. Fees other than health insurance are assessed at a per semester hour rate through the first 16 hours. Health insurance is assessed.

Other Employment

With the exception of a pre-approved Graduate Extra Pay (GEP) contract, graduate assistants with full-time assistantships (50% TA/ RA/Practicum, generally 20 hours per week Administrative/Operational) are not allowed to take other assistantships or additional employment on campus while classes are in session during fall and spring semesters. Graduate Assistants with a less than 50% (TA/ RA/Practicum) or generally 20 hours per week (Administrative/Operational) appointment may be allowed to accept additional employment on campus (for instance, another assistantship, or hourly employment as a student worker in your own or any another unit).

The percentages below indicate the relationship of your current appointment(s) (for instance, if you already hold two 25% appointments, your total is 50%) to the number of hours of additional campus employment you may work.

- With 15% appointment, a student may work up to 14 additional hours each week on campus.
- 18% appointment, 13 additional hours
- 20% appointment, 12 additional hours
- 23% appointment, 11 additional hours
- 25% appointment, 10 additional hours
- 28% appointment, 9 additional hours
- 30% appointment, 8 additional hours
- 33% appointment, 7 additional hours
- 35% appointment, 6 additional hours
- 38% appointment, 5 additional hours
- 40% appointment, 4 additional hours
- 43% appointment, 3 additional hours
- 45% appointment, 2 additional hours
- 48% appointment, 1 additional hour
- 50% appointment, no additional hours

Any exceptions to these limits require that the employing unit seeking to offer the extra hours receive prior approval from both Human Resources and the Graduate School, using the GEP (PERS 916) form, *before any* extra hours are worked. Working outside of your assistantship/contract in excess of the limits listed above without a previously approved GEP form is a violation of assistantship policy.

If you are an international student the rules/laws for your visa status may place limits on your employment eligibility. Students are responsible for knowing and following all applicable visa status rules/laws. If you are not certain whether your visa status allows you to accept an assistantship or additional work hours, contact the Office of International Studies and Programs immediately for clarification. The University cannot grant exceptions to visa status rules/laws.

The University does not monitor off-campus employment of graduate assistants. International graduate assistants should contact the International Studies Office for any restrictions on employment which may be related to their visa status.

Insurance

All Graduate Assistants must have adequate health/accident insurance coverage in force during the entire period of the appointment. At the time of the offer, the student must also complete a Health Insurance Certification form. Coverage must be either privately procured or obtained through the university's student health insurance plan. All students registered for 9 or more credit hours by the 15th day fall/spring (6 or more credit hours by the 8th day of summer session) will automatically be assessed for, and be included in, the University student health insurance plan. Students with early or late start dates can purchase insurance by paying the fee to the Student Insurance Office within 15 days of the start date. International students may be subject to additional insurance

requirements. Please contact the Office of International Studies and Programs to find out what your requirements are.

Graduate assistants registering for less than 9 credit hours in fall or spring or 6 credit hours in summer will not have the insurance fee automatically assessed. Those graduate assistants must contact the Student Insurance Office before the 15th calendar day of each semester and the 8th calendar day of the summer session to pay premiums. Students are eligible to purchase coverage for no more than four consecutive terms.

Student Health and Accident Insurance information can be found in the Graduate Catalog or information can be provided by contacting the Student Insurance Office, Student Services Building 230, or by calling (309) 438-2515.

Beginning Fall 2009, graduate assistants who meet all criteria below will receive an additional payment from the university for the amount of that semester's Student Insurance charge minus applicable taxes.

- appointed for full-time Fall and/or Spring GA contracts (for graduate assistants, university regulations define full time as 28-50% TA/ RA/Practicum; 11-20 hours per week Administrative/Operational),
- paid at least the current full-time stipend for the student's class – master's, doc year 1 or 2, doc year 3 & up)
- purchased ISU Student Insurance during the semester/s of their appointment period

Please note that this reimbursement is provided only during the contract period in fall and spring. Unlike the tuition fellowship, the insurance reimbursement does not carry over into the following summer, and summer GA contracts do not carry this insurance reimbursement.

Following are answers to some questions commonly asked by GAs and appointing units.

1. What do GAs have to do to receive this reimbursement?

- a. Eligible GAs still need to purchase Illinois State University student insurance (outside health insurance does not meet the reimbursement criteria) just as they always have.
- b. Pay that charge on their Student Accounts bill.
- c. Watch for an e-mail from Human Resources detailing when the reimbursement (less applicable taxes) will be made. This reimbursement will normally occur (for all GAs) in the latter two months of each semester.
- d. There are no additional forms to complete.

2. If my department files my GA appointment late, or if I miss the deadline to sign up for insurance, can the Graduate School, HR, the Student Insurance office, or someone else grant me an extension of the insurance deadline?

No. Those deadlines are contractual provisions of the University's insurance company policy. No one on campus can waive or extend them.

3. My GA appointment does not meet the eligibility requirements described above. Can I get an exception to still be eligible?

No.

4. What if I have two part-time GA appointments in the same semester?

So long as in that semester your GA appointments equal full-time (as described above) and your GA stipends total at least the FT minimum for your class (master's, doc 1 and 2, or doc 3 & up) you are eligible. NOTE: Only regular GA appointments count toward full-time employment. Graduate Extra Pay and student appointments do not count toward the eligibility requirements.

5. Does the Student Insurance reimbursement apply to international students who hold GA appointments?

Yes. It applies to all GAs who meet the eligibility criteria above, whether the GA is in-state, out-of-state, or international.

6. Since all GAs are graduate students, aren't all GAs eligible to purchase Student Insurance? How could a GA be ineligible to purchase it?

GAs enrolled only in thesis or dissertation audit hours are not eligible to purchase Student Insurance.

GAs who have received an exception to hold an assistantship with under 9 hours course load in fall or spring and those enrolled in "one hour equals full time" general courses may also become ineligible. Purchase of Student Insurance with under 9 hours is limited to no more than four terms.

GAs may call Student Insurance, 438-2515, to find out whether or not they are eligible to purchase ISU insurance.

7. I have questions not covered above. Who should I contact?

E-mail hr@ilstu.edu . To expedite a reply, put "GA Health Insurance Question" in the subject line.

Library Privileges

Graduate assistants may be given certain faculty library privileges by checking materials out in the faculty member's name. A form is available at the Circulation Desk of Milner Library which can be signed by the faculty member.

Research Integrity

Depending upon source of funding for an assistantship there may be restrictions placed on access and right to use data collected when appointed to a graduate assistantship. Any research activities conducted under an assistantship or by students must meet ethical guidelines established by the federal government. This includes research with human subjects/animals. There are also federal and state regulations guiding health and safety for activities conducted at a university for research activities.

There are ethical guidelines within every profession/discipline which guide issues with regard to ownership of data including such things as authorship and data use. These issues should be discussed with the graduate assistant's supervisor. Any questions about issues of potential misconduct in research should be directed to the Research Ethics and Compliance Office, Conferencing Center, (309) 438-8451.

Academic Integrity

Graduate assistants, as students, are expected to be honest in all academic work. Likewise graduate assistants supervising other students are to expect honesty in all academic work. Academic integrity violations may jeopardize a student's graduate assistantship.

A student's name on any academic exercise (theme, report, notebook, paper, examination) shall be regarded as assurance that the work is the result of the student's own thought and study. Offenses involving academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to the following:

- a. Cheating on quizzes or examinations occurs when any student is found using or attempting to use any book, paper, or other article, or assistance from any individual intending to deceive the person in charge of the quiz or examination with reference to his or her work. No books, notes, papers, or related articles shall be used at any quiz or examination unless specifically authorized by the person in charge. Conversation or other communication between individuals in examinations and quizzes is forbidden except as authorized by the instructor.
- b. Computer dishonesty is the unacknowledged or unauthorized appropriation of another's program, or the results of that program, in whole or in part, for a computer-related exercise or assignment.
- c. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged appropriation of another's work, words, or ideas in any themes, outlines, papers, reports, or computer programs. Students must ascertain from the instructor in each course the appropriate means of documentation. Submitting the same paper for more than one course is considered a breach of academic integrity unless prior approval is given by the instructors.

- d. Grade falsification is any attempt to falsify an assigned grade in an examination, quiz, report, program, grade book, or any other record or document.
- e. Collusion occurs when students willfully give or receive unauthorized or unacknowledged assistance on any assignment. This may include the reproduction and/or dissemination of test materials. Both parties to the collusion are considered responsible. No individual may substitute for another in any quiz or examination.

For more information, consult the Community Rights and Responsibility web site, <http://www.crr.ilstu.edu>.

Non-Discrimination

The non-discrimination policy for Illinois State University may be found at: http://www.equalopportunity.ilstu.edu/equal_opportunity/.

Discrimination and Harassment Policy

Illinois State University fosters a campus environment that recognizes individual and cultural differences and is strongly committed to the ethical and legal principle that each faculty member of the University community enjoys academic freedom and all members of the University have a constitutional right to free speech. The right of free expression and the open exchange of ideas and views are essential, especially in a learning environment. Illinois State University vigorously upholds these freedoms. However, the value of free expression may be undermined by certain acts of harassment or discrimination. Such harassment or discrimination may result in the loss of self-esteem for the victim and the deterioration of a quality classroom, social, or work environment. Therefore any act of harassment or discrimination will not be tolerated.

The discrimination and harassment policy for Illinois State University may be found at: <http://www.equalopportunity.ilstu.edu/harassment/index.shtml>

Who To Contact

For more information regarding this policy or to file a formal complaint please contact the Office of Equal Opportunity, Ethics, and Access at (309) 438-3383 or visit www.equalopportunity@ilstu.edu.

Drug-Free Workplace

The Drug-free Workplace policy for Illinois State University is at: <http://www.policy.ilstu.edu/health-safety/5-1-5.shtml>

Contact Information

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Shawn Rigsby scrigsb@ilstu.edu	Financial Aid Specialist for Graduate Students	(309) 438-2231	Financial Aid Office, 231 Fell Hall