

September 2014



**GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
Student Version**

Overview

Graduate assistantships offer students hands-on experiential learning opportunities, one-on-one instruction and mentoring with social work faculty members/professional staff, and work experience to prepare them for careers as professional social workers. In turn, faculty members/professional staff are provided with the opportunity to work one-on-one with graduate assistants in order to advance their research, scholarship, teaching and mentoring agendas as well as the mission of the Department of Social Work and its commitment to students. The Department of Social Work Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures are designed to maximize the success of the graduate assistantship experience for the benefit of the student, the faculty member/professional staff, and Department of Social Work. These policies and procedures supplement the information provided to the student by the Graduate School as well as provide structure and accountability in the graduate assistantship experience. This manual includes information regarding:

1. Selection of Graduate Assistants (GAs)
2. Assignment of GAs
3. Responsibilities of GA Supervisors
4. Responsibilities of GAs
5. GA Time & Attendance
6. Faculty/Professional Staff Evaluation of GAs
7. GA Reflections on the GA Experience
8. GA Dismissal Procedures
9. GA Forms

Selection of Graduate Assistants

Once applicants to the Masters of Social Work (MSW) Program are admitted, they complete the *Application for Graduate Assistantship in the Department of Social Work* if they are interested in a graduate assistantship. This form asks them to provide demographic information as well as degrees earned, honors/awards, special areas of study (i.e., advanced certificates), relevant work skills they will bring to the graduate assistantship, such as computer skills and library skills, and a current resume. This form in conjunction with the admissions application is used to determine the final selection of GAs.

Using the *Graduate Assistantship Criteria Worksheet*, the Director of Admissions and Student Services will review each GA application. The following criteria are used to rank each applicant: financial need; undergraduate GPA and institution; previous work experience; previous volunteer experience; quality of GA application; membership in underrepresented group; and special considerations. Once all applications are reviewed and ranked, the Director of Admissions and Student Services submits the recommended list of graduate assistant appointments to the Department Chairperson, who will give final approval for the appointments. Students receive official confirmation of their awards and necessary GA paperwork from the Dean's Office, College of Community and Public Affairs (CCPA).

Assignment of Graduate Assistants

Faculty members and professional staff will complete the *Faculty Request for Graduate Assistant Form* to be considered for appointment of GAs. The forms will be submitted to the Director of Admissions and Student Services no later than the last day of the spring semester to ensure that they receive full consideration. The *Faculty Request Form*, which will be used to match GAs and faculty members, asks for information about the faculty members' current research, scholarship and teaching/curriculum needs for the upcoming year as well as information about the skill sets they are looking for in a GA. Faculty members/professional staff requesting a GA who already have been assigned a first year GA will be assigned the same GA for the second year except under extraordinary circumstances (i.e., dismissal of GA for poor job performance). The resumes of GAs that are a possible fit for faculty members who need to be assigned new GAs will be distributed to faculty members/professional staff for review and ranking to ensure the best match between faculty members/professional staff and GAs.

Students will be notified regarding GA assignments no later than one week prior to the start of the fall semester.

Responsibilities of GA Supervisors

GA Supervisors are expected to:

1. Establish 10 hour a week work schedules with students that takes in to account the students course and field placement schedule as well as their GA needs;
2. Establish weekly supervision meetings in-person, by phone, or through e-mail communication, to assign projects, discuss progress of projects, provide necessary instruction for projects, and offer mentoring;
3. Provide clear instructions for all assigned tasks, activities, and projects and the needed training and resources to complete the work;
4. Provide ongoing supervision, instruction, and mentoring;
5. Complete the GA Performance Evaluation forms each semester and schedule appointments to discuss these with GAs.

Responsibilities of GAs

The responsibilities described here supplement those outlined in The Graduate School and Human Resources Forms that GAs complete when they accept graduate assistantships. GAs are expected to:

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