

Georgia Institute of Technology
Policy Guidelines
Graduate Assistant Waivers and Stipends
July 1, 2008

NOTE – EFFECTIVE FALL SEMESTER 2008:

The minimum stipend level for the 2008-2009 academic year shall be \$1,250 per month for each doctoral graduate assistant, and \$800 per month for each master's graduate assistant, regardless of whether a student is working one-third or one-half time. Some academic programs will not be able to pay this minimum in fiscal 2009 due to resource restrictions. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Provost's Office. By Fiscal 2010 all units shall be in compliance with the minimum as of that year.

I. Effective Date, Scope and Applicability

A. Effective Date. The policy is approved as of July 1, 2008 for the Fall 2008 semester.

B. Scope. The policy is intended to:

1. Summarize the requirements for graduate assistant appointments
2. Delineate the benefits and financial responsibilities of graduate assistants
3. Define a minimum stipend level for graduate assistants and outline a process to bring all academic units in compliance with the minimum.

C. Applicability. This policy applies to all graduate assistants on the Atlanta and Georgia Tech Savannah campuses and to colleges and other academic units that hire graduate assistants.

NOTE: The stipend minimum defined in Paragraph V.A.1. is not applicable to academic units that already pay graduate student stipends above this minimum. Also, Paragraph IV.A. pertaining to transition funding does not apply to these units. All other sections of the policy apply to all academic units.

D. Cross References to Other Georgia Tech Policies Pertaining to Graduate Assistants: See Appendix 4.

II. Requirements for Graduate Assistantship Appointments

Georgia Tech graduate students may be appointed as graduate assistants who assist faculty in instruction and research. The following requirements apply to these appointments:

A. The graduate student must be enrolled full-time, as defined by the "Policy on Hour Loads for Graduate Students." This applies to the summer, fall, and spring semesters.

(<http://www.grad.gatech.edu/admin/hrload.html>)

B. Each graduate assistantship must be approved by the student's academic department or college, although the student may work in an academic or research unit other than the student's home academic department. Additionally, only the student's academic home department may submit the waiver request for the assistantship, regardless of where the

student is working. Work departments hiring a graduate assistant, GRA or GTA, whose waiver is not covered by a sponsored project must have approval from the home department and must agree to cover the in-state tuition cost with the work department's funds. See "Guidelines for Academic, Administrative and Financial Administration of Graduate Assistantships:" <http://www.grad.gatech.edu/>.

- C. An assistantship may not be approved for a student working in an administrative unit, with the exceptions noted in the "Policy Guidelines: Academic, Administrative and Financial Administration of Graduate Assistantships." (<http://www.grad.gatech.edu/>)
- D. Each student receiving a graduate assistantship is expected to assist faculty either with sponsored research or instruction. The student must be classified as a Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) or a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA), as defined in "Policy Guidelines: Academic, Administrative and Financial Administration of Graduate Assistantships," quoted in Appendix 1 of this document.
- E. Per the policy on hour loads cited in item one above, each graduate assistant, as a full-time student, is expected to work at least one-third time (13 hours per week), but no more than one-half time (20 hours per week).

III. Benefits of Graduate Assistantship Appointments

- A. Each student awarded a graduate assistantship receives a waiver of resident or non-resident tuition, with the exception of a \$25 graduate fee. See Appendix 2 for the Board of Regents policy governing graduate tuition and waivers, which also establishes the graduate fee. For graduate assistants working on sponsored awards, the sponsoring organization may be paying the resident tuition through the Graduate Student Tuition Remission Program (GSTRP), administered by the Office of Grants and Contracts. See the following policy pertaining to GSTRP:
<http://www.admin-fin.gatech.edu/business/contracts/030170.html>.
- B. Each graduate assistant receives a stipend, to be determined by each academic department using the guidelines defined in Section V of this document.

IV. Financial Responsibilities of Graduate Assistants

Each graduate assistant is responsible for payment of the following expenses:

- A. Georgia Tech's mandatory fees for transportation, health, student activities, athletics, technology, and campus recreation facility;
NOTE: See <http://www.bursar.gatech.edu/tuiandfee.php> for current mandatory fees. For Georgia Tech Savannah students, only the Technology Fee is charged in Fiscal 2008, with additional fees to be added in Fiscal 2009.
- B. Mandatory student health insurance required by the University System of Georgia;
NOTE: See the following web site for information on health insurance:
<http://www.grad.gatech.edu/MandatoryStudHealthInsuranceMemo.html>
- C. Any tuition differential for a particular discipline above the base graduate tuition;
NOTE: See the list of differentials at the end of the worksheets in Appendix 3. Some academic units may make arrangements to pay the tuition differential on behalf of the students.

- D. Any special laboratory or other discipline-specific fee;
- E. Any applicable Georgia Tech elective fees such as housing, food service, parking, and other fees.

Appendix 3 of this document provides illustrative worksheets for potential resident and non-resident Georgia Tech students to assist them in computing the costs of graduate studies and the resources available to cover those costs. Also, the current costs of attendance for a graduate student are estimated on the Office of Student Financial Planning and Services web site at the following web site: <http://www.finaid.gatech.edu/costs/>.

V. Determination of Graduate Stipend Levels

A. Minimum Stipend Level

1. **Minimum Stipend Level for Fiscal 2009:** For the 2008-2009 academic year, the minimum stipend level for each doctoral graduate assistant shall be \$1,250 per month, regardless of whether a student is working one-third or one-half time. The minimum stipend level for each master's graduate assistant shall be \$800 per month, regardless of whether a student is working one-third or one-half time.
2. **Reevaluation of Minimum Stipend Each Year:** The Office of the Provost will determine a new minimum stipend level by February 1st of each year for the following academic year; the new minimum will be posted on the Graduate Studies web site (<http://www.grad.gatech.edu/>). The revised minimum will take into consideration changes in the following factors:
 - a. Georgia Tech's projected mandatory and elective fees for the next fiscal year;
 - b. Projected graduate student health insurance premium level for Georgia Tech's program (University System of Georgia's program in Fiscal Year 2008);
 - c. Current NSF fellowship level;
 - d. Expected state employee pay increase percentage, as recommended by the Governor to the General Assembly;
 - e. Other cost factors affecting graduate students.

B. Factors in Determining Stipend Levels

Each academic unit shall determine the stipend levels for its students. The stipend levels shall be determined by the following factors:

1. Peer institution stipend levels for individual disciplines, taking into consideration the tuition waiver policies and cost factors for peer institutions for comparability (peer reviews to be conducted by academic units);
2. Progress toward his/her degree, including whether a student is a masters or doctoral student;
3. Whether a student is determined to be one-third time or half-time, as determined by each department;
4. Level of teaching or research work conducted by the student;

5. Past experience of the student in research or teaching;
6. For an international student, the estimated cost of living as determined by the Office of Graduate Studies through the I-20 form (<http://www.oie.gatech.edu/>).

C. Annual Re-evaluation of Stipend Levels

Each academic unit shall annually review the overall stipend levels for its students based on the factors noted in “B” above. If the General Assembly provides funding for annual pay raises for employees, commensurate increases for graduate assistants funded through non-sponsored funds shall also be provided. Raises for graduate assistants funded through sponsored funds shall be provided as allowed by the respective sponsored agreements.

VI. Funding for Graduate Stipends

Academic units pay stipends for graduate assistants from sponsored (grant and contract) funds, internal Georgia Tech resources such as tuition and state allocations, or a combination of sponsored and Georgia Tech funds. Academic units are expected to allocate adequate funding from either source to pay stipends at least at the level defined in Section V of this policy. The following non-sponsored funding is budgeted centrally in the Georgia Tech budget, to be allocated to units at the discretion of the Provost and the Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance:

Transition Funding: Selected academic units have in recent years paid graduate students less than the minimum level. To provide assistance to those units in Fiscal 2009 to make progress toward the minimum standard, partial funding will be allocated by the Provost and Executive Vice President. Such funding also may be applied to increase the stipend levels of graduate assistants who are currently above the minimum. Following Fiscal 2009, all units will be expected to meet the minimum requirements with internal resources within their respective budgets.

VII. Exceptions to Policy

Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Provost’s Office.

Categories of Graduate Assistantships

Graduate Research Assistantships (GRAs) are generally intended to be funded through sponsored research. GRA students participate in research and typically perform the following activities: help conduct experiments, analyze data, research academic literature, write computer programs, and author papers and theses. Most GRA salaries should be charged to sponsored programs participating in the Graduate Student Tuition Remission Program (GSTRP). However, upon specific approval by the Provost, academic and research units also may hire GRAs in support of non-sponsored, faculty research. This is especially the case for new faculty, pursuant to offer letters. Generally these students are paid through General Operations funds.

Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs) are primarily funded by departmental General Operations budgets. GTAs provide normal instructional support services such as teaching, managing labs, holding tutorial sessions, and grading papers. Students working on sponsored teaching grants should be charged to the sponsor, if the sponsored award is eligible for participation in GSTRP. Colleges will be responsible for covering resident tuition waived for GTAs in excess of approved levels.

Source: Policy Guidelines: Academic, Administrative and Financial Administration of Graduate Assistantships, April 25, 2006 (<http://www.grad.gatech.edu/>)

Board of Regents Policy on Graduate Tuition

704.014 GRADUATE TUITION

University System of Georgia institutions that offer graduate programs may request Board approval for graduate tuition rates as follows:

1. Effective for the fall semester 2007, each institution that offers graduate programs shall request a "core" graduate tuition rate that shall apply to all graduate courses and programs.
2. Each institution may request separate graduate tuition rates for specialized programs subject to the provisions of section 704.015.

The regular graduate tuition rates normally shall be charged to all graduate students; however, where a graduate student is classified as a research, teaching, or graduate assistant, the institution may waive all or part of the graduate tuition and/or waive the differential between in-state and out-of-state graduate tuition. A registration fee of no less than \$25 shall be charged to all students for whom a full waiver is provided (BR Minutes, October 2006).

Source: Board of Regents Policy Manual Section 700, Finance and Business
<http://www.usg.edu/regents/policymanual/700.phtml>