Assistantship Opportunities

Graduate Research and Teaching assistantships, as well as fellowships, are available in the department. The number of assistantships varies and is primarily determined by grant money. Teaching and research assistants are appointed for either .25 FTE (10 hours each week) or .50 FTE (20 hours each week). The highest recommended workload for graduate assistants is 20 hours a week, meaning that the combination of assistantship positions should not exceed .50 FTE.

Educational tuition and supplemental course fees are waived for graduate students who hold at least .25 FTE assistantships. Tuition will only be waived for those courses that have been approved by students' advisors and/or those courses listed on students' program of study forms (M1/D2). It is recommended that you complete these forms well in advance. The bookstore on campus offers a 10% discount for GAs. You also have the option of applying for a parking space on campus. The cost of parking is the responsibility of the student. Other fees (recreation, technology, student activity) are the responsibility of the student as well.

All students will be considered when selecting candidates for GRA and GTA positions. In general, students with higher GPAs and GRE scores will receive preference. Students holding assistantships are expected to be full time students (exceptions apply for PhD students who are preparing for comps or have ABD status). That means they must complete 9 hours of coursework each semester. Students are also encouraged to seek and apply for funding in other departments and University programs.

Consistent with procedures followed in the College of Human Environmental Sciences, HDFS uses two pay-level categories, doctoral and masters, when paying graduate research/teaching assistants. Students are eligible to receive the higher rate of pay (doctoral) once they have completed their master’s degree and the degree has been conferred by the university. This requirement applies to all students currently working on their master’s degree, regardless of whether the department has already accepted the student into the doctoral program.

Master of Arts and Master of Science students will be eligible for TA/RA positions and tuition and supplemental course fee waivers for a period of 5 semesters, beginning with the academic term in which the student was first enrolled in the degree program. Doctoral students will be eligible for a period of 10 semesters. The 2011-2012 TA/RA .25 FTE 9-month base stipend for MA/MS students is $3,000/semester. The TA/RA .25 FTE 9-month base stipend for Ph.D. students is $4,000/semester. The Graduate Instructor rates for MS/MA/PhD are variable and up to the department chair.

Teaching Assistantships (TA), Research Assistantships (RA), and Graduate Instructor (GI) positions are the most common forms of financial support our department offers. Teaching Assistants may lead small group discussions in connection with large lecture classes, assist in
grading, provide administrative support to a faculty member, and help develop and organize
course materials among other tasks. Graduate Research Assistants may collect, code, and
analyze data, draft manuscripts, and otherwise help faculty, typically with funded research
projects.

Priority for GI and RA positions goes to experienced Ph.D. students. Graduate Instructors
have full, but mentored, responsibility for teaching a class. Prospective GI's are expected to
shadow any course prior to teaching it. See Appendix A to review the policy on shadowing.

The Director of Graduate Studies will assist prospective students in applying for other
fellowship and scholarship assistance available in the College and on campus.

If a student terminates her/ his assistantship or fellowship at any point during the semester,
she/ he will also lose a portion of the fee waiver. The fee waiver will be pro-rated based on
the number of days in the semester that the student had the assistantship/ fellowship, and
the student is responsible for the balance of the fees that are not covered by the pro-rated
fee waiver. This will also occur if the student withdraws from the university during the
semester. Any student considering terminating her/ his assistantship/ fellowship or
withdrawing from the university should check with the Graduate School as to what her/ his
pro-rated fee waiver would be and what portion of the fees the student would have to pay.

Teaching Assistantships are typically awarded for the academic year, on a semester by
semester basis, and do not cover the summer months. Research Assistantships may or may
not cover the summer months. Summer funding is often quite limited, and it is the student’s
responsibility to secure his or her own funding over the summer months.

Evaluation of TAs/ GIs and RAs

Each semester, students will be evaluated, using the approved forms, for their performance
as a TA/ GI or RA by their immediate supervisor. Students may be required to meet with
their supervisors, advisors, and/ or the Director of Graduate Studies to discuss their job
performance. If their work is deemed satisfactory, the student may be hired back the
following semester.