

19/AS/08/GC--Policy and Procedures for Awarding Graduate Fee Waivers and Employment of Graduate Assistants and Teaching Associates

Policy and Procedures for Awarding Fee Waivers

This policy and procedure for administering the Graduate Fee Waiver program at California State University, Stanislaus is in accordance with the original policy (in the April 15, 2002 Senate Resolution 22/AS/01/GC) for Graduate Student Fee Waivers, subsequently amended by the Graduate Council on October 16, 2008, ratified by the Senate (in Resolution 19/AS/08/GC), and approved by President Shirvani on January 9, 2009. This policy reflects the provisions imposed by the Unit 11 Collective Bargaining Agreement currently in effect. In the event that this document appears to contradict stipulations found in the Collective Bargaining Agreement, the authority of the union contract will prevail.

Eligibility

Funding for graduate fee waivers is always dependent on the University's fiscal resources, and cannot be guaranteed. Therefore, subject to availability, graduate fee waivers may be awarded to graduate students who have been formally admitted to the University and who have been admitted to a graduate program as a classified student. Candidates for a possible fee waiver may also receive other financial aid and/or employee compensation. While the fee waiver is not being provided as employee compensation, graduate students receiving fee waivers must fall within one of the three following categories:

1) *Graduate Scholar*. This is a non-employee position. The Graduate Scholar is academically eligible for, or has been awarded, a scholarship, fellowship, or some other form of grant-in-aid. While Graduate Scholars are not employed by the University, they may (as part of their normal academic studies) voluntarily assist their departmental faculty in research projects and the like.

2) *Graduate Assistant (GA)*. This is a classified employee position, with an established salary range as defined in the Unit 11 Collective Bargaining Agreement. Graduate Assistants are primarily employed to assist the regular faculty with various teaching, professional, and technical duties, tutoring, research, preparation of course materials, and related work.

3) *Teaching Associate (TA)*. This is a classified employee position, with an established salary range as defined in the Unit 11 Collective Bargaining Agreement. Teaching Associates are primarily responsible for classroom or laboratory instruction of undergraduates—usually as the “instructor of record.”

Qualifications

After being appointed to one of the three categories above, the graduate student must also meet the following criteria:

- Be a classified graduate student in good academic and financial standing;
- Show evidence of satisfactory progress toward completion of the degree;
- Hold the prerequisite educational and/or professional experience related to the three categories listed above.

Timelines

For Fall Semester Fee Waivers:

Fall Semester, prior year: Deans and Provost consult, and determine available resources. Deans receive requests from their graduate programs.

December 15, prior year: Deans submit proposals for funding, to include any internal college resources.

January 31: Provost determines allocations and informs deans. Deans distribute allocations (both internal and from Provost) to individual programs. Colleges inform Graduate School of program distributions.

May 15: Departments select students for fee waiver awards, based on eligibility and qualifications listed above. Graduate program directors/coordinators forward Fee Waiver Award Form to the Graduate School.

June 1: The Graduate School processes the requests for fee waivers, which includes forwarding a list of award recipients to Financial Aid for eligibility review.

June 15: The Graduate School posts the fee waiver to the student's account. The student subsequently registers for courses.

For Spring Semester Fee Waivers:

June 15, prior year: The Graduate School reports to the Provost any unused balance in available resources for fee waivers.

Fall Semester: Deans and Provost consult, and determine available resources. Deans receive requests from their graduate programs (for Spring Semester only).

October 15: Departments (provisionally) select students for fee waiver awards, based on eligibility and qualifications listed above. Deans submit proposals for funding (for Spring Semester only), to include any internal college resources.

December 15: Provost determines allocations and informs deans. Deans distribute allocations (both internal and from Provost) to individual programs. Graduate program directors/coordinators select recipients for Spring Awards and forward Fee Waiver Award Form to the Graduate School.

January 15: The Graduate School processes the requests for fee waivers, which includes forwarding a list of award recipients to Financial Aid for eligibility review.

February 1: The Graduate School posts the fee waiver to the student's account. The student subsequently registers for courses.

Financial & Billing Information

To avoid being billed for coursework to be covered by fee waivers, graduate students should not register for courses until the waivers are posted to their accounts. It is thus extremely important that graduate programs adhere to the established timelines for providing information to the Graduate School. If the fee waiver is not processed within the established timelines, and the student receives a bill, the student must pay the bill and wait to receive compensating financial credit after the waiver is posted. Failure on the part of the graduate program or the Graduate School to meet their respective deadlines does not relieve the student from his/her financial obligations to the University. Failure to pay a University billing on time will result in the student being charged a non-reimbursable late fee.

Graduate programs may not award more waivers than those they have been allocated by the Provost and/or College Dean.

Graduate students may be awarded multiple fee waivers over the course of their studies, as long as they maintain the eligibility and qualification criteria described above.

CSU Executive Order 611 restricts fee waivers to the State University Fees. Fees that are not waived include local campus fees (e.g., IRA, Health Services, University Union, Associated Students, Athletics, etc.), non-resident fees, international student fees, parking, individual course fees, graduate fees, and processing fees (e.g., late application, add/drop, late payment, etc.).

Policy and Procedures for Employment of Graduate Assistants

The Graduate Council at CSU Stanislaus has developed this policy and procedure for the employment of Graduate Assistants, in accordance with the *CSU Classification & Qualification Standards* and the Unit 11 Collective Bargaining Agreement. In the event that this document appears to contradict stipulations found in the Collective Bargaining Agreement, the authority of the union contract will prevail.

The University considers the Graduate Assistant to be an important supporting role in many of our graduate programs. Graduate Assistants assist regular faculty with various professional and technical duties associated generally with the subjects or programs in which the assistant is doing graduate work. This work should not take precedence over the successful completion of the graduate degree program by the student in a timely matter. Ideally, the work done by the Graduate Assistant ought to complement their graduate studies, and provide practical experience within the discipline.

Roles & Responsibilities

Graduate Assistant

AY Class Code: 2355

Monthly Class Code: 2325

Graduate Assistant work may involve supervising students in a classroom, workshop, or laboratory (where final responsibility for the class and its entire instruction, including the performance of the GA, is vested in a member of the faculty); training students in the use of equipment or other resources; assisting faculty with research and preparation of course materials; participating in the evaluation of students' work; tutoring students; and other related work.

Graduate Assistants are not responsible for the instructional content of a course, selecting student assignments, planning of examinations, determining the term grade for students, instructing the entire enrollment of a course, or providing the entire instruction of a group of students enrolled in a course. Graduate Assistants may not be employed to assist in a course in which he/she is enrolled, nor should they be consulted regarding the grading of their peers.

Typical activities of Graduate Assistants may include: 1) assisting in the instruction of students by conducting small discussion groups related to large lecture or television courses and the like, supervising laboratory periods, workshops, production courses, or other course activities, assisting by handling equipment, performing demonstrations, maintaining office hours to provide direct individual contact between student and GA, clarifying course material or course content for students; 2) providing assistance to faculty conducting authorized research by collecting and arranging data, developing source materials, summarizing reports, searching the literature and compiling bibliographies, developing and operating research equipment, preparing and caring for research materials, assisting in the conduct of experiments, etc.; and/or 3) generally

assisting faculty in evaluating student work and examinations; preparing course materials and aids, or performing other functions requiring knowledge and background beyond that generally possessed by undergraduate assistants.

Minimum Qualifications for Graduate Assistants

The *CSU Classification & Qualification Standards* require that graduate students hired for the Graduate Assistant position provide evidence of the following qualifications:

- **Knowledge and Abilities:** Knowledge of the subject matter of the discipline in which assigned. Ability to relate well to others within the academic environment; ability to supervise, assist, and train students; and ability to assist faculty in the conduct of special projects/research within the discipline.
- **Experience:** For the initial appointment, evidence of satisfactory achievement in previous academic work. For subsequent appointment, evidence of satisfactory progress toward completion of the degree.
- **Education:** Equivalent to completion of the requirements for a bachelor's degree and registration in a CSU graduate degree program. Students enrolled in credential programs are not eligible for this position.

CSU Stanislaus Criteria

Enrollment: The potential Graduate Assistant must be registered as a classified student in a CSU Stanislaus graduate degree program, and enrolled in courses toward the completion of a graduate degree during the GA appointment period. Students enrolled in (K-12) teaching credential programs and students enrolled in graduate programs outside of the CSU are not eligible for this type of appointment.

Appointment: Graduate Assistants are salaried employees who may work up to, but no more than, an average of 20 hours per week during a typical academic semester. GA appointments are calculated as fractions based on the assumption that a 20 hour workweek equals a .50 appointment. Thus, a GA working an average of 10 hours per week would be given a .25 appointment.

Academic Progress: In order to encourage the continued academic progress of graduate students, CSU Stanislaus employs the following criteria for initial and continuing appointments:

- the classified graduate student is in good academic standing;
- the student is maintaining continuous enrollment in a graduate degree program;
- the student shows evidence of satisfactory progress toward degree completion.

Hiring Procedures

Departments wishing to hire Graduate Assistants should first identify the specific funding source for the position. It should be noted here that funds earmarked for fee waivers, or fee waivers themselves, may not be used as compensation for Graduate Assistant work. Once the source of funding has been clearly identified, and authorization for its expenditure has been secured, the department should establish specific procedures regarding the recruitment, formal application, and selection of Graduate Assistants. Those procedures must be consistent with this policy and procedures document, the *CSU Classifications & Qualifications Standards*, and the Unit 11 Collective Bargaining Agreement. Departments must file a copy of their hiring procedures (including timelines and deadlines) along with job descriptions for each Graduate Assistant position with: 1) the Graduate School office, 2) the office of Career Services, and 3) the office of Faculty Affairs.

Final appointment authority for Graduate Assistants resides with the College Dean and is based on: a) appropriate consultation with the academic department within which the GA will work, and b) available budgetary resources. Because Graduate Assistants are University employees represented within a collective bargaining agreement, their actual hiring process is managed by the Office of Faculty Affairs, which is responsible for implementing union contract provisions related to compensation, benefits, and the like. Selection of Graduate Assistants should occur by June 1 for employment in the following academic year. Initiation of a Graduate Assistant appointment begins when a department forwards to Faculty Affairs the “Part-Time Faculty Request for Appointment” form.

Training, Supervision, & Evaluation

The academic department is responsible for training, supervision, and periodic evaluation of Graduate Assistants. Departmental faculty should develop timelines, procedures, and forms related to GA training, supervision, and evaluation, after consulting provisions on such matters found in the Unit 11 Collective Bargaining Agreement. Subject to those contractual restrictions, implementation may include:

- Training: a preliminary orientation; participation in seminars, conferences, or workshops; formal coursework related to GA work; observation of faculty members; and individualized faculty mentoring.
- Supervision: periodic and systematic observations of a GA’s work; review of materials prepared by the GA; feedback from undergraduates tutored or supervised by the GA.
- Evaluation: GAs must be provided with evaluation criteria in writing within the first 14 days of their initial appointment. These criteria should also be accompanied by the procedures and schedule to be used by the unit. Once the appointment period begins, no changes should be made to these criteria or procedures. A summative evaluation should be provided to the GA at the end of

each semester. While the actual evaluation must be in writing, supervisors are strongly encouraged to meet with the GA to discuss the evaluation in order to provide an opportunity to respond to concerns, provide additional material, etc. If the GA disagrees with the evaluation, he/she has the right to submit a written rebuttal within 14 days; this rebuttal must be attached to the written evaluation before it is placed in the GA's file.

All training, supervision, and evaluation should be viewed—by both the GA and by departmental faculty—within an educational context. These processes should be considered teaching/learning opportunities, with the ultimate goal being the professional development of the Graduate Assistant within the discipline.

Compensation

The responsibility for compensation of Graduate Assistants falls to the department in which they are employed. Departments may use a combination of resources to meet this obligation. In some instances, the College Dean and/or Provost may provide some assistance. Because Graduate Assistants are salaried “exempt” employees, their compensation is based on an appointment fraction roughly corresponding to the average number of hours worked per week for the semester and/or academic year (and is therefore not an hourly rate). Current salary information for GAs can be found in the Unit 11 Collective Bargaining Agreement, or by contacting the Office of Faculty Affairs.

Fee Waivers: A Graduate Assistant may also receive a fee waiver, but the distinction between compensation and financial aid must be clearly understood. When a GA is paid a salary (from the General Fund, Foundation, or some other resource) this is compensation for work. On the other hand, a fee waiver is a form of financial aid, similar to a scholarship, and is being used to reduce the cost of the student's education. A fee waiver is *not* compensation and may not be used in lieu of compensation (i.e., no Unit 11 work may be performed in order to “earn” a fee waiver).

Policy and Procedures for Employment of Teaching Associates

The Graduate Council at CSU Stanislaus has developed this policy and procedure for the employment of Teaching Associates, in accordance with the *CSU Classification & Qualification Standards* and the Unit 11 Collective Bargaining Agreement. In the event that this document appears to contradict stipulations found in the Collective Bargaining Agreement, the authority of the union contract will prevail.

The University considers Teaching Associates an integral feature of our graduate programs and a logical consequence of the institution's mission to promote a learning environment. Further, our mission to personalize student learning often finds its fullest expression when the graduate *student* makes the transition to *instructor*. The Teaching Associate experience embodies the "knowledge, skills, and values that serve and support the University's mission," and is a practical way to "promote academic excellence in teaching."

Roles & Responsibilities

Teaching Associate

AY Class Code: 2354

12-Month Class Code: 2353

The Teaching Associate classification provides currently enrolled or admitted CSU graduate students with part-time employment offering practical teaching experience in fields related to their advanced study. They teach university courses and may also assist faculty or teaching staff with various professional and technical activities. Work assignments are closely associated with their program of study or the academic department in which they are enrolled.

The Teaching Associate classification is distinguished from the Graduate Assistant or Student Assistant classifications by assignments that primarily involve classroom and laboratory instruction. Responsibility for a course may be vested in the Teaching Associate under the direct supervision of an appropriate faculty member.

Teaching Associates typically are responsible for providing classroom and/or laboratory instruction, making assignments to students, preparing course materials, administering examinations, assessing student performance, tutoring students, and determining course grades. Also, incumbents may assist faculty with field experience, supervision, simulation exercises, and/or research projects. Normally, incumbents in Range A are designated to teach courses at the lower division level, and incumbents in Range B are designated to teach courses at the lower and/or upper division level.

Two salary ranges are provided for Teaching Associates. Range A represents the salary range for CSU graduate students who (1) are currently enrolled or admitted to master's degree programs, and (2) usually teach credit-bearing courses. Range B represents the salary range for CSU graduate students who (1) are currently enrolled or admitted to

doctoral degree programs, or hold a doctorate, and (2) usually teach credit-bearing courses.

Minimum Qualifications for Teaching Associates

The *CSU Classification & Qualification Standards* require that graduate students hired for the Teaching Associate position provide evidence of the following qualifications:

- Knowledge and Abilities: Knowledge of the subject matter of the discipline to which the individual is assigned. Ability to relate well to others within the academic environment and ability to instruct and evaluate students.
- Experience: Evidence of satisfactory achievement in previous academic work.
- Education:

Range A: Equivalent to or completion of the requirements for a bachelor's degree and concurrent admission to or enrollment in a graduate degree program of the university that is related to the discipline to which the individual is assigned.

Range B: Equivalent to or completion of the requirements for a master's or doctorate degree and concurrent admission to or enrollment in a doctorate degree program of the university that is related to the discipline to which the individual is assigned. One academic year of full-time doctoral study, with successful completion of all requirements, may be substituted for the master's degree requirement.

CSU Stanislaus Criteria

Enrollment: The potential Teaching Associate must be registered as a classified student in a CSU Stanislaus graduate degree program, and enrolled in courses toward the completion of a graduate degree during the teaching associate appointment period. Students enrolled in (K-12) teaching credential programs and students enrolled in graduate programs outside of the CSU are not eligible for this type of appointment.

Appointment: Teaching Associates appointed at half time or more may not be appointed concurrently in another student assistant classification. Teaching Associates appointed for less than half time may be appointed concurrently in another student classification, up to a combined total of approximately 20 hours per week. Hours worked in another student classification do not count toward benefits eligibility in the Teaching Associate classification.

Qualifications: In order to encourage high quality of instruction and the continued academic progress of graduate students, CSU Stanislaus employs the following criteria for initial and continuing appointments:

- the classified graduate student is in good academic standing;
- the student is maintaining continuous enrollment in a graduate degree program;
- the student shows evidence of satisfactory progress toward degree completion;
- the student possess some previous tutoring and/or teaching experience, related instructional experience, and/or department training and preparation.

Hiring Procedures

Departments wishing to hire Teaching Associates for instructional activities should first identify the specific funding source for the position. It should be noted here that funds earmarked for fee waivers, or fee waivers themselves, may not be used as compensation for Teaching Associate work. Once the source of funding has been clearly identified, and authorization for its expenditure has been secured, the department should establish specific procedures regarding the recruitment, formal application, and selection of Teaching Associates. These procedures must be consistent with this policy and procedures document, the *CSU Classifications & Qualifications Standards*, and the Unit 11 Collective Bargaining Agreement. Departments must file a copy of their hiring procedures (including timelines and deadlines) along with job descriptions for each Teaching Associate position with: 1) the Graduate School office, 2) the office of Career Services, and 3) the office of Faculty Affairs.

Final appointment authority for Teaching Associates resides with the College Dean, and is based on: a) appropriate consultation with the academic department within which the TA will teach, and b) available budgetary resources. Because Teaching Associates are University employees represented within a collective bargaining agreement, their actual hiring process is managed by the Office of Faculty Affairs which is responsible for implementing union contract provisions related to compensation, benefits, and the like. Selection of Teaching Associates should occur by June 1 for employment in the following academic year. Initiation of a Teaching Associate appointment begins when a department forwards to Faculty Affairs the “Part-Time Faculty Request for Appointment” form.

Training, Supervision, & Evaluation

The academic department is responsible for training, supervision, and periodic evaluation of Teaching Associates. Departmental faculty should develop timelines, procedures, and forms related to TA training, supervision, and evaluation, after consulting provisions on such matters found in the Unit 11 Collective Bargaining Agreement. Subject to those contractual restrictions, implementation may include:

- Training: a preliminary orientation; participation in seminars, conferences, or workshops; formal coursework related to pedagogy; observation of faculty members’ teaching; and individualized faculty mentoring.

- Supervision: periodic and systematic observations of a TA's classroom or laboratory instruction; review of classroom materials, syllabi, quizzes and examinations; review of IDEA feedback.
- Evaluation: TAs must be provided with evaluation criteria in writing within the first 14 days of their initial appointment. These criteria should also be accompanied by the procedures and schedule to be used by the unit. Once the appointment period begins, no changes should be made to these criteria or procedures. A summative evaluation should be provided to the TA at the end of each semester. While the actual evaluation must be in writing, supervisors are strongly encouraged to meet with the TA to discuss the evaluation in order to provide an opportunity to respond to concerns, provide additional material, etc. If the TA disagrees with the evaluation, he/she has the right to submit a written rebuttal within 14 days; this rebuttal must be attached to the written evaluation before it is placed in the TAs file.

All training, supervision, and evaluation should be viewed—by both the TA and by departmental faculty—within an educational context. These processes should be considered teaching/learning opportunities, with the ultimate goal being the professional development of the Teaching Associate as an instructor.

Compensation & Benefits

The responsibility for compensation of the Teaching Associate falls to the department in which they are employed. Departments may use a combination of resources to meet this obligation. In some instances, the College Dean and/or Provost may provide some assistance. Because Teaching Associates are salaried “exempt” employees, their compensation is based on WTU assigned workload for the semester and/or academic year (and is therefore not an hourly rate). Current salary information for TAs can be found in the Unit 11 Collective Bargaining Agreement, or by contacting the Office of Faculty Affairs.

Only Teaching Associates who are appointed to a 50% (or higher) timebase for 6 months (or more) are benefits-eligible. All questions regarding potential TA benefits eligibility should be directed to the Office of Faculty Affairs.

Fee Waivers: A Teaching Associate may also receive a fee waiver, but the distinction between compensation and financial aid must be clearly understood. When a TA is paid a salary (from the General Fund, Foundation, or some other resource) this is compensation for work—usually, instruction. On the other hand, a fee waiver is a form of financial aid, similar to a scholarship, and is being used to reduce the cost of the student's education. A fee waiver is *not* compensation, and may not be used in lieu of compensation (i.e., no Unit 11 work may be performed in order to “earn” a fee waiver).