

GRADUATE ASSISTANT GUIDELINES

ASSISTANTSHIPS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

General Policy

Assistantships for graduate students provide outstanding students with financial resources to help them complete their degrees. Assistantships offer varying educational and professional benefits but, in general, assistantships can offer the opportunity to—

- gain further instruction in field of study
- gain leadership experience
- hone your research skills
- acquire pedagogical experience necessary for an academic career
- develop professional skills including leadership, interpersonal effectiveness, and
- performance evaluation

Anderson University awards approximately 21 graduate assistantships to qualified students each year (Educational Support-2; Student Life-4; Athletics-14; and Admissions-1). These awards are intended to help accomplish our educational mission as well as to supplement your academic and professional pursuits.

The Office of Work Life Engagement coordinates the employment of the Graduate Assistantship program and direct supervision is provided by the respective Dean/Director: Athletic Director; Dean of Students; Director of Educational Support Services; Director of Admissions, Recruitment and Outreach; Controller, Asst. Treasurer. Graduate Assistants are employed under the University student employment guidelines and subject to the policies of the Student Employment Handbook.

Objectives

Assistantships are designed to –

- recruit outstanding and promising students to graduate study, with special attention to access and equal opportunity policies
- provide graduate-level learning experiences through a supervised assignment
- provide support that enables you to complete your graduate degree on time
- provide the university with limited support services in selected programs and areas

Eligibility for Appointment/Reappointment

To be considered for an assistantship, candidates must –

- possess an earned baccalaureate degree (or its equivalent) by your beginning assignment date
- satisfy the selection criteria for an assistantship established by the graduate program or department where you will be placed
- be admitted to graduate study and enrolled in an Anderson University master's program in the School of Theology & Christian Ministry (*except* the online degree Masters of Christian Ministry program), the Falls School of Business (*except* the residential MBA program, or the School of Music, Theatre, & Dance Masters of Music Ed.
- for reappointment, be in good standing at AU, making satisfactory progress in the graduate program, and have no incomplete grades (except for your thesis or master's project courses),

- must meet University lifestyle expectations

Preference will be given to students who –

- have not already obtained a graduate degree
- have not previously been awarded an assistantship at AU, or
- have held an AU assistantship for less than four semesters Assistantships at AU involve responsibilities that require assistants to be present on campus. Applicants are strongly encouraged to initiate the application process at least two months prior to the graduate assistantship application deadline.

Application Process

To be considered for an assistantship, you must apply to and be accepted by a graduate program, complete the Graduate Assistantship Application form and complete the Paycom application process including application questions, download a resume and download a cover letter via Studentemployment.anderson.edu or employment.anderson.edu

The application for graduate study and a listing of graduate program application requirements can be found by contacting the Graduate program directly.

Your application will be considered complete when –

- you have been admitted to an AU graduate program (see qualifying programs above)
- you have submitted a letter of interest
- you have submitted a resume
- you have submitted a Graduate Assistantship Application
- you have submitted Paycom application information

(NOTE: If hired for a Graduate Assistantship, the new employee will need to complete payroll information through Paycom.com. And provide the required identification to complete the I-9 form.)

Anderson University Statement of Compliance

Anderson University maintains compliance with applicable federal and state statutes related to private institutions of higher education including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), as amended; the Student Right to Know Act, as amended; and the Solomon Amendment. In compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and 1991, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 as amended, the university does not discriminate in its educational programs or admissions procedures. Anderson University is a not-for-profit exempt organization as described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

The duties of a Graduate Assistant (GA) are to support the teaching and learning environment through administrative functions. Graduate assistants whose primary (i.e., greater than 50%) duties consist of the following types of activities will be classified as Graduate Assistants –

Duty	Sample Tasks
Clerical Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copying course materials • Correspondence • General office work/Receptionist
Advising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve as liaison to Educational Support by being a student advocate • Providing support to academic advisors
Coaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant Coach for assigned athletic team • Academic Coach for student athletes or academically struggling students
Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with student recruitment

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help publicize programs and activities to campus and public constituencies • Assist with event management
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TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF ASSISTANTSHIP AWARDS

Notice of Appointment

All newly appointed and re-appointed assistants will receive a letter of agreement that specifies the appointment title, stipend amount, effective dates of service, and the supervising individual/department.

Work Responsibilities

You will be supervised directly by a faculty or staff member of the program/department that offers your appointment. The assistantship supervisor recommends candidates for appointment, determines the assistantship assignments, and supervises and evaluates your work. Contact your supervisor for details about the assistantship.

Graduate assistantship appointments are typically half-time (20 hours per week) for one academic year (10 months). The time allocated to fulfilling work responsibilities should not exceed 20 hours a week; however, under special circumstances, an overload during one week may be balanced by a lighter load during the week before or after the overload. (International students, due to their visa status, are not allowed to work more than 20 hours per week in their assistantship.) Overload hours should be planned in advance and should be mutually agreed to by you and your supervisor. Under no circumstances may an assistant work more than 40 hours per week. Assistants do not earn vacation.

According to Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) regulations, **Graduate Assistantships** are considered “salaried non-exempt” appointments. Graduate Assistants (GAs) are required to record their actual hours worked. These sheets should be reviewed and signed by the Graduate Assistant’s supervisor on a monthly basis (or more frequently if requested by the supervisor).

If an assistant is sick or otherwise unable to come to work on a day that he/she is scheduled to work, the assistant should contact his/her supervisor. If you miss work hours, you should arrange with your supervisor to make up the hours. Assistants do not earn sick leave.

All assistantships are considered academic year appointments. Since assignments vary, your supervisor will monitor your work responsibilities. If an assistant is assigned duties during a scheduled academic holiday/break, he/she should be given equal time off at another time. This revised work schedule should be mutually agreed on by the assistant and his/her supervisor.

Graduate Assistants are to report to work as instructed by their department/supervisor.

Assistants are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is professional, courteous, and conducive to a professional atmosphere in the performance of their University duties. Assistants are expected to comply with all work rules and expectations that are developed in their appointing programs, departments, or units, as well as with applicable University rules and policies. Applicable University policies include, but are not limited to Sexual Harassment, Drug Free Schools and Campuses, the University and Student Codes of Conduct, and policies governing research with human subjects and the use of University resources. You are expected to be familiar with these policies. Electronic copies of the policies can be accessed through links available on the Work Life Engagement, Department of Student Life and/or applicable Graduate school web pages.

Work Plan

Working with your designated supervisor, you will have a written work plan that includes –

- Job Description – general areas of responsibility as well as specific tasks
- Learning Objectives/Special Projects – responsibilities as they relate to the assistant's academic pursuits and/or career aspirations
- Work Schedule – the estimated number of hours per week to be spent on each assigned responsibility, and the schedule of days/times assistant will work each week

The agreed upon written work plan will be sent to Office of Work Life Engagement. In the event you wish to change your assistantship work schedule based upon adding or dropping a course after the work plan has been agreed to, you should meet with your supervisor and discuss the impact on your schedule. The work schedule may be changed by mutual agreement between the assistant and supervisor. In the event mutual agreement cannot be reached, the work schedule as agreed to in the work plan shall prevail.

Wages and Benefits

Graduate Assistants are designated by Anderson University as student employees. Pay rates vary depending on the work assignment but will not be less than minimum wage as required by Wage and Hour regulations; wages are not subject to FICA/Medicare tax withholdings. Wages are paid according to the bi-weekly payroll schedule. Graduate Assistants are covered by Worker's Compensation during paid work hours but are not eligible for other University benefits (vacation, sick leave, medical, dental, retirement or life insurance). Depending on availability a GA may choose campus-provided housing; this is a taxable benefit.

Graduate Assistants receive the remitted tuition benefit of 100% to earn a Master's Degree. This is a tuition waiver of up to \$5,250 per year that is not taxable; tuition beyond this amount is taxable. Pre-requisite courses taken at Anderson University are covered by the tuition waiver. All program fees, except for course-specific fees, will be waived. (Disclaimer: Fee structure reviewed and subject to change annually.)

Satisfactory Academic Performance

Successful, timely completion of your graduate degree is the primary goal of our Assistantship Program. The responsibility for monitoring your mid-year and year-end academic progress rests with your designated supervisor. He or she will cooperate with your academic advisor, the dean or administrator of the program offering your appointment, and the Office of Work Life Engagement in making these evaluations.

Resignation/Withdrawal from Graduate Program

Upon accepting an Assistantship, it is assumed you will complete the entire academic year. If a resignation/withdrawal is deemed necessary, you are asked to resign/withdraw effective at the end of a semester unless circumstances prevent this. Prior to making a decision you are encouraged to speak with your Supervisor and/or Graduate Program Director. Notice of resignation/withdrawal is requested a minimum of 30 days prior to the end of the semester.

Resignation from Assistantship Assignment: Assistants may choose to resign from employment while continuing enrollment and continue enrollment in a graduate program. Should resignation from the assistantship assignment occur before the end of a semester, tuition waiver for the semester will be prorated and the balance of the semester's tuition applied to your student account.

Withdrawal from Graduate Program: Withdrawal from the graduate program is an automatic termination of the Graduate Assistantship assignment. If withdrawal occurs before the end of the semester, tuition and fee charges will be calculated in accordance with current policy and may be

applied to your student account. The effective date of withdrawal will be the date communicated by the graduate program to the University Registrar.

Simultaneous Resignation/Withdrawal from Graduate Program: Both of the above procedures are effective.

Satisfactory Work Performance and Notice of Deficiency in Performance

Assistants are expected to meet responsibilities specified in the work plan, adhere to the agreed upon work schedule, and conduct themselves consistent with the employment expectations outlined in the Anderson University Student Employment Handbook. For most problems with performance, the assistantship supervisor will first attempt to correct performance deficiencies through work-related counseling, instruction, or training. Assistants are encouraged to work cooperatively with their supervisors to informally resolve performance problems.

Deficiencies in performance that are not resolved informally through work-related counseling, instruction, or training may result in formal discipline up to and including dismissal. Formal disciplinary procedures, in consultation with Work Life Engagement, will generally follow the process outlined in the Anderson University Staff Handbook. A recommendation to terminate your assistantship may occur if a very severe problem in performance exists, you fail to make specified improvements in performance within an established time period or there are violations of AU's conduct standards.

Termination

If your work performance is not satisfactory and you fail to make improvements specified in the notice of deficiency by the time your performance is re-evaluated, your supervisor may recommend to the dean/director or the division head that your assistantship be terminated or not renewed for the next year.

Behaviors that may result in the termination of your assistantship without oral warning or notice of deficiency in performance include, but are not limited to –

- failing to maintain academic eligibility because of unsatisfactory academic progress;
- obtaining off-campus employment in excess of 20 hours per week;
- engaging in unethical or unacceptable conduct (see University Code of Conduct at <http://www.anderson.edu/hr/policies>); or
- abandoning job duties (i.e., absence without approval for 3 or more working days)

Depending upon the reason for termination, you may be given 30 calendar days' notice. Behaviors defined as Gross Misconduct in the Anderson University Staff Handbook may result in immediate termination. Termination of an assistantship will follow the same procedures as "Resignation/Withdrawal from Graduate Program."

Renewal for Subsequent Academic Year

Reappointments to assistantship positions are not automatic. Students must apply for reappointment completing a Reappointment Request Form. Your application materials, academic records, performance evaluations, and length of time in the assistantship position will be considered when you seek reappointment. Graduate students who are not re-appointed will be notified in writing by the dean/director or their supervisor.

Academic eligibility for reappointment requires that you are in good standing at AU, have completed at least 12 semester hours of credit during the academic year, are making satisfactory progress toward completion of your degree, and have no incomplete grades. Incomplete coursework must be completed before a student can be reappointed.

Assistantships are normally limited to a maximum of four semesters. Students normally will not be considered for assistant appointments that exceed four semesters. Exceptions to this policy can be considered under extraordinary circumstances. To request this exception, you must complete the Graduate Assistantship Reappointment Request form, attach a letter detailing the basis for your request and any supporting documentation you wish to include. Submit the Request form with the letter(s) to the Office of Work Life Engagement which will facilitate the decision process.