

4.2 RA and TA Appointments

A. Appointing Students to Graduate Assistantships

All Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs), Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs), and Graduate Services Assistants (GSAs) are appointed in the University's HR System and are paid on the University's biweekly payroll cycle. Students must sign up for direct deposit through Employee Self-Service in MyPack Portal.

Graduate students who are paid on a temporary/hourly basis may not be given the title Graduate Research Assistant, Graduate Teaching Assistant, Graduate Extension Assistant, or Graduate Services Assistant. Temporary appointees may be referred to as student workers.

- Graduate Teaching Assistants: Appointed in the University HR system under Job Code A138, A178, A438, A478/Employee Class GRD, Department ID from 11#### -20####.
- Graduate Research Assistants: Appointed in the University HR System under Job Code A148, A178, A448, A478/Employee Class GRD, Department ID from 11#### -20####.
- Graduate Extension Assistants: Appointed in the University HR System under Job Code A428, A438, A448, A478/Employee Class GRD, Department ID from 11#### -20####.
- Graduate Services Assistants: Appointed in the University HR System under Job Code A198/Employee Class GRD.

B. Procedures for Paying Fellowship Stipends/Awards

NC State University, effective July 1, 1997 (updated June 1, 2012)

All graduate fellowship stipends/awards are entered in the University's Financial Aid System by the Graduate School based on information provided by departments on the Graduate Fellowship Payment Information Form. A copy of the graduate fellowship stipend/award letter attached to the Graduate Fellowship Payment Information Form must be forwarded to the Graduate School for all new fellowship stipends/awards by the 15th of the month in which disbursements begin.

Students receive monthly payments through the Cashier's Office, and students must sign up for direct deposit through Student Financials in MyPack Portal.

1. Determining the Primary or Supplemental Status of a Fellowship

A primary fellowship is one that pays a stipend/award of \$3,000 or more for the Fall or Spring academic term. Health insurance benefits, in-state tuition awards, and tuition remission (if applicable) must be provided under the terms and conditions of the Graduate Student Support Plan, if the student meets the Plan's registration requirements. A primary fellowship is responsible for the total cost of the health insurance benefits, in-state tuition, and tuition remission matching (if applicable). Tuition remission match is 25% of the out-of-state tuition amount and is only applicable to out-of-state students. Health insurance coverage remains in force only as long as the fellowship appointment remains in effect. If any part of the benefits

package (where applicable) cannot be paid by the fellowship funds, the college must cover it from other sources of funds.

A supplemental fellowship is one that pays a stipend/award less than \$3,000 for the Fall or Spring academic term. Supplemental fellowships are not used to determine eligibility for health insurance, in-state tuition awards, or tuition remission. Recipients of supplemental fellowships will not be eligible for health insurance and tuition remission unless they have other qualifying assistantship appointments or primary fellowships.

2. Fellowship Assignment Guidelines

The following guidelines apply to fellowships in order to distinguish them from assistantships and retain their "exempt from withholding" status:

All fellowship assignments will be entered in the SIS Financial Aid System with an stipend/award amount and the dates for disbursement. The designation of the fellowship as primary or supplemental will be determined by both the award amount and the dates for disbursement.

Examples are:

- a. If a student will be paid a graduate fellowship of \$14,000 in equal monthly installments over an academic year (fall and spring terms), the stipend/award amount entered into the Financial Aid System will be \$14,000. The effective date will be 8/1/XX and the end date will be 5/31/XX, with disbursements paid August through May. This is a primary fellowship.
- b. If a student will be paid a graduate fellowship of \$5,000 in equal monthly installments over an academic year (Fall and Spring Terms), the stipend/award amount entered into the Financial Aid System will be \$5,000. The effective date will be 8/1/XX and the end date will be 5/31/XX, with disbursements paid August through May. This is a supplemental fellowship.

Note: Fellowship payments default to equal monthly amounts over the disbursement period. The default disbursement schedule/monthly amount can be overridden when needed. The reason for the adjustment should be provided on the Graduate Fellowship Payment Information Form.

- c. If a student will be paid \$2,500 in August, and \$2,500 in January, a stipend/award of \$5,000 will be entered in Financial Aid. The first \$2,500 installment will be designated for the Fall term with disbursement in August, and the second \$2,500 installment will be designated for Spring term with disbursement in January. Since the payments are not continuous, this is a supplemental fellowship; please keep in mind that in order to qualify for continuous health insurance benefits throughout the academic year, the student must be receiving continuous biweekly "primary" fellowship payments.

The process to determine a graduate student's eligibility for health insurance benefits, in-state tuition, and tuition remission will read this stipend/award in Financial Aid in the same way it reads a graduate assistantship appointment in the HR System. In the case of a primary fellowship, eligibility and payment

responsibility for graduate student support will be determined on the value of the primary fellowship stipend/award alone.

If the country of legal residence is not the US, taxes will be withheld, or not, based on the country of residence.

In addition to the stipend/award amount, many fellowships include the cost of education and/or educational enhancement funds. These funds may be used to pay the fellow's tuition, fees, books, supplies, travel, and other costs that directly support the student's educational program. These funds will be managed by the fellow's department or college and in some cases, the Graduate School. Expenditure of these funds will continue to be processed through Accounts Payable as it has in the past.

A No-Pay Graduate Fellowship job record will be entered in the HR System by the Graduate School based on information provided in the Graduate Fellowship Payment Information Form; this No-Pay job record will provide the student with access to the University's Marketplace and Travel Systems. Cost of education and educational enhancement funds will not be used to determine eligibility for the health insurance benefits, in-state tuition awards, or tuition remission.

C. Terms and Conditions of Assistantship Appointments

When appointing students to Graduate Research/Teaching/Extension Assistantships, the terms and conditions for the appointment must be presented in writing to the student. The Terms and Conditions for Appointment document may be used as a stand-alone document. If the department chooses to send its own letter of appointment, the Conditions for Appointment statement must be attached. Also, a checklist, Items to be Included in Letters of Offer Along With Generic Form of Conditions for Appointment, is provided to ensure that departments include all necessary information in their assistantship offer letters.

The "Terms and Conditions" document must be used to make clear the expectations the University has for Teaching, Research and Extension Assistantships and for the individual on these appointments to know the conditions upon which they are appointed and the benefits they are entitled to in exchange for their performance.

Procedures

1. Initial Graduate Assistantship Appointment

Each student who is offered a Graduate Research/Teaching/Extension Assistantship will be notified in writing of the terms and conditions of their appointment. The following documentation is required for all new or initial Graduate Research/Teaching/Extension Assistantship appointments:

- Completed and signed Terms and Conditions for Appointment document OR the Conditions for Appointment document, along with a letter of offer stating the "terms" of appointment
- I-9 and e-Verify completed through Guardian. The department submits completed and signed documents attached to the HR System Personnel Action Form (PAF) to the Graduate School. No assistantship is in effect until (a) all documentation is submitted and approved by the Graduate School, and (b) the appointment

has been entered into the Human Resources (HR) System. The information in the HR System must match the terms and conditions document. The appointment end date from the terms and conditions document represents the last day the student will be paid, and the date is entered in the HR System as both the "appointment end date" and the "expected job end date." Graduate assistant appointments are systematically terminated in the HR System based on the "expected job end date."

2. Extension of Graduate Assistantship appointment or additional Graduate appointment

A change to the appointment such as an extension of the current appointment that is not reflected in the initial "Terms and Conditions" document or the initial "Conditions for Appointment" document and letter of offer necessitates a new, signed Terms and Conditions document reflecting the change(s). Both the student and the Director of Graduate Programs (DGP) must be in agreement to change the terms and conditions of the existing appointment.

For example, if the initial Terms and Conditions of the Graduate Assistantship indicated support for a three (3) year appointment, the initial document would cover continuous payments for that three-year period of time unless changes were made to the terms of the appointment. If the initial "Terms and Conditions" document reflected support for a one (1) year Graduate Assistantship, this initial document would cover continuous payments as a Graduate Assistant for the one-year term only.

Any appointment not covered in the initial Terms and Conditions requires a new Terms and Conditions document. Appointments that are extended necessitate a new, signed Terms and Conditions. Payroll actions extending the appointment must be processed in the HR System at least three weeks prior to the planned exit date to insure that continuous pay is not disrupted. The department submits completed and signed documents attached to the HR System Personnel Action Form (PAF) to the Graduate School. No reappointment is in effect until (a) all documentation is submitted and approved by the Graduate School, and (b) the appointment has been entered into the Human Resources (HR) System.

3. Termination of Graduate Assistantship prior to the end of the contract

If a graduate assistant resigns prior to the end of the contract stated in his/her "Terms and Conditions" document, a letter of resignation or a memorandum documenting the resignation is required. A copy of the required back-up documentation in #8 of the "Terms and Conditions" document attached to the HR System Personnel Action Form (PAF) must be forwarded to the Graduate School once the termination action has been entered and approved in the HR System.

If a department terminates a graduate assistant prior to the end of the contract stated in the "Terms and Conditions" document, a copy of the required back-up documentation in #8 of the "Terms and Conditions" document attached to the HR System Personnel Action Form (PAF) must be forwarded to the Graduate School once the termination action has been entered and approved in the HR System.

4. Reinstatement of Assistantship

Students who have their assistantship terminated due to academic difficulty must have their DGP submit a separate request for reinstatement and academic exception to their Graduate School Liaison.

5. Human Resources (HR) System

Data entry in the HR System must reflect the current appointment(s). This includes title, compensation rate, FTE, and dates of appointment, as reflected in the "Terms and Conditions" document.

6. Terms and Conditions for Self-Supporting Students

Self-supporting students enrolling at NC State may be asked by their department to complete the Terms and Conditions for Self-Supporting Students document when they enter a graduate program. This document outlines their academic obligations, but in no way obligates the University to any financial responsibility for the student.

D. Assistantship Course Load

Students appointed to assistantships should consider the number of credit hours for which they register in any given fall or spring semester in light of the duties expected of them as a result of the assistantship. Limits to the number of credits such students may register for in a semester may be imposed by individual advisers or by programs. In such cases, registration should be established in consultation with the student's adviser and/or DGP.

E. Taxation of Assistantships and Fellowships

All scholarship and fellowship payments are reportable on the recipient's income tax returns. This includes the amount of any tuition remission a student may have received, which is treated as a fellowship for tax purposes.

All assistantship payments are considered wages and will be paid and reported by the University payroll system. They will be subject to tax withholding.

The University Payroll Office can answer questions concerning current tax issues. Also refer to the Internal Revenue Service and/or NC Department of Revenue.

F. Managing Fellowships and Grants

In addition to fellowships and traineeships administered by individual colleges and departments, the Graduate School administers a number of fellowships (traineeships) and grants. These include:

1. "Portable" fellowships awarded by foundations and government agencies, which individual students "bring" to the University and which the Graduate School is asked to administer;
2. Federally funded fellowships (traineeships) awarded to the University as a result of grant proposals, which are often used to recruit students to specific interdisciplinary programs of study and research;
3. Institutional fellowships funded with income from university fellowship endowments;
4. Grants to support graduate student diversity (see below).

Regarding University-awarded fellowships, in most cases students are nominated by their graduate programs or colleges rather than

applying directly for the fellowships. Recipients are selected either by the Credentials and Awards Committee of the Administrative Board of the Graduate School or by a selections committee of faculty who help direct a specific training program.

1. Fellowship Information and Nominations Procedures

Graduate School Fellowship Information on the Graduate School web site provides an overview of types of funding available for graduate education, descriptions of selected NC State fellowships administered by the Graduate School, and searchable databases for nationally competitive fellowships and other funding opportunities. Both campus-based and national fellowship competitions are routinely announced in the NC State Online Bulletin. For University-wide fellowships, calls for nominations are sent to DGPs and/or Associate Deans, depending on the selections process. For training grants, which are much narrower in scope, calls for nominations are e-mailed to the training faculty identified in the grant proposal or to DGPs whose programs are eligible to nominate trainees. To nominate students for diversity grants, DGPs should contact the Graduate School. Further information on all funding opportunities is available by contacting Dr. David Shafer, Assistant Dean of the Graduate School.

2. Generating Fellowship (Traineeship) Programs

Researching opportunities and submitting proposals for new fellowship (traineeship) programs is a coordinated effort among the NC State Graduate School, faculty, and the Proposal Development Unit (PDU), which is part of the Office of Research, Innovation, and Economic Development. The PDU provides support for faculty producing large-scale proposals for graduate fellowships with a goal of enhancing competitiveness for research and graduate fellowship funding. In most cases, funded fellowship proposals are administered by the Graduate School.

3. Managing Fellowship (Traineeships) and Diversity Grants: The Role of the Graduate School

For all fellowships (traineeships) and grants administered by the Graduate School, the Graduate School appoints the students through the Financial Aid System and sets up their accounts. If their award qualifies them for the Graduate Student Support Plan, the Graduate School also pays their tuition, health insurance, and any other fees covered by the fellowship or traineeship, as well as the monthly stipend.

For fellowships and grants with a need-based stipend, the Graduate School also calculates the appropriate stipend/award level. If the fellowship brings with it an educational enhancement allowance for books, supplies, professional travel, etc., the Graduate School sets up an account for these funds and monitors their disbursement. Finally, the Graduate School monitors the academic progress of students receiving funding from fellowships, traineeships, and grants to ensure that they are meeting the academic requirements of their funding.

For institutionally awarded fellowship and traineeship programs and for diversity grants, the Graduate School, in consultation with

the training faculty, has some or all of the following additional responsibilities:

- a. Sending out calls for nominations and collecting nomination/application materials
- b. Coordinating the selections process for the faculty selections committee
- c. Sending out award letters
- d. Coordinating arrangements for orientation of new fellows and trainees
- e. Coordinating the annual evaluation of fellows (trainees) and the training programs themselves
- f. Coordinating competitions to fill any traineeship vacancies
- g. Monitoring trainees' participation in required professional development programs
- h. Coordinating related professional development activities such as seminars and mini-grant competitions for which the Graduate School is responsible
- i. Submitting reports to the funding agency.

4. Managing Graduate Fellowships (Traineeships) and Grants: The Role of Directors of Graduate Programs (DGPs) and Other Graduate Faculty

Depending on the requirements of the fellowships (traineeships) or grants of students in their programs, DGPs and training faculty have one or more of the following responsibilities:

- a. Mentoring fellows (trainees) and grant recipients to ensure that they are effectively integrated into their graduate programs, that they understand and fulfill the conditions of their awards, and that they make satisfactory progress toward the degree.
- b. Notifying the Graduate School if the department or program does not receive the student's stipend check on time.
- c. Submitting annual evaluations of fellows (trainees) who are their advisees and seeing that these advisees submit annual activity reports to the Graduate School on time.
- d. Notifying the Graduate School of any student whose fellowship (traineeship) or grant should be terminated because:
 - the student is switching to a degree program or research focus ineligible for fellowship (traineeship) funding;
 - the student has accepted outside employment that makes him or her ineligible for his or her award; or
 - the student is withdrawing from the University.
- e. Working with department heads to ensure that the department or program honors any financial commitments associated with accepting students with a specific financial award, such as the following:
 - For those programs that require them, providing supplements to the stipend awarded through the grant;
 - For supplemental fellowships or grants that require them, ensuring that the student also has an assistantship stipend per semester;
 - Using tuition remission slots for out-of-state students in fellowship programs that require tuition remission as part of an institutional match;
 - Ensuring that fellows (trainees) participate in those professional development activities outlined in the traineeship proposal, such as Preparing the Professoriate, research ethics training, internships, or service learning;

- If applicable, providing support for the student beyond the length of the fellowship (traineeship) until the degree is completed, provided that the student is making satisfactory progress toward the degree and usually for no more than a total of five years of combined support.

5. Diversity Grants for Students from Underrepresented Groups

Diversity Enhancement Grants are funded by the State of North Carolina for students who are accepted in master's or Ph.D. programs at NC State. Criteria for selection include: academic record, character, creativity, educational and economic background, race and ethnicity, gender, exceptional personal talents, unique work or service experience, and leadership potential. Applicants must add to the goal of increasing diversity in graduate education at North Carolina State University. Recipients are awarded stipends based on financial need for the academic year, with an option of additional support for study in the summer session.