



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Graduate Teaching Assistantships

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Version 2.0
Revised: Jan. 2, 2021

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1. What is GTA and GRA Workload?

Answer: You may hold multiple assistantships (e.g., GTA and GRA) from our department. However, the cumulative FET (Full-Time Equivalent) appointment cannot add up to more than a 0.50 FTE (20 hours per week) appointment. For example, you're your GTA load is 1/3, then your GRA load will be 1/6. Your GRA rate, of course, can be adjusted by your advisor who offer you the graduate research assistantship.

2. What's the discrepancy between graduate teaching assistant (GTA) and graduate assistant (GA)?

Answer: You are classified as a GTA (e.g., in COMP1000 and COMP1100), if at least 50% of your responsibility as a teaching assistant is devoted to the direct instruction of students in classrooms or computer laboratories. If your role is a grader (e.g., a grader for COMP3500), you will be categorized as a graduate assistant (GA) rather than a graduate teaching assistant (GTA). GAs are not required to take the SPEAK test.



Nevertheless, all CSSE international graduate students who seek to be GTAs in future semesters are strongly encouraged to take the SPEAK test.

3. What does FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) mean?

Answer: FTE stands for Full Time Equivalent. If you receive an assistantship at the FTE rate of 0.5 in fall, spring, and summer semesters, you will work 20 hours per week.

4. Can I receive tuition waiver without an assistantship?

Answer: The answer depends on if you have been awarded an assistantship in the past. More specifically, graduate assistants who have received a 0.33 FTE or higher assistantship for two semesters of a given academic year and are not on assistantship for the third semester will receive tuition support during that corresponding third semester.

5. How to apply for a graduate tuition fellowship?

Answer: You cannot apply for a tuition fellowship. Students with a teaching/research assistantship appointment of 0.33 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) or higher will automatically receive a graduate tuition fellowship that pays resident and non-resident tuition.

6. How many credit hours will be covered by my tuition fellowship?

Answer: University funded tuition support will be limited to 110% of the number of hours required for a graduate degree. For example, a doctoral student continuously supported with a qualifying assistantship is in a program that requires a minimum of 66 hours to complete. The maximum Graduate Tuition Fellowship support available to the PhD student is 110% of 66 hours, which is 72 hours. If the student has not completed the degree in 72 supported hours and she/he retains an assistantship, tuition and fees will be charged at in-state rates thereafter.

7. How to track my university-paid tuition record?

Answer: The *Graduate Tuition Fellowship System* (GTUFS) shows you (1) the number of hours taken toward their degree as of the current semester, (2) the number of hours allowed under the tuition waiver, and (3) the number of tuition hours remaining to be covered by the waiver.. The system indicates the number of credit hours to be covered by the tuition fellowship in the future semesters.

GTUFS: <http://graduate.auburn.edu/current-students/guidelines-for-graduate-tuition-fellowships/>

You may follow the steps below to access GTUFS:

- Log-In to AU Access
- Click-on the Student Menu option of the My Academics tab.



- On the “Student” tab, click Graduate Tuition Fellowship System (GTUFS).

8. What is the minimum number of credit hours a GTA/GRA must be enrolled in each semester?

Answer: In general, GTAs/GRAs must be enrolled in nine (9) graduate credit course hours in the Department of Computer Science and Software Engineering per Fall or Spring semester. In summer semesters, GTAs should be enrolled in at least three (3) graduate credit course hours. Although exemptions may be approved by the director of graduate programs (GPO), the minimum number of credit hours is three (3) per semester.

9. What is the background check policy?

Answer: The Graduate School requires that all graduate student employees (including hourly paid) have an approved consumer report and/or investigative consumer report (background check) as a condition for appointment. The information contained in these reports may be used to deny an individual employment or continued employment with Auburn University. The background report and its contents are deemed private and confidential and shall be disclosed only for the purposes described in “Procedures for Securing Background Reports for Graduate Students Before Hiring” to those University employees who have a need to know, or as otherwise required or permitted by law. This policy is effective for all graduate student employees whose new appointments begin on or after January 1, 2014.

10. What is annual evaluation of graduate teaching assistants?

Answer: The Graduate School will require that each department conduct -- at least on an annual basis -- an evaluation of the progress of each Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) and each graduate student enrolled in a doctoral program. Continuation is contingent upon satisfactory performance. Annually, each department will report to the Graduate School, confirming that the evaluation of all GTAs and doctoral students has been completed. In addition, the department will provide the Graduate School with a summary report of all instances in which a GTA or doctoral student has received an unsatisfactory review.

11. Are future teaching assistantships guaranteed?

Answer: Graduate assistant appointments are temporary. Although there is no guaranteed future teaching assistantship, your assistant appointments can be renewed. Continuation depends upon availability of funds, level of enrollment, and satisfactory performance.