

Policy for Hiring Graduate Assistants

Purpose and Professional Value

Graduate assistantship positions offer students opportunities to engage in scholarly activities with faculty members and to receive financial support (e.g., wages/stipend, tuition waiver, health insurance). The Department of Special Education (DSE) has a limited number of graduate assistantship positions to offer each semester. Eligible students are encouraged to apply.

Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) and Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) positions are central to graduate education and training in the Department of Special Education. These roles provide students with structured opportunities to develop professional skills aligned with careers in higher education, research, leadership, and related fields.

These positions are intended to enhance students' academic preparation, while contributing to the Department's instructional and research mission.

The Department offers two types of Graduate Assistant Positions

Graduate Research Assistant (GRA)

Job responsibilities include research duties under the supervision of an appropriate faculty member or FAU administrator. Such research duties may include, but are not limited to, assisting in classroom/lab research, community-based research activities, developing research methods, data collection and analysis, and dissemination for 20 hours/week. Compensation includes a paid stipend each term, a 100% tuition waiver, and 75% health insurance.

For GRA applicants, the recommendation letter from a previous faculty member letter should specifically address the candidate's academic written and oral communication skills, timeliness and quality of assignment completion, and ability to conduct library and other information-gathering research (e.g., library search for literature, Google Scholar, or other internet database searches).

Through GRA appointments, students may gain experience in:

- Research design, data collection, and scholarly dissemination
- Collaboration with faculty on research initiatives
- Professional communication, ethical practice, and time management

Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA)

Job responsibilities include serving as the instructor of record for undergraduate courses in the specific discipline in which the student has the graduate-level expertise required for credentialing; assisting a faculty member in any aspect of course instruction, although not as the instructor of record; or, assisting a faculty member in the non-instructional aspects of course teaching (e.g., grading) for 20 hours/week. Compensation includes a paid stipend each term, a 100% tuition waiver, and 75% health insurance.

Through GTA appointments, students may gain experience in:

- Instructional support, assessment, and mentoring

- Collaboration with faculty on teaching
- Professional communication, ethical practice, and time management

Application & Deadlines

- Students apply for GRA and GTA positions through the online application portal on the Department of Special Education website.
- Submit a maximum 250-word narrative describing skill sets relevant to the desired position responsibilities as described above.

- Fall Semester:
 - Applications due February 1 | Decisions announced March 9
- Spring Semester:
 - Applications due June 1 | Decisions announced July 9

Eligibility

- Students are eligible for a GTA or GRA position if they–
 - Meet eligibility criteria as required by the university which may include:
 - Full time student status
 - Maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better
 - Earn no grade in the current program below 3.0
 - Obtain advisor approval

Hiring Priorities

Hiring decisions are guided by the following priorities:

- Preference is given to students enrolled in the Department of Special Education.
- Preference is given to PhD students over master's students, particularly for GTA positions.
- Preference is given to students who have higher GPAs

Review of Applications

- New GTA and GRA applications will be reviewed and a decision will be made by the PhD Coordinator and the Department Chair.

Appointment Terms

- Appointments are made for **one semester at a time**. Continuation beyond one semester is based on performance and **not guaranteed**. Students may serve as a GTA and/or GRA for up to **two academic years**, unless extenuating circumstances exist (e.g., insufficient applicant pool).

Evaluation and Continuation

For students applying to continue in a GRA or GTA position, feedback from relevant course instructors and those leading the research associated with the GRA position(s) will be factored into the decision to rehire.

At the end of each semester, the PhD Coordinator and Department Chair will solicit feedback from relevant course instructors and/or research supervisors. On the designated form, the student must receive an overall *Satisfactory* score and no individual item scores of *Strongly Disagree*.

- Decisions regarding continuation will be made within one week after the end of each semester:

Reappointment Process

Students continuing in a GTA and/or GRA role do **not** need to submit a new application. Prior to application deadlines, the PhD Coordinator will confirm the student's interest in continuing for the following semester.

Expectations

Students appointed as GRAs or GTAs are expected to:

- Meet assigned teaching or research responsibilities
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress
- Adhere to departmental and university policies
- Communicate regularly with supervising faculty
- Attend GTA/GRA university orientation

GTA Responsibilities	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Unknown
The GTA followed grading criteria or rubrics appropriately.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The GTA returned graded work in a timely manner.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Communication							
The GTA communicated clearly via Canvas.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The GTA responded to student inquiries in a timely manner.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Overall GTA Rating

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Satisfactory
- Needs Improvement
- Unsatisfactory

Comments:

GRA Responsibilities	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Unknown
The GRA shows growth in research skills over the evaluation period.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Overall GRA Rating

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Satisfactory
- Needs Improvement
- Unsatisfactory

Comments:

GTA/GRA Advisor/Supervisor Approval Form

Date: _____

Student: _____

Advisor/Supervisor: _____

Role (Graduate Research Assistant, Graduate Teaching Assistant): _____

Relevant Semester: _____

As the Advisor Supervisor of _____, I verify the following:

The student has a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better

The student has received no grade in the current program below 3.0

I agree with the decision for the student to serve as a GTA/GRA (Circle One).

Advisor/Supervisor Signature: _____

Student Signature: _____