

Definitions of Graduate Stipend Designations

Accurate and fair resource analyses play an important role in internal university decisions and in responding to requests for data by such external agencies as the Ohio Board of Regents. One impediment to such analyses when they involve graduate student stipend support is the lack of consistency in the use of terms such as Teaching Assistantships (TA) and Research Assistantships (RA). The purpose of this document is to provide a detailed set of definitions that departments and schools are asked to use in requesting contracts for students on stipend support. Three major categories of assistantships are to be used in requesting graduate contracts – Teaching Assistantships (TA), Graduate Assistantships (GA), and Research Assistantships (RA). The definitions for these categories are as follows:

Teaching Assistantship (TA)

This designation should be used for students receiving stipend support when:

- a. they are the Teacher of Record for a course (that is, they have primary responsibility for a course including the final grade book responsibility for the course).
- b. 50% or more of their assigned stipend duties are instructional in character as described below.
 1. They teach laboratories, practica, or run discussion sections.
 2. They prepare or grade exams for courses.
 3. They respond to student queries in person or by correspondence (e.g., by e-mail, web site responses).
 4. They provide departmental supported tutorial assistance.
 5. They assist in activities directly associated with the instructional goals of the department (e.g., proctoring exams, preparing instructional lab materials, or monitoring an instructional oriented computer laboratory).

The fundamental criterion for receiving the designation of a TA is that 50% or more of the duties *be directly related to the teaching mission of the department or school*.

Graduate Assistant (GA)

This designation should be used for students receiving stipend support when 50% or more of their duties are primarily administrative in character and/or their duties are not directly related to either the instructional or research mission of the university, but to some duties related to their professional training. The following examples are illustrative of these duties but this is not an exhaustive listing.

1. A visual communications student is assigned to develop graphics for a web page.
2. A psychology student is assigned to assist in the running of a clinic.
3. An international Studies student helps administer a grant.
4. A theater student is assigned to the scene design shop for a production.

Research Assistantship (RA)

This designation should be used for students receiving stipend support when 50% or more of their duties are directly related to research or creative activities. The following examples are illustrative of these duties, but this is not an exhaustive list.

1. A student is assigned to a faculty member to assist in the conduct of the faculty member's research/creative effort.
2. A student is supported by an external grant that funds a research or creative project.