

## Resources & Information for Graduate Students on Appointment

### **Pacing Yourself & Maintaining Balance**

It is important to remember that your assistantship is only a part-time job, not the purpose you are here. While you should put 100% into the time you are expected to work, do not try to overdo it, as your other responsibilities will suffer. Most assistantships are only on half-time appointment or 20 hours per week so keep that in mind when thinking through your duties. If you are a TA, this balance is especially difficult to maintain. Between actually teaching the courses, grading, and office hours, you can easily go over your 20 hours. Try to strike a balance early in the semester with your duties and find ways to consolidate your duties, make best use of your time, and lessen the load on yourself. This might mean giving less homework, using peer evaluation more often, or staggering the assignments that must be completed by the students.

Finally, keep in mind your health. Having an assistantship often puts an added strain on already stressed-out graduate students. Eat well, exercise regularly (you are paying for the SRC, use it!), and get plenty of sleep.

### **Relationship with Supervising Professor**

Your assistantship should be coordinated to work directly with one professor that is either your course coordinator (in the case of TA) or your supervisor (in the case of RA). This relationship will obviously be very important to your success in the assistantship itself, but will also be important to your success in the College overall. Try to maintain a positive, professional relationship with your supervisor at all times and work quickly to resolve any conflicts. Good communication is always a must in any working relationship, so do your part. If you feel that conflict has gotten to the point where you are unable to resolve it personally or uncomfortable doing so, approach your department chair to assist in mediating the issue. You are also able to utilize the Ombudsman on campus to help in conflict mediation if the department chair's efforts are unable to resolve the dispute.

### **Self-Direction**

While some assistantships are very directed, others are anything but. Often your assistantship is just like your graduate school experience: one that should be self directed and self-disciplined. If your supervisor or course coordinator is allowing you to take more responsibility and freedom with your appointment, use this opportunity to the best of your abilities. Not only will this experience be something that you will include on your vita, but should also be a wonderful opportunity for you to learn new skills. However, make sure to have a discussion with your supervisor if you are feeling like you do not have enough direction to be productive.

## **Academic Responsibilities**

All graduate students on appointment must be enrolled in at least 10 credits in the fall and spring semesters (and 3 credits in the summer term, if you are employed during the summer months). These can be all coursework credits or can be a combination of research and coursework credits. In addition, your department may also have certain grade point average requirements that you must maintain. Make sure to check on any of these details.

## **Work Week and Hours**

Graduate students are expected to work 20 hours if they are on a half-time (.50) appointment, 10 hours if they are on a quarter-time appointment (.25), or 30 hours if they are three-quarters-time (.75). Since graduate assistants are considered employees of the state, you are expected to work all normal working days that the rest of the university staff must work. This includes winter vacation (except Christmas Day and New Year's Day) and spring break. Check with your supervisor to find out their expectations of your work schedule and calendar.

## **Space & Keys**

Depending on your assistantship, you may or may not have office space. Check with your supervisor to find out if you have space allotted to your position, and if so, get keys and access from your departmental representative (see Contacts section for more information on whom to obtain keys from in your department). If you have keys, make sure to keep them in a safe place, as it is very expensive to replace keys and lock cores. If you lose them, be sure to let your respective office representative as soon as possible. Finally, keys for the technology carts are also available from your department, which may or may not be required to turn in at the end of each semester.

## **Copy Codes**

Your assistantship will most likely also have a copy code assigned. Check with your respective department to obtain this code. Remember that this is only for assistantship related copying.

## **Conduct Expected**

Just a few last words about conduct. It is a good idea to always keep in mind that you are a university employee in your appointment to assistantship. The relationships you have with your colleagues and most especially with your students should be professional at all times. In addition, the University advises against engaging in romantic relationships with students over which you have supervisory or evaluative power. TAs working with undergraduate students should keep in mind that their students will tend to evaluate your behavior outside of the classroom as well. Be professional at all times and remember that Pullman is a very small town!

## Resources and Information for TAs

- RONet** <http://www.ronet.wsu.edu/Main/Apps/HomePage.ASP> - The online tool for submitting grades and downloading class rosters.
- Syllabus** Typically it is prepared by the course coordinator, but this is not always the case. So work with your coordinator, at the very least, you will need to give your contact information to include the syllabus right away. You are in charge of making copies on your own. You must find out immediately who is your coordinating professor and the status of the syllabus. You should become familiar with course requirements, grading, etc., before classes begin.
- Office hours** At least a couple hours of week in your office is required for TAs and you may also establish “by appointment” hours.
- Academic Code** <http://www.conduct.wsu.edu/> - This website will inform you about the academic integrity code for WSU as well as the procedure for dealing with infractions.
- UNIV 590** A course offered through WSU to people wishing to teach at the college level and is helpful to those TAs currently or those wishing to become professors in the future.
- Mentoring** Do not feel shy about asking other graduate students for help. Find those who have been TAs previously, especially those who have taught the course you are teaching in the past.
- Graduate School** <http://www.gradsch.wsu.edu/> - The WSU Graduate School website offers many offices and resources for TAs on campus. Check it out!
- Institutional Research** <http://ir.wsu.edu/> - This WSU office has multiple resources on university data including demographics of university constituents. They are also a good resource for questions about conducting research.
- National Center for Education Statistics** (<http://www.nces.ed.gov>) – This governmental agency maintains numerous databases of information, survey information, and reports on K-20 education.