THE GRADUATE ASSISTANT HANDBOOK

A Policies and Procedures Manual

For Graduate Assistants at the

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EASTERN SHORE

2009-2010 Update
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Who is a Graduate Assistant in the University?</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Categories of Graduate Assistantships at UMES and Percentage of Time</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Eligibility for and Retention of a Graduate Assistantship</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Appointment, Reappointment, Duration of Employment</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Supervision and Evaluation of the Graduate Assistant</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Time Commitment, Scheduling and other Employment</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. Examples of Duties by Category of Graduate Assistant</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. Full-time Graduate Student Status</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX. Conduct and Resolving Problems</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X. Termination of Assistantships</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI. Salary/Stipend and Step Levels of Assistantships</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII. Benefits Available to Graduate Assistants</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII. Holiday and Break Periods</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIV. ID Card and Other Campus Services</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XV. Taxation Status, Payroll Deductions, and Queries</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVI. Fellowships</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVII. Board of Regents, University System of Maryland &amp; UMES Policy and Procedures Applicable to Graduate Assistants</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVIII. Policy/Procedure Clarifications/Updates on Graduate Assistants</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Appendixes

- A. Steps in the Routing and Approval Process for a Graduate Assistant Appointment | 15
- B. UMES Policy on Benefits for Graduate Assistants                         | 17
- C. Steps in the Routing and Approval Process for Tuition Remission         | 19
- D. Faculty Form VII Duty Sheet                                             | 22
- E. UMES Employee Exit Procedures                                           | 24
- F. Selected Listing of Board of Regents and University System of Maryland Policies and Procedures and Reciprocal Policies and Procedures of UMES | 29
- G. Selected Information Resources for Graduate Teaching Assistants and Graduate Students in General | 33
- H. Memoranda of January and February 1999 Which Clarify Graduate Assistant Processes and Benefits Found in the Graduate Assistant Handbook | 36
Foreword

A. Purpose:

This handbook is prepared as a reference guide for all categories of graduate assistants employed at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) campus, whether new or returning. The graduate assistant has a vital and integral role to play in the academic community. The objective of this handbook is to provide you, the graduate assistant, with pertinent information on the privileges, regulations, procedures and resources governing or applicable to your role and particular assignment.

B. Goals:

The graduate assistant is both a degree-seeking student and an employee. The primary goal of an assistantship is to facilitate progress toward, and successful completion in a timely manner of a graduate degree program. The secondary goal of an assistantship is to provide a meaningful work experience in the academic community under the supervision or tutelage of the faculty, staff or administration. Hence, the work experience is a type of professional preparation or development and in-service training for the student. The tertiary goal of the assistantship is the employee relationship and the fulfillment of assigned tasks or duties. It is the latter goal which is most specifically addressed by this handbook.

C. Questions:

No handbook is prepared to address all possible or unanticipated problems and variations or to be definitive. Questions, guidance or referrals on interpretation of handbook sections should be addressed to the Dean of Graduate Studies, unless otherwise specified in the text as addressed by a specific campus office, e.g. the Office of Human Resources Management, and so forth.

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I. WHO IS A GRADUATE ASSISTANT IN THE UNIVERSITY?

Graduate Assistants (GA’s) are admitted or matriculated graduate students at UMES who are provided with a temporary academic appointment to perform assigned tasks or duties within an academic department or unit (center, institute, etc.), or office in the University, under the supervision of a faculty member, a department head, an administrator or director of an office or unit. Employing unit will be the term used in this text to mean the department, office, program, in which the student will perform the tasks/duties.

Most graduate assistantships are available in the Division of Academic Affairs.

Graduate assistantships are not the only financial option available to graduate students. Graduate students may also be employed as hourly contractual employees in departments and offices through procedures of the Office of Human Resources Management, or seek work-study programs and aid available through the Office of Financial Aid.

II. CATEGORIES OF GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS AT UMES AND PERCENTAGE OF TIME:

Graduate Assistantship (GA) is the generic title in the University nomenclature and payroll system. At the preference of the employing department/office, some appointments may be simply stated as “Graduate Assistant”. Other appointments may be subtitled as, 1.teaching, 2.research, 3.administrative. These categories are briefly described in section VII below. As a general rule, when the term "GA’s" is used in the text, it will refer to all categories of GA’s.

Graduate assistantships are either full (100%) or half (50%) time. A full time GA identified by a category above could be split, e.g., as a 50% teaching and a 50% research appointment. Requests for GA’s at less than 50% time and less than a semester's duration e.g., only a month, are generally processed through other payroll mechanisms. A part- time GA can be expanded into a full-time GA with the addition of funds and work assignment. A student who has already been employed as a part-time graduate assistant can be requested to be hired in another area on an hourly contract basis. In either case the original GA appointment is amended to incorporate the request rather than a separate employment contract issued.

III. ELIGIBILITY FOR AND RETENTION OF A GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP:

For the Graduate School and the employing unit, a graduate student must:

a. be admitted into a graduate degree program at UMES in Regular (Full) or Provisional Status;

b. be registered for graduate level credit courses each semester during the period of the appointment (9.0 mo.), and a summer session for 12 mo. appointments if applicable graduate credit courses are being offered; (on credits, see section VIII on full-time graduate student status);

c. be either a new admit or continuing student and in good academic standing (3.0 or
above cumulative GPA) when the appointment or reappointment becomes effective;

d. maintain reasonable progress toward a graduate degree each semester or session as determined by the student’s graduate program and the Graduate School;

e. be recommended for the appointment on the appropriate form;

f. if an international student, have a visa status which permits employment.

The employing unit will: 1) have the position advertised according to the university procedures, 2) create a job description and take applications, 3) arrange a search and screening process for the interviewing of candidates who meet the qualifications for the position, 4) make the selection of the qualified candidate to be recommended, 5) complete and process the GA appointment recommendation form, and 6) provide the orientation, supervision and evaluation of the appointee.

IV. APPOINTMENT, REAPPOINTMENT, DURATION OF EMPLOYMENT

The steps in the routing and approval process for a graduate assistant appointment and the GA appointment recommendation form are found in Appendix A. The offer of appointment for a GA is issued in letter format by the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The student accepts the appointment offer by signing and returning a copy of the appointment letter by the posted date.

The offer includes the category of Assistantship (if specified), the salary/stipend level, the assigned department or office, and the beginning and ending dates of the appointment, and whether tuition remission is allowable. The beginning date is the day on which the GA is expected to report. Offers of appointments do not include information on fringe benefits for GA’s such as health insurance which are discussed with and processed through the office of Human Resources Management if the individual is eligible. Information on applicable benefits to GA’s is covered in section XII.

Sufficient time must be allowed for processing of the appointment recommendation (approximately 14 to 21 working days). The requested appointee may not begin work until the Vice President for Academic Affairs has made the offer of employment and the appointee has accepted by his/her signature the terms of the offer. Appointments will not be backdated for convenience.

1. Appointment Period (9.0 or 12 mo.)

Graduate assistant appointments are for a regular academic year (9.0 months) or for a 12-month period (the latter is usually for non-instructional activities). The academic year appointment begins in late-August and ends in late-May. Twelve month appointments may begin July 1 of one year and end as of June 30 of the following year. NOTE: All academic appointments, whether 9.0 mo. or 12 mo., run on the state Fiscal Year (F.Y.) cycle (July 1 to June 30). Appointments may occur for a shorter period of time during the state F.Y., e.g., a semester, but will be usually be processed as 9.0 mo. if the time period is during the academic year, and 12 mo., if it is before late-August or after late-May (before and after the academic year). A graduate assistantship during the academic year may not be an appointment of less than one academic semester unless it is a replacement for a vacated Assistantship or preliminary to the expected continuation of the GA appointment in the next F.Y. All academic appointments are automatically terminated at the end of the state fiscal year for which they are effective.
2. Reappointment

Graduate assistants may be reappointed at the discretion of the employing unit. In order to allow a larger number of qualified students to benefit from these positions, most employing units are attempting to limit the time period in which a graduate student may serve as an assistant in any category. In general, this is two academic or fiscal years for a master's degree student, and three years for a doctoral student. There are occasional exceptions to the time limitation based on employing unit needs and expertise of the student.

The present practice is that each employing unit is responsible for determining and communicating its own specific criteria, within the limits of university policy, for assessing student qualifications for appointment and reappointment to graduate assistantships. In general, reappointment is dependent upon satisfactory work performance, good academic standing in the Graduate School and the graduate program, and progress toward the degree. As with all University faculty and staff positions, appointment or reappointment are contingent upon the availability of funds.

Good academic standing refers to course grades and the cumulative grade point average. Consult the Graduate Catalog for specifics on Graduate School, and as applicable, individual program requirements on standards for grades, the cumulative grade point average and academic probation, and satisfactory progress toward a degree.

Although a rare occurrence, a GA might receive an academic probation notice for the immediate past semester/session. The present practice is that the GA, like any other graduate student, has the usual two successive semesters in which to remove the probation (consult the Graduate Catalog section). Academic probation, however, may weigh in the consideration of reappointment of the student.

A graduate student who has been certified as having fulfilled all obligations for the degree or has graduated, and is not admitted into another graduate program at UMES, is ineligible for continuation of a GA in the next semester or session; e.g., a 9.0 mo. GA who completes the degree program for the December Commencement. 9.0 and 12 mo. GA’s who complete the degree program for the Spring Commencement may continue to complete their work assignments, if needed, up to the end of the contract period, at the request of the supervisor and consent of the Graduate Dean for granting an exception (ref.: Section X, item 4), subject to the availability of funds.

V. Supervision and Evaluation of the Graduate Assistant

1. Supervision

GA’s are directly under the supervision of the employing unit. The employing unit determines assignment, supervision of work, evaluation of performance, and recommendation for reappointment, if applicable.

2. Evaluation

In practice, each employing unit has been responsible for determining procedures for review and evaluation of graduate assistants. Depending on the type of assignment, the process of evaluation might include a survey form or written assessment of work by the supervisor(s), classroom visitation
by designated faculty members, student or clientele evaluations, faculty observation of research work and results, etc. The results of performance reviews and evaluations are to be discussed with the graduate assistant.

VI. TIME COMMITMENT, SCHEDULING AND OTHER EMPLOYMENT

1. Time Commitment

Time commitments for GA’s are based on a 40-hour week concept. For full time (100%) GA’s it would be divided 20 hours a week for the university and 20 hours a week devoted to academic study and pursuit of the degree. For part time (50%) GA’s, it would be 10 hours a week for the university and the rest of the time for academic study and pursuit of the degree.

2. Scheduling

The scheduling of the time for GA’s to undertake their assignments per week (whether 20 hours or 10 hours) is determined by the employing unit. The type of duties assigned to GA’s, even if specific teaching or research assistants, may vary from individual to individual because of differences in the qualifications or experience brought to the position and differences in the demands and needs of the employing unit. Employing units are responsible to monitor the time commitment of their GA’s. GA’s account for their time to the institution by completing the monthly Faculty duty Form VII and returning it to the Human Resources Management office (see appendix D).

3. Other On-Campus Employment

During the academic semester a full time GA may not seek and will not be approved for other part-time on-campus employment above the 20-hours/week limits. A part time assistant may seek other on-campus options so as to create a full time GA (so long as the combined hours total 20 hours/wk). The GA’s contract is amended to reflect the additional hours and stipend.

4. Off-campus Employment

A full time GA is considered to be a full time employee of the University and should not be seeking outside employment. It is expected that the combined role and responsibilities of graduate student and graduate assistant will occupy all the time available to a student during the appointment period. Usually what suffers with outside employment is the 20 hours a week to be devoted to the academic study. The academic departments and graduate programs recommend Assistantship appointments for graduate students whose commitment is most likely to result in satisfactory progress toward their degree program as well as in undertaking their Assistantship responsibilities. In fairness to other graduate students who are applying for a GA, outside employment could be a consideration in recommending against the continuance or reappointment of a GA.

For part time GA’s it is expected that they will not work beyond an additional 10 hours a week.
VII. EXAMPLES OF DUTIES BY CATEGORY OF GRADUATE ASSISTANT:

A general, non-specific title of a graduate assistant is one in which the individual may perform a variety of tasks that could relate to a teaching, research or administrative assistant. For the specified appointment to a category of graduate Assistantship, see the descriptions that follow.

1. Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA)

The specific duties of a GTA may vary from one department to another, but for the majority of teaching assistants, the assignments and responsibilities will fall into one or more of the following four categories:

a. assisting in general departmental support or service duties (e.g., wet laboratory preparation, resource room help person, tutor, etc).

b. assisting a faculty member in the grading, advising, and administrative duties necessary for a course or courses;

c. teaching responsibility for a laboratory or discussion session of a course under the supervision of the instructor of record for the course;

d. teaching responsibility for a classroom section of a multi-sectional course, under the close supervision of the instructor of record for the course or other faculty/department chair.

Within a department, the particular assignment depends on the department's needs and the experience and academic qualifications of the assistant. All GTA's serving in any capacity are under the direction and close supervision of the teaching faculty and the Department Chair.

Since English is the medium of instruction at UMES, academic departments and support offices must assess the proficiency in spoken English of the international students selected as GTA's or tutors. Orientation and training for the GTA are the responsibility of the employing academic department.

2. Graduate Research Assistants (GRA)

A GRA is an encompassing title. A GRA might participate in the data collection and analysis of a faculty member's research project, oversee or provide technical assistance to students in a computer or similar type of academic support laboratory, or assist in other non-instructional activities, institutional research or educational assessment. Sometimes GRA's working on research projects find topics and data applicable to a thesis, dissertation, master’s project and so forth.

The duties of research assistants are performed under the direction and supervision of a member of the faculty or academic/administrative support staff.
3. Graduate Assistant with Administrative Assignments

Offices on campus may employ graduate assistants to help with administrative support functions. Responsibilities vary, as do the durations of appointments. Supervision is provided by the administrator or staff of the office.

VIII. FULL-TIME GRADUATE STUDENT STATUS

During the appointment period, for a full-time Assistantship, a GA must register for at least 24 graduate units of course credit per semester to qualify concurrently as a full-time graduate student. For an explanation of the graduate unit system in relation to semester credit hours equivalency, see the latest Graduate Catalog. Course credit includes both regular course work and research course credits for the thesis or dissertation, master’s project, etc. The Graduate Dean may verify the full-time graduate student status of the GA. There is no maximum number of graduate units set for GA’s. GA’s should consider their assistantship workload in planning their registration for course credits.

IX. CONDUCT AND RESOLVING PROBLEMS

1. Conduct

All graduate assistants are subject in their teaching, research, and administrative activities to the ethical precepts and code of the academic profession (e.g., American Association of University Professors), to the laws of the State of Maryland regarding its employees and to University System, Board of Regents and campus policies which govern their institutional obligations. For a brief introduction to the subject of institutional policies, consult the UMES latest issue Graduate Catalog. See appendix F for a listing of selected Board of Regents and University System Policies and UMES reciprocal policies and procedures for implementing them.

Graduate Assistants are expected to conduct themselves in their interactions with students, faculty, and all other members of the university community with the same sensitivity and thoughtfulness they expect to receive from others. Neither age, disability, ethnicity, gender, national origin, race, religion, nor sexual orientation may be the subject of prejudicial actions, comments, or expressed attitudes.

2. Resolving Problems

GA’s should try to resolve difficulties first at the department or office level. If a GA is having unusual difficulties with his/her assignment, it should be discussed with the supervisor(s). If satisfaction is not forthcoming, the matter may be discussed with the chair of the department or next level office administrator, and if unresolved at this level, may be referred to the graduate dean for resolution. If the problems are related to academic work, the GA should consult first with the academic advisor or major professor, and secondly, the department’s graduate program coordinator. If further discussion is necessary, it may be brought to the attention of the department chair. Some matters may require the chair’s review and approval. Beyond the chair’s level is the Dean of the School in which the department is located.
The Dean of Graduate Studies is also directly concerned with all academic problems of graduate students that require mediation or action beyond the graduate program and department level.

The University has grievance procedures for orderly action on specific grievable issues.

3. **Changing Supervisors**

Graduate Assistantships are not portable or transferable. Those funded by an external grant or contract are within the purview of the responsible faculty or staff member in a department or office. Those funded by institutional funds are distributed to academic departments which have graduate programs. Therefore, unless a vacancy for a GA occurs, the funding is available, and the student has the qualifications to fill the GA vacancy, or unused GA funds to an academic department are reassigned to another department, it is not possible for a GA to move to another supervisor. If a move is possible, change of supervisor involves adequate notice of resignation to the current supervisor. On a case by case basis, the Graduate Dean will determine what further process may be necessary for the student to be reassigned.

X. **TERMINATION OF ASSISTANTSHIPS**

Following prescribed procedures, the appointment may be terminated before the expiration of the appointment period for any of the following reasons:

1. documented unsatisfactory work performance, e.g., violation of policy such as misconduct that is job-related, incompetence, neglect of duty, and so forth;
2. reported deficiency in academic work and in meeting academic requirements for the degree, leading to a recommendation by the program for termination of graduate admission status;
3. there is no enrollment for graduate credit during the appointment period (semester or session if applicable);
4. the student is certified as having completed the degree program and is not admitted into another UMES graduate degree program, or is employed full-time in off-campus employment;
5. financial exigency (e.g., funds rescinded or cut) or discontinuance of the work in which the appointment is made;
6. medical or health conditions which interfere or limit the performance of required duties;
7. visa status (international students) changes to one which does not permit employment or is revoked.
8. voluntary mutual agreement (letter of resignation and acceptance).
If their contracts are to be terminated prior to the original date specified in the offer letter, GA’s will be notified in writing. Cases of egregious violations may result in immediate actions, appropriate to University policy. Supervisors, departments and university officials may initiate actions. Consult the Graduate Dean for specifics. Voluntary resignations are initiated by letter addressed to the supervisor with the effective date. The letter is forwarded to the Graduate Dean for follow-up action.

The termination of assistantships follows the same exit procedures for leaving employment of the university as other employees (see appendix E for the procedures and form to be completed.)

XI. SALARY/STIPEND AND STEP LEVELS OF ASSISTANTSHIPS

Graduate Assistant Stipend Rates for FY July 1 2009 - June 30 2010

Graduate assistant appointments to Steps 2 and 3 are based on the criteria following the tables. Stipend rates are subject to change in future years.

Table 1: 9.0 Month

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Stipend</th>
<th>Pay Period</th>
<th>Stipend</th>
<th>Pay Period</th>
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<tr>
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<td>9.0-Month Annual (Full-time - 50% FTE)</td>
<td>9.0 Month Bi-weekly (Full-time - 50% FTE)</td>
<td>9.0-Month Annual (Half-time - 25% FTE)</td>
<td>9.0 Month Bi-weekly (Half-time - 25% FTE)</td>
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Table 2: 12 Month

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<th>Pay Period</th>
<th>Stipend</th>
<th>Pay Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.0-Month Annual (Full-time - 50% FTE)</td>
<td>12.0 Month Bi-weekly (Full-time - 50% FTE)</td>
<td>12.0-Month Annual (Half-time - 25% FTE)</td>
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<td>$509.49</td>
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The step level criteria for appointment are as follows:

Step 1: Graduate student admitted to a degree program or matriculated graduate student in good standing, without prior assistantship or without previous teaching or research experience as a graduate student.

Step 2: Graduate student in good standing who possesses a master’s degree or who has one year of experience as a graduate assistant (full or part-time, 9 months or 12 months).

Step 3: Graduate student in good standing who has been admitted to candidacy for the doctoral degree.

NOTES:
The stipend levels are considered to be ranges, subject to the availability of institutional or external
funds and/or the conditions of the funding source (institutional and external funds) in any given year. Contract, grant and private funds may have approved budgets or allowances to offer a higher stipend level.

All stipends are paid through the payroll system and hence they are identified as salary. Part-time appointees are always paid at an exact salary/stipend. 100% time appointees are paid at the salary/stipend (factor) rate.

**Full Time Assistantship= 20 hours per week, Part-Time Assistantship= 10 hours per week**

**XII. BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO GRADUATE ASSISTANTS**

Benefits available to GA’s are processed through the office of Human Resources Management, 3rd floor, J.T. Williams Administration Building (the contact person is Mrs. Martha Smith).

Benefits, as applicable, are listed in the UMES Policy on Benefits for Graduate Assistants [see Appendix B.]. The subsections of the policy are briefly noted, clarified or expanded upon below.

1. **Remission of Tuition; Tuition Status; Deferment of Tuition**

a. Remission of Tuition and Deferment of Tuition

If the funding source for the salary/stipend is from institutional (state) funds, full-time GA’s may receive remission for up to ten (10) credits of tuition each academic semester, part-time GA’s up to five (5) credits of tuition per academic semester. For the winter session tuition remission is capped at 2 credit hours and up to 6 credit hours for a summer session, regardless of whether the GA is full-time or part-time.

Stipends for GA’s paid from contract or grant accounts are generally adjusted to compensate for the additional financial burden for students to pay their own tuition. Contract and grant accounts are sponsored, not institutional funds. On average, over 50% of UMES GA’s annually are paid wholly or partially by sponsored or external funds. External funding from federal, state or private sources can be used to pay the salary/stipend for an assistantship, but may have restrictions on the allowability or the amount of remission of tuition or even on the amount of salary/stipend which can be paid. In these cases, “generally adjusted” means that the stipend/step level base in Section XI is increased by a dollar amount to cover an estimated or the actual cost of the tuition remission up to the number of credit hours of tuition allowed in the policy (e.g., ten per semester if 100% time). “Generally adjusted” also means that the stipend increase for this purpose is not a practice contrary to the terms and conditions of the sponsor and that sponsor funds are also available and sufficient to pay for the stipend adjustment. If the adjustment is done at the time of the GA appointment recommendation, the adjusted amount will generally be an estimate of projected tuition charges for the student over an academic year or a semester, depending upon the duration of the appointment. An alternative is for the stipend to be paid out of one grant or contract and the actual tuition remission for the semester or session to be paid out of another grant/contract or revolving account.

If the contract or grant will pay the full tuition remission per semester or session regardless of the number of credit hours attempted, then the contract or grant will be charged for the tuition and the stipend will not be adjusted.
There is a field on the GA Appointment Recommendation Form for appropriate offices to check whether tuition remission is allowable under external funding; it is not guaranteed.

If the GA has to pay the full or a partial tuition, a deferment of tuition (promissory note) for a portion or all of the semester/session can be obtained to give the student additional time to pay the tuition. The remission of tuition is processed on a semester or session basis on the form available from the office of Human Resources Management. (See Appendix C for these steps and approval process).

b. Tuition Status

As employees of the University System of Maryland, all graduate assistants, whether non-Maryland residents or on non-immigrant visas (e.g., F1), are billed at the in-state tuition rate. As soon as the assistantship is terminated, graduate students are billed according to their original tuition rate status, unless their status has changed by petition to Resident. See the latest release of the Board of Regents Policy on Student Residency Classification for Admission, Tuition and Charge-Differential Purposes.

2. Health Insurance

Full-time Graduate Assistants may enroll in the University health care programs, but within a certain eligibility time period. Consult Mrs. Smith in the office of Human Resources Management for specifics on health insurance coverage and enrollment.

3. Retirement, Social Security

Retirement fees and social security (FICA) are NOT withheld from the salaries of graduate assistants. However the social security exemption is valid if the GA is registered as a full-time student and working no more than 20 hours per week. Consult Ms. Gertrude Hairston, Payroll Officer in the Office of Human Resources Management, for specifics on the FICA exemption.

4. Vacations And Sick Leave

Graduate assistants are NOT eligible for vacation or sick leave credit.

5. Facilities

Departments and offices provide GA’s, as applicable to their role and responsibilities, suitable work, laboratory and/or desk space. In addition, GA’s usually have access in their work environment to file space, mailboxes, computers, telephones and other types of office equipment and supplies in line with their assigned duties.
6. Housing
Consult the Office of Residence Life for listings of off-campus housing. Because of space limitations, the campus no longer offers graduate housing except under extreme circumstances.

XIII. HOLIDAY AND BREAK PERIODS

Legal holidays in the University calendar are observed by all employees. Depending on the type of GA responsibilities, there may be occasional exceptions or emergencies in the employing unit, and if GA’s are scheduled to work on a holiday, they must be given an alternate time off.

GA’s under 9.0 month appointments will still have their 10 or 20 hours a week due the employing unit during the Winter Session and the period following the May Commencement to the end of their contract period. However, during these time periods the employing unit may elect to arrange the time due to the convenience of the unit and the GA.

During the winter session and summer months, GA’s under 12 month appointments and who are in good academic standing, may be granted an exception by the graduate dean to the 20 hr.study/20 hr. work week, so as to work a 40 hour week for a specified duration. 9.0 month GA’s in good academic standing may also be granted an exception to the 20-hour study/20 hour work week so as to work a 40 hour week during the Winter Session, and after the May Commencement to late-May. In either case the GA must not be enrolled in the Winter or a Summer Session. Because of the short duration of the Spring Break and the fact that students remain enrolled for the Spring semester, there is no exception granted for students to work additional hours during this time.

In both instances above, the GA’s contract letter is amended to reflect the increased time and salary/stipend level for the specified time period. An accompanying letter or memo from the supervisor must provide a justification for the exception, and indicate the hours to be increased and the additional stipend amount to be paid, on an amended GA Appointment Recommendation form. As with all GA appointments, the processing must be done in advance of the projected change in hours.

XIV. ID CARD AND OTHER CAMPUS SERVICES

Because of their responsibilities, graduate teaching assistants (GTA’s) may obtain a faculty/staff identification (ID) card. The GTA appointment contract letter may be submitted to the Office of Auxiliary Enterprises, which issues the ID cards. Other GA’s receive regular student ID cards. GA’s may be eligible for issuance of office keys and access to other University property, depending upon their assigned duties and allowance by campus procedures and security.

In addition to offices already mentioned herein, other campus offices of interest to graduate students are the Student Health Center, the Career Services Office, Counseling Services, the Academic Computing Center, the Office of Public Safety (vehicle registration and parking permit) and the bookstore. Information on these offices can be found in the annual student handbook issued by the Office of the President for Student Affairs and on the UMES website under the administration and services links.
XV. TAXATION STATUS, PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS AND QUERIES

U.S. federal tax code revisions will affect in some way the income tax liability of graduate students who receive stipends and tuition remission from graduate assistantships. The taxation issues are usually complicated. Consult the Human Resources Management office as well as your own tax counsel on your particular situation.

Payroll is on a biweekly basis. GA’s are not eligible for overtime.

All questions relative to payroll are addressed to the payroll officer in the Office of Human Resources Management (Ms. Gertrude Hairston).

XVI. FELLOWSHIPS

Graduate Fellowships allowed by external funding will follow the guidelines in this booklet. Because of payroll restriction, fellowships will be processed as graduate assistantships if they are to be paid through the payroll system. An alternative method of fellowship payment is through the scholarship authorization, for which the student receives a lump sum per semester or summer session to cover a stipend and pay her/his own tuition and health insurance costs.

Fellowships follow the terms of the sponsor concerning stipend level and the availability of tuition and health insurance and any allowances level for either, whether processed as a graduate assistantship or a scholarship authorization. Fellowships, as available, have been supported from external, not institutional (state) funds. University of Maryland Eastern Shore endowment funds for graduate fellowships may be processed under either method described in this section.

XVII. BOARD OF REGENTS, UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF MARYLAND AND UMES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

In appendix F is found a listing of the most pertinent policies and procedures applicable to one or more category of GA’s. The listing is divided by function, i.e., by policies and procedures pertaining to academic affairs, research, student affairs, general administration, personnel and miscellaneous. Copies of these policies are available in the Offices of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Administrative Affairs, among others. Policies and procedures are subject to change.

XVIII. POLICY / PROCEDURE CLARIFICATIONS / UPDATES ON GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

In appendix H are two clarifications on Graduate Assistant processes and benefits (memoranda of early 1999).
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A
Steps in Routing and Approval Process for a Graduate Assistant Appointment
STEPS IN THE ROUTING AND APPROVAL PROCESS

Graduate Assistant Appointment Recommendation Form
(available from the Graduate Studies Office, latest issue update)

1. Initiates with a faculty member, director or department chair to complete applicable data on the form and sign. Incomplete forms will be returned without action. If an item does not apply, state so.

2. If external funding of the appointment is involved, routed to the appropriate office for approval of available funds and applicable benefits.

3. Routed for signature through the Dean of the School in which the department is located.

4. Routed to Graduate Studies Office for review and concurrence of information on the form.

5. Approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies.


7. Account number approval on institutional funds by Administrative Affairs Office.

8. Approved by the Vice President for Academic Affairs for issuance of appointment contract letter.

Note: This approval process parallels all academic appointments. Processing time must be allowed of approximately 14 to 21 working days. The graduate student may not begin any work until an offer of employment as a graduate assistant has been made by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the student has fully accepted by signature the terms of the offer.
APPENDIX - B

UMES Policy on Benefits for Graduate Assistants
I. Remission of Tuition

Graduate assistants may receive remission of up to ten (10) credits of tuition each academic semester. As employees of the University of Maryland graduate assistants are billed at the in-state rate. As soon as the assistantship is terminated, students are billed at their original status, unless they have changed their status by petition.

Stipends for graduate assistants paid from contract or grant accounts are generally adjusted to compensate for the additional financial burden imposed by the necessity for them to pay their own tuition.

II. Health Insurance

Graduate assistants may enroll in the university health care programs. Enrollment must be within 60 days of employment.

III. Retirement, Social Security

Retirement fees and social security are not withheld from the salaries of graduate assistants, and they are not entitled to the benefits that accrue from withholding.

IV. Vacation and Sick Leave

Graduate assistants are not eligible for vacation or sick leave credit.

V. Facilities

Departments generally provide graduate assistants with suitable work space, laboratory space and office space, when necessary.

VI. Housing

Housing is available to graduate assistants as available on a first come, first served basis.
APPENDIX – C
Steps in the Routing and Approval Process for Tuition Remission
STEPS IN THE ROUTING AND APPROVAL PROCESS

USM Graduate Assistants/Fellows Request for Tuition Remission Form (latest issue available from the Human Resources Management Office, J.T. Williams Building, 3rd Floor)

1. Completion of the form and signature by the student. Review of the accuracy of the information on the form (e.g., 50% or 100% appointment, the FAS number) and signature of the supervisor (budget manager, department chair, office head, etc).

2. Account (FAS) number review and signature (Administrative Affairs Office).

3. Review of the form and signature by the Human Resources Management Office (HRMO) representative (Mrs. Martha Smith).

4. The HRMO sends a completed copy to the UMES Comptroller Office and to the Host Institution.

Notes: Tuition remission is not allowable under some funding sources. This information is stated on the GA appointment recommendation form and the contract letter.

The Graduate Studies Office is not a required signature on the tuition remission form.
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SYSTEM
GRADUATE ASSISTANTS/FELLOWS REQUEST FOR
TUITION REMISSION AND TUITION SCHOLARSHIPS

(Form to be Uploaded)
APPENDIX – D
Faculty Form VII
**UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EASTERN SHORE**  
**OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**  
**FACULTY FORM VII**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name: FIELD(l)</th>
<th>Department: FIELD(2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of Full-Time: FIELD(3)</td>
<td>SS#: FIELD(4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Month:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<th>8</th>
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<th>14</th>
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<th>27</th>
<th>28</th>
<th>29</th>
<th>30</th>
<th>31</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Please Insert Appropriate Code Above For Each Day**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Required Duties were performed that day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Weekend or nonexistent day in month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>Personal Leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Approved Leave – Unpaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Unauthorized Absence – Unpaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Subpoenaed Witness – Unpaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Administrative Leave – Unpaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Sick Leave – Immediate Family – Paid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>Sick Leave – Immediate Family – Unpaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Annual Leave (Last 15 days of 10-Month Contract)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Sick Leave Not Collegially Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Military – Paid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Work Injury – Paid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Jury Duty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Official Holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Administrative Leave - Paid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Comp. Time - Paid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Subpoenaed Witness - Paid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Disciplinary Suspension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Suspension Pending Charges - Paid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Suspension Pending Charges - Unpaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Sabbatical Leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Sick Leave - Collegially Supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Faculty Signature:**  
**Supervisor's Signature:**

**Date:**  
**Date:**
APPENDIX E
UMES Employee Exit Procedures
MEMORANDUM

TO:   Vice Presidents, Deans, Dept. Heads, Directors  
FROM: Ms. Marie Billie, Director  
RE:   Employee Exit Procedures  
DATE: May 3, 2002

UMES has an approved Exit Procedure which is required of all employees, including temporary faculty and teaching assistants, leaving employment with the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. This procedure is necessary to ensure that University property is returned, that arrangements are made for delivery of any final paycheck, and that the employee is advised of any residual rights or benefits.

Items that are covered during the exit interview are:
1. Retirement matters (Deferred Retirement, withdrawal of contributions);
2. Continuation - Conversion of health benefits coverage;
3. Payment for unused leave;
4. Unemployment insurance;
5. Reinstatement rights;
6. Filing Financial Disclosure Forms, if applicable;
7. Disposition of final paycheck;
8. Reason(s) for terminating employment with UMES;
9. Forwarding address.

University property to be turned in by the employee prior to leaving the worksite on the last day of employment may include, but is not limited to:

1. Identification card;
2. Parking permit;
3. Keys for University property;
4. University credit cards;
5. Library materials;
6. Miscellaneous items.

Effective January 1, 1993, "...if you terminate State Employment and do not elect continuation of your benefits (Health) under COBRA and you return to State employment in the same calendar year, you will not be permitted to re-enroll in benefits (Health) until Open Enrollment.” Since this is an IRS regulation, UMES Human Resources Office has no control over this ruling; we have been informed there will be no exceptions.
Please review this procedure with those employees in your area who will be separated at the end of this semester and advise them accordingly. The enclosed revised form should be duplicated as necessary. Any questions about this procedure should be addressed to Ms. Marty Smith at Ext. 6403. We appreciate your assistance and cooperation in the implementation of this Exit Procedure. The employee’s final check will not be released until the procedure has been completed.

Attachment (1)
MEMORANDUM

TO: Vice Presidents, Deans, Dept. Heads, Directors
FROM: Ms. Marie Billie, Director
RE: Employee Exit Procedures
DATE: May 10, 2001

Currently, UMES has an Exit Procedure which all employees, including Graduate/Teaching Assistants, must complete prior to receiving final pay checks. This process is required at the end of each semester unless the employee has assurance, in writing, of returning for the following semester.

At the end of the Spring Semester, multiple health deductions are taken from the first pay period in June to assure continuity of coverage during the summer months when the contract is no longer in effect. As mandated by the State Department of Budget and Fiscal Planning, Health Benefits Department, those deductions will be taken from the paycheck distributed on June 8, 2001. Please advise those individuals under your supervision to review their payroll check on June 8th for the proper deduction amount.

Should the employee return to work in August 2001 and multiple deductions were not taken, he/she will not be permitted to re-enroll in Health Benefits until Open Enrollment, with coverage effective January 1, 2002, unless payments have continued to be made, by the employee (CORBA), during the summer months. These payments will consist of both the employee’s normal biweekly deduction, as well as, the normal biweekly contribution made by the state. These payments are due monthly and made payable directly to the State. Since this is an IRS regulation, the UMES Human Resource Office has no control over this ruling; we have been informed there will be no exceptions. COMPLETED EXIT INTERVIEW FORMS ARE REQUIRED FROM ALL GRADUATE/TEACHING ASSISTANTS, PRIOR TO RECEIVING THE CHECK TO BE ISSUED ON JUNE 8, 2001.

Please distribute this information to those Graduate/Teaching Assistants in your department and have them contact Ms. Marty Smith at Ext. 6403 prior to June 8th for information regarding CORBA.

REMEMBER, THOSE PERSONS WHO DO NOT HAVE MULTIPLE DEDUCTIONS, OR CHOOSE CORBA, WILL NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR ANY HEALTH BENEFITS UNTIL OPEN ENROLLMENT SHOULD THEY BE GIVEN A NEW CONTRACT FOR THE FALL 2001 & SPRING 2002 ACADEMIC YEAR.
University of Maryland Eastern Shore  
Office of Human Resource Management  

CLEARANCE PROCEDURE FOR SEPARATING EMPLOYEES/VOLUNTEERS  
(This form must be in the Human Resources office prior to issuance of final check)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Separating Employee:</th>
<th>Separation Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Security Number:</td>
<td>Department:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position:</td>
<td>Supervisor's Signature: (please sign when departmental clearance is completed)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Signatures below indicate that the separating employee has settled all known outstanding accounts and/or returned all outstanding University equipment, supplies and materials.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IF CLEARANCE IS PROVIDED DIRECTLY FROM APPROPRIATE CLEARING STATIONS, COMPLETE THIS SECTION ▼</th>
<th>IF CLEARANCE IS PROVIDED TO THE SUPERVISOR OR DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SUPERVISOR BY PHONE, COMPLETE THIS SECTION ▼</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Authorized Signature</strong></td>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name of the Individual Providing Clearance</strong></td>
<td><strong>Supervisor/ Representative</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Accounts (Accounts Receivable, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comptroller’s Office (Petty Cash, American Express, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library (Overdue books, fines, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Police (ID Card, Parking Fines, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Plant (Building Keys)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsored Programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department (File keys and other departmental property)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchasing (Visa Card)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources (Insurance, retirement, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Forwarding Address: (This address is necessary to forward your W-2 tax document at the end of the year)

Reason for separating from the University:

---

28
APPENDIX F

Selected Listing of Board of Regents and University System of Maryland Policies and Procedures and Reciprocal Policies and Procedures of UMES
(WHICH AFFECT GA’s IN SOME CAPACITY)

SECTION III - ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

III-1.00 POLICY ON FACULTY, STUDENT AND INSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

III-1.00 (A) UMES POLICY CONCERNING UNIVERSITY ESTABLISHED EXAMINATIONS

III-1.10 POLICY ON MISCONDUCT IN SCHOLARLY WORK

III-1.10 (A) UMES PROCEDURES FOR ALLEGATIONS OF MISCONDUCT IN SCHOLARLY WORK

III-1.20 POLICY FOR REVIEW OF ALLEGED ARBITRARY AND CAPRICIOUS GRADING

III-1.20 (A) UMES PROCEDURES FOR REVIEW OF ALLEGED ARBITRARY AND CAPRICIOUS GRADING

III-2.50 POLICY ON ACADEMIC ADVISING

III-2.50 (A) UMES POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON ACADEMIC ADVISING

III-5.00 POLICY ON ACADEMIC CALENDAR

III-5.10 POLICY CONCERNING THE SCHEDULING OF ACADEMIC ASSIGNMENTS ON DATES OF RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

III-5.10 (A) UMES POLICY AND PROCEDURES CONCERNING ACADEMIC ASSIGNMENTS ON DATES OF RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

III-6.20 (A) UMES GRADING SYMBOLS AND NOTATIONS USED ON ACADEMIC TRANSCRIPTS

III-6.30 POLICY ON CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISCLOSURE OF STUDENT RECORDS

III-6.30 (A) UMES POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON THE DISCLOSURE OF STUDENT EDUCATION RECORDS

SECTION IV - RESEARCH
IV- 2.10 UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SYSTEM POLICY ON HUMAN SUBJECTS OF RESEARCH
IV- 2.20 POLICY ON CLASSIFIED AND PROPRIETARY WORK
IV- 3.00 POLICY ON PATENTS
IV- 3.10 POLICY ON COPYRIGHTS

SECTION V - STUDENT AFFAIRS
V- 1.00 (A) UMES JUDICIAL CODE
V- UMES STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES
V- 1.00 (C) UMES POLICY FOR CLASS EXCUSES

SECTION VI - GENERAL ADMINISTRATION
VI- 1.10 POLICY ON ACTS OF VIOLENCE AND EXTREMISM
VI- 1.30 UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND-SYSTEM POLICY ON SEXUAL ASSAULT
VI- 8.00 (A) UMES POLICY CONCERNING THE USE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES
VI- 9.00 (A) UMES TRAFFIC REGULATIONS
VI-11.00 (A) UMES POLICY AND PROCEDURES CONCERNING HIV INFECTION AND AIDS

SECTION VII- PERSONNEL
VII- 1.10 UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SYSTEM POLICY ON A DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE
VII-1.10 (A) UMES DRUG ABUSE POLICY
VII- 2.00(A) UMES POLICY FOR EMPLOYEE PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS
VII- 2.00(B) UMES POLICY FOR MEDICAL CARE FOR STAFF AND FACULTY
VII- 4.50 POLICY ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF AND BENEFITS FOR GRADUATE ASSISTANTS
VII- 4.50(A) UMES POLICY ON BENEFITS FOR GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

VII- 6.00(B) UMES POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT

VIII- FISCAL AND BUSINESS AFFAIRS

VIII- 2.70 POLICY ON STUDENT RESIDENCY CLASSIFICATION FOR ADMISSION, TUITION AND CHARGE-DIFFERENTIAL PURPOSES

SECTION X - MISCELLANEOUS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

X - 1.00(A) UMES POLICY CONCERNING THE USE OF UNIVERSITY STATIONERY

X - 2.00 (A) UMES POLICY CONCERNING ON-CAMPUS MAIL

X - 2.01 (A) UMES POLICY CONCERNING OFF-CAMPUS MAIL

X - 3.00 (A) INFORMATION CONCERNING UMES TELEPHONE SYSTEM USEAGE

X - 4.00 (A) UMES POLICY CONCERNING SMOKING
APPENDIX G

Information Resources for Graduate Teaching Assistants
And Graduate Students in General
INFORMATION RESOURCES FOR GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS AND FACULTY

Note: Copies of these items below are in the UMES Frederick Douglass Library.


   ASHE-ERIC* Higher Education Reports (by year):


   *Association for the Study of Higher Education; ERIC-Clearinghouse on Higher Education

9. “Preparing Future Faculty Program: **(series of six papers)
   - Program Description
   - Frequently Asked Questions
   - The Relationships between Faculty Preparation Programs and Teaching Assistant Development Programs
   - A Memo to Graduate Students: Preparing to be the Faculty of the Future
   - The Lessons…Concerning the Job Market
   - Building Bridges: The Preparing Future Faculty Program and Teaching Assistant Training

   ** Association of American Colleges and Universities and Council of Graduate Schools.
INFORMATION RESOURCES FOR GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS
AND GRADUATE STUDENTS IN GENERAL

Copies of the items below are in the UMES Frederick Douglass Library.


Note: articles in item no. 3 are of value to all graduate students, whether writing a thesis, a master's project or major seminar/research paper, and regardless of discipline or program.
APPENDIX H

MEMORANDA OF JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 1999 WHICH CLARIFY GRADUATE ASSISTANT PROCESSES AND BENEFITS FOUND IN THE GRADUATE ASSISTANT HANDBOOK
MEMORANDUM
January 5, 1999

TO: Graduate Assistants and Supervisors
    Graduate Program Coordinators
    Department Chairs with Graduate Programs

FR: C. Dennis Ignasias, Dean
    School of Graduate Studies

RE: Update on Graduate Assistant Processes and Benefits

The following matters affecting Graduate Assistantships have been addressed or clarified between the Division of Administrative Affairs/Human Resources Management Office and the Division of Academic Affairs/Graduate Studies office. Most of what is presented below in items 1, 2 & 3 is already in the Graduate Assistant Handbook, and is restated or clarified.

Hours per week: Time Commitment and Scheduling of Time

As stated in the Graduate Assistant Handbook, Section VI, p. 3, full-time (100%) graduate assistants are to work 20 hours a week, not 25, 30 or more hours per week; part-time (50%) 10 hours per week, not 15 or 20 hours per week. Full-time assistants are to devote 20 hours to work, 20 hours in pursuit of the degree program. There may be flexibility in the scheduling of the full or part-time graduate assistant’s time commitment to the University, but it should balance the work/study ratio.

2a. Tuition Remission: Number of Credits Issue and Allowability

Where allowable per funding source, tuition remission in the stated UMES policy (1992) and in the Graduate Assistant Handbook (Section XII, p. 8) is up to 10 credit hours per semester for full-time assistantships and up to 5 credit hours per semester for part-time assistantships. It is not automatically the ceiling of 10 or 5 credit hours, but based on actual credit hours taken. There is no unused tuition remission which carries over to another semester. See the Graduate Assistant Handbook, section XII, pg. 8 for the Winter and Summer sessions' credit hours for tuition remission. In all of these cases the assistantship's duration of time must be inclusive of the semester or session in which tuition remission is sought.
2b. **Tuition Remission: Processing (Graduate Assistant Handbook, Appendix C, Pgs. 18-19)**

Once the Tuition Remission request form (original is green color) has been signed by all parties, it is the student's responsibility to take the form to student accounts in the Comptroller's office and to later check that the tuition remission has been processed and credited to the student's account for that semester/session.

3. **Health Insurance Eligibility (Graduate Assistant Handbook, Section XIL No. 2, p. 9)**

The State of Maryland annually negotiates group health plans on a calendar year basis. All state agencies must abide by the calendar, eligibility requirements and provisions of these health plans. To be eligible for health insurance, a graduate assistant must have a full-time appointment of at least 9.5 months, covering two concurrent semesters. Part-time assistantships, even if 9.5 months duration, are ineligible for health insurance as are any assistantships for only one semester, and resident assistantships.

4. **Social Security Number for U.S.M. Payroll Processing**

Graduate Assistants who have a temporary social security number (957 ... ) assigned to them when they are admitted -- normally international applicants outside the U.S. -- must apply for a permanent social security number immediately upon acceptance of a graduate assistantship. A copy of a receipt from the local Social Security Administration office, showing submission of an application for a permanent social security number, should be submitted to the Office of Human Resources Management. In addition, once the graduate assistant has received his/her permanent social security card, they should provide it to the Office of Human Resources so that the temporary number can be replaced with the permanent number. A student cannot receive more than two payroll checks without showing that the proper social security application procedures have been followed. Note also that coverage for health insurance for eligible Graduate Assistants cannot be completed until a permanent social security number has been submitted to and verified by the Office of Human Resources.

The permanent social security number should be shown to the Graduate Studies office to correct the graduate record/transcript. A graduate assistant is also a matriculated graduate student, and social security numbers must match so that the Office of Human Resources can verify and process data and forms.

5. **Source of Funding for Assistantships**

Graduate assistantships paid out of external funding to the University (grant or contract from a federal or state agency/department) are always subject to rules and regulations of the grant or contract sponsor governing agency recision (early recall) of awarded funds or termination of the grant or contract for convenience of the government prior to the original termination date. While these are generally rare occurrences, they could occur. Graduate Assistants on external funding will now have a standard clause added to their appointment letter denoting that the appointment is "subject to availability of funds or continuous funding of the grant or contract."

/vcs

Copy: Human Resources Management Office
MEMORANDUM
February 3, 1999

TO: Mrs. Marty Smith
    Human Resource Associate II

FR: C. Dennis Ignasias
    Dean, School of Graduate Studies

RE: Graduate Students, Undergraduate Numbered Courses and Tuition Remission

This is a clarification regarding allowance of tuition remission for undergraduate numbered courses.

It is standard practice throughout graduate education in the United States that graduate programs may allow admitted students a limited number of credit hours to be earned or transferred at the undergraduate (usually 400) numbered level to be applied toward a graduate degree. See the section on course numbering system (p. 20, enclosed) in the Graduate Catalog which documents this allowability (400 level). In this case the graduate student has to undertake additional work in the class to the satisfaction of the instructor to qualify for the course to be considered as graduate work for the student's approved program of study. On an approved exception basis, a 300 level course might qualify if it is offered only at the 300 level and would be needed for the student's program of study to be continued without undue hindrance or unreasonable time delay. Some graduate students admitted on a provisional basis may be required to take a prerequisite undergraduate course(s), e.g., calculus, which at UMES is offered at a 100 or 200 series level, to satisfy a condition for undertaking and completing the student's program of study toward the degree.

For example, a graduate student in a Master of Science degree program such as Applied Computer Science, falls under the Non-Thesis option. I have enclosed pp. 27, 28 and 29 of the Graduate Catalog. On p. 28 (top) it states that no less than half of the total required course credits for the Master's degree, or at least 12, must be from 600 or above level courses. On page 28 under the sub-section, non-thesis option, second paragraph it states "...a minimum of 18 semester credit hours in courses numbered 600 or above...". This means a student, at the discretion of the
individual graduate program, could take up to 12 credit hours of coursework at the 400 numbered level to complete the minimum 30 credit hours needed for that degree. On p. 29 of the Graduate Catalog, under Master of Education degree requirements, item B, it states that no more than 12 credit hours may be earned in the 400 series. At UMES, 500 numbered courses are reserved for first professional graduate programs like the MAT and Physical Therapy.

In conclusion, upon the academic advisor's approval and within the student's approved program of study, graduate students may enroll in undergraduate numbered courses. If the graduate student is otherwise eligible for tuition remission, e.g., as a graduate assistant or staff, he/she should be entitled to the tuition remission even if it is given for an undergraduate numbered level course.

I enclose the Graduate Catalog text on designation of full and part-time graduate students (pp. 20-21), which is also a guide in determining the relationship of a graduate student's academic load with an assistantship, based on the concept of the graduate unit. All UMES graduate policies mirror the text of UMCP and/or UMAB/UMBC graduate policies, including graduate assistantships.

If further clarification is needed, please contact me.

Thank you for your continued assistance.

/vcs

Enclosures