

Guidelines for Requests, Appointments and Reappointments of Graduate Assistants, Teaching Assistants, and Research Assistants (GA/TA/RA)

8/23/16; Updated 10/16/17; Updated 9/11/18

Education and research are at the core of the academic initiative of the University of Colorado Denver. Graduate teaching and research assistants (GA/TA/RAs) are important and essential links between the creation and dissemination of new knowledge and the learning environment that meets the needs of, and enhances the experience of, students. Whether they serve as teaching assistants or research assistants, this group of students enriches the School of Public Affairs's mission. The purpose of this document is to describe guidelines related to the request, appointment and reappointment of GA/TA/RAs.

DEFINITIONS:

GA - Graduate Assistant, job code number 1502. Regularly enrolled, CU Denver degree seeking SPA graduate students in good standing who have assignments within the School, but are not directly involved in instruction.

GPTI - Graduate Part-Time Instructor, job code number 1503. Graduate student in good standing who must have master's degree or equivalent, and who have demonstrated competence in classroom teaching. GPTIs generally are given full responsibility for an undergraduate class. The activities may include preparing the course syllabus, instructing their class, holding office hours, determining of grades, etc. GPTIs must be enrolled as a full-time, regularly enrolled, degree-seeking graduate student.

RA or GRA - Graduate Research Assistant, job code number 1505. RA's must be enrolled as degree-seeking graduate students in good standing. The activities may include assisting with and performing research, writing up results of experiments, and presenting findings at conferences, which potentially may involve travel.

TA - Teaching Assistant, job code 1506. Graduate students in good standing who supervise and lead quiz sections, discussion sections, recitations or laboratory sections, serve as class assistants, or perform comparable activities. Must be enrolled as a regular degree-seeking graduate student in SPA. Each TA must be under the guidance of a particular professor(s) designated by the Dean or his/her delegate. TA's are not placed in overall charge of courses.

Student Asst. II – Student Assistant, job code 4102. In the case of upper level/five-year BA/MA students, they may be hired to assist faculty with data entry, clerical/office tasks, lab or library attendants, receptionists or other routine, repetitive work which may require some judgement.

GA/TA/RA ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. To be eligible for appointment as a GA/TA/RA, a graduate student must be admitted to a graduate program in the School of Public Affairs, in good standing (i.e., not on academic probation).
2. To be eligible for an appointment as a GA/TA/RA, a SPA graduate student should be enrolled on a full-time basis. However, exceptions to this requirement can be made on a case-by-case basis with the approval from the Associate Dean.
3. To be eligible for a Student Assistant work-study position, an undergraduate BA or five-year BA/MA must be enrolled continuously in 6 or more credit hours during the semester, including summer semesters.

REQUESTS FOR GA/TA/RA

1. It is the requesting faculty member's responsibility to identify the particular graduate student they wish to serve as their GA/TA/RA.
2. A request for a GA/TA/RA, must be submitted to the SPA HR Director using the "[Student Employee Request Form](#)". The written request must be submitted at least one month prior to the beginning of the semester in which a GA/TA/RA is requested to serve. The written request must include these elements:
 - a. The justification for the GA/TA/RA,
 - b. The semester(s)/year the GA/TA/RA is requested,
 - c. Identification of the specific graduate student requested to serve in this capacity,
 - d. Verification that the requested graduate student meets all requirements to serve as a GA/TA/RA, and
 - e. The tasks and responsibilities that will be assigned to the GA/TA/RA.
4. Lecturers are not eligible to request GA/TA/RA appointments.
5. The Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs will review all requests to determine eligibility and make a recommendation to the Assistant Dean and Dean. The Assistant Dean will verify if adequate funding is available for the request. The final decision to appoint a GA, TA or RA to a full-time faculty member is made solely at the Dean's discretion.
6. Students wishing to be considered to serve as a GA/TA/RA should submit a resume and cover letter to SPA HR. The student's information will be added to the share drive. Faculty can use this part of the share drive as a resource for finding potential assistants.
7. Faculty who are hiring a GA/TA/RA through one of their non-SPA research grants may hire a non-SPA student if needed. The faculty member should contact the SPA Human Resources Director prior to hiring a non-SPA student to discuss the hiring process.

8. GA/TA/RAs cannot begin working for faculty members until their background check and paperwork have been approved by Human Resources.

APPOINTMENT PERIODS

Appointments will typically be made on a semester (i.e., fall or spring) basis, with the exception of PhD-level RAs and program director GAs which typically will be appointed for the academic year (August to May). Appointments for the academic year, however, must contain a clause that the second semester appointment is based on the student's adequate academic progress and adequate performance in their appointment. Semester appointments run from either August to December for fall or from January to May for spring appointments. Summer appointments for GA/TA/RAs are approved only in very unusual circumstances, and generally require that the faculty member has secured adequate funding to support the graduate student during the summer.

APPOINTMENT DECISION CRITERIA

1. Requests for GA/TA/RAs in which grant funding received by the faculty member would support the GA/TA/RA during the requested semester(s) will be given preference.
2. Requests for GA/TA/RAs from junior (pre-tenure) faculty will be given preference.
3. Requests for GA/TA/RAs in which faculty members are responsible for large teaching loads, are teaching writing intensive courses, and faculty teaching a large numbers of students during the semester or year will be given preference.
4. Funding for PhD student RA or TA lines is used to attract the best and brightest PhD applicants, to provide opportunities to advance their professional careers, and to allow them to pursue their doctoral degree full-time. These students are "matched" with faculty with related interests with a priority given to junior faculty. In assigning PhD students, considerations will be given to what makes most sense for SPA as well as to the interest and needs of the faculty and students. In addition to working as a RA or a TA with a faculty member, PhD students may also work for The SPA Institute or in administrative support to a Program Director. As noted, faculty are encouraged to secure external funds to offer RA positions to help recruit and support available PhD students.
5. All GA/TA/RA requests will be considered, but are contingent upon budget availability that academic year.

REAPPOINTMENT DECISION

1. GA/TA/RA reappointment is not automatic.

2. To be eligible for reappointment as a GA/TA/RA, a graduate student must be admitted to a graduate program in the School of Public Affairs, in good standing.
3. To be eligible for reappointment as a GA/TA/RA, a graduate student must be enrolled on a full-time basis.

POST APPOINTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. It is up to the individual faculty member to determine assignments for the GA/TA/RA that are appropriate for the position. The faculty member should communicate the assignments and expected deadlines clearly to the student at the beginning of the semester and maintain regular communication with the student.
2. The GA/TA/RA is expected to maintain all records pertinent to his or her assignment and to provide them as requested by his or her faculty supervisor.
3. It is the faculty member's responsibility to ensure the student's time sheets and other required administrative tasks are accomplished correctly and on time, and are submitted to SPA HR.
4. The GA/TA/RA is expected to work closely with their faculty supervisor in carrying out assigned GA/TA/RA duties, and also to make good progress toward degree completion.
5. The GA/TA/RA is obligated to maintain and enforce standards of academic honesty and integrity and to report violations of these to their faculty supervisor.
6. As per university policy, a GA/TA/RA cannot work more than 20 hours per week. Hourly pay rates are established by the University.
7. GA/TA/RAs are ineligible for paid vacation or sick leave. A student may make personal arrangements with the School for such leave without pay if needed.