UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND
TUITION SCHOLARSHIPS

2015-2016 GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

WHO IS A GRADUATE ASSISTANT?
• Graduate assistants are those who receive stipends in association with assignments in
teaching, research, administration, professional assistance, clinical duties, and specialized
services. Assistants cannot receive academic credit for assigned assistantship duties.
This policy includes research performed by research assistants.

GRADUATE STUDENT EMPLOYEES UNION
• All State-funded teaching and graduate assistant positions including Carson Carr Graduate
Diversity Scholars are represented for purposes of collective negotiations by the
Communications Workers of America, Local 1104/Graduate Student Employees Union
(CWA Local 1104/GSEU).

• Fellows are NOT members of the CWA Local 1104/GSEU bargaining unit. Likewise,
graduate assistant positions that are funded from non-State resources (e.g., the Research
Foundation or other external funds) are NOT members of the CWA Local 1104/GSEU
bargaining unit.

JOB POSTING
• The Office of Human Resources Management posts a list of departments and
administrative units that employed CWA 1104/GSEU represented teaching and graduate
assistants during the previous academic year.

• Under the current GSEU Agreement, units identified in the above listing are required to
have written policies describing the application process, selection criteria, terms of
appointment, policies for renewal, and evaluation procedures for all CWA Local
1104/GSEU represented teaching and graduate assistant positions.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES
• Applications for assistantships, fellowships, or tuition scholarships should be made directly
to the department chairperson in the department where the program is offered or the dean
for any school that does not have a departmental organization. Applicants and new
students should complete the Graduate Assistantship/Fellowship Application form and
upload it with their on-line application where it can be given special attention and be
reviewed by the appropriate admissions committee during the admission process.

• Assistantships, fellowships, and tuition scholarships can only be awarded to
students or prospective students who have been formally admitted into a graduate
degree program.
• Inasmuch as the University at Albany is a signatory to the following resolution by the Council of Graduate Schools, the policy below should be adhered to as offers are made and commitments are received from graduate students.

"Students are under no obligation to respond to offers of financial support prior to April 15; earlier deadlines for acceptance of such offers violate the intent of this Resolution. In those instances in which a student accepts an offer before April 15, and subsequently desires to withdraw that acceptance, the student may submit in writing a resignation of the appointment at any time through April 15. However, an acceptance given or left in force after April 15 commits the student not to accept another offer without first obtaining a written release from the institution to which a commitment has been made. Similarly, an offer by an institution after April 15 is conditional on presentation by the student of the written release from any previously accepted offer."

Likewise, after June 1, if a student has accepted an assistantship or fellowship in one University unit, another department at Albany should not recruit the student for a different award.

**APPOINTMENT PROCEDURES**

• Upon receiving written acceptance of an assistantship or fellowship award, the appointing department should direct and assist the hired graduate assistant to complete the appropriate employment paperwork required by the Human Resources payroll office. Forms can be located and printed from the Human Resources website http://www.albany.edu/hr/HRM4.php.

All new assistantship appointments require the completion of an entire student packet which contains the Graduate/Teaching Assistant, Resident Assistant, and Fellowship Appointment HRM-4 form, EMP-1 New Employee Information Form, Federal Withholding Form W-4, New York State Withholding Form IT-2104, Form I-9, Oath Card, Employees’ Retirement System (ERS) Information Sheet and Acknowledgement. Health Insurance Information, Employee Access and Compliance Agreement, and Direct Deposit Form are all considered optional forms. International students complete differing Federal NRA Form W-4 and State NRA IT-2104 forms as well as a Foreign National Information Sheet.

Continuing assistantship appointments require only the Student Appointment Request HRM-4 form with the following exceptions: (1) tax forms must be redone for those changing their tax status and (2) a new I-9 is needed for international students whose employment authorization has changed since the previous I-9 was completed.

Fellowship appointments require only the Student Appointment Request HRM-4 form and Employee Identification Questionnaire. Since taxes are not withheld from fellowship stipends, withholding forms are not needed. (Please refer to the section on Fellowships for additional information regarding the taxability of fellowship stipends.)

All graduate assistant and fellowship appointment forms should be forwarded through the appropriate Dean’s Office to Human Resources Management. All Tuition Scholarship Award forms should be processed by the appropriate Dean’s Office.
Questions concerning administrative procedures and payrolls may be addressed to the appropriate office listed below:

- for State-funded assistants: call Office of Human Resources Management at 437-4700 or visit http://hr.albany.edu
- for Research Foundation assistants: contact Sponsored Funds Personnel at 437-4500
- for State-funded fellows and tuition scholarships: contact appropriate College or School’s Dean’s Office

- If an assistant or fellow resigns the award, withdraws from the academic program, or ceases to satisfactorily perform the assigned assistantship duties, the assistantship or fellowship should be immediately terminated.

**TERMS OF APPOINTMENT**

- A student must enter the University in good academic standing to be considered for appointment during the initial term. Likewise, a student must remain in good academic standing and must have satisfactorily performed the assigned assistantship duties to be eligible for renewal in this appointment.

- Full-time student status is required to hold an assistantship or fellowship.

- A student may receive a maximum of two years of support from State resources while pursuing the Master’s degree. Doctoral students who enter the University without advanced standing may be appointed to a total of four years of State-funded support. Doctoral students who enter their doctoral program with a master’s degree in the same field are limited a total of three years. All funding is contingent upon the availability of University funding. Requests for exceptions to this policy should be directed to the Dean of Graduate Education.

- Assistants and fellows cannot hold more than one full assistantship or fellowship, and should not engage in additional work beyond the assistantship or fellowship, including part-time lectureships and outside employment, during the term of their appointment. The student’s department chairperson, college/school dean, and the Dean of Graduate Education all need to authorize exceptions based on educational benefits (not financial need). Approval should be received prior to the commencement of the additional responsibilities.

- In general, assistants are expected to provide their usual services following the academic calendar and, in addition, to be available to assist during the examination period when needed. However, assistants in certain administrative offices or departments may be expected to provide services over the entire period including the intersession recess, provided this arrangement is stated in the notification letter at the time of appointment.
• For payroll purposes graduate assistants are appointed for the 2015-2016 academic year from August 13, 2015 through May 18, 2016. Stipend checks are divided into twenty equal payments and are subject to the lag payroll. The first check will be issued on September 9, 2015, and the final check on June 1, 2016. Fall 2015 semester graduate assistants are appointed from August 13, 2015 through December 30, 2015. First paychecks for those appointed for Fall 2015 will be issued on September 9, 2015 and their last paycheck will be issued January 13, 2016. Spring 2016 semester graduate assistants are appointed from December 31, 2015 through May 18, 2016. First paychecks for those appointed for Spring 2016 will be issued on January 27, 2016 and their last paycheck will be issued June 1, 2016.

• Fellowship appointments are generally for the period of September 1, 2015, through May 31, 2016. Stipend checks are divided into ten equal payments and are issued once a month except in March. There are two checks issued in March. (Please refer to the Fellowship section of these guidelines for the specific payment schedule.)

STIPENDS
Assistantship stipends are considered to be taxable income even where there is a specific requirement for training for all students in a particular program.

TRAINING
• Each department should organize a program for the training and orienting of teaching assistants. In addition, there is a University-wide College Teaching Symposium conducted through the Institute for Teaching, Learning and Academic Leadership (ITLAL) prior to the start of the academic year.

• Ordinarily, assistants assigned to teach undergraduate courses should be doctoral students studying beyond the Master’s degree. Assistants studying at the Master’s level may assist in the teaching of a regular course and may teach laboratory sessions, but should not assume full responsibility for a regular course.

• International graduate students must have a TOEFL score of 600 or above on the paper version; 250 or above on the computer version; or 100 or above on the IBT Internet based test and also be certified by the department chairperson as competent to conduct classroom discussion before they can be authorized to teach classes or laboratories where the language of instruction is English. If their TOEFL score does not meet this standard, they must pass the Test of Spoken English with a score of 50 and be certified by the department chairperson as competent to conduct classroom or laboratory discussion. One way to meet this standard is to enroll during the summer prior to the start of the fall semester in the Intensive English Language Program offered by the University at Albany. For more details concerning this program, please consult http://www.albany.edu/ielp/, with particular reference to the Summer Academic Institute.

• The University at Albany also accepts the IELTS test as an alternative to TOEFL. International applicants must score 7.0 or greater. However, not all departments accept the IELTS.
LEAVE ACCRUALS
After the first semester of service, teaching and graduate assistants covered by the GSEU bargaining unit are eligible for a maximum of five leave days for personal illness with pay. Leave may be granted in increments of one-quarter (.25) day or greater and is subject to the approval of the supervisor. Assistants do not have any sick leave accruals during the first semester of the appointment. Should an assistant be ill, the department must either arrange for the student to make up missed time, or notify the Benefits Office ASAP that the student should be placed on leave without pay.

Subject to prior approval (such approval not to be unreasonably withheld) some or all of the 5 days provided may be used for absences due to substantiated illness or death in the graduate assistant’s immediate family (spouse, child, sibling, parent, grandparent, in-laws, or any person with whom the student has been making his or her home).

EFFORT REPORTING
Each assistant and supervisor must certify that the assistant has satisfactorily fulfilled the assignments and duties of the position. The Monthly Attendance Report, Graduate and Teaching Assistants, http://www.albany.edu/hr/schedules_timesheets.php, should be signed at the end of each month and kept by the supervisor. At the end of each semester, this card should be returned to the Office of Human Resources Management. If the service commitment of a graduate assistant is not fulfilled, stipend checks will not be issued.

EVALUATION
Under the terms of the GSEU Agreement, departments which conduct written evaluations of graduate and teaching assistants are required to notify the assistants in writing of the procedures used and allow assistants to comment upon these procedures.

TUITION SCHOLARSHIPS
- In order to apply for a tuition scholarship award, students must complete a Tuition Scholarship Award Form http://www.albany.edu/graduate/graduate-forms-publications.php. Departments should send this form to the appropriate Dean’s Office for processing.

- Only graduate level course work is eligible to be covered under a tuition scholarship award.

- Incoming domestic out-of-state graduate students are eligible for in-state tuition rates after they have been residing in New York State on a permanent basis for one year. Therefore, tuition scholarships will cover tuition expenses at the out-of-state rate for the first year only, and cover expenses at the in-state rate in all following years.

- If a tuition scholarship award recipient leaves the program or is terminated from an assistantship or fellowship position prior to the mid-semester date, the tuition scholarship will be terminated and the student will be liable for the tuition charges.

- The Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) for New York State residents is no longer available for graduate students.
RESIDENCY
The University must comply with SUNY’s administrative policy, “Establishment of Residency for Tuition Purposes,” when determining residency status. Key to any residency case is the determination of domicile, which is defined as a fixed, permanent home to which a person intends to return following an absence. In order to qualify for residency for tuition purposes, it is generally required that a New York State domicile must have been established at least one year prior to the period of registration at the University and maintained beyond that point. The burden of proof is upon the applicant through the submission of documentary evidence sufficient to demonstrate domiciliary status.

Emancipation, including full financial dependence, is a cornerstone consideration in residency determinations. Pursuant to SUNY policy, the domicile of students who are not financially independent (emancipated) is that of the parents. SUNY policy further specifies some of the factors to be used in determining emancipation. A student claiming emancipation must present evidence of both emancipation and a New York State domicile in order to be designated a New York State resident for tuition purposes. Proof of emancipation must include documentation demonstrating the student’s financial independence.

New York State High School Exception
Certain non-resident students may be eligible for the resident tuition rate if they attended an approved New York State high school for two or more years, graduated from an approved New York State high school and applied for admission to the University within five years of receiving a New York State high school diploma; or attended an approved New York State program for a General Equivalency Diploma (GED) exam preparation, received a GED and applied for admission to the University within five years of receiving the GED. Application requirements: complete the Express Application for New York State Residency for Tuition Billing Purposes, include a copy of your official/final high school transcript showing the award of degree or a copy of your official GED along with documentation of the preparation program attended and submit it to the address on the form by the deadline date indicated for the semester or term for which you are applying for NYS residency.

Definitions

Domicile
A domicile is a person’s fixed, permanent, and principal home for legal purposes. According to SUNY tuition policy, this means more than simply residing in New York State to attend school. A domicile is the home to which a person intends to return following a period of absence. Establishing domicile includes the abandonment of one’s prior state of residence and the decision to adopt NYS as one’s permanent home. It also includes the intent to remain in NYS permanently.

Emancipation
Emancipated students no longer receive any financial support from their parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and are completely responsible for paying all of their educational costs. Students claiming to be emancipated, or financially independent, must provide evidence of both financial independence and domicile.
Non-U.S. Citizens

Permanent Resident aliens, Refugees and Asylees, including those with pending applications, and some undocumented aliens may establish in-state residence in accordance with SUNY policies. Non-Immigrant Aliens with the following types of visa classifications may also establish in-state residence in accordance with these policies: A1-A3, E1, E2, G1-G5, H1B, H1C, H4, I, K1-K4, L1 and L2, N8 and N9, O1, O3, S5-S7, T1-T4, U1-U4, and V1-V3.

Domestic out-of-state graduate students can request in-state status by filing An Application for New York State Residency Status for Tuition Billing Purposes http://www.albany.edu/studentaccounts/res_apply.php. Semester application deadlines are:

- Fall – October 1
- Spring – March1
- Summer Sessions – July 1

For complete information on SUNY residency requirements and required documentation please reference the Office of Student Account’s Apply for New York State Residency website http://www.albany.edu/studentaccounts/res_apply.php. Questions concerning eligibility should be addressed to the Office of Student Accounts located in the Student Financial Center.

BENEFIT INFORMATION

See the Office of Human Resources Management, Employee Benefit Summaries http://www.albany.edu/hr/GATA_SEHP.php for complete information about graduate assistant benefits.

- Graduate and Teaching Assistants who have at least a half assistantship and who have an annual stipend of at least $4,600.50 ($2,300.25 per semester) are eligible for the Student Employee Health Plan as employees represented by the Graduate Student Employees Union (GSEU). This differs from the accident and sickness insurance available to all domestic students. An enrollment packet will be sent to eligible employees in care of their department once Human Resources is notified of an appointment.

Plan Provisions and additional information can be found in the SEHP At a Glance Booklet. Additional information can be found on the Civil Service Website or by viewing the Summary of Benefits and Coverage (SBC).

- F-1 and J-1 Students: Students on an F-1 or J-1 visa are required to enroll in the Student Employee Health Plan. Coverage becomes effective on the date of appointment regardless of date of application. Enrollment in the program may be waived with proof of comparable coverage under another plan.

- U.S. Citizens and Permanent Residents: Enrollment in the Student Employee Health Plan is voluntary and must be requested within 45 days after the date of appointment to avoid waiting periods. Health insurance coverage is effective on the date the enrollment form is received, but not earlier than the date of appointment. Enrollment after the initial enrollment period is subject to a 30-day wait from the date of request, unless previous coverage is terminated and proof is provided. An open enrollment is held each year from mid-August to late September.
- Graduate fellows are not covered by a health plan. However the University offers a comprehensive form of accident and sickness insurance for domestic students. Participants may obtain coverage for their spouses and/or dependents. More information concerning this health policy can be found at http://www.albany.edu/health_center/healthinsurance.shtml.

- Students appointed through the Research Foundation may elect to participate in the Graduate Student Employee Health Plan (GSEHP). GSEHP is a different plan from the Student Employee Health plan (SEHP). Like fellows, Research Foundation assistants are not eligible for SEHP.

- All Graduate and Teaching Assistants are eligible for membership in the NYS Employees' Retirement System (ERS). Additional information can be found at http://www.albany.edu/hr/retire.php.

**PATENT POLICY**

The patent policy (Article XI, Title J, Section 1 of the Policies of the Board of Trustees) of the State University of New York states that:

"All inventions made by faculty members, employees, students, and all others utilizing University facilities at any of the State-operated institutions of State University shall belong to State University and should be voluntarily disclosed or shall be disclosed to State University upon request of the University. The inventor or inventors shall make application for patents thereon as directed by State University and shall assign such applications or any patents resulting there from to or as directed by State University. ...an invention made by an individual wholly on such individual's own time and without the use of such University facilities shall belong to the individual even though it falls within the field of competence relating to the individual's University position."
GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP LEVELS

FULL ASSISTANTSHIPS WITH STIPENDS AT OR ABOVE $9,201
- Assistantships with annual stipends at or above $9,201 are considered standard full assistantships. Students holding these assistantships are expected to devote approximately one-half of their time to the academic program and one-half to the assistantship.

- Study: Prior to admission to candidacy, graduate assistants must register for a minimum of 9 graduate credits each semester of the academic year to meet award eligibility requirements. Supported doctoral students in their last term prior to candidacy and master’s students in their final semester of study may be allowed a reduced course load to conform with remaining program credit requirements. Note, however, that such reduced enrollment will not cause the student to be certifiable as enrolled full-time. After admission to candidacy, certifiable full-time award eligibility and certification requirements can be met by registering for a minimum of one dissertation 899 unit.

- Duties: (a) Teaching assignment: teaching up to five credits (generally one or two courses each session).
  (b) Laboratory teaching assignment: two or three sections each session.
  (c) Non-teaching assignment: 15-20 clock hours per week.

- Tuition Scholarships: Graduate students with this type of award may qualify for a tuition scholarship of 9 or more graduate credits per semester.

HALF ASSISTANTSHIPS WITH STIPENDS AT OR ABOVE $4,600.50
- Students holding assistantships with annual stipends at or above $4,600.50 are expected to register as full-time students and provide half the professional assistance of full assistants.

- Study: Full-time registration (minimum of 12 graduate credits per semester) in course and seminar work each session of the award. Supported doctoral students in their last semester prior to candidacy and master’s students in their final semester of study may be allowed a reduced course load to conform with remaining credit requirements. Such reduced enrollments will not, however, be cause for full-time enrollment certifications. Supported doctoral students formally admitted to doctoral candidacy may register for one-credit of dissertation 899 and be considered in conformance with award eligibility requirements and are certifiable as enrolled full-time.

- Duties: Equivalent to about ten hours a week

- Tuition Scholarships: Graduate students with this type of award may qualify for a tuition scholarship of up to 6 graduate credit hours per semester.
CARSON CARR GRADUATE DIVERSITY SCHOLAR AWARDS

- Carson Carr Graduate Diversity Scholar awards are competitive, merit-based awards granted to graduate students who will contribute to the diversity of the student body in their graduate or professional program.

- A Carson Carr Graduate Diversity Scholar Application must be completed by interested new students and current University at Albany students and is found at [http://www.albany.edu/graduate/graduate-forms-publications.php](http://www.albany.edu/graduate/graduate-forms-publications.php). Applicants must be United States citizens or have permanent residency and must have completed an application for graduate study at the University. The deadline for application submission for new students corresponds with the applicant’s department deadline for financial assistance. For current students applications must be received no later than April 15.

- Students new to the University at Albany receive first priority for available funding. However, currently enrolled doctoral candidates who have completed all degree requirements but the dissertation (“ABD”) may also apply for assistance under this program. Current Graduate Assistants and Teaching Assistants may also apply for a supplement to their current stipends if such a stipend can be demonstrated to enhance their retention in graduate studies.

- Duties: Initial work assignments for Carson Carr Graduate Diversity Scholars will be determined as the first semester progresses. They will typically include attending departmental colloquia, attending meetings of the graduate student organization in the department, getting to know faculty in the program, becoming integrated into the life of the department, and participating in campus-wide Graduate Student Organization events and activities. In the second semester, Carson Carr Graduate Diversity Scholars continue to attend colloquia and remain a full participant in graduate student life, as well as assume teaching and/or research obligations as designated by the department.

- Tuition Scholarships: Graduate students with this type of award may qualify for tuition scholarship awards.
FELLOWSHIPS

- Fellowships are grants to students who are engaged in full-time study. **NO work obligation** is associated with full-time fellowship awards. If a student is in an academic program that requires all students to perform ancillary teaching, research, or practicum duties, the student should register for independent study or practicum credits, and this activity should be clearly differentiated from the fellowship award. The same arrangement should be followed for fellows who desire teaching and research experience.

- Fellowship stipends are reportable income even though no taxes are withheld from the stipend checks. Generally, only the portion of the stipend used to pay for books, supplies, or equipment that are required for classes and for which the student has receipts can be considered tax exempt. Fellows should consult the local Internal Revenue Service with specific questions about the taxability of the stipend. There are no Form 1099s issued for fellowship stipends. However, upon request, the student’s appointing department or Dean’s Office will generate a tax letter indicating the total stipend received during the previous calendar year. It is the recipient’s responsibility, where applicable, to report the stipend to the IRS.

- Study: Full-time registration (minimum of 12 graduate credits per semester) in course and seminar work each session of the award. Supported doctoral students in their last semester prior to candidacy and master’s students in their final semester of study may be allowed a reduced course load to conform with remaining credit requirements. Such reduced enrollments will not, however, be cause for full-time enrollment certifications. Supported doctoral students formally admitted to doctoral candidacy may register for one-credit of dissertation 899 and be considered in conformance with award eligibility requirements and are certifiable as enrolled full-time.

- Tuition Scholarships: Graduate students with this type of award may qualify for a tuition scholarship of up to 12 graduate credit hours per semester.

STIPEND PAYMENT

- The following table indicates the dates when fellowship checks will be issued during the 2015-2016 academic year. In most cases, checks are available through the dean’s or department chair’s office. Students should contact their school to confirm the appropriate pick up location.

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**BLENDED AWARDS**

- A “blended” award consists of a partial fellowship and partial assistantship. This position is designed to provide students with greater contact with faculty and to receive enhanced teaching and research experience, while allowing for substantial freedom from work obligations in order to pursue full-time study.

- Departments will be able to mix funding types to craft competitive awards, which will help to enhance the use of funding as a recruitment and retention tool. Half-assistantships with a stipend that meets eligibility requirements ($4,600.50 for the academic year or $2,300.25 per semester) are eligible for GSEU health insurance.

**HALF ASSISTANTSHIP AND HALF FELLOWSHIP**

- Study: Full-time registration (minimum of 12 graduate credits per semester) in course and seminar work each session of the award. Supported doctoral students in their last semester prior to candidacy and master’s students in their final semester of study may be allowed a reduced course load to conform with remaining credit requirements. Such reduced enrollments will not, however, be cause for full-time enrollment certifications. Supported doctoral students formally admitted to doctoral candidacy may register for one-credit of dissertation 899 and be considered in conformance with award eligibility requirements and are certifiable as enrolled full-time.

- Duties: Equivalent to about ten hours a week for the assistantship portion of the award; there is no work obligation associated with the fellowship portion of the award.

- Tuition Scholarships: Graduate students with this type of award may qualify for a tuition scholarship of 12 credits.

**STIPEND PAYMENT**

Students receiving a blended assistantship will receive two different paychecks. They will receive a bi-weekly check from state resources, with tax, health insurance and any other dues deducted; and they will receive a monthly fellowship check.