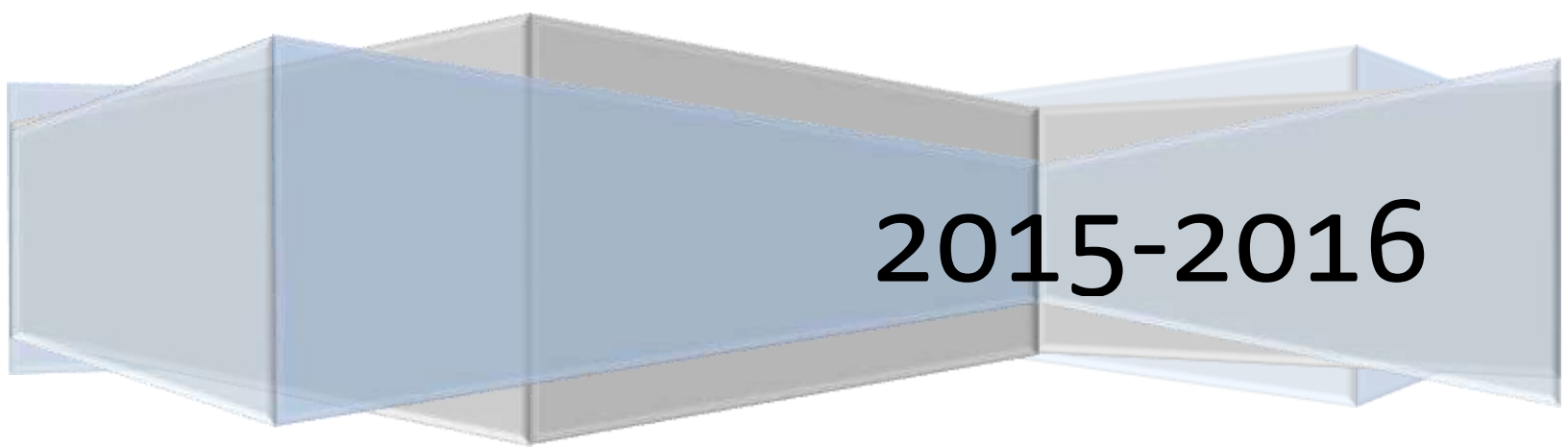


**Division of Student Affairs and  
Enrollment Management  
Graduate Assistantship Policy Manual**



**2015-2016**

# Division of Student Affairs & Enrollment Management

## Graduate Assistant Policy Manual

### 2015-2016

The Division of Student Affairs & Enrollment Management is committed to funding approximately 40 graduate assistantships each year for students primarily enrolled in the College Student Affairs graduate program (Master of Education in Professional Counseling with a concentration in College Student Affairs). Approximately half of the assistantships are for first-year students, and approximately half are for second-year students. The purposes of the Graduate Assistantships are:

- To support the work of the Division of Student Affairs & Enrollment Management.
- To provide financial support for graduate students pursuing master's degrees in College Student Affairs.
- To provide a developmental experience for Graduate Assistants (GAs) in order to help prepare them to be successful higher education professionals - helping them learn about higher education as a career, develop professional skills, learn to balance personal and professional life, and learn about themselves.
- To provide opportunities for GAs to put academic principles and theories from their studies into practice in a professional environment.

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## Policies

### Abbreviations in this document:

**SAEM** – Student Affairs & Enrollment Management

**VPSAEM** – Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management

**GA** – Graduate Assistant

**CSA** – College Student Affairs graduate program

### 1. Work Schedules

Because of the nature of the student affairs profession, work hours may vary slightly depending on the time of year and demands of the particular office. ***Supervisors will work with GAs to help them balance work, school, and life.***

- All GAs will work approximately 20 hours per week.
- The following anticipated work schedule for GAs is for the 2015-2016 academic year. If it is necessary for some GAs to work on holidays, before the first day of work for a term, or after the last day of work for a term, they will receive additional compensation, **OR** will take off other days to make up for those days, at the discretion of the supervisor. Department heads/supervisors will communicate this with their GAs.
- GAs are not eligible for vacation time. If there is a need for flexible time away, this needs to be worked out with the supervisor, prior to the time away, and documented in writing.
- GAs should work with their supervisor to clearly define what work hours are work expectations. Attending events and programs that are not defined as part of expected work is at the choice of the GA.
- In the first weeks of work GAs and their supervisors should document their planned work schedule for the upcoming semester.

## Division of Student Affairs & Enrollment Anticipated Graduate Assistant Work Calendar 2015-2016

| Term        | Orientation | First Day of Work | Classes Begin | Breaks                      | Classes End | Graduation  | Last Day of Work |
|-------------|-------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| Fall 2015   | August 10   | August 11         | August 24     | September 7; November 23-27 | December 11 | December 12 | December 18      |
| Spring 2016 | N/A         | January 4         | January 11    | January 18; March 14-18     | April 29    | April 30    | April 29         |
| Summer 2016 | N/A         | May 2             | May 9         | May 30; July 4              | July 29     | July 30     | July 29          |

*If it is necessary for some GAs to work on holidays, before the first day of work for a term, or after the last day of work for a term, they will receive additional compensation, **OR** will take off other days to make up for those days, at the discretion of the supervisor. Department heads/supervisors will communicate this with their GAs.*

*Note – GA stipends are based on 80 work hours per month (20 hours for four weeks). For months in which the GAs do not work four weeks, for example in August and December, GAs are to work with their supervisor to determine alternate times to make up those hours.*

## 2. Compensation

GAs will receive a monthly stipend on the last day of the month of \$800 per month (**before taxes**), for a 9-month period (\$7,200 per academic year), plus a waiver of tuition (2015-2016 value: \$ approx. \$2000/semester for in-state students and approx. \$8000/semester for out-of-state students)

- Because of the nature of the position, some GAs in Housing and Residence Life are required to live on campus and are provided an apartment (valued at \$500/month)
- Due to the change in the Academic Calendar for the Fiscal Year in 2017 (FY17), the annual compensation may be distributed differently.

## 3. Summer Stipends

The SAEM Division will provide the opportunity for GAs to work during the summer if they are interested. GAs may work 1, 2, or 3 months during the summer (May, June, July), with an \$800 (before taxes), stipend for each month. If a GA works fewer than 80 hours during a month, the stipend will be pro-rated appropriately.

- As long as a GA works during at least one summer session and takes at least 6 hours, his/her tuition is waived for any summer session.
- Summer pay for all GAs except those in Housing & Residence Life is from the VPSAEM's budget.

## 4. Mandatory Fees

Graduate students must pay all UWG mandatory fees, including a \$25 Graduate Tuition Fee, for any session they take classes. (Approximately \$981 per semester for 2015-2016)

## 5. Health Insurance

The University System of Georgia (USG) requires all graduate students receiving a tuition reduction as part of their graduate assistantship award to have health insurance, which meets certain minimum requirements. The USG has contracted with an outside vendor to provide this insurance, which will automatically be charged to the GAs UWG account. If a GA has not purchased the USG-required insurance, or received a waiver from the vendor by the deadline, his/her classes will be dropped and s/he will not be eligible for a GA position. More information is at [http://www.westga.edu/graposting/index\\_14556.php](http://www.westga.edu/graposting/index_14556.php). You will need to type in "University of West Georgia" in the search box at the top to see our school's information.

## 6. Travel Funds

- All travel must be approved by the GAs supervisor.
- SAEM provides \$300 per graduate student per Fiscal Year (July – June) to use for travel to professional conferences. Funds cannot roll over to the following year. Jo Etta Miller, Assistant Director for Student Affairs Budget, Planning and Finance, will work with GAs on the paperwork.
- Your department will provide up to \$300 in travel funds in order to support their own missions.
- The VPSAEM office may have funds available each year which GAs may apply for if they are presenting a program or participating in a case study competition. Contact Jo Etta Miller, Assistant Director for Budget, Planning and Finance ([jmiller@westga.edu](mailto:jmiller@westga.edu)), to apply for funds.
- The VPSAEM Office will also periodically provide transportation for selected state and regional generalist conferences which are within driving distance (such as SACSA/NASPA Region III, GCPA, Graduate Student Faculty Forum, and Georgia's New Professionals Institute).
- Travel funds can be used for conference registration, meals, lodging, and transportation, as long as GAs follow appropriate UWG policies as outlined at <http://www.westga.edu/travel/>

- Approval/funding by the SAEM division does not constitute an excused class absence. Each professor sets his or her own class attendance policies, and it is the responsibility of the GA to follow those policies and discuss concerns with the faculty member.
- Time away and missed work and work hours to attend conferences, is to be arranged in advance with the GA supervisor, consistent with the expectations for the department.

## 7. Evaluations

***Each term, supervisors will conduct performance evaluations with GAs to help them identify strengths, areas for growth, and future plans.*** This should include a preliminary discussion of the next year's assistantship with first-year GAs.

## 8. Term of appointment

All SAEM Graduate Assistantships are renewable one-year appointments, assuming satisfactory job performance by the GA.

- GAs must be in good academic standing with their academic program to hold an assistantship in the division.
- If a GA is not performing the job satisfactorily, the supervisor will discuss that with the GA and may require corrective action, or disciplinary action ranging from warning to termination.
- Each December/January, first-year GAs and their supervisors will discuss their plans for the following year. If both the supervisor and the GA are satisfied with the appointment, the GA will continue in the appointment for a second year. If either the GA or the supervisor wishes to make a change, the SAEM VP office will facilitate a process for GAs to apply for interviews in other departments within the Division for different positions the following year. The process for a second year student to make a change in assistantship must be completed prior to the date that available assistantships are published for newly recruited students. This date will be published when the process commences in January, and **no switches will be allowed after the date.**

## 9. E-mail addresses

GAs will get a UWG staff e-mail address and are expected to check it regularly and use it for all professional correspondence. GAs will be on the UWG "all-staff" listserv and on the SAEM Divisional staff listserv. Departments are responsible for requesting GA email addresses and verifying continued employment each semester to that credentials do not expire.

Because GAs are also enrolled as students, they will receive a student e-mail address ([jdoe1@my.westga.edu](mailto:jdoe1@my.westga.edu)) which they should check regularly to be sure they are aware of any academic, billing, and other student-related information from the University.

More information about UWG e-mail is at [http://www.westga.edu/google/index\\_22272.php](http://www.westga.edu/google/index_22272.php)

## 10. Parking

As a general rule, GAs receive Student Parking privileges (as a part of the mandatory Transportation Fee they pay), and will park in the appropriate zone. If there is a special situation where a GA needs a different parking classification in order to perform his/her job, the GA supervisor can work with Parking Services to see if that is possible.

### **11. Employment and Enrollment in CSA graduate program**

In order to be a UWG Graduate Assistant, a student must be enrolled in a graduate program. In order to be enrolled in the CSA graduate program, a student must have either an approved graduate assistantship or be employed in higher education.

- If a student is having academic difficulties which lead the CSA faculty to believe that s/he may be removed from the CSA program, the faculty member will contact the VPSAEM to discuss the concerns. The GAs supervisor may be informed of the situation.
- If a student is exhibiting performance problems in her/his assistantship which leads his/her supervisor to believe that s/he may be terminated from the position, the supervisor will contact the VPSAEM to discuss the concerns. The CSA faculty may be informed of the situation.
- Performance Management—If a student is not performing adequately in the Assistantship, the supervisor will work with the GA to remediate performance. Such actions would include verbal and/or written warning and the development of a performance management plan. In extreme cases where the GA is unable to meet the expectations, the GA may be terminated.
- The CSA faculty and GA supervisor may work with the GA to help address the behavior so that the GA can be successful in both the academic program and the workplace. However, the final decision about academics lies with the academic department, and the final decision about employment lies with the employing department.

### **12. GAs enrolled in other graduate programs**

On rare occasions, an SAEM GA may be enrolled in a graduate program other than the CSA program. All relevant policies in this document apply to those GAs as well. Supervisors will discuss any exceptions to policy with the GA.

### **13. Training/Orientation**

- All new GAs are required to attend an Orientation to the University and Division of SAEM on the Monday prior to the official start date of work each August.
- All Division of SAEM employees, including GAs, are required to attend monthly staff development sessions held during the academic year.
- CSA GAs are required to attend monthly professional development sessions for Graduate Assistants. *\*see dates on p. 8*
- GAs may be required to attend other training sessions during the course of their employment.

### **14. PAR's**

In order to be paid and receive a tuition waiver, a Personnel Action Request (PAR) must be completed by the University each term. The VPSAEM office will work with supervisors to ensure that all PAR's are completed in accordance with UWG deadlines. Typical deadlines are early July for Fall, early November for Spring, and early April for summer.

### **15. Professional Behavior**

GAs are expected to follow all University policies, including the Student Code of Conduct, and to meet any professional standards outlined by their supervisor (in terms of dress, language, communication, confidentiality etc.). Non-employment concerns may be referred to and addressed by the Office of Student Conduct.

## Division of Student Affairs & Enrollment Management Graduate Assistant Operational Calendar 2015-2016

*Red-UWG dates*     *Blue – Selected professional association dates*

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### 2015

**July 27:** First Day of work for ALL GAs in Housing and Residence Life

**August 10:** Orientation for New GAs in SAEM

**August 11:** First Day of work for all GAs\*

**August 24:** First Day of classes

**September 7:** Labor Day (University Closed)

**September 18:** New Professionals Workshop, Georgia College & State University

**October 1 - 31:** National Careers in Student Affairs Month

**October 31 - November 2:** SACSA/NASPA Region III Conference (Greenville, SC)

**November TBA:** Complete all PAR's for Spring (Jo Etta)

**November/December:** Supervisors conduct evaluations with GAs & discuss 2016-2017 plans.

**November 23 - November 27:** Thanksgiving Holiday / No classes \*

**November 26 - 27:** University closed\*

**December 9:** Department heads submit list of Fall 2016 anticipated vacant GA positions to VPSAEM office (either because GAs are graduating or because they wish to move to another department)

**December 5 - 11:** Last Day of Classes/Exams

**December 12:** Graduation

**December 10 - 18:** VPSAEM office works with department heads to determine if assistantships will be added, eliminated, or moved for Fall 2016, then finalized list of available positions are emailed to current GAs.

**December 18:** Last Day of work for GAs\*

**December 20 - January 1:** University Closed\*

## **2016**

**January 4:** First day of work for GAs\*

**January 11:** First Day of classes for Spring Semester

**January 4 - 15:** GAs wishing to change assistantships for Fall 2016 interview with departments for positions.

**January 18:** MLK Day (University Closed)\*

**January 25:** Department heads communicate to VP office which GAs are moving for Fall 2016 (no moves after this date).

**February 1:** Update website of available positions for Fall 2016.

**February:** Southern Placement Exchange, Memphis

**February 25 - 28:** Oshkosh Placement Exchange, Oshkosh

**March:** Supervisors will discuss summer plans with GAs and make decisions about who will work in the summer. *(Department heads will work together to assure that every GA who wishes to have a summer assistantship has one. GAs may work 1, 2, or 3 months during the summer (May, June, July), with a stipend for each month. If a GA works less than 80 hours during a month, the stipend will be pro-rated appropriately. Summer pay for all GAs except those in Housing & Residence Life and Health Services is from the VPSAEM's budget.)*

**TBA:** Application Deadline for Fall 2016 CSA Program

**TBA:** CSA Interview Days for Fall 2016

**March 6 - 9:** ACPA Conference (Montreal)

**March 9 – 13:** The Placement Exchange (Indianapolis)

**March 12 - 16:** NASPA Conference (Indianapolis)

**March/April -** Select Fall 2016 GAs

- Faculty notify GAs of admission to program
- VPSAEM designee notifies GAs of assistantship offer and start dates.
- VPSAEM designee sends a list of all GAs who accept positions to Jo Etta, including full name, social security number, and supervisor name.

**March 14 - 20:** Spring Break (no classes)\*

**March 20 – 24, 2016:** ACUI (New Orleans, LA)



**April 3 – 6, 2016: NIRSA (Gaylord Palms, FL)**

**April 4:** Department heads notify VPSAEM office of which GAs will be working in the summer.

**April TBA:** Complete all PAR's for Summer (Jo Etta)

**April 23 - 29: Last day of Classes/Exams**

**April 29:** Last day of work for GAs\*

**April 30: Graduation**

**May 2:** First day of work for summer GAs\*

*GAs may work 1, 2, or 3 months during the summer (May, June, July), with a stipend for each month. If a GA works less than 80 hours during a month, the stipend will be pro-rated appropriately.*

**May 9:** First day of summer classes (NOTE: College of Education classes may begin later.)

**July 4:** University closed.\*

**July 29:** Last day of classes/exams

**July 29:** Last day of work for summer GAs\*

**July 30: Graduation**

*\*If it is necessary for some GAs to work on holidays, before the first day of work for a term, or after the last day of work for a term, they will receive additional compensation as Student Assistants, **OR** will take off other days to make up for those days, at the discretion of the supervisor. Department heads/supervisors will communicate this with their GAs.*

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**2015 -2016 GA Professional Development Schedule  
Center Pointe Suites Multipurpose Room (12:00 pm – 1:30 pm)**

Tuesday, September 15, 2015  
Tuesday, October 20, 2015  
Tuesday, November 17, 2015  
Tuesday, January 19, 2016  
Tuesday, February 16, 2016  
Tuesday, March 22, 2016