**Sample Graduate Assistantship Appointment Letter – REVISED AUG 2024**

* **Highlighted areas are to be completed depending on each specific appointment**
* **You may remove the GTA proficiency section for GRAs and GSAs**
* **Links provide information to complete the specific appointment and are to be a part of the appointment letter**

Date

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_:

I am pleased to offer you a position as a [regular (20 hours per week) or partial (10 hours per week] Graduate [Teaching, or Research, or Service] Assistant in the [Department, or College/ School, or Office] at West Virginia University. Your [initial or continued] term of appointment, assuming satisfactory performance in the position, is from [start date to end date]. This letter of [appointment/renewal] describes what the assistantship is meant to provide you with, and many of the policies and procedures associated with such a position. **It is important that you read all of this information and reach out to me with any questions before you accept these terms.**

*A Graduate Assistantship (GA) is an academic position that contributes to your studies and offers some benefits to help support your completion of a degree. These are the benefits that come with this assistantship:*

* **A waiver of university tuition**. The award of an assistantship includes a [9 credit hour (regular appointment) or 5 credit hour (partial appointment) <https://graduateeducation.wvu.edu/grad-life/graduate-assistantships/policies/benefits>] waiver of University tuition for each academic semester. **You may only accept this assistantship if your degree program allows you to waive University tuition and you must confirm your eligibility before you accept this appointment.** Please note: several programs only permit the **reduction of university tuition**, while others do not accept waivers <https://graduateeducation.wvu.edu/faculty-and-staff/tuition-waivers/restrictions>. Please work with your program/college to determine what your GA waiver will cover, and to confirm you are eligible to accept an assistantship offer.
* **A stipend.** A stipend is funding to assist with your expenses while you are a graduate assistant, in exchange for your work in our unit. Your stipend for this time period will be [ $XX,XXX, <https://graduateeducation.wvu.edu/grad-life/graduate-assistantships/policies/benefits>] payable in equal biweekly installments aligned with the University’s payroll schedule. Your first check during this time period will be issued on the second University payday following your start date <https://payroll.wvu.edu/pay-schedules>. This appointment is a part-time non-tenure track position and not a benefits eligible appointment.
* **Student Health Insurance.** WVU requires that all students carry adequate health insurance. You will be automatically enrolled in the WVU student health insurance plan. If you are covered by another plan that meets certain standards, you may opt out of the WVU plan by completing the student health insurance waiver. [All or half depending on whether the GA is regular or partial as indicated in the first paragraph] of the premium for the WVU health insurance will be paid for you as part of your assistantship. Information is available from <https://talentandculture.wvu.edu/student-insurance>.

*A GA comes with many responsibilities. These are related to your ability to accept the position and/or continue in the position in the future if it can be offered again. While a GA is designed to offer you support while you pursue your academics, it is also important to understand these policies and limitations:*

* **Background Check.** The offer of this position is contingent upon a satisfactory result from your background check (required if you have not been a GA at WVU in the past 12 months), which is currently in progress. Should your background check reveal any unsatisfactory results, your GA assignment may be terminated effective immediately.
* **Other Expenses.** You will be responsible for paying **college tuition**, **university fees,** and other fees that may be required by the university. Information about tuition and fee charges is available at <https://tuition.wvu.edu/graduate>. If this is your first semester as a graduate assistant, it is important to consider **the** **timing of these additional expenses.** You may be responsible for college tuition, fees and your living expenses before you are processed for payroll and receive your first stipend payment.
* **Summer Tuition.** Students who serve as regular (not partial) GAs in both fall and spring *may* be eligible for a waiver of university tuition for the summer term with the approval of their college or school. Please research if your program permits waivers of tuition in the summer, and if there are any requirements for such waivers.
* **Processing for Payroll and Documentation**. This assistantship offer is contingent upon your ability to provide satisfactory documentation for the completion of a federal I-9 form. WVU is required to maintain Federal I-9 Forms that verify each graduate assistant’s identity and eligibility to work in the USA. To comply with federal requirements, new GAs must bring appointment eligibility and identity documentation to Shared Services before the first day of their **paid** appointment.
	+ For more information regarding Shared Services Center locations and hours for on campus payroll processing, please visit Shared Services Employee Processing [<https://sharedservices.wvu.edu/employee-processing>].
	+ Please visit the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services website for the complete List of Acceptable Documents [<https://www.uscis.gov/i-9-central/form-i-9-acceptable-documents>]. For questions, contact Shared Services at sharedservices@mail.wvu.edu.
	+ If you are a nonresident alien and you currently do not possess authorization to work in this position at West Virginia University, please contact the International Students and Scholars Services at (304) 293-5954 immediately upon receiving this assistantship offer. New graduate assistants who are a Foreign National should provide their documentation to Tax Services before the first day of their appointment. Please visit [https://taxservices.wvu.edu/internationals/international-payroll-processing](https://taxservices.wvu.edu/internationals/international-payroll-processing%20) or contact Tax Services at tax@mail.wvu.edu or (304) 293-3379 ext. 3 for additional information.
	+ International Students intending to study on an F-1 or J-1 visa can consult <https://isss.wvu.edu/students/student-employment> for further information regarding international student employment and processing for payroll
* **Delay in Payroll Processing.** You will need to complete I-9 paperwork prior to or on the first day of your appointment. Completing Form I-9 after the start date listed in this letter will result in a prorated stipend based on the period you able to perform your duties. **No graduate assistant is permitted to work prior to processing for payroll.**
* **Budget.** As with all positions in higher education, this position is subject to the availability of funds and approval of the appropriate expenditure schedule. For more information, see “Terminating Graduate Assistantships” (<https://graduateeducation.wvu.edu/grad-life/graduate-assistantships/supervisors#terminations>).
* **Policy.** Your position at West Virginia University is governed by the relevant rules and policies [<https://graduateeducation.wvu.edu/grad-life/graduate-assistantships/policies>] applicable to all students and employees of West Virginia University, as they are and as they may from time to time be changed. It is also governed by other policies adopted by the university and the faculty and administration of the [Department and College/School]. It is your responsibility to be aware of terms and conditions of the university policies that govern your work. Further information regarding policies that may be applicable to you are also available in the Graduate and Professional Catalog [<http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/>]. Information is available concerning your privileges and responsibilities as a Graduate Assistant [<https://graduateeducation.wvu.edu/grad-life/graduate-assistantships/policies/expectations>]. General questions about graduate assistant rights, responsibilities, policies, and procedures should be directed to the Office of Graduate Education and Life (GradEd@mail.wvu.edu, 304-293-7173).
* **Enrollment and Academic Standing.** You must be admitted to a degree program, in good academic standing within your program, and registered as a full-time graduate student (at least 9 credit hours per fall or spring semester) in order to receive the assistantship.
* **Renewal.** The continuation of a graduate assistantship beyond the initial or renewal semester of appointment is not guaranteed.
* **English Proficiency.** All Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) must be able to demonstrate English proficiency before they can assume teaching responsibilities. This can be done in a variety of ways, including the True North test. Please see here for more information: <https://elli.wvu.edu/testing-resources/english-proficiency-gtas>.
* **Limits on Additional Employment.** A graduate student may hold no more than the equivalent of one graduate assistantship or fellowship. If you are a candidate for another WVU assistantship or fellowship, you will be permitted to accept only one. You may not accept additional employment through WVU that exceeds 100 hours per semester without approval from your supervisor and the Office of Graduate Education and Life (see information about the 100-hour rule [<https://graduateeducation.wvu.edu/grad-life/graduate-assistantships/policies/additional-employment>]).
	+ If you are being offered a partial assistantship (10 hours per week) you are allowed to be simultaneously employed in a WVU hourly student worker position for up to 10 hours per week.
	+ *Please note that F-1 and J-1 student visa holders are restricted to working 20 hours per week when classes are in session under Immigration guidelines and are not permitted to work additional hours throughout the semester.  Working more than 20 hours per week when classes are in session may be a violation of your non-immigrant status*

**Expectations, Communication and Evaluation.** *It is our responsibility to offer you clear communication about your schedule, responsibilities, and our expectations for your work.*

* **Evaluation.** Graduate assistants at West Virginia University are reviewed at the end of each semester, including the first. Such a review is required prior to consideration of your continued appointment, which is dependent upon your satisfactory fulfillment of the responsibilities of this position, and of continued funding of and need for the position. Should your performance fall below expectations, you will receive feedback from your supervisor. It is your responsibility to regularly monitor your MIX email, or participate in conversations with your supervisor, so that you receive feedback on your performance. If there are serious issues, you may receive a written warning and a two-week period in which you must improve your performance or your GA may be terminated. There may be cases where an immediate termination of the GA is necessary [<https://graduateeducation.wvu.edu/grad-life/graduate-assistantships/supervisors>]
* **Good Academic Standing.** This appointment is contingent upon your maintaining full-time student status, good standing in your program, and adequate progress toward completion of your degree program as determined by the faculty of your program.
* **Code of Conduct.** Professional conduct is critical to the fulfillment of WVU’s mission, vision and values. Graduate assistants are expected to adhere to [WVU’s Campus Student Code](https://studentresponsibility.wvu.edu/campus-student-code), and to follow the expectations for conduct set forth by their supervisor(s) and academic program.
* **Annual Security and Fire Safety Report and Two Factor Authentication.** According to federal law, West Virginia University must publish and distribute an Annual Security and Fire Safety Report (ASR) to current students and employees and to give notice of its availability to prospective ones. Please see: <https://police.wvu.edu/clery-act>. WVU requires the use of two-factor authentication. See more information at: <https://graduateeducation.wvu.edu/grad-life/graduate-assistantships/policies/expectation>.
* **Title IX.** In accordance with Title IX regulations, the University’s Title IX Coordinator contact information is as follows: James Goins; Title IX Coordinator/Director of Equity Assurance; Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion -- Equity Assurance Office; 1085 Van Voorhis Road, Suite 250; Morgantown, WV 26506; Phone: 304-293-5600; E-mail: james.goins@mail.wvu.edu
* **Your Responsibilities.** At this time, your assignment will be to serve as a Graduate [Teaching, or Research, or Service] Assistant under the supervision of [Name, and title]. Your time commitment is expected to be up to [10 or 20 as indicated above] hours per week, on average, as scheduled by your supervisor in consultation with you. Your responsibilities will include those duties specifically set forth here and in other documentation provided to you, as may be amended from time to time, and such other duties and responsibilities as may be assigned to you by your supervisor.
* **Your Schedule.** Your responsibilities are to be carried out throughout the semester of appointment, including times when classes are not in session, [including or not including University breaks], but should not include days when the University is closed.

Typical assigned duties for your position include:

* XXXX
* XXXX
* XXXX

In addition, you will be expected to [include specifics related to times, for example]:

* XXXX
* XXXX
* XXXX
* **Orientation.** You may be expected to attend orientation sessions designed for all WVU graduate assistants and to participate in Graduate Assistant Training and development opportunities in your [department or college/school]. Information concerning mandatory and optional orientation and training sessions will be sent to you through your University e-mail account.

**Summary:** You will receive a university tuition waiver currently valued at [$x,xxx] for residents/[$xx,xxx for non-residents], a stipend valued at [$x,xxx] and the fee for student health insurance valued at [$x,xxx] (unless you waive coverage). You will be responsible for paying college tuition and university fees. Currently, in your program college tuition is [$xxx for residents and $xxx for non-residents] and university fees are [$xxx]. [Please speak with your college about any additional university tuition costs.] Students studying on a visa may have additional fees to consider [<https://isss.wvu.edu/fee>]. *Please be advised tuition and fees are subject to change. See* [*tuition.wvu.edu*](https://tuition.wvu.edu/)*.*

As an acknowledgment of these general conditions and the more specific aspects of your appointment, please sign and return to me one copy of this letter as soon as possible, [but no laterthanseven university working days from the date of this appointment letter as stated above/by April 15th if offering position with admission offer]. Please retain a copy of this letter for your files. If you are unable to accept the offer, please contact me as soon as possible.

Should you have any questions about this appointment letter, please contact me at [telephone number] or [e-mail address]. I am looking forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

[Chair or Supervisor Name]

[Title]

I acknowledge and accept the terms and conditions of this appointment:

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_