



GRADUATE ASSISTANT APPOINTMENT PROCEDURE

Updated: 9/2016

To be employed as a Graduate Assistant, the student must have completed his/her bachelors degree, be accepted into a graduate program at SMSU, and must continue to meet minimum academic standards.

A) COMPENSATION & WORK LOAD:

- 1) Graduate Assistants will work, on average, 35% time (14 hours per week) during the academic year.
- 2) Compensation will be \$4,000 per semester; \$8,000 per academic year.
- 3) Compensation will be \$2,000 for the entire summer session or \$1000 for one-half the summer. For this purpose summer session begins the week after spring semester ends and ends at the last date of summer session.
- 4) Graduate Assistants will be granted resident tuition regardless of domicile per current Minnesota State System regulations.
- 5) Graduate Assistants will receive the following free tuition credits.
 - Graduate assistants starting in fall semester will receive up to 18 credit hours of free graduate tuition at SMSU during a year that begins in fall semester and continues through the end of the subsequent summer session.
 - Graduate assistants starting in spring semester will receive up to a total of 12 credit hours of free graduate tuition at SMSU during that spring semester and the subsequent summer session.
 - Graduate assistants starting in summer semester will receive up to 6 credit hours of free graduate tuition at SMSU during that summer session.
 - Graduate assistants can receive a maximum of 36 credit hours of free tuition during their two years of employment as a graduate assistant.
 - Waiver of tuition credits will be allowed for summer session if the graduate assistant employment ends at the end of the immediately preceding spring semester. However, tuition waiver will not be allowed for the spring semester or summer term if employment ends in the fall semester.
 - Tuition waivers will be applied to on campus courses first, then to SMSU online courses, then to SMSU off campus courses.
- 6) To use waivers in summer session and if not employed during that summer session as a graduate assistant, graduate assistants must register for summer courses and complete and return to Business Services the tuition waiver form by April 1. After this date, you may take summer courses but tuition waivers will not be available.
- 7) Fees and other charges will not be waived and must be paid by the graduate assistant by the tuition due date as published each semester.

- 8) To receive the tuition waiver, the tuition waiver form must be processed, signed by the appropriate Dean, Athletic Director, or appropriate Vice President level position. The Graduate Assistant must prepare this form for each term of enrollment, has the responsibility to obtain signatures, and is to submit the form to the Office of Business Services.
- 9) Graduate Assistants will be assigned professional level duties and clerical and manual tasks will be held to a minimum

B) PAYROLL PROCESSING & TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

- 1) Graduate Assistants are paid via the student payroll on a “contract” basis.
- 2) Appointments for Graduate Assistants are made via the Office of Business Services.
- 3) Under current tax law, Graduate Assistants are generally exempt from Social Security and Medicare tax but not income tax. Also under current law, the value of the tuition waiver is subject to income tax. The value of the tuition waivers will increase the income taxes paid per paycheck. Any summer waivers must be applied and taxed during the spring semester if not employed by SMSU as a graduate assistant during the summer session.
- 4) Graduate Assistants will be employed for no longer than two full years; two academic years and two summer sessions.
- 5) Normally, Graduate Assistants will not be employed during the summer session. Exceptions may be granted by the appropriate Dean or Vice President.
- 6) Departments fund the cost of Graduate Assistants, in total, through their student labor budget.
- 7) The appointing department will provide the Graduate Assistant with a letter of appointment and job description with a copy of this procedure attached.

C) COURSE LOAD

- 1) Graduate Assistants must enroll for a minimum of six semester credits at SMSU (three credits during the summer if employed during the summer), per term, during the time in which they are employed unless, under very unusual circumstances, an exception is granted at the vice presidential level.
EXCEPTION: The Physical Education Program allows Graduate Assistants to be enrolled in five credits a semester due to program curriculum.
- 2) Graduate Assistants must meet minimum academic standards for their program of study and, if they do not, will lose their appointment for the next term until the point that they again maintain minimum academic standards. There is no guarantee that a graduate assistant position will be available should an individual lose employment status for failure to meet academic standards.