

Graduate Assistant (GA) Policy

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Disclaimer: Please refer to the accompanying Procedures and Guidelines (PG) document for Guidelines and specific procedures related to this policy. A list of abbreviations is defined in ARP-6 (By-Laws for Deanship of Research and Graduate Studies)

1. Definitions

Graduate Assistant (GA)	A graduate student enrolled at Ajman University who is assigned academic, research, teaching, or related support duties while pursuing graduate studies, in accordance with this policy.
CGS Member	A faculty representative serving on the Council of Graduate Studies (CGS) and acting as the designated college-level representative for graduate studies matters related to this policy.
Program Coordinator	A faculty member assigned to coordinate the academic and administrative matters of a specific graduate program, including communication with students and follow-up on program-related requirements.
GA Supervisor	A faculty member assigned to supervise the duties of a Graduate Assistant and to monitor and evaluate the student's performance in relation to the assigned assistantship tasks.
Thesis Supervisor	A faculty member officially appointed to supervise a student's thesis or dissertation as part of the academic requirements of a research-based graduate program. The Thesis Supervisor may also serve as the GA Supervisor, where applicable.
Professional Graduate Program	A graduate program that is mainly designed to develop professional knowledge and practice and is not primarily thesis-based. Examples include professional programs such as the MBA and DBA.
Doctoral Program	Any graduate program that leads to a doctoral-level degree awarded by Ajman University.
PhD Program	A Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) program, which is a research-focused and normally requires the completion of original research and a dissertation.

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2. Aim of Policy

The aim of graduate assistantship is to promote graduate programs at AU, increase enrollment in AU graduate programs, and produce graduate students who become more employable, creative, and professional individuals through formal instruction, interaction with faculty, research, and relevant academic experience.

3. Policy Statements

1. The AU may offer selected graduate students,
 - a. Sponsored Graduate Research Assistant (SGRA),
 - b. Sponsored Graduate Teaching Assistant (SGTA), in certain disciplines only.
2. For graduate programs offered by AU, the University provides financial support to GAs in terms of full or partial tuition fee waiver and a monthly stipend, as applicable. A GA should be enrolled as a full-time graduate student i.e., i.e., registered for the required credit hours as per the study plan in the University for the duration of their assignments.
3. Graduate assistantships are not offered for graduate programs in the College of Law, the College of Dentistry, and for Diploma programs.
4. The University may terminate a graduate assistantship if the student fails to meet the academic performance, or other requirements of the assistantship. Grounds for termination may include, but are not limited to, unsatisfactory academic progress, failure to maintain the required CGPA, poor performance in assigned duties, repeated non-compliance with University policies and procedures, inadequate attendance, or failure to fulfill assigned responsibilities as determined by the relevant supervisor and the College. Graduate assistantship may also be terminated if the student loses eligibility for the award or no longer meets the conditions set out in this policy.
5. The graduate assistantship will be provided during the Fall and Spring semesters only for master's students and year-round for PhD students, unless otherwise stated in this policy.
6. The maximum duration of graduate assistantship is the approved minimum official duration of the program.
7. Graduate assistantship is contingent upon student status, satisfactory degree progress (i.e. CGPA), and performance evaluation. For GAs, the supervisor must certify the performance as Good or higher at the end of each regular semester (i.e. Fall and Spring semesters only).
8. A GA must devote appropriate effort to formal study and assigned teaching or research duties that are designed to enhance their university education. The Sponsored Graduate Teaching Assistants assist in the teaching of related programs only. The stipend (as applicable) and/or Credit Hour (CR) fee reduction received by the GA is in recognition of these services and continuity of assistantship is subject to their satisfactory performance.
9. The GAs shall serve in the University as a full-time graduate student without any other part-time or full-time job/assignment, within or outside University. This, however, is not applicable for professional graduate programs like MBA/DBA (i.e. for P-SGRA).
10. Graduate Assistants working 20 hours per week under a graduate assistantship shall not be hired as Hourly Paid Research Assistants (HPRA) in AU funded research grants. However, SGRA-Pharmacy students may be hired as HPRA for a maximum of five hours per week, provided that

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the Principal Investigator is not their GA Supervisor and that the GA duties are clearly different from the responsibilities of the funded research project. In such cases, the student and the Principal Investigator must clearly state these arrangements in the selection form.

11. The CGS member, in collaboration with the College Dean determine service requirements of students who hold these assistantships. In all cases, the award obligates awardees to no more than 20 hours per week of services that make a substantive contribution to the student's academic and professional development.
12. It is the responsibility of the CGS member to allocate a supervisor to each student, and it is the responsibility of the supervisor to make sure that the graduate assistants are fully aware of all related policies and procedures and abide by them.
13. The CGS Member shall oversee the implementation of graduate assistantship matters at the college level and ensure that the selection and allocation process is carried out in a fair and consistent manner. The responsibilities of the CGS Member include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Coordinating with the relevant University departments, including the Marketing Department where applicable, to advertise available GA positions.
 - b. Forming an ad hoc committee, to evaluate applications and nominate eligible GAs to the Deanship of Research and Graduate Studies (DRG) in accordance with the requirements of this policy.
 - c. Ensuring that the selection of GAs is conducted fairly and uniformly across the relevant graduate programs.
 - d. Once approval is received from the Deanship of Research and Graduate Studies (DRG), inform the students of the outcome and assign supervisors to the selected Graduate Assistants in a fair and balanced manner, taking into account the nature of the assistantship duties and the needs of the program.
 - e. A graduate assistant must register the required number of credit hours, as per their study plan and other university requirements,
 - f. Monitor the student's progress regularly, assess performance, and submit recommendations to the Deanship of Research and Graduate Studies (DRG).
 - g. Submit the student attendance record to the Deanship of Research and Graduate Studies (DRG) every month.
 - h. Informing the Deanship of Research and Graduate Studies (DRG), on an annual basis, of the expected number of GAs to be hired in the following academic year, in order to support budget planning and allocation.
14. The Supervisor shall oversee and support the Graduate Assistant throughout the period of assistantship and ensure that the assigned duties are aligned with the objectives of the assistantship. The responsibilities of the Supervisor include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Setting, defining and communicating clear objectives and expected duties for each Graduate Assistant at the beginning of each semester.
 - b. Assigning work in a fair and balanced manner to ensure that the Graduate Assistant is neither overloaded nor underutilized.

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- c. Guiding the Graduate Assistant and providing appropriate supervision throughout the semester.
 - d. Monitoring the Graduate Assistant on a regular basis, including attendance, punctuality, and overall commitment to assigned duties.
 - e. Maintaining and submitting the required attendance records and related documents to the DRG on a monthly basis and in a timely manner.
15. A graduate assistant must register the required number of credit hours, as per their study plan and other university requirements, unless an exception is justified and approved in advance by the Deanship of Research and Graduate Studies (DRG) based on the recommendation of the relevant CGS Member.
16. The following table summarizes the SGRA categories and related requirements (applicable for all programs except PhD programs, and graduate programs offered by the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences):

SGRA Category	Maximum Tuition Fee Supported by AU (per semester)	SGRA Working Hours/Week	Monthly Stipend (AED)	Minimum CGPA Requirement
SGRA	100% tuition fee as per the study plan	20	4,000	3.5
P-SGRA (Professional Programs)	3 credit hours	5	0	3.0

The SGRA category is applicable for all master's programs where a thesis is required for degree completion. P-SGRA is applicable to professional graduate programs only, such as MBA/DBA.

Based on valid justification and a formal request from the college, the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies may consider approving SGRA appointments on a pro-rata basis, allowing, for example, two students to share a single SGRA allocation.

17. The following points summarize the SGRA arrangements in the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (SGRA/SGTA-Pharmacy):
- a. Graduate assistantship in the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (SGRA/SGTA-Pharmacy) is offered to selected candidates in the form of a partial tuition fee waiver, covering two-thirds of the tuition for the program duration. No additional compensation or monthly stipend is provided under this category. The two-thirds waiver is calculated after applying all other discounts (e.g. alumni discount), and the student is responsible for paying the remaining one-third. For example, if the annual tuition is AED 130,000 and, after discounts, the student is required to pay AED 100,000, the two-thirds waiver would cover AED 66,667, leaving the student responsible for pay for AED 33,334.
 - b. SGRA/SGTA-Pharmacy provide teaching/research services for 14 working hours per week during the first three semesters of their study in the program, with the exception of last two semesters during training, where students are not expected to work as SGRA.
 - c. The SGRA/SGTA-Pharmacy must maintain a minimum CGPA of 3.5 throughout the program duration.

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- d. The SGRA/SGTA-Pharmacy must follow the study plan strictly and complete the program within five semesters, unless an exception is justified and approved in advance by the DRG based on the recommendation of the relevant CGS Member.

18. The following summarizes the SGRA arrangements for PhD programs:

- a. The PhD-SGRA is applicable to students enrolled in PhD programs. The assistantship shall continue for the full approved duration of study, on a year-round basis, subject to budget availability, satisfactory academic progress, maintenance of the required CGPA, and satisfactory performance in assigned duties.

PhD GA Category	Maximum Tuition Fee Supported by AU	Working Hours/Week	Monthly Stipend (AED)	Minimum CGPA Requirement	Duration
PhD-SGRA	100% tuition fee as per the study plan	20	6,000	3.5	Full duration of study, 12 months per year

19. The following table shows the maximum number of GA positions per program. These numbers may be adjusted based on budget availability and approval from the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (VCAA).

Program Type	Maximum Number of GA Position (per Academic Year)
Regular Master's Programs	3 positions per eligible program
Professional Graduate Programs (e.g., MBA, DBA)	9 positions
Pharmacy Program - SGRA	3 positions
Pharmacy Program - SGTA	3 positions
PhD Programs	4 positions/program

20. Graduate assistant positions are typically offered at the start of the academic year in the Fall semester and are generally available only to newly registered students. If the approved GA positions are not fully filled in the Fall semester, the remaining positions may be allocated in the Spring semester from the new intake of students, subject to budget availability. The total number of positions may also be revised with approval and based on available budget.
21. GA positions are allocated only to graduate programs with a clear academic need and in line with the strategic priorities of the DRG and the University. Generally, the number of GA positions should be proportional to student enrollment, and programs with lower enrollment may receive fewer positions.