



## **Graduate Admission and Assistantships**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to define the types of Graduate Assistantships available to students and outline the eligibility criteria for each. Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) encourages qualified students to apply for admission to Graduate Studies by using the electronic version of the ApplyTexas application, which is available at [www.applytexas.org](http://www.applytexas.org).

### **Persons Affected**

This policy applies to current and prospective graduate students.

### **Policy**

Stephen F. Austin State University offers four types of graduate assistantships (GAs):

1. Teaching Assistantship - A Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) works with students in a specific course or laboratory to provide support for the faculty member in charge, and, in some cases, to teach the course as the primary instructor, under the guidance of a faculty member.
2. Research Assistantship - A Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) is normally employed by the principal investigator of a funded research project or may be employed by a department in the pursuit of its broader research mission. The GRA will be assigned a range of duties, such as library searches, fieldwork, laboratory experiments, and preparation of reports. Work on a research project often leads to a thesis or dissertation, or a professional presentation or publication, and provides long-range direction for the student's development as a scholar.
3. Administrative Assistantship - A Graduate Administrative Assistant (GAA) works with the administrative staff of a department, college, or campus office primarily in gathering, organizing, and analyzing information. The duties should be more advanced than those performed by undergraduate student assistants.
4. Graduate Teaching Fellow – A Graduate Teaching Fellow (GTF) provides instruction to students in a specific course or laboratory with mentorship from a faculty member. The GTF is an advanced graduate student who has completed a minimum of 18 graduate semester credit hours in the subject area and has at least one semester experience as a GTA. The GTF will have completed their work as a GTA with good student evaluation ratings.

### **Eligibility criteria for GA positions**



To be eligible for a GA, a student must have clear or provisional admission to the graduate school and the academic unit and be in good academic standing. GAs assigned at the 50% rate (50% = full GA) are obligated to the academic unit to which they are assigned for approximately 320 hours per semester or twenty (20) clock hours per week. Those assigned to other percentages are obligated for a proportionate number of clock hours. GA work times and schedules are determined by the needs of the academic unit or department. The academic unit or department head is responsible for the selection, training, assignment of duties, and supervision of the GAs.

A GA must be enrolled for at least six semester credit hours (SCH) of graduate courses in a fall or spring semester, or three SCH in the summer. Should a GA fall below the required SCH minimum, the GA will not be eligible for an assistantship the following semester.

A GA who receives veteran's benefits or other resources may be required to take nine hours in a fall or spring semester in order to receive the additional benefits. A student eligible for additional benefits should consult the source of the additional funding to determine the number of hours he/she must be enrolled to receive the benefits.

A student must be approved for an assistantship by the academic unit head, dean, director of human resources, and dean of the office of research and graduate studies (ORGS). The compensation for an assistantship should follow the guidelines established by the dean of ORGS. Appointment as a GA requires a clear background check and is completed only after the candidate has attended a mandatory new employee orientation session in the Department of Human Resources. All GAs must also complete an online GA Orientation module which is maintained by ORGS within their first month of employment. Except for students in the Ed.D., Ph.D. and M.F.A. programs, or externally funded grant programs, a student normally may receive an assistantship for no more than four long semesters and two full summers.

## **Procedures**

Evaluation of transcripts is done by the Office of Research and Graduate Studies and the departments. All new and returning graduate applicants for admission are required to submit a nonrefundable application fee. Applicants for clear admission to SFA will be required to meet or exceed an overall GPA of 2.5. Applicants must have proof of bachelor's degree from a recognized accredited college/university as indicated on an official transcript. However, SFA seniors with at least 110 semester credit hours and a 3.0 GPA may apply and be considered for graduate admission. SFA seniors must receive proof of a bachelor's degree within the first semester or part of term of their graduate academic program to continue graduate studies.

Admission to Graduate Studies is under the discretion of the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies and the programs. Admission to the university does not automatically guarantee admission to a particular college, school, or program. An applicant admitted to a graduate program must enroll within one year of admission. When a graduate student, new or returning, does not register for courses in one year, that student must re-apply to the program to continue studies. Further rules and requirements regarding graduate admission may be found in the



## **Admission Criteria Graduate Studies**

All students seeking admission to a graduate program should consult criteria directly with the graduate program advisor of the department in which they wish to study for specific additional requirements. Each department has the authority to set admission standards higher than the general criteria set by the university. Some graduate programs have higher GPA standards and require additional documentation such as the Graduate Record Examination, the Graduate Management Admission Test, essays, and letters of recommendations or resumes.

## **Transfer Credits**

The university accepts transfer credits from accredited institutions as determined appropriate by the major department's program. Any course accepted by transfer will carry credit but no grade point value. Moreover, to transfer credit, the student must have earned a grade of B or better on the course.

## **Degree Plan**

Following admission to a graduate degree program, a student must confer with the graduate advisor in the major department. As soon as possible and preferably during the first semester or summer session of enrollment, a student should have a degree plan made by the graduate advisor in the major department. Hours earned in an SFA certificate program can be considered for a graduate degree program.

## **Resident Status**

The student who has not resided in Texas for 12 months immediately preceding the student's registration into the university will be classified as non-resident. A non-resident teaching assistant employed at least half-time in a position which relates to her or his degree program shall be entitled to pay the tuition and fees of a resident student. A non-resident student holding a competitive scholarship of at least \$1,000 for the academic year awarded by a scholarship committee of SFA qualifies for resident tuition and fees.

## **Meningitis Vaccination**

State law requires all entering or re-entering students to provide evidence of vaccination against bacterial meningitis or the appropriate documentation for exemption. Students are exempt if they are 22 years old or older by the first day of the semester in which they intend to enroll or if they are enrolled in online or distance-education courses only.

## **Related Statutes or Regulations, Rules, Policies, or Standards**

SFA HOP 02-206 Course Grades



**STEPHEN F. AUSTIN  
STATE UNIVERSITY**

Handbook of  
Operating Procedures

SFA HOP 04-205 Meningitis Vaccine

Policy Number: 04-204  
Last Revised: N/A

Graduate Bulletin

**Responsible Executive**

Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

**Forms**

Application Form for Graduate Assistantships (available on the ORGS website and from the office of the academic unit head)

**Revision History**

September 1, 2023 (original)