

# PL- ACADEMIC-00X: Graduate Assistantship Policy

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## Source / Authority

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This policy and accompanying procedures were developed by the Office of the Vice President and Chief Academic Officer and endorsed by the University President.

The Office of the Vice President and Chief Academic Officer is responsible for overseeing and monitoring the implementation of this policy and accompanying procedures.

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## Purpose

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The purpose of this policy is to establish and implement clear policy and procedures to standardize Graduate Assistantship Awards at QU.

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## Who Should Know This Policy

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- President
- Vice President
- Legal Advisor
- Dean
- Director / Departmental Head
- Faculty
- Human Resources
- Graduate Students
- Accounting/ Finance Personnel
- Student
- All Employees
- Legal Office

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## Policy Description

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Qatar University is committed to ensure supportive and productive graduate education environment that enhances students qualifications and provides opportunities for graduate students to engage in teaching and/or research activities that contribute to the university's academic mission and to the graduate students' education.

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## Rationale

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Qatar University offers financial support, in the form of Graduate Assistantships (GA) Awards, to graduate students who engage in teaching and/or research activities that contribute to the university's academic mission and to the graduate students' education.

Graduate Assistants (GAs) provide academic program support under the supervision of a faculty member. GAs may assist faculty in the department in teaching undergraduate courses, including laboratory teaching assignments, or in providing other appropriate professional assistance, including grading examinations, problem sets, and/or laboratory assignments, setting up displays for lectures and laboratory sections, and preparing or maintaining equipment used in laboratory sections. GA awardees are not permitted to provide administrative services as part of their responsibilities. Graduate Assistantships are awarded on a competitive basis to students admitted to a graduate program at Qatar University.

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## Eligibility and Application Process

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- All admitted graduate students with GPA of 3.0 or higher are eligible to apply for the award
- Graduate students must show that they have met the minimum English language proficiency requirements (TOEFL or IELTS tests), as well as that of the Arabic language proficiency requirements, if required. Applicants should contact their academic departments for further information;
- Applicant must submit an application for Graduate Assistantship along with the application for admission to a graduate program;
- The deadlines for assistantship applications are the same as those for admission;
- The number of GA awards is contingent on colleges' demand for teaching assistants based on course offerings, laboratory sessions, enrolment, number of faculty and available funds;

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## Appointment Process

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- The Chair of the Department recommends qualified applicants to the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies of the relative college along with their academic status, workload, and assigned duties;
- Students selected to receive a Graduate Assistantship are informed in writing upon confirmation of enrolment in a QU graduate program;
- Prior to the starting date of the appointment, the newly accepted GA should receive a formal email from the VPCAO office (copying the Associate Dean of the concerned GA) summarizing the general duties of the Graduate Assistantship;
- Once the GA arrives on campus, the formal contract must be signed at the Qatar University Human Resources office; the GA will retain a copy of the formal contract for their records;
- In the first week of commencing duty, GAs are required to participate in the GA orientation session with the supervisor designated by the Department Chair. The orientation includes, but is not limited to, a description of specific duties, standards

for evaluation of performance, training, if relevant, and information on available resources. A hard copy of the assignment in general or specific terms will be given to GAs;

- Renewal of a GA contract is contingent upon prior performance, departmental teaching needs, and availability of funds;
- A GA desiring to resign from his/her position must notify his supervisor and give the university a one-month notice;
- The resigning GA must complete the Resignation Form located on the Office of Graduate Studies website and obtain the required approvals from the department/college. The signed GA Resignation Form should be sent to the Human Resources office (copying the Office of Graduate Studies).

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### **Responsibilities and Load**

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GA awardees should be asked to perform duties that are directly related to the home department's academic mission. GA awardees are not permitted to provide administrative services as part of their responsibilities.

The duties and responsibilities of GAs are stated in the contract. GAs will serve under the direction and supervision of appointed faculty members as designated by the Head of the Department. The following guidelines apply:

1. Graduate teaching responsibilities must comply with the teaching credential policy and may include, but are not limited to, assisting in laboratory sessions, teaching tutorials and help sessions, help in grading laboratory reports/papers and quizzes, proctoring exams, and organizing/uploading course handouts as instructed by the supervising faculty. In addition, GAs could be assigned additional academic and/or research duties as deemed appropriate by the department chair and/or faculty supervisor. However, it is not part of the GA to provide administrative services to the department;
2. Students awarded a GA are not allowed to work other jobs inside or outside the University;
3. Support for a GA is defined as being registered for 9 credit hours unless it is the last semester where the student is expected to graduate;
4. A full-time GA is expected to maintain good academic standing, satisfactory progress towards his degree and contributes to the academic unit's goals. The hour commitment defined by the full time appointment is no less than 35 hours per week, which can be distributed among different tasks as per departments; need. GAs maximum teaching responsibilities shall not exceed 20 hours per week. The responsibilities may vary from semester to semester based on department's need.
5. GAs with teaching responsibilities in the summer session will be compensated beyond the normal GA compensation as per applicable policy;
6. GAs are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity and abide by college and University rules and regulations;
7. GAs are not permitted to enroll in any course for which they are assigned assistantship responsibilities;
8. A GA who drops a course, withdraws from the University, or resigns an assistantship after the drop and add period of the semester, will be responsible for all expenses paid;
9. A GA can hold only one assistantship at a time.

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### **Compensation**

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- The GA will be compensated on a monthly basis for the duration of the contract.

- The GA appointment is based on 12-month contract with 35-hour work commitment per week. The maximum teaching assignment shall not exceed 20 hours per week.
- The contract is renewable for a maximum of 2 years for Master's and a maximum of 4 years for PhD students;
- The awardee is personally responsible for all of his/her expenses, including housing, tuition, insurance, travel and any other incurred expense while studying at Qatar University;
- GA awardee is eligible for a forty-five days vacation. The vacation time must be in-line with QU academic calendar, must reside outside the teaching times when the assistance is required by the department, and approved by the direct supervisor.

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### Evaluation

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- GA awardee must fill the biweekly report and submit to the supervising faculty member.
- The faculty member supervising or directing the instructional activities of the GA, should complete an evaluation form of the student's performance at the end of each term and submit it to the head of department;
- The department head will evaluate all GAs working in the department at the end of every academic year, and provide each one of them with a written evaluation of performance;
- A copy of this formal evaluation should be sent to the Dean's office, and to the Office of Graduate Studies for record.

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### Maintaining the GA Award

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- The maximum length of a full-time GA for receiving support is limited to the normal length of time for completing the degree;
- In most cases, the normal length of time is not to exceed two years for a Master's degree student and four years for a doctoral degree student;
- Graduate students who have been awarded the GA position must satisfy the following:
  - The student must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0
  - A student who is appointed as a GA at QU must not hold any other employment commitments.
  - A student is not permitted to hold a graduate assistantship at QU concurrently with an assistantship at any other institution.

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### End of Contract

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- Graduate Assistants are expected to meet the standards of performance described at the time of their appointment and to maintain satisfactory academic progress toward their degree;
- GA contract may be terminated with one month's notice at any time that their performance is considered to be unsatisfactory by the concerned department;
- Although, immediate end of contract may be called upon for serious misbehaviour or failure to perform and attend to duties, all terminations must follow the legal guidelines adopted by QU. Appeals to the termination decision must be submitted within one week of the termination letter to the Office of Graduate Studies. The student will be notified of the appeal outcome within one month.