

Guidelines and Information for Ball State University Graduate
Assistants and Doctoral Assistants

A. Resolution Regarding Graduate Scholars, Fellows, Trainees, and Assistants (Council of Graduate Schools)

1. Acceptance of an offer of financial support (such as a graduate scholarship, fellowship, traineeship, or assistantship) for the next academic year by a prospective or enrolled graduate student completes an agreement that both student and graduate school expect to honor. In that context, the conditions affecting such offers and their acceptance must be defined carefully and understood by all parties.
2. Students are under no obligation to respond to offers of financial support prior to April 15; earlier deadlines for acceptance of such offers violate the intent of this Resolution. In those instances in which a student accepts an offer before April 15, and subsequently desires to withdraw that acceptance, the student may submit in writing a resignation of the appointment at any time through April 15. However, an acceptance given or left in force after April 15 commits the student not to accept another offer without first obtaining a written release from the institution to which a commitment has been made. Similarly, an offer by an institution after April 15 is conditional on presentation by the students of the written release from any previously accepted offer. It is further agreed by the institutions and organizations subscribing to the above Resolution that a copy of this Resolution should accompany every scholarship, fellowship, traineeship, and assistantship offer.

B. Employment Verification

1. According to the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 and the Immigration Act of 1990 as interpreted by university attorneys, all employees including graduate, research, and doctoral assistants must have their identity and employment eligibility verified by completing a Form I-9. The verification (I-9) process must be **initiated on or before the first day of work**, and must be completed within three (3) business days. If the employee is unable to present the required documents(s) to establish eligibility for section 2 of the I-9 form within the time specified, the employee must produce a receipt showing that he or she has applied for the document(s). In addition, the employee must present the actual document(s) within ninety (90) days of the date of hire. **Assistants who are not verified within three (3) business days of the date of employment could have their employment terminated.** Verification must be done **in person** in the **Graduate School Office, West Quad Room 100.**

C. Eligibility

1. A master's level student **must** have completed the bachelor's degree before the beginning of the semester or term in which the graduate assistantship begins. A doctoral level student **must** have completed the master's degree before the beginning of the semester or term in which the doctoral assistantship begins. Official transcripts **must** be on file in the Graduate School Office of Admissions.
2. Students must maintain a minimum cumulative graduate grade point average (3.000 for master's level or 3.200 for doctoral and specialist level) to continue on the assistantship. Any assistant with an academic year contract whose grades fall below the established minimums at the end of the fall term will be reviewed by the hiring unit to determine if he/she can continue on the assistantship in the spring semester. The hiring unit will make a

recommendation to the dean of the Graduate School either to terminate the contract prior to the spring term or request the assistant be allowed to continue thru the end of the contract period. The final decision rests with the graduate dean.

3. Assistants whose cumulative grade point averages are below the established minimums who are allowed to continue thru the end of their contract periods cannot be reappointed to a new assistantship contract until their grades reach the required minimums.
4. Matriculated students who are recommended for assistantships must also meet the established graduate grade point average minimums (see #2 above) before a contract will be issued.

D. **Stipends and Fee Remission**

1. Graduate and doctoral assistants receive a stipend amount determined by the funding unit and approved by the dean of the Graduate School. Graduate students appointed for a summer term will be paid 15% of their previous academic year stipend, if an opportunity is available.
2. Regular graduate assistants and doctoral assistants are not assessed the nonresident fee and pay only the student service fee (for 2009-2010 \$756 per semester and \$378 for a five week summer session, rates subject to change for 2010-11) provided the student is on contract by the last day of the university drop/add period. If the period of employment for regular graduate and doctoral assistants is at least two semesters (two summer terms constitute a semester), for fee adjustment purposes employment may be considered to include the semester immediately following the assistantship or the semester immediately preceding the second semester of the assistantship. The student service fee charged to graduate and doctoral assistants must be paid **prior** to the beginning of the term. Those holding half-time graduate and doctoral assistantships pay half tuition including the nonresident fee.
3. Graduate and doctoral assistants are paid bi-weekly during their contract period. Please inquire at the departmental office concerning the place for distribution of checks.
4. Deductions are made for the Indiana State Income Tax, the County Option Tax (when applicable), and the Federal Income Tax. Please complete W-4 and WH-4 tax forms which are enclosed and return both forms to the Payroll Office, Administration Building, Room G-29.
5. University Counsel is of the opinion that in most cases the stipend associated with graduate and doctoral assistantships is taxable income, and that withholding of income tax is required by law. However, you may wish to consult your own tax adviser with respect to the taxability of these payments under the applicable federal and state income tax laws. In the event you have determined that your stipend is exempt from taxation, please refer to instructions (Line 3 of Form W-4). As indicated in paragraph 4 above, Form W-4 must be returned to the Payroll Office. **See also tax liability for extra work under paragraph E.**
6. Policy and procedures for the remission and billing of contingent fees for mid-semester assignments and resignations of graduate assistants and doctoral assistants effective Fall of 1999.
 - a. **Student filling an assistantship vacancy after the university drop/add period** – no fee remission is available during the academic semester in which the student is initially appointed. All fees (contingent portion of the general fee, graduate course fee) will be waived for a subsequent academic term if the student is appointed as an assistant before the end of the drop/add period of that term.

- b. **Student vacating an assistantship after the university drop/add period** – the fee remission will be available only during the semester in which a student resigns the assistantship after the drop/add period has ended.

E. Policy Regarding Resignation/Termination of Assistantships

1. Assistants are expected to fulfill the terms of their contracts. An assistant who requests to be released from his/her contract prior to the end of the contract period must receive permission to vacate the position from the hiring unit and the dean of the Graduate School.
2. A hiring unit that requests termination of an assistantship contract prior to the end of the contract period must have informed the assistant in writing of any deficiencies and given the assistant an opportunity to correct the deficiencies within a specified time. If the assistant does not satisfactorily correct the deficiencies within the designated time, the hiring unit can make a recommendation to the dean of the Graduate School to terminate the assistantship for said student. The final decision on termination rests with the dean of the Graduate School.

F. **Additional Employment**

1. Graduate and doctoral assistants will normally not accept other employment. If a limited amount of employment is deemed advisable, such employment must be approved by the concerned department chair. In the event such additional employment is at Ball State University, the approval of the graduate dean is also necessary. Such on-campus employment is limited to 10 hours per week.
2. Graduate and doctoral assistants are exempt from FICA (social security) and Medicare taxes. If a student is approved for additional employment at Ball State University on student wage pay, he/she can work up to and including 10 hours per week without being assessed these taxes.
3. Graduate and doctoral assistants who are approved for additional employment at the professional level, e.g., to teach a class, are no longer exempt from FICA and Medicare taxes. Students who accept this type of extra work are reclassified and transferred to the faculty payroll, and their **full wages (including the assistantship stipend) are subject to FICA and Medicare taxes.**

G. **Graduate Academic Course Load Limits for Graduate and Doctoral Assistants**

	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Maximum</u>	<u>Overload*</u>
Fall and Spring	6 semester hours	12 semester hours	
5-wk Summer Session	3 semester hours	3 semester hours	

*The student’s adviser or committee chairperson (if the student is a doctoral candidate) or the department chair can approve an overload up to and including 15 hours for fall and spring terms. Requests in excess of 15 hours must also be approved by the dean of the Graduate School. The same procedure is followed in requests for course loads of less than the minimum number of hours given.

H. **Amenities**

1. Study rooms and lockable book trucks are available in Bracken Library. Forms requesting a study room or book truck are acquired at the library circulation desk and need the approval of the Graduate School. Full-time doctoral candidates working on their dissertations are given first preference. Students may also be eligible for a Muncie Public Library card. Please call 757-8200 for details.
2. The University may have work opportunities for the spouse if he/she is not a full-time student. For further information, contact Human Resources, Administration Building, Room 350, 285-1834.
3. There is no fee for regularly scheduled athletic events or university convocations. Tickets may be acquired by showing ID card. Recreation facilities in the Irving Gymnasium Complex and Ball Gymnasium are available to graduate and doctoral assistants and their dependents. For further information on recreation programs, services and facilities contact the Office of Recreation Programs, Room 201, Irving Gym, 285-1753.
4. All regular graduate and doctoral assistants are entitled for a 10% discount at the Ball State Bookstore on cash purchases to be used for them only. This discount is available only during the time period in which the assistant is employed and receiving a stipend. Charges must be made on Visa or Mastercard (**No discount on charges.**).
5. Graduate and doctoral assistants may borrow from and save in the Ball State Credit Union, 2900 N. Oakwood, 285-1065. The Credit Union also has an office in the village.
6. Graduate and doctoral assistants are eligible to register with the Ball State Career Center, Lucina Hall 220, 285-1522. Professionally trained spouses of assistants may seek the assistance of the Career Center in locating employment during their stay in Muncie.
7. The spouse or children of graduate and doctoral assistants shall also receive resident classification during the term of such employment if residing with such person upon registering and receiving courses at Ball State.

I. Other

1. University housing fees must be paid **prior** to occupancy. Consult with the Bursar, Lucina Hall, Room 36, 285-1731, if you have questions. For information relative to housing, write or call the Director of Housing, Dr. Alan Hargrave, 765-285-8000.
2. Graduate and doctoral assistants will need the approval of the chair of the department before obtaining building keys from the Business Office.
3. Physical examinations, medical advice, bed patient care, and dispensary treatment are provided by the University Health Service. The University Health Service does not make out-patient calls in dormitories or student residences. Graduate students may also take out student health insurance. For further information concerning student health insurance contact the Office of the Controller, Administration Building, Room 301, 285-8444.
4. Social Security Numbers, Confidentiality Agreements, and Identity Theft. Ball State recognizes that it collects and maintains confidential information relating to its employees and individuals associated with the university. To ensure the privacy and proper handling of this information, the university has developed policies to protect people's information. The Social Security Number Policy is at www.bsu.edu/bsuid. Part of the Social Security Number Policy includes signing a "Confidentiality Agreement" which is online at www.bsu.edu/webapps2/formfinder/compliance.htm if the graduate assistant has access to confidential information, including social security numbers and/or credit card numbers. The completed Confidentiality Agreement should remain in the department where the graduate assistant has the graduate assistantship. In addition, the Identify Theft Prevention Program Policy is at www.bsu.edu/bsuid. Graduate assistants are expected to be familiar with each of these policies as penalties include the university's obligation to notify the

Attorney General of the state of Indiana if the university has a breach and social security numbers or other information is released in a non-approved manner. Never send a social security number or a credit card number in an email or as an attachment.

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