



Valdosta State University  
**Graduate Assistant Handbook**  
A Guide to Policies and Procedures

# The Graduate School

Valdosta State University

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## Graduate Assistant Hiring Process

Please Be Advised:

Due to INS and IRS requirements, Graduate Assistants (GAs) are not permitted to begin working until the onboarding process is complete. The GA may only begin working on the date noted in their Appointment Form.

If you are chosen to be a Graduate Assistant, you are required to have a background check, which can take up to 2 weeks and must indicate eligibility to work, before the onboarding process can begin.

All onboarding paperwork can be completed

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# Eligibility

To be eligible to be hired as a Graduate Assistant at VSU, you must comply with the following requirements:

1. be accepted into a degree-granting masters, specialist, or doctoral program as a Regular Admission student. Students admitted on Probationary status may be eligible in limited cases, e.g. International students. Students admitted to a certificate program are not eligible.
2. be lawfully present in the US, be eligible to work in the United States, and pass all relevant background checks.
3. be enrolled in at least 6 Graduate coursework hours per semester.
4. maintain a minimum of a 3.0 GPA (granted 1 semester probation if GPA falls below the 3.0 minimum)
5. make substantial progress toward degree completion by successfully completing 12 credits per year (6 credits per semester including summer if working as a GA during the summer). Graduate School funding will end upon the completion of 24 hours of thesis work or 4 years from the date of first hire, whichever comes first.
6. earned a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the discipline to be taught if hired as a Graduate Assistant Instructor of Record.

Graduate Assistants who are Instructors of Record must attend training and be supervised by an experienced, full-time faculty member.

The Department assigning a Graduate Assistant as

# GA Hiring & Onboarding Process

In order to be eligible for a graduate assistantship, you must be admitted to VSU as a degree-seeking graduate

## Onboarding Paperwork

Once the background check is complete and returned indicating your eligibility to work, you will receive a GA Appointment form to sign electronically via DocuSign (located in MyVSU portal). After the appointment form is completed you will then receive an email from Equifax Compliance Center to complete the majority of your onboarding paperwork.

Most of the onboarding paperwork can be completed remotely. However, part of the onboarding paperwork is the I-9 and Security Questionnaire, which require notarization. If you complete the I-9 and Security Questionnaire remotely, you will need to locate a notary for this purpose. Or, you may choose to complete in person at the Graduate School where forms can be notarized in person.

## Orientation

While your onboarding paperwork is processed in Human Resources and the Payroll Department, you will receive directions in email to set up your Direct Deposit in OneUSG and to complete the virtual GA orientation in a Blazeview course. All new Graduate Assistants are required to complete a virtual employment orientation. The orientation will cover the topics **below**:



# Your New Employer

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As an employee of VSU, there are rights, responsibilities, and guiding principles that apply.

## Mission Statement

... research, teaching and service responsibilities of the University and to provide graduate students with valuable professional development opportunities while earning a graduate degree. Therefore, the graduate assistantship involves the dual responsibilities of maintaining satisfactory academic performance and successfully performing the duties assigned to you by your supervisor.

## Equal Opportunity Employer

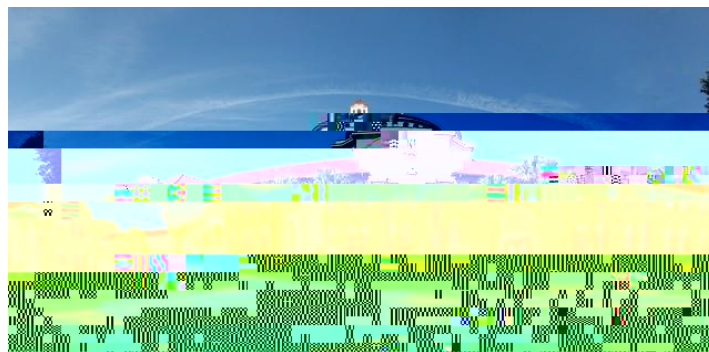
VSU employs graduate assistants of the highest quality available based on ability, experience, training, intelligence, character, and physical fitness according to the needs and the strategic mission of the university. No applicant for a graduate assistantship who is otherwise qualified for employment will be excluded based on race, color, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, physical handicap, or National origin.

[Human Resources](#) is a resource for more information about these rights. The contact information is:

Human Resources  
Employee Matters  
University Center Entrance 5  
229.333.5463

## Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

VSU is governed by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, which prohibits the discrimination on the basis of disability. VSU is committed to complying with the goals and objectives of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Persons needing accommodations should contact the [Access Office](#). For more information, call 229.245.2498 or email [access@vsu.edu](mailto:access@vsu.edu).



# Graduate Assistant Responsibilities

## Academic Responsibility

As a Graduate Assistant of the university, we consider your employment as secondary to your academics. While your employment is a meaningful part of your university experience, it should not interfere with or be detrimental to success in your academic program. To remain eligible as a graduate assistant, you are required to maintain a minimum of a 3.0 GPA.

As a graduate assistant, you must maintain a cumulative 3.0 GPA. Graduate assistants whose cumulative grade point average falls below 3.0 will be terminated.

As a Graduate Assistant, you must register for and earn credit for six (6) semester hours of graduate course work each semester in which you hold the assistantship.

is required for all graduate assistants within 45 days after being hired.





# Work Hours

## Maximum Hours

The maximum number of hours Graduate Assistants are to work each semester is noted in the Appointment Form. Graduate assistants work up to 304 hours for a 1%-

hours graduate assistants may work each week is flexible. GAs may work more hours some weeks and fewer hours other weeks so long as the maximum number of hours during the

If you know in advance that you will be late to or absent from work, it is your responsibility to notify your supervisor. If something unexpected happens that causes you to be late or absent from work, contact your supervisor when you expect to be back to work.

#### Working More Than One Job

Graduate Assistants are ineligible to hold a second GA position or any other position within the USG due to one pay designation restriction. While GAs are permitted to work another job off-campus, it is not advisable due to priority on successful academic progress.

#### Rest Periods/Breaks

Graduate Assistants working more than six consecutive hours must take a 30-minute, off-the-clock, break. Graduate Assistants who work four consecutive hours are entitled to and should take a 15-minute break/rest period.

#### Center for South Georgia Regional Impact

# Stipend & Tuition Waiver

## Graduate Assistant Stipend

Graduate Assistants are paid on the last business day of each month during the semester. During the Fall semester, the stipend is divided equally among five months (August through December) and four months in the Spring semester (January through April). However, if a GA is onboarded past the hiring deadline, the stipend will be paid over four months (September through December). Stipends are paid through direct deposit which is set up in OneUSG by the GA during the onboarding process.

## Stipend Amounts

Academic Year		
Categories	14-Hour	19-Hour





# Evaluations & Grievances

## Evaluations

The performance evaluation is an integral part of every employment position. Evaluations are a valuable tool to:

- contribute to the Graduate's professional development;
- provide feedback to the GA Supervisor how to improve the assistantship experience;
- strengthen the overall employment environment.

The performance of Graduate Assistants in their assigned responsibilities is expected to be of the highest quality throughout the term of the appointment. It is the responsibility of the Supervisor to monitor the work quality and to verify that the required work hours are fulfilled each semester.

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VSU encourages informal resolution of grievances and complaints. Your Supervisor can assist you in resolving any work-related concerns or misunderstandings. If you have addressed the grievance with your Supervisor and do not believe the conflict has been resolved, you may seek assistance through the department head, the Graduate Assistant Services Coordinator, and the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies and Research.



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# Other Employment Opportunities

## Federal Work-Study Program

[Federal Work-Study](#) is a federally funded grant that allows eligible students to work on a part-time job on campus, or off-campus with one of our community service partners (such as Lowndes/Valdosta Commission for Children & Youth, Goodwill