



Financial Support for Graduate Students

The University of the District of Columbia has a variety of support mechanisms for full-time, degree-seeking graduate students. These mechanisms include teaching assistantships, research assistantships, and graduate assistantships. In addition, there are grant-funded traineeships and/or scholarships available to students in some programs at some times. Moreover, the University recognizes and accepts fellowships provided by external sponsors.

Assistantships are designed to provide meaningful professional development for the student, as well as a mechanism of financial support, while they pursue their graduate degree.

Selection for traineeships, assistantships, scholarships, and fellowships is competitive and merit based, with financial need being a factor in some cases. Finally, non-foreign UDC graduate students, enrolled half-time or more, are eligible for student loans, available through the University's Financial Aid office. This document covers assistantships, traineeships, and fellowships, but not student loans.

The University's Board-approved Graduate Assistantship Program provides a tuition scholarship for full-time graduate students employed by the University as a Teaching Assistant (TA), Research Assistant (RA), or Graduate Assistant (GA) and to graduate students, who receive a grant-funded Traineeship, Scholarship, or a competitively awarded Fellowship.

PROGRAM FEATURES

1. **Eligibility:** To be eligible for the Graduate Assistantship program and associated tuition scholarships, a student must be enrolled as a full-time, degree-seeking student at UDC for the current semester and be in good academic standing (GPA above 3.0) proceeding toward the degree.¹ To be awarded a teaching assistantship, a graduate student also must have completed UDC's Teaching Assistantship training, or the equivalent. To receive the tuition scholarship, the TA/RA/GA

¹ Some programs have a published curriculum in which the recommended number of credits varies each term. Provided the master's curriculum covers four or fewer terms, a student following the published curriculum will be considered full time for the purposes of this assistantship program, if he or she is (a) proceeding in accordance with the published curriculum, and (b) is enrolled in at least the number of credits defined by the program as the appropriate enrollment for that term.



appointment, a traineeship, or a fellowship must commence not later than three weeks into the academic term and extend at least to the end of the term.

2. **Benefits:** Recipients of TA/RA/GA appointments, traineeships, scholarships, and fellowships shall be provided with a tuition scholarship to cover the difference between the student's tuition and the resident tuition rate. Each student with a TA appointment shall be provided with an additional tuition scholarship, in the amount of the resident tuition (for a 20-hour-per-week appointment), 75% of the resident tuition (for a 15-hour to 19-hour-per-week appointment), or 50% of the resident tuition (for a 10-hour to 14-hour-per-week appointment).
3. **Selection:** Selection of students for assistantships, traineeships, scholarships, and fellowships shall be made on a merit basis. Financial need can also be an important factor. Students who bring fellowship or traineeship support from sponsors outside the University shall be provided the same benefits as students selected and funded within UDC.
4. **Duration:** The assistantship appointment may be made for a specific academic term or as a commitment for the entire academic year. However, a student's eligibility for the appointment will be re-verified prior to awarding the stipend and associated tuition scholarship in the second semester. Continued eligibility depends on full-time enrollment status, good academic standing, and satisfactory performance of assistantship duties during the prior term.
5. **Renewal:** A student pursuing a Master's degree is eligible for a maximum of four academic terms of support under this policy. GA, RA, and traineeship appointments may be held during at most two summer terms that occur between the matriculation and graduation of the student, provided the student was enrolled as a full time student during the previous spring term, and has not completed the degree.
6. Assistantship holders may not have any other on-campus employment during the assistantship period, and students with paid off-campus employment have a low priority for this support.

PROCEDURES

1. To be considered for UDC-administered assistantships, traineeships, and fellowships, students apply to their graduate program or to any office seeking graduate assistants or offering traineeships or fellowships in the discipline. For external traineeships and fellowships, students apply as specified by the sponsor. The selection and award of assistantships, traineeships, and fellowships must be merit based, and it is the responsibility of the program or office with the funding.



2. Assistantships are specified in “hours per week” of expected service, with a maximum appointment during an academic term being limited to 20-hours per week. Like for any professional position, the amount of service may vary from week to week, but the average over the term should equal the specified amount. A summer assistantship may require up to 40 hours per week of service, if the student is not concurrently enrolled in courses.
3. For appointment as a TA, a graduate student must complete UDC’s TA Training Program or equivalent training in advance of assuming the position. UDC’s TA Training Program is organized and conducted by UDC’s National Center for Urban Education in partnership with the Office of Graduate Studies. Determination of whether a TA candidate has had equivalent training or experience is the responsibility of the National Center for Urban Education. In calculating the hours per week of a TA appointment,
 - a. Each hour of tutoring, writing lab service or grading counts as one hour of service;
 - b. A 2.5 hour (1 credit) lab section counts as 5 hours of service, including set up, grading, and clean-up);
 - c. Serving as the instructor of record for a 3-credit hour course section of a multi-section lower-division course coordinated by and under the direction of a regular faculty member counts as 10 hours (including grading);
 - d. Leading one-hour of recitation/problem session, including grading, counts as 2 hours of service.
4. A graduate student TA may only serve as the instructor of record for a stand-alone course if he/she satisfies all the credential requirements that would be expected of an adjunct faculty member appointed to teach the course; generally this requires at least a master’s degree in the discipline or a closely related field.
5. No graduate assistant may be hired by the University for any assignment or collection of assignments/positions with a service commitment that averages more than 20 hours per week all together, during any term in which the student is enrolled in courses.