


[This policy designates the guidance for graduate assistantships.]

	<p style="text-align: center;">NORTH CAROLINA A&T STATE UNIVERSITY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CHAPTER 300 - ACADEMIC AFFAIRS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AP314, GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS</p>
---	---

SECTION AP314.1 POLICY STATEMENT

North Carolina A&T State University (“NC A&T” or “University”) recognizes the value of graduate assistantships as a means of furthering its educational mission as it relates to graduate education. Graduate assistantships provide rich opportunities for graduate students to acquire additional knowledge and to contribute to the institution in diverse ways. Graduate assistantships are available to graduate students who have been admitted to a graduate degree program at NC A&T, maintain full-time status, are in good academic standing, and are making satisfactory progress toward their degrees.

SECTION AP314.2 PURPOSE

This policy sets forth the rules and procedures governing graduate assistantships at NC A&T.

SECTION AP314.3 SCOPE

This policy applies to all graduate students who accept or have previously accepted an assistantship, faculty supervising these graduate students, and other faculty, students, and staff supporting graduate assistants.

SECTION AP314.4 DEFINITIONS

- (1) “Graduate Assistants” are full-time graduate students employed on a part-time basis (maximum 20 hours per week, .50 FTE during the academic year) by the University to serve as Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs), Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs), or Graduate Administrative Assistants (GAAs). Reference to “Graduate Assistant” or “GAs” includes members of all three types of assistantships or any one type unless stated to the contrary.

- (2) “Graduate Assistantship” is a form of apprenticeship that contributes to students’ professional development by assisting students in strengthening and successfully completing their academic program. Graduate Assistantships include activities that are relevant to each student's program of study and contribute to the University's teaching, research/creative activity or service efforts.

SECTION AP314.5 TYPES OF ASSISTANTSHIPS

Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) are appointed in academic departments or programs to support the university's instructional mission. NC A&T faculty members oversee all GTA duties. There are two types of GTAs: Instructor of Record and Instructional Assistant.

- Instructor of Record – Must have at least 18 hours of graduate-level coursework completed in the subject area (Must be credentialed by the Office of Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (OSPIE))
- Instructional Assistant – Assists the Instructor of Record with grading, lab sections, recitations, proctoring examinations, etc.

Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs) are appointed in academic departments or programs to support the university's research mission by conducting research in an area relevant to their major course of study under the direction of a faculty member.

Graduate Administrative Assistants (GAAs) are appointed in academic departments or programs to support the administrative operations of the various university departments.

SECTION AP314.6 MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Graduate Students must meet the following eligibility criteria at all times in order to hold a Graduate Assistantship:

1. Admitted into the Graduate College in full graduate standing in a graduate degree program and;
2. Enrolled in the fall and spring semesters.
3. Must have a baccalaureate degree, or a baccalaureate degree and work experience, that equips them for the assignment;
4. Must have had an undergraduate grade point average of at least 3.0 or better overall or completed at least six hours of graduate work with a GPA of 3.0 or better.
5. Must be making satisfactory progress towards their degree.

Section AP314.6.1 Additional Eligibility Requirements for GTAs, GRAs, and GAAs

(a) Graduate Teaching Assistants who are the “Instructor of Record” must possess a master's degree in the teaching discipline or 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline. OSPIE must credential them via the faculty credentialing process.

1. If properly credentialed by the OSPIE official, GTAs who are “Instructor of Record” may prepare course content, provide instruction, serve as the instructor of record so long as they meet national accreditation requirements, and prepare assignments for students in lower-division undergraduate courses.

2. Selection of GTAs may also be determined by additional criteria, including communication skills and adequate preparation in the subject area.
 3. GTAs with appointments as instructional assistants shall not serve as the instructor of record. These appointments may also include additional criteria (e.g., communication skills or additional skills related to the administrative assignment).
- (b) Graduate Research Assistants' eligibility is established by the program director, principal investigator, and/or the academic department.
1. GRAs are selected by the faculty member who directs the laboratory or research project on which they will work.
 2. GRA preference may be given to doctoral students, but will be given to students who demonstrate qualifications for the position as demonstrated by completion of courses related to the topic of the research, prior research experience, or research interests consistent with the project.
- (c) Graduate Administrative Assistants' eligibility to work in academic or non-academic areas is established by the supervisor in the area. GAA appointments may also include additional criteria (e.g., communication skills or additional skills related to the administrative assignment).
- (d) Graduate students must enroll in at least nine credit hours each semester of the assistantship unless a student is in their final semester and has applied for graduation or is in the dissertation or thesis research phase (having completed all other required courses of their program and being enrolled in research courses only);

Section AP314.6.2 Non-Resident Alien Students

In accordance with federal immigration laws, international and non-resident alien students must not exceed 50% full-time equivalent (FTE) appointments and must not work more than 20 hours per week.

SECTION AP314.7 GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP APPOINTMENT

Section AP314.7.1 Application for a Graduate Assistantship

New graduate students need not submit a separate application for a GTA or GAA. Their application for admission constitutes an application for a GTA or GAA. Hence, new graduate students should apply by the priority deadline for funding as set by the Graduate College.

Graduate students can also apply for graduate assistantships by responding to a position announcement posted by faculty with extramural funding or a division/unit of the university.

Section AP314.7.2 Appointment Period

Assistantships are generally made for one academic year (9 months). Summer term appointments are dependent on the availability of funding and approval of the supervisor.

Section AP314.7.3 Approval

Each appointment for a graduate assistantship is contingent upon approval by the appropriate budget official, dean, provost, and/or continuation of funding.

SECTION AP314.8 FUNDING AND COMPENSATION

Section AP314.8.1 Compensation Equity

- (a) The University must pay equitable compensation to graduate assistants who perform jobs that require substantially equal skills, effort, and responsibilities, and that are performed under similar working conditions within the University.
- (b) Pay rates may vary by student experience, funding source, discipline, and duties and responsibilities of the appointment.
- (c) All assistantships must be funded from approved University accounts with adequate funding in the assistantship line item. Personal funds must not be used to support assistantships.
- (d) Departments must monitor their pay practices for consistency and ensure that graduate assistants are paid in compliance with the published pay scales and legal requirements.
- (e) The University sets the minimum and maximum salary scale for all categories of assistantships. Payments to graduate assistants are made in accordance with University policies and procedures.
- (f) Graduate Assistants are eligible to receive student health insurance.

Section AP314.8.3 Tuition Remission

- (a) Graduate Assistants may be eligible for tuition remission or reduction, as well as payment of required fees.
- (b) GTA tuition remission is allocated directly to the academic schools and colleges. Allocation to individual students is managed by the schools/colleges or The Graduate College.

Section AP314.9 REVIEW AND RENEWAL

- (a) Students have no “right” to a graduate assistantship, and continuation of a graduate assistantship from one semester to another or from one year to another is not guaranteed.
- (b) Renewal and reappointment are based on several factors including satisfactory progress toward degree completion, satisfactory completion of prior assistantship responsibilities, availability of funding and resources, and program approval.
- (c) To retain their appointment, graduate assistants:
 - 1. Must participate in any required orientation program;
 - 2. Must follow instructions of the employing department to complete the INS Form I-9 to certify employment eligibility before the first day of employment. Assistantships cannot start until the date that work authorization was provided. (International GAs complete this form in the Office of International Affairs);
 - 3. Must enroll in at least nine credit hours each semester of the assistantship unless a student is in their final semester and has applied for graduation or is in the dissertation or thesis research phase (having completed all non-research courses) of their program and is enrolled in research courses only;
 - 4. Must work no more than twenty hours per week in the assistantship and any other employment on-campus;
 - 5. Must perform assigned duties satisfactorily according to the terms of appointment and participate in the supervision and evaluation processes required for the assistantship;
 - 6. Must maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 and be making satisfactory progress towards their degree at NCA&T or through an approved joint degree program.

SECTION AP314.9.1 Performance Evaluations

- (a) All graduate assistants (GTA, GRA, GAA) must be evaluated and receive a satisfactory evaluation every semester to maintain their assistantship.
- (b) Each department must determine written procedures for reviewing and evaluating graduate assistants, and for informing graduate assistants of these procedures.
- (c) Evaluation processes may vary by department and should include written assessment of work by an individual faculty member, classroom visitation by designated faculty members, and written student evaluations. The results of reviews and evaluations should be discussed with the graduate assistant concerned.

SECTION AP314.9.2 Training

- (a) All graduate assistants (GTAs, GRAs, GAAs) must complete the required training prescribed by the Graduate College, as well as those prescribed by their hiring program/unit.
- (b) All new graduate teaching assistants must attend instructional workshops during the week before classes begin in the fall or spring semester.
- (c) Before assuming teaching assistant duties that require contact with students, a non-native, non-primary-English-speaking graduate student must be certified as proficient in oral and written English. This is assessed using the student's Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores.
- (d) Graduate research assistants must receive the following training before working in any lab:
 - (1) Lab safety training (e.g., laser safety, chemical hazard safety, etc.);
 - (2) Training in research ethics;
 - (3) Conflict of interest and commitment;
 - (4) Responsible authorship;
 - (5) Intellectual property rights;
 - (6) Publications and patent policy;
 - (7) Any other training required by the University or faculty researcher; and
 - (8) Other topics mandated by federal and state regulations.

SECTION AP314.9.3 Graduate Assistantship Administration

The Graduate College administers all graduate assistantships and is responsible for post-audit reports to track and monitor compliance with University policies, federal and state laws, and adherence to fiscal regulations.

SECTION AP314.9.4 Code of Conduct

- (a) Graduate assistants' teaching, research, and administrative activities are subject to the ethical precepts and codes of the academic profession, the laws of the State of North Carolina regarding its employees, the laws of the United States, and University policies governing institutional obligations.
- (b) Violation of any of these requirements constitutes a basis for disciplinary action under the applicable University policies.
- (c) Graduate assistants must conduct themselves with professionalism, ethics, sensitivity, and thoughtfulness in their interactions with students, faculty, and other members of the University community.

SECTION AP314.10 TERMINATION OF GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP

The following students are ineligible to receive graduate assistantship appointments:

- (1) Students who were removed from a prior graduate assistantship appointment;
- (2) Non-degree seeking or transient students;
- (3) Non-resident alien students whose immigration status does not allow employment in the United States; and
- (4) Undergraduate students.

Section AP314.10.1 Grounds for Termination of Graduate Assistantships

Graduate assistantships may be terminated before the expiration of their designated term due to loss of funding, cause, academic delinquency, by written notice, and/or by voluntary mutual agreement.

- (1) **Loss of Funding.** Graduate assistantships may be terminated due to a loss, reduction, or reallocation in appropriation, grant, contract, gift, or other funds that support the appointment.
- (2) **Cause.** Graduate assistantships may be terminated when cause exists to end the appointment (e.g., incompetence, inefficiency, wanton carelessness or neglect of duty, violation of research ethics, violation of safety protocols, insubordination, violation of law or University policies, repeated or extended absences, not completing the required training for graduate assistants, etc.).
- (3) **Academic Delinquency.** Graduate assistantships may be terminated when a student is not making satisfactory academic progress toward a degree or is otherwise not in good academic standing.
- (4) **Voluntary Agreement.** With the agreement of the University, an appointment may be terminated by the voluntary written resignation of the graduate assistant.

Section AP314.10.2 Appeal of Termination of Graduate Assistantship

- (a) Graduate students who have been terminated from a graduate assistantship for a reason other than voluntary agreement may appeal the termination of the assistantship.
- (b) Before filing an appeal, graduate students must attempt to resolve the termination dispute with the hiring faculty member and/or department chairperson and dean of the academic college in which the assistantship is assigned.

- (c) Appeals of a termination of a graduate assistantship must be in writing, addressed to the Dean of the Graduate College, and contain the following:
 - (1) The date of the appeal;
 - (2) The name of the student filing the appeal;
 - (3) The names of the hiring faculty member, department chair, and dean of the college in which the assistantship was to occur;
 - (4) The specific reasons for the appeal;
 - (5) A narrative explanation for the appeal;
 - (6) A copy of the graduate assistantship application, contract, work description, and other related documents; and
 - (7) The student's University-issued email address and telephone number, along with any other contact information that the student wishes to provide.
- (d) Appeals of termination of a graduate assistantship must be filed with the Office of the Dean of the Graduate College by hand delivery, mail, or email.
- (e) The Dean of the Graduate College shall refer the appeal to the Graduate Appeals Committee (GAC) of the Graduate Council for consideration and decision/recommendation. The Graduate Appeals Committee will consider cases properly before it on a case-by-case basis. Decisions of the Graduate Appeals Committee are final.

Section AP314.10.3 Deadline for Filing Appeal of Termination of Graduate

- (a) Graduate students who are unable to resolve a termination of assistantship issue with the hiring faculty member or within the department or college must file their written appeal within:
 - (1) thirty (30) calendar days from the effective date of termination of the assistantship;
or
 - (2) thirty (30) calendar days from the date of the adverse decision at the department level.
- (b) The deadline for filing an appeal will be extended to the next workday if it falls on a weekend or University holiday.
- (c) If a written appeal is not received by the deadline, it will not be considered and the termination of the assistantship will be final.

POLICY HISTORY:

First approved: Before July 2012

Revised: August 6, 2012; June 6, 2014; January 2016; November 27, 2017; January 1, 2018; November 5, 2019; February 17, 2020; _____, 2024

AUTHORITY: Academic Affairs

POLICY OWNER: Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: Graduate College

RESOURCES:

<https://hub.ncat.edu/administration/legal/policies/sec2-acad-affairs/faculty-handbook/aa-selected-faculty-and-staff-policies.pdf>

NC A&T Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO/AA) Statement
(<http://www.ncat.edu/hr/policies/index.html>)

Equal Employment Opportunity /Affirmative Action certification in the federal government's System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

Equal Pay Act of 1963

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967

Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990