Introduction:

A graduate assistantship benefits the graduate student’s educational experience and contributes to the academic mission of Kutztown University. According to Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education Board of Governors Policy 1983-09-A: Graduate Assistant Stipends, “System universities have long made excellent use of graduate assistants to enhance both the quality of graduate education and to assist faculty in the discharge of their responsibilities.” The Taxable Fringe Benefit Guide. Federal, State, and Local Governments. The Internal Revenue Service states “Tuition reductions for graduate education are considered ‘qualified’ and are tax-free if they are provided by an eligible educational institution to a graduate student who performs teaching or research activities for that institution. All other tuition reductions for graduate education are taxable.”

Kutztown University provides financial support in the form of graduate assistantships to a limited number of qualified graduate students in good academic standing. These assistantships are directly linked to graduate programs and are supported by funds provided by the University or other sources and administered through the University. Appropriate academic graduate program and student learning outcomes are identified for each graduate assistantship through a formal application process.

The duties of graduate assistants should be related to their academic and professional goals. All duties and responsibilities of graduate assistants are carried out under the supervision and direction of approved University faculty and staff. Assignments may include some of the following; note that because of the unique nature of each program, duties may vary from this general list: involvement in research activities, peer counseling, assisting in laboratories, supervising resident groups working with undergraduates, tutoring and assisting in academic advisement, compiling data.

General Information:

- All graduate assistantships are awarded by the Dean of Graduate Studies.
- Graduate assistantship applications are considered on a competitive basis without regard to age, gender, race, color, national origin, sexual orientation, or religious creed, but with regard to ability reflected in a record sufficiently strong to support confidence that the applicant can participate effectively in the graduate community.
- Graduate assistantships are awarded for a period of one academic year (i.e., the fall and spring semesters), or a fraction of the same. The academic year ends at
the conclusion of the spring semester. The exception to this is Doctoral Graduate Assistantships which are available for fall, spring, and summer sessions.

- A graduate assistantship can be used for the completion of only one (1) graduate degree at Kutztown University.
- A graduate student seeking certification only is not eligible for an assistantship.
- A graduate assistant tuition waiver can only be used for graduate course credits that apply toward the completion of the student’s program of study.
- Any graduate assistant who withdraws from academic courses and whose total enrollment falls below the required semester hours will be terminated from the assistantship; i.e., nine (9) graduate credits/semester for a 300-hour graduate assistantship and six (6) graduate credits/semester for a 200-hour graduate assistantship.
- A 300-hour graduate assistant (i.e., 20 hours/week) who wishes to be changed to a 200-hour graduate assistant (i.e., 13.3 hours/week) must have the permission of the supervisor and Dean of Graduate Studies.
- A graduate assistant can participate in only one (1) assistantship per academic year.
- A graduate assistant must be in good academic standing. A graduate assistant cannot be on academic warning or probation and must maintain an overall GPA at or above 3.0 each semester of the assistantship.
- A graduate assistant who does not complete the required 15 weeks/semester will be charged a prorated tuition and receive a reduced stipend.

**Types of Graduate Assistantships:**

- 300-Hour Graduate Assistantship: A 300-hour graduate assistant must be in good academic standing and be registered for nine (9) or more graduate credits. A 300-hour graduate assistant works 20 hours per week during the 15-week fall or spring semester. Under no circumstances may a 300-hour graduate assistant work more than 30 hours per week, including other work at Kutztown University. This graduate assistantship receives a tuition waiver for nine (9) graduate credits and a stipend of $7,500 ($3,750/semester).

- 200-Hour Graduate Assistantship: A 200-hour graduate assistant must be in good academic standing and be registered for at least six (6) graduate credits. A 200-hour graduate assistant works 13.3 hours per week during the 15-week fall or spring semester. Under no circumstances may a 200-hour graduate assistant work more than 30 hours per week, including other work at Kutztown University. This
graduate assistantship receives a tuition waiver for six (6) graduate credits and a stipend of $5,000 ($2,500/semester).

✓ Doctoral Graduate Assistantship: A doctoral graduate assistant must be in good academic standing and be registered for six (6) graduate credits during the fall, spring, and summer semesters of Year 1 and Year 2 and six (6) graduate credits during the fall and spring semesters of Year 3. A doctoral graduate assistant works a total of 200 hours during each semester. This graduate assistantship receives a tuition waiver for six (6) graduate credits per semester and a stipend of $7,500 per year.

Withdrawal From Academic Course

Graduate assistants withdrawing from any academic course must comply with all Kutztown University withdrawal policies and procedures. Such procedures are normally outlined in the Master Schedule and other University publications relating to registration.

Any drops or withdrawals from classes that reduce the graduate assistant’s enrolled credits below the minimum required may result in termination from the graduate assistant position regardless of when the withdrawal occurs. The stipend will be terminated as of the date of the withdrawal and the student will be charged prorated tuition.

Graduate assistants who find it necessary to withdraw from a course are urged to meet with the Dean of Graduate Studies prior to making any final decision.

Termination

Graduate assistants are expected to complete the terms of their appointment. Graduate assistants who find it necessary to resign for any reason must submit a letter or e-mail to the Dean of Graduate Studies. Graduate assistants resigning their positions during the semester are required to comply with all University academic course withdrawal procedures. Failure to properly withdraw from an academic course may generate additional tuition charges and a failing grade.

Graduate assistants who find it necessary to resign their positions are urged to meet with the Dean of Graduate Studies prior to making any final decision.

Supervision

Graduate assistants are expected to report to their respective supervisors as cited in their letters of appointment. Graduate assistants normally report solely to their supervisors for assignments. Graduate assistants engaged in academic experience and learning opportunities with other members of the faculty or staff do so at the discretion and direction of their supervisors.
The supervisor will be asked for an evaluation of a graduate assistant’s work (see 2015-2020 Graduate Assistant Performance Evaluation). This form is sent to the supervisor by the Graduate Studies Office the first week in November for fall semester evaluation and the first week in April for spring semester evaluation. The form is to be completed by the supervisor, and the evaluation is to be reviewed and discussed with the graduate assistant. The completed form is to be returned to the Graduate Studies Office no later than the Wednesday after Commencement.

Although the graduate assistant contract is for the academic year, an assistant can be terminated during the fall or spring semester or at the end of the semester by the supervisor for (1.) a poor evaluation; (2.) lack of adherence to the requirements of the contract (e.g., insufficient hours worked per week); (3.) poor academic performance; and/or (4.) lack of compliance with University policies and procedures.

The supervisor of the graduate assistant is expected to monitor weekly hours. The supervisor is asked to notify the Dean of Graduate Studies when the student misses total hours equivalent to one week (i.e., 20 hours for a 300-hour assistantship or 13.3 hours for a 200-hour assistantship).

**Vacation and Holidays**

Graduate assistants do not earn vacation hours or accrue sick time. Graduate assistants observe the University holiday schedule when offices are closed. Graduate assistants work while classes are in session, from the start date to the end date of the semester. Some graduate assistant positions may require work during the Spring break week.

**FERPA Regulations**

Graduate assistants often interact with students and/or student records, including academics, financial aid, billing, and other personal information. All student information and records are protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). FERPA is a federal law that protects students from any persons gaining access to their student records; the supervisor reviews the relevant FERPA regulations and provides training in handling student information. All graduate assistants are required to sign a FERPA agreement, ensuring the confidential handling of student information.

**Sexual Harassment, Anti-Harassment, and Anti-Discrimination Training**

All graduate assistants must complete the University-offered online sexual harassment, anti-harassment, and anti-discrimination training. Training models are available at the Kutztown University Office of Social Equity website: [http://www.kutztown.edu/about-ku/administrative-offices/social-equity/links-of-interest.htm](http://www.kutztown.edu/about-ku/administrative-offices/social-equity/links-of-interest.htm). Questions can be addressed by calling 610-683-4700 or socialequity@kutztown.edu.
Special Assignments and Committee Appointments

Supervisors are required to allow graduate assistants time off when students are serving on University committees and/or special assignments. This means that a graduate assistant serving on the Graduate Exceptions Committee, for example, is permitted time away from the student’s normal responsibilities, and this time will be counted as “service rendered.” Thus, if a graduate assistant was expected to provide 20 hours per week and the student served two (2) hours on a University committee, this assistant would serve 18 hours that week at the regular position.

Appeal and Special Concerns

Graduate assistants experiencing difficulties are urged to meet with the deans of their respective colleges or the Dean of Graduate Studies and express their concerns. No major decision regarding resignation, withdrawal from an academic course, or academic problems should be made without a discussion. The student’s academic advisor should also be consulted. Students with formal concerns regarding policies may appeal to the Graduate Exceptions Committee of the University Senate.