

**UNIVERSITY POLICIES, PROCEDURES,  
& GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE  
ASSISTANTSHIPS**



**LOUISIANA TECH**  

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**U N I V E R S I T Y**®

***Approval by:***

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Graduate Assistants and Teaching Assistants are vital components of the graduate programs at Louisiana Tech University. Their assistance is essential to the fulfillment of the role, scope, and mission of each of these programs. It is an honor to be selected as a Graduate Assistant. Students who serve in this capacity are recognized for academic achievement and professional promise. They serve in a supervised setting while also pursuing an advanced degree. Acceptance of an assistantship is a professional commitment for the time stipulated. Graduate Assistants serve in variously assigned administrative, teaching, assisting, or clerical capacities.

### **Mission**

The Graduate School offers the administrative structure, leadership, and guidance necessary to support graduate education at Louisiana Tech University. The staff members of the Graduate School work with the Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Graduate Council, the academic deans, and the graduate programs and faculty to help provide students with a superior educational and research environment within which to pursue rigorous, challenging, and relevant graduate and professional degrees.

### **Administration**

The Dean of the Graduate School administers and coordinates the graduate programs of the University. Graduate instruction is supervised by the appropriate academic deans, directors of graduate studies, department heads, and graduate faculty under policies set forth by the University of Louisiana System and the Graduate Council chaired by the Dean of the Graduate School. The President of the University is the final local authority in the operation of the graduate program.

The Graduate Council chaired by the Dean of the Graduate School and composed of representatives from each College and the Student Government Association, recommends policy requirements and identifies issues that pertain to graduate/teaching assistants. The Graduate Council relies upon each College to establish specific policies within the framework established for the University. The policies established by each College must be in writing and recommended for approval by the Graduate Council. It is the responsibility of each College to implement, monitor, enforce, and file for review the guidelines set forth in this document.

### **Student Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of students receiving graduate assistantship funding to be knowledgeable about all policies and procedures regarding compliance with the awarding of and retaining eligibility for a graduate assistantship. Individuals appointed with the title of graduate assistant, research assistant, or teaching assistant must be admitted to and enrolled in a graduate degree program.

### **Appointment and Reappointment Criteria**

Graduate assistantships are normally budgeted to a College. The University also provides a number of University Assistantships. Applications for an assistantship may be obtained from the Associate Dean/Graduate Director of each College, or from the Graduate School Office, or online from the Graduate School website at [http://www.latech.edu/documents/grad\\_school\\_assistantship\\_application.pdf](http://www.latech.edu/documents/grad_school_assistantship_application.pdf). Completed application forms are to be filed with the academic or administrative unit/department in which the services are to be performed.

A completed application and all necessary transcripts are required before a student can be considered for an assistantship. Certain units/departments may also require letters of recommendation. Students whose first language is not English and who are seeking graduate teaching assistantships must demonstrate English language proficiency.

### **Deadlines**

- Applications for assistantships beginning in the Fall Quarter should be received by the appropriate College by the deadline set by each unit. Students are responsible for becoming aware of the deadline dates for their specific program.
  
- Applications for assistantships other than in the Fall Quarter should be received by the appropriate College at least one month prior to the first day of classes of any quarter other than Fall.
- Offers of assistantship for those students applying for admission to the Graduate School in quarters other than the Fall are subject to the same selection criteria and availability as those students applying for Fall selection.

### **Eligibility**

Graduate assistantships are limited in number and awarded on a competitive basis, subject to criteria such as grade point average, test scores, skills offered by the applicant, needs of the College or Unit/Department, and order in which the assistantship application was received. Each assistantship applicant may be asked to complete a skills inventory form in order to determine what qualities the applicant has to offer. Colleges may impose additional eligibility criteria. To be eligible for a graduate assistantship, a graduate student must

- meet Graduate School admission requirements
- meet the requirements of the individual College
- must submit satisfactory standardized test scores.

**Students admitted to the Graduate School in non-degree programs will not be considered for a graduate assistantship.** A Graduate Assistant who becomes ineligible for continued enrollment in the Graduate School is ineligible to hold an assistantship. Students on assistantship and placed on academic probation may be terminated at the discretion of the funding department/college, and students will lose any benefits associated with the assistantship, such as the out-of-state fee waiver. Students leaving the campus for reasons other than approved University-related business will lose their assistantship immediately on the last work date and will lose any benefits associated with the assistantship, such as the out-of-state fee waiver.

Graduate assistants employed under either Federal or Institution programs are covered under Workman's Compensation laws. It is therefore imperative that the proper hiring

procedures are followed to ensure that the University and/or its agents are not in violation of any rules or statutes.

The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as amended, prohibits employers (including schools) from accepting voluntary services from any paid employee. Any graduate assistant employed under work-study must be paid for all hours worked.

### **Length of Appointment**

In most cases, appointments are made for an academic year, but occasionally an appointment is made for one or two quarters to meet special circumstances (for example, Library appointments are made on a quarter-by-quarter basis). Reappointment or continuation is contingent upon the following:

- continued eligibility for graduate enrollment,
- satisfactory progress toward meeting degree requirements, and
- satisfactory performance of assigned duties as determined by the faculty mentor and the appropriate unit/department head.

Graduate Assistants appointed during the quarter in which the graduate degree will be conferred cannot work beyond the last day of classes for that final quarter. Students pursuing dual degrees simultaneously and awarded assistantship funding during the final quarter when one of the graduate degrees will be conferred may continue working beyond the last day of classes for that quarter as long as the student continues enrollment in the second graduate degree program.

A Graduate Assistant who becomes ineligible for continued enrollment in the Graduate School is ineligible to hold an assistantship. Students on assistantship and placed on academic probation may be terminated at the discretion of the funding department/college, and students will lose any benefits associated with the assistantship, such as the out-of-state fee waiver. Students awarded graduate assistantship funding must be on campus during the period of assistantship appointment. Students leaving the campus for reasons other than approved University-related business will lose their assistantship immediately on the last work date and will lose any benefits associated with the assistantship, such as the out-of-state fee waiver.

### **Part-Time Assistantships**

Students can also be offered part-time assistantships. An assistantship is considered to be part-time if the pay and time/teaching requirements are less than that of a full-time assistantship (maximum of 20 hrs/week) offered by that unit/department and cannot be less than 5 hrs/week. A student must meet the same eligibility criteria for a part-time assistantship as for a full assistantship. Part-time Graduate Assistants are expected to enroll in not less than six (6) hours of credit on their graduate Plan of Study during a regular quarter (Fall, Winter, Spring). Summer quarter is exempt **provided** the student was a full-time student in the previous Spring Quarter **AND** has pre-registered for full-time in the upcoming Fall Quarter during the early Fall registration period.

### **Orientation**

All new Graduate Assistants must attend an orientation session at the beginning of the Fall Quarter. The Director of Graduate Studies of each College will be responsible for conducting this orientation session. The Director of Graduate Studies will ensure that each new assistant receives a copy of the "Graduate Assistant Guidelines" and that each new teaching assistant also receives a copy of applicable guidelines from the Manual of Policies & Procedures (Policy 2108, "Faculty

Evaluation;” and Policy 2200, “Policies and Procedures Pertaining to Instruction”). These policies are also available online at <http://www.latech.edu/administration/policies-and-procedures/>. All applicable College policies, supervision, in-service training, and evaluation procedures will be explained, as well as any other expectations of the individual College.

### **Course Load Requirements**

Graduate Assistants are expected to earn not less than six (6) hours of graduate credit on their Plan of Study during any regular quarter (Fall, Winter, Spring). Summer quarter is exempt **provided** the student was a full-time student in the previous Spring Quarter **AND** has pre-registered for full-time in the upcoming Fall Quarter during the early Fall registration period. In that case, a Summer enrollment of three (3) graduate hours is sufficient to retain an assistantship.

If the student was not full-time during the previous Spring Quarter and will not be full-time during the upcoming Fall Quarter, the student must be enrolled in a minimum of six (6) hours of credit on the graduate Plan of Study during the Summer Quarter to retain eligibility. If undergraduate courses have been stipulated to fulfill deficiencies in the Plan of Study, those courses **must** be listed on the Plan of Study. Courses being audited do not qualify.

A Graduate Assistant who is registered to graduate may receive an assistantship for the quarter in which the student is scheduled to graduate, but must be enrolled in at least one graduate course (3 credit hours) for credit listed on his or her graduate Plan of Study. NOTE: This exemption from the six (6) hour enrollment requirement **may be used only once** during a student’s graduate program. Students who postpone graduation cannot re-use this category in a subsequent quarter and must be enrolled full-time for the remainder of the graduate program in order to be eligible for an assistantship. Exceptions, for unusual circumstances, must be recommended in writing by the appropriate Director of Graduate Studies and approved by the Dean of the Graduate School or the Graduate Council.

Graduate Assistants who reduce their course load below full-time graduate status (6 graduate hours) may have their assistantship cancelled and may be required to repay the out-of-state tuition waiver, and/or other fees received as part of the assistantship, to the University. According to the Department of Civil Service, “a student employee dropping from full-time status to part-time status...**MUST TERMINATE** University employment immediately.” **The student will be responsible for reimbursing the University for those funds received while ineligible to do so.**

### **Stipend Amounts**

Stipends for Graduate Assistants are established by the department or unit in which the assistantship is offered and must meet the federal minimum wage requirements. Partial assistantships may be available.

### **Out-of-State Fee Waiver**

All out-of-state tuition is waived for those students holding graduate or teaching assistantships requiring at least ten (10) hours of service per week. Those students holding graduate assistantships during the nine-month term will also receive out-of-state tuition waivers for the

summer term immediately preceding or following the academic year in which an assistantship is held. Students must receive an offer letter from the unit/department granting the assistantship before the beginning of the quarter in question in order for the student to receive a fee waiver. A student whose offer was made after the 9<sup>th</sup> class day of any quarter will not be eligible for an out-of-state fee waiver until the following quarter. Appropriate appointment forms must reach the Graduate School prior to the 9<sup>th</sup> class day of any quarter. Out-of-state fee waivers must be posted to the student account prior to the 9<sup>th</sup> class day of each quarter.

A student whose assistantship starts in the Fall Quarter and who wishes to claim the out-of-state fee waiver for the summer preceding the appointment must be offered the assistantship by July 1<sup>st</sup> of that summer. **Out-of-state fee waivers are not retroactive.**

### **Resigning from an Assistantship**

Graduate Assistants who resign from the University in accordance with University regulations can expect a reduction of the out-of-state tuition waiver received as part of the assistantship to be calculated as part of the resignation calculation.

Graduate Assistants who resign or abandon an assistantship but who remain enrolled at the University will be required to repay the out-of-state tuition waiver to the University.

### **Termination**

A student is to be notified in writing if the assistantship is to be terminated. Students wishing to appeal an assistantship termination may follow the appeal procedure outlined in this document.

### **Appeal Procedures**

Graduate Assistants who have grievances involving their work requirements or performance will follow the procedures established in the Manual of Policies & Procedures (Policy #2310-<http://www.latech.edu/administration/policies-and-procedures/2310.shtml>).

1. Graduate Assistants must present grievances **in writing** to appropriate University personnel detailing the issue to be addressed and a proposed solution to the grievance of the individual Graduate Assistant.
2. An individual Graduate Assistant must initiate a grievance with an administrative superior to whom an appeal of a grievance decision may be made. Grievances must be appealed to all administrative responders in a progressive order.
  - a. Immediate Supervisor
  - b. Budget/Unit Head
  - c. Director/Associate Dean/Area Head
  - d. Dean
  - e. Vice President
  - f. President
3. An initial grievance or an appeal of a grievance decision must be made to the appropriate appellate authority by notification in writing via a current *Notification Of Grievance* form which may be obtained from the Office of Human Resources.



4. A grievance must be submitted and will be considered only on an individual basis. All information that is to be considered during the grievance process must be provided during the initial grievance submission. No appeal to a higher appellate authority may be considered until an appeal has been made to all lower appellate authorities (administrative respondents). All administrative personnel who are affiliated with Louisiana Tech University and who are named in a *Notification of Grievance* as being individuals against whom a grievance has been filed should be afforded, in an administratively progressive order, the opportunity to respond orally as well as in writing to the grievance.
5. The initial grievance must be filed with the proper appellate authority/administrative respondent within thirty (30) calendar days or twenty (20) Louisiana Tech University “class days” (i.e., classes are in session and held) from the date of the announcement of the administrative decision at issue. Any subsequent appeal to an appellate authority relative to the grievance must be filed with the proper appellate authority within fifteen (15) calendar days or ten (10) Louisiana Tech University “class days” from the date the Graduate Assistant is notified of an adverse decision of the appellate authority/administrative respondent. Failure to initiate a grievance or to appeal a decision relative to a grievance within the applicable prescribed time period will result in the waiver of the Graduate Assistant’s right to initiate the grievance or to appeal a grievance decision to an appellate authority.
6. All appeals to higher appellate authorities should be accompanied by a copy of the *Notification of Grievance* form initially filed with an administrative respondent, indicating the date the grievance was formally filed with the appropriate appellate authority, the subsequent date(s) of appeal, and the respective response of each appropriate appellate authority for each subsequent appeal.
7. The Honor Council is authorized to hear, mediate, and advise on an individual Graduate Assistant basis with respect to adjustment or resolution of the grievance of a Graduate Assistant whose grievances were timely filed and proceeded through the appropriate appellate authorities. The authority of the Honor Council shall be solely to hear presentations by the grievant and the appropriate appellate authorities, to mediate voluntary adjustment or resolution when possible, and to make recommendations to the administration when deemed appropriate.
8. The Honor Council will determine if the hearing request identifies a specific grievance issue that warrants a hearing, and the Chairperson of the Honor Council shall inform the Graduate Assistant in writing of the following:
  - a. Approval of a hearing
    1. the date, time, and place of the hearing, and
    2. The issue(s) to be considered at the hearing.
  - b. Denial of a hearing which is final.

## ASSIGNMENTS AND DUTIES

The academic or administrative unit/department to which the Graduate Assistant is designated is responsible for determining and assigning appropriate duties, for providing in-service training, and for evaluating performance. Generally, there are two categories of graduate assistantships:

1. Non-teaching assistantships and
2. Teaching assistantships.

### **Non-Teaching Assistantships**

Non-teaching Graduate Assistants are normally master's degree candidates not assigned classroom teaching responsibilities.

### **Duties**

Graduate Assistants may be assigned to a unit/department or to a faculty member who will define the specific duties of the Graduate Assistant. These duties may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Assistance in administering and grading objective exams or the objective questions included in exams.
- b. Preparation of demonstration materials, displays, or audio-visual materials.
- c. Maintenance of classrooms, laboratories, equipment, and storage areas in good order; reporting needed repairs and problems to their supervisor.
- d. Library research.
- e. Computer assistance such as data entry, spreadsheets, statistical packages, and word processors; and assistance in conducting literature searches.
- f. Office assistance such as typing, copying, and filing.
- g. Assistance to the Library in the conduct of its circulation, inter-library loan, reserves, and related business.

Each Graduate Assistant is expected to keep a daily log of time worked and type of work undertaken during that time.

### **Expectations**

The Graduate Assistant is an extension of the permanent teaching faculty and staff and as such must meet certain expectations:

- a. Assuming duties assigned, and reporting to appropriate faculty and staff members promptly and regularly.
- b. Maintaining a professional attitude towards students, staff, and faculty.
- c. Maintaining a standard of personal appearance and personal hygiene, which reflects a professional demeanor.
- d. Handling confidential information in a professional manner.
- e. Representing the College and University to others with whom the assistant has contact.

## **Supervision**

Normally, the academic unit/department head/coordinator by whom the assignment is made shall designate, subject to the approval of the Dean of the College, faculty members holding full-time appointments to supervise and coordinate the work of the Graduate Assistant. Graduate Assistants are expected to report to appropriate faculty and staff members promptly and regularly.

## **Teaching Assistantships**

A Graduate Teaching Assistant is defined as one who teaches a course and/or assigns the final grade for such a course.

## **Duties**

A Graduate Teaching Assistant should not be assigned primary responsibility for a class until he/she has earned at least eighteen (18) graduate semester hours in the field being taught and demonstrates satisfactory language proficiency. Graduate Teaching Assistants are required to maintain office hours. Office hours requirements are determined by the unit/department in which the assistant is teaching. Both teaching and service assignments are made at the unit/departmental levels. Some variations in assignments and duties will occur.

## **English Language Proficiency**

Students for whom English is a second language may be appointed to Graduate Teaching Assistantships only after having demonstrated proficiency in English. Such Graduate Teaching Assistants, in addition to having achieved the required minimum TOEFL exam score of 550 (paper-based), or 80 (internet-based); or IELTS exam score of 6.5 (over 4 modules), must also achieve the following, in this order:

1. A score of 2.3 on the SPEAK testing instrument.
2. Satisfactory completion of a lecture/presentation given to a four-person committee.

The four-person committee is composed of the unit/department head, a senior faculty member from the unit/department in which the student is applying for a teaching assistantship, a faculty member from outside the unit/department, and an undergraduate student from a related discipline. The committee shall then render a decision. If a negative decision is rendered, the student will be required to seek additional language instruction to acquire the necessary language skills. The unit/department will maintain a record of the committee's recommendation.

## **Expectations**

The Teaching Assistant is an extension of the permanent teaching faculty and staff and as such must meet certain expectations:

- a. Assuming duties assigned, and reporting to appropriate faculty and staff members promptly and regularly.
- b. Maintaining a professional attitude towards students, staff, and faculty.
- c. Maintaining a standard of personal appearance and personal hygiene, which reflects a professional demeanor.
- d. Handling confidential information in a professional manner.

- e. Representing the College and University to others with whom the assistant has contact.

### **Supervision**

Normally, the academic unit/department head/coordinator by whom the assignment is made shall designate, subject to the approval of the Dean of the College, faculty members holding full-time appointments to supervise and coordinate the work of the Graduate Teaching Assistant. Graduate Teaching Assistants are expected to report to appropriate faculty and staff members promptly and regularly.

### **In-Service Training**

A Graduate Teaching Assistant shall meet with his or her supervising faculty a minimum of three (3) times during each quarter. The first meeting shall be held before classes begin to discuss such topics as instructional strategies, testing and grading, student counseling, attendance regulations, academic misconduct and plagiarism, course content and syllabus, and discipline.

The second meeting is to be held approximately three (3) weeks after the term has begun. Discussion at this meeting should focus on any problems that the Graduate Teaching Assistant may have encountered. Although this meeting is primarily designed to provide possible solutions to these problems, other relevant matters may appropriately be considered.

The third meeting with the Graduate Teaching Assistant will provide an opportunity to discuss the preparation and submission of final grades and other end-of-quarter activities. The mentor will help the Graduate Teaching Assistant take a retrospective look at the quarter's work and make plans for improving the instruction and conduct of future classes.

### **Class Visitation**

The mentor shall conduct a pre-announced visit of at least one entire class period to each class taught by a Graduate Teaching Assistant. The mentor shall then hold a follow-up conference to discuss the performance of the Graduate Teaching Assistant. This conference may be incorporated into the second meeting discussed under "In-Service Training."

### **Evaluation Procedures**

In addition to class visitations, evaluation of the Graduate Teaching Assistant will follow the same procedures as the evaluation model for regular faculty. This activity includes self-evaluation, student evaluation, and administrative evaluation.

### **Academic Regulations**

It is the responsibility of each Graduate Teaching Assistant to be familiar with the regulations in the University Catalog, the Manual of Policies & Procedures (Policy #2108, #2200, and #2310) and other relevant materials concerning

- course requirements,
- class meetings,
- class attendance and records,
- absences and make-up work,

- grading policies,
- academic misconduct, and
- the student appeal procedure.

Discussion of each of these topics is outlined below:

Course Requirements: Each Graduate Teaching Assistant is expected to have clearly defined requirements for each course. These requirements should be detailed in writing, filed with the unit/department head, and distributed to each student at the beginning of each quarter. The statement should cover such matters as attendance; the number and type of tests, projects, and reading; and other requirements as well as an explanation of the grading system to be used and the policy for making up work. The statement should agree with the course description given in the University Catalog and comply with college/unit requirements.

Class Meetings: Classes are to be met and dismissed on time. Food or drink is not allowed in auditoriums, classrooms, laboratories, and other instructional support areas. Any change in class time or location must be requested through the unit/department head, the academic dean, the Vice President of Academic Affairs, and the Registrar's Office where the change will be recorded on the master room chart. In no instance should a Graduate Teaching Assistant change the meeting place or time for a class without following this procedure. When the request is approved, a notice of the change should be posted by the Instructor on the door of the regular meeting place.

Class Attendance and Records: In accordance with the policy established by the University of Louisiana System and Board of Supervisors for State Colleges and Universities, each Graduate Teaching Assistant shall keep a permanent attendance record for each class.

The names, attendance records, and grades of students shall be permanently recorded in the class record book in such a self-explanatory manner that a third person (perhaps an attorney or a judge) should be able to interpret the records and understand exactly how the final grade was determined. When class record books become filled, the books shall be kept in a locked filing cabinet either in the teacher's office, or in the unit/department head's office. At any time, the unit/department head must be able to obtain a class record from previous years.

Graduate Teaching Assistants separating from the University or not teaching during any quarter must leave record books with their unit/department heads.

Absences and Make-Up Work: To derive optimal educational benefits from their collegiate experiences, students must attend classes regularly and take examinations on scheduled dates. In the event that students must miss work (exams, reports, etc.) for valid and verifiable reasons, the students shall be given some fair and appropriate means and times for making up this work. All University excuses must be accepted; the policy for the acceptance of other excuses is left to the discretion of the instructor and shall be announced at the beginning of each quarter.

Students are responsible for all academic work missed during their absences, whatever the reasons. Students shall keep their instructors informed about anticipated absences, especially when examinations are scheduled on these dates, and shall make prior arrangements with their instructors regarding assignments and examination in conformity with the instructor's announced policies. In the event of emergency absences, students shall initiate such arrangements immediately.

Grading: Graduate Teaching Assistants must submit, in person, final grades to the Registrar's Office on the "University Report of Grade" form which is distributed to units/departments prior to the announced deadline. The University's system of grading is traditional:

- **A** - grade given for the highest degree of excellence that is reasonable to expect of students of exceptional ability and application.
- **B** - grade of superior performance.
- **C** - grade of average performance.
- **D** - grade given for a quality of work that is considered the minimum for receiving credit for the course.
- **F** - grade given for a failure, and the work must be repeated to receive academic credit.
- **S** - grade given to indicate satisfactory completion of the course. The **S** grade increases hours earned, but does not affect hours pursued or quality points.

Some other grades given by the University need more explanation.

- **I** - grade (Incomplete) given to denote failure to complete all assigned class work and/or exams as a result of conditions beyond the student's control. It is the responsibility of the student to initiate a request with the instructor that a grade of **I** be issued. If the student's work is of passing quality, the instructor may approve the student's request and will assign a grade of **I** plus the letter grade on all work completed to that point (e.g. IA, IB, IC, or ID). A grade of **IF** cannot be issued. If the instructor agrees to issue an **I** grade, he/she will complete a standard contract with the student detailing requirements for course completion and specifying the date those requirements must be finished. Instructors then provide a copy of the contract to the student and a copy to the department head/director. Students will receive a grade of IA, IB, IC, or ID for that quarter. Incompletes are factored into hours attempted and quality points awarded. Therefore, they impact a student's quarter and cumulative grade point averages and are a factor in academic probation or suspension decisions. The maximum amount of time allowed for a student to finish incomplete assignments is Friday of the fourth (4th) week in the following quarter, with one exception: students receiving an **I** in the Spring Quarter have until Friday of the fourth (4th) week in the following Fall Quarter to complete their work. A reminder of this date is published in the academic calendar each quarter and can also be found on the academic calendar at Tech's website ([www.latech.edu](http://www.latech.edu)). <http://www.latech.edu>. If the student does not complete the required work within the contract period, the instructor will change the **I** grade to an **F** grade by delivering a final grade change to the Registrar's Office by Friday of the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) week of the quarter. The final grade replaces the **I** grade on the student's permanent record (transcript); attempted hours, earned hours, quality points, and quarter/cumulative grade point averages are recalculated applying the final grade. A student may be placed on or removed from academic probation or suspension based on the recalculated GPA at the time an **I** grade is cleared. **I** grades are cleared only by completing the required course assignments, and not by registering for the course again. A student will not be permitted to graduate unless all grades are cleared.

**NOTE:** Students registered for approved graduate research, practicum, dissertation or thesis courses requiring multiple quarters of the same course registration to complete the research

receive an **I** grade for each attempt until the research or practicum is accepted as complete by the advising faculty member. At that time, the graduate student's **I** grades are changed to **S** on his/her permanent record (transcript).

- **PI** - grades of **I** awarded for Research & Thesis, Research & Dissertation courses will be automatically converted to **PI** (permanent incomplete) grades by the designated College representative (i.e., Assoc Dean of Graduate Studies, Research Advisor, Instructor of Record, etc.) under the following circumstances:
  - Student resigned from the academic program without completing the thesis or dissertation.
  - Student changed from a thesis track to a non-thesis or practicum track within the same Master's program.
  - Time limitation for the degree has expired.
  - Thesis and dissertation course attempts with **I** grades changed to **PI** grades will remain on the student's graduate transcript. The attempted hours will continue to be tracked in the cumulative attempted graduate semester hours statistic. As the basic **I** grade is not calculated into the cumulative or quarterly GPA, there is no effect on GPA. The legend on the transcript will instruct the recipient that the student's thesis or dissertation is no longer in progress and will not be completed at Louisiana Tech University.
  - Thesis or dissertation **I** grades changed to **PI** grades are not eligible for use toward any future academic program, or a future return to the initial program at Louisiana Tech University.
  
- **W** - grade (Withdrawn) issued when a student withdraws from a class (drops a class) after the final date for registration has passed and before the end of the first seven (7) weeks of a quarter. The **W** grade will appear on the student's grade report and permanent record (transcript), but is not included in computing the student's GPA. Students who stop attending class(es) without following proper drop/withdrawal or resignation procedures (walk away) will receive an **F** grade for each class affected.

Grade reports are posted on the Tech website at the end of each quarter by the Registrar. Quality points indicate the quality of a student's work.

- A grade of **A** receives four quality points per semester hour,
- A grade of **B** receives three quality points per semester hour,
- A grade of **C** receives two quality points per semester hour,
- A grade of **D** receives one quality point per semester hour,
- A grade of **F** receives zero quality points.

**Disabled Students:** Students requesting accommodations based on a disability should provide appropriate documentation and requests to the Office of Disability Services (Wyly Tower 318) so that a determination of reasonable accommodations can be established and services scheduled. Faculty should refer students to the Office of Disability Services and make classroom accommodations in accordance with notification from the Office of Disability Services.

Academic Misconduct: Academic misconduct at the University is determined by the faculty member, committee, or other supervisor(s) under whom such misconduct occurs. The misconduct may occur in an individual class, a comprehensive exam, a practicum, an internship, a thesis or dissertation, a research project, a multi-quarter sequence of courses, or any other academically related matter or setting. Sanctions may range from dismissal from the University or an academic degree program to a failing grade or other penalty as determined by the faculty member, Plan of Study committee, supervising authority, or judiciary. The student has the right to appeal the charge of academic misconduct in accordance with the procedures contained in the Academic Honor Code (Section Eight: Appeals) paragraphs of Chapter 4 of the University Catalog.

Final Grade & Academic Appeals Procedure: A final grade in a course represents the cumulative evaluation and judgment of the faculty member placed in charge of that course. If a student feels the final grade in a course was not determined in accordance with University policies or was determined arbitrarily, the student may appeal by adhering to the *Final Grade Appeals Procedure* as outlined in the University Catalog.

### **REQUIRED FORMS**

Upon receiving a graduate assistantship appointment, a student is responsible for ensuring that the faculty supervisor has completed all paperwork by the appropriate deadlines. Failure to have an appointment form completed and posted may result in a student not receiving his/her out-of-state tuition waiver for the current quarter, or not receiving a paycheck. Questions concerning the procedures should be addressed to the appropriate Unit/Budget Head or Director of Graduate Studies in the college.

#### **Appointment Request Forms**

Graduate Assistants are appointed after the submission and approval of an Appointment Request Form. Appointment forms must be completed every fiscal year by the Director of Graduate Studies in each college. Amended forms need to be completed if there are changes in any of the following:

- the stipend amount,
- the position,
- the budget account code, or
- the award period.

No appointment is final until approval has been received from the President and the Appointment Request Form is filed in the Office of Human Resources. **Forms must be received in the Office of Human Resources by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month** in order for a paycheck to be issued for that month. Graduate Assistants whose appointment forms are received in the Office of Human Resources after the 15<sup>th</sup> of any month will be paid the following month for the hours that were worked. Appointment forms must be received by the Graduate School for posting by the 9<sup>th</sup> class day of any quarter to generate an out-of-state waiver for that quarter, if applicable.



### **Attendance Reports**

All Graduate Assistants are required to submit monthly time and attendance reports to their unit/department head. Graduate Assistants must sign only their own individual time sheet certifying the actual hours worked. All time/attendance reports must contain original signatures and stamped, faxed, or copied reports are not permissible. These forms must be completed monthly by each Graduate Assistant, including those on research/external appointments, and returned to the respective unit/department head and appropriate Dean/administrator for review and signature prior to submission to the Office of Human Resources by the 5<sup>th</sup> working day of each month. In addition, each graduate assistant is expected to keep a daily log of time worked and type of work undertaken during that time. Copies of the daily log of time worked and the monthly time/attendance reports submitted to the Office of Human Resources must be available for inspection by auditors at all times. The Records Retention schedule should provide the appropriate time length for retaining these records.

Graduate Assistants are not required to “make up” their regularly scheduled work hours when the University is officially closed. If Graduate Assistants are required to work during quarter breaks when the University is open (as is the case with those employed in the Library), the dates of their employment should be noted on their Appointment Request Form. Similarly, if Graduate Assistants are required to work only during the academic quarter when classes are in session, the dates of their employment should be noted on their Appointment Request Form (e.g., from first day of classes to last day of classes).

Graduate Assistants will be compensated only for hours worked during a pay period and may not exceed 20 hours per week during any pay period. **The limit of hours must be monitored by the departmental supervisors to make sure that the maximum of 20 hours per week is not exceeded without prior approval.** If more than 20 hours are approved, then the supervisor must be sure that the unit/departmental budget allows for payroll, as well as additional funds for 7.65% FICA matching withholdings. Any scheduled hours that were not worked during the month must be made up during the same pay period or the hours missed will be deducted from the paycheck. Graduate Assistants are not eligible to earn vacation, leave time, comp time, or other benefits.