

# REGISTRATION AND ASSISTANTSHIPS

## General Requirements

Any graduate student using the assistance of a faculty member or any faculty of The University of Alabama in relation to a degree program must be registered in an appropriate course reflecting that activity. This includes such activities as coursework, thesis and dissertation advising and reading, comprehensive examinations, and other degree requirements. Summer registration is available and is required if the student has an August graduation date. Please see exceptions below for international students.

## Prerequisites

If the student's undergraduate preparation in either the major or minor subject is considered inadequate, certain preliminary (undergraduate and/or graduate) courses will be prescribed by the department or school concerned. These courses become prerequisites, which must be taken during the first semester of enrollment, if possible. If they are undergraduate courses, they do not carry graduate credit. If they are graduate courses, they carry graduate credit but are not used toward the curricular requirements of the degree.

## Plan of Study

The student's plan of study is determined in consultation with the chair of the major department, the graduate director, the advisor and/or the chairperson of the graduate committee. The Plan of Study must then be approved at the department level and by the dean of the Graduate School.

## Course Loads

Full-time enrollment for graduate students involves 9–15 graduate credit hours per regular semester. Course loads above 15 hours during the regular semester require approval by the graduate school.

Students may register for a maximum of 6 semester hours in a summer term or 12 hours during an entire summer dual session. No more than 3 semester hours may be taken during the Interim session. Taking more than 12 semester hours in a summer dual term requires a petition from the department regarding the extraordinary circumstances for approval by the Graduate School.

Course loads will be monitored by the individual graduate program.

## Graduate Credit

A student must be admitted to the Graduate School and must register as a graduate student in order to receive graduate credit.

## Noncredit Experiences for Graduate Credit

All course credit used toward a UA graduate degree must be taught at the graduate level. No graduate credit may be earned for experiential learning not conducted under the direct supervision of graduate faculty of The University of Alabama as part of a course. UA does not offer graduate credit for noncredit workshops, seminars, continuing education experiences, professional development, internships, work/life experience, or other non-credit-bearing experiences.

## Satisfactory Academic Progress Requirements of Federal Financial Aid Recipients

All students at The University of Alabama who receive federal financial aid must make satisfactory academic progress toward completion of their degrees within a reasonable period of time. Satisfactory academic progress criteria may be obtained by contacting the Office of Student Financial Aid.

## Assistantships: Admission Status, Class Hours, and FTE Level

Students with Regular or Permission-to-Continue admission status may hold graduate assistantships. A minimum graduate GPA of 3.0 must be maintained while holding any assistantship, except during the first 12 graduate semester hours earned at UA. Students who have earned academic warning or are in non-degree status may not hold graduate assistantships of any kind.

Students who have not yet earned a bachelor's degree, even if they are participating programs such as the Accelerated Master's Program (AMP), are not allowed to hold graduate assistantships.

All non-native speakers of English must successfully complete the University's International Teaching Assistant Program (ITAP) before they can hold a teaching assistantship. Students with Conditional Language Admission are eligible to hold only externally funded research assistantships; they may not hold any type of teaching assistantship or internally funded assistantship until the language provision has been removed.

All students holding an assistantship must successfully pass a pre-employment background investigation prior to the first day of employment. The background check is performed by an external vendor which the University has contracted.

Students reinstated or readmitted to the Graduate School following suspension may not hold a graduate assistantship until all conditions have been met for the readmission or reinstatement.

A signed Memorandum of Appointment (MOA) must support every assistantship appointment and reappointment. Specifics regarding minimum stipend levels, the processing of tuition scholarships, and other assistantship management guidance can be found on the Graduate School's website. The MOA must include specifics regarding the duties required as part of the assistantship.

The FTE from **all** assistantships, plus any other on-campus employment, must be combined when determining FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) status.

All students on tuition-bearing assistantships must be registered for a minimum of 6 hours of academic credit (whether coursework or thesis/dissertation research hours). In addition, the combination of coursework/research credit hours and IDGR (assistantship) hours must total at least 9 hours, for students with tuition-bearing assistantships. The 599/699 reduced-enrollment options (3 hrs. or 1 hr.) are not available for students on assistantships or other graduate student employees.

## Registration during the Final Semester

During their final semester, students holding assistantships may enroll in only the number of credits required to complete the degree, even if

that number is less than 4.5 credit-hours. This provision is known as the "Final Semester Concession." In other words, during the final semester, students may enroll in just one hour of 599/699 and still hold a full or half assistantship. In order to utilize this concession, the Final Semester Notification form must be attached to the student's EPA when the EPA is submitted to the Graduate School. This concession can be used only once.

## Overloads Involving Assistantship FTE Plus Coursework Hours

The Graduate School does not need to approve combined FTE + academic credit hours that are within the table guidelines below.

The table below includes the Graduate Council's maximum recommended combinations of FTE plus academic credit hours.

Combined FTE of All Assistantships	Recommended Range of Graduate Course Hours the Student is Taking;
.25	9-15
.50	6-15

The Graduate School continues to urge caution when considering large course loads and will continue to monitor overloads even in cases where prior approval is not needed. The Graduate School monitors whether academic warnings and suspensions increase and, if they do, the Graduate School tracks the student's and department's overload history for signs of a correlation. It is expected that student loads will be designed carefully to provide meaningful yet not burdensome assistantship experiences, while allowing students to move efficiently through their degree programs.

For fall and spring semesters, a graduate student must be enrolled in classes to hold an assistantship. For the summer semester (which includes Interim), it is not required that a graduate student be enrolled in classes to hold an assistantship, as long as the student was enrolled in the prior Spring semester and has not graduated, or will be enrolled in the subsequent Fall semester and is not an incoming international student. (Incoming/new international graduate students whose first semester of enrollment is the summer do need to be enrolled during the summer term in order to hold an assistantship.)

Please note that full-time status here is not the same as that required for other registration and financial situations. For example, fellowships, financial aid regulations, resident visa rules, the UA System Cooperative Exchange Program, INS and IRS regulations, and other academic policies use different status definitions with regard to full-time. For more information, please refer to the department(s) administering these other programs.

## IDGR (Assistantship) Hours

To clarify the assignment of IDGR Hours:

- A full-time assistantship ( 0.5 FTE, or 20 hours/week) carries 6 IDGR hours.
- A half-time assistantship (0.25 FTE, or 10 hours/week) carries 3 IDGR hours.
- Other IDGR hours are calculated proportionally

IDGR hours should be assigned in the following categories:

- IDGR 601- Graduate Teaching Assistantship (not instructor of record)
- IDGR 602- Graduate Teaching Grader Assistantship (instructor of record who assigns grades)

- IDGR 603- Graduate Research Assistantship
- IDGR 604-Graduate Administrative Assistant (other)

## Part-Time Temporary Instructors

A graduate student employed as a part-time temporary instructor (PTTI) to teach a credit-bearing course is distinct in several ways from a graduate student on an assistantship. All PTTIs must meet the UA requirement of having at least 18 graduate semester hours in the discipline in which they are teaching. PTTIs do not receive tuition waivers, are taxed at the PTTI rate, and must comply with Personnel Policies for Student Employees of The University of Alabama. These policies may be obtained by contacting the Human Resources Service Center.

## Graduate Students on Fellowship Funding

Graduate students supported by Graduate Council Fellowships, McNair Fellowships, other Graduate School fellowship funding, or externally funded fellowships must maintain full-time enrollment (at least 9 academic credit hours). The fellowship is awarded based on enrollment in a specific program. A program change will result in a loss of the fellowship.

Students with regular or permission-to-continue admission status may hold graduate fellowships. A minimum graduate GPA of 3.0 must be maintained while holding any fellowship. Students who have earned academic warning or are in a non-degree status may not hold graduate fellowships.

Students who have not yet earned a bachelor's degree, even if they are participating in programs such as the Accelerated Master's program (AMP) , are not allowed to hold graduate fellowships.

Students reinstated or readmitted to the Graduate School following suspension may not hold a graduate fellowship until all conditions have been met for the readmission or reinstatement.

A student who is holding a fellowship may not additionally hold an assistantship except through permission of the Dean of the Graduate School.

A signed letter of offer must support every fellowship appointment.

## Graduate Student employees not on Assistantships

Graduate students who are receiving UA paychecks but do not have tuition-bearing assistantships (e.g. hourly student workers) must register for at least 4.5 academic credit hours.

All graduate student employees must successfully pass a pre-employment background investigation prior to the first day of employment. The background check is performed by an external vendor with which the University has contracted.

During their final semester, student employees may enroll in only the number of credits required to complete the degree, even if that number is less than 4.5 credit-hours. In other words, during the final semester, they may enroll in just one hour of 599/699 and still hold a student position. In order to utilize this concession, the Final Semester Notification form must be attached to the student's EPA when the EPA is submitted to the Graduate School. A student may only use this concession once.

For the summer semester (which includes the interim), it is not required that a graduate student employee be enrolled in classes to hold a campus job, as long as the student was enrolled in the prior Spring semester and has not graduated, or will be enrolled in the subsequent Fall semester and is not an incoming international student. (Incoming/new

international graduate students whose first semester of enrollment is the summer do need to be enrolled during the summer term in order to hold a paid position on campus.)

International students who do not have assistantships must be registered for at least 9 hours during the fall and spring semesters, in order to be non-assistantship (hourly) graduate student employees.

Additional minimum-registration policies that should be considered are minimum enrollment for federal financial aid eligibility, for student health insurance, for access to campus facilities (e.g. Student Recreation Center), for some aspects of international student visa status, or related to other particular situations.