

Graduate Assistant Information

How do I become a “teaching assistant”?

If you are interested in becoming a teaching assistant for a particular course, you should speak with the course instructor. You should also contact Dr. Young (young@gwu.edu), Vice Chair for Educational Activities. Dr. Young coordinates the hiring of assistants for all of the graduate courses in the department and can set up a time to meet with you and discuss the process.

What is the difference between a teaching assistant and a graduate assistant?

Graduate assistant is the term that the University uses to refer to teaching assistants who are current students. There are two categories that are used to hire “teaching assistants” for courses:

1. Instructional Assistant (IA)-this position is for people who are no longer students at GW and who have at least an MS/MSPH/MPH as the terminal degree
2. Graduate Assistant (GA)-this position is for current GW students.

How much does the position pay?

A graduate assistant position pays \$2500 for the semester for 2 and 3 credit courses and \$1250 for the semester for a 1 credit course. This salary is not negotiable.

What is the workload and what are my responsibilities?

The workload is expected to average 10 hours of work per week including instruction, grading, and preparation time. Remember that this is an average so it may mean that on some weeks there may be less work (assisting and preparing for labs) and in other weeks there may be more work (grading assignments).

Responsibilities vary by course and will be negotiated directly with the faculty course director. You may be asked to attend lecture, assist with labs, lead small group exercises, assist in proctoring exams, assist with grading, answer student questions, or hold office hours. Please make sure you understand the responsibilities of the course before agreeing to take the position. Please carefully consider your own academic workload and make sure that you can balance that with your graduate assistant position.

Can I be a GA and have another job in the University?

Unfortunately at this point, we cannot accept GAs who have other jobs within the University. This means that if you are a research assistant or have another job in the University even if it is a part-time position that we will be unable to hire you as a GA.

What type of training will I receive?

All new GAs will also be required to take online training provided by the University for training in instructional methods. This training is free. It will show up on the transcript, but this course does not count for academic credit. You may also be asked to participate in a short instructional evaluation. If you are a non-native English speaker, there may also be a requirement for additional training or English language proficiency assessment. The University will notify you of what the requirements are and will provide you with the needed training or

assessments free of cost. It is important to note that this training is mandatory for first time GA appointments, and you must complete the trainings on time in order to be appointed.

What academic courses and experience do I need?

For 6003, we prefer that assistants have completed both 6003 and 6247 with a minimum of A- grades.

For higher level courses such as 6247, 6252, and various epidemiology electives, we prefer that assistants have experience as an assistant in other courses or that the assistant has a terminal degree. If you are interested in a specific course, then you should reach out to the course instructor to express your interest and see what the requirements may be.

For new students, this usually means that you will not be eligible to be hired as a graduate assistant until the fall of your second year. Previous assistants are given preference due to experience, but we are always hiring new assistants as well.

Recommendations from faculty are extremely important in this process so it is imperative that you be able to provide the name of a faculty member who will be willing to recommend you for the position.

When do you hire graduate assistants?

We usually begin the staffing process for a semester about midway through the previous semester. For example, hiring for the spring semester will usually begin in mid-October. You can begin to inquire about positions earlier so that Dr. Young can begin meeting with candidates. You can also inquire about positions directly with the course directors for the courses.

What type of support can I expect from the faculty?

The Department of Epidemiology highly values teaching excellence. The faculty course directors will work with you to ensure that you have the materials that you need to effectively provide instruction for your group of students. If you have problems or concerns with a student, then please get in touch with your faculty course director. You should also copy your faculty course director on all email communications with students. If you suspect academic dishonesty, please get in touch with your faculty course director and do not attempt to deal with this on your own. Faculty will also provide evaluations for new graduate assistants and may provide advice and instruction to assist in improving your teaching skills.

A reminder:

In your position as graduate assistant, you may have access to exams, keys, and grades for some of your peer students. You are expected to conduct yourself with professionalism inside and outside of the classroom. You may only discuss grades of a student with the course faculty and the individual student. The content of homework, exams, or any other course material should only be discussed with faculty and graduate assistants for that course. Please refer to the University Code of Academic Integrity (<http://studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity>) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (<http://studentconduct.gwu.edu/ferpa>) for additional information. Please contact your faculty course director or Dr. Young if you have questions about any of these policies.