



Nichols College

## **GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE ASSISTANTS**

Nichols College  
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## PHILOSOPHY

Graduate Assistants (GAs) at Nichols College are, first and foremost, graduate students pursuing an education. The opportunity to work with staff in administrative environments is an integral aspect of the overall learning experience.

Graduate students who hold assistantships benefit educationally and professionally. They enhance their leadership experience and expand their interpersonal skills. Skills learned in these roles prepare students for a wide variety of professional opportunities after graduation.

Assistantships also provide graduate students the financial resources necessary to pursue their degrees. This financial support is part of the College's mission to expand the education for our graduate students.

Nichols College is committed to ensuring that graduate assistant positions benefit both the student and the department the assistant works for. This guideline is subject to change without notice.

## APPOINTMENT PROCEDURE CHECKLIST FOR HIRING MANAGER(S)

1. The hiring manager(s) must complete the job requisition form from Human Resources. The job description should be attached to the form and emailed to HR (April Girardin) in Microsoft Word format.
2. Upon Human Resources receiving an approved job requisition, April Girardin will email the hiring manager(s) that the job requisition has been approved and will post the position to Paycom. **ALL** Graduate Assistant positions *must* be posted to Paycom for fair and equal opportunities. A link to all open positions will also be on the Graduate Assistant portion of the Nichols website.
3. When the hiring manager(s) are ready to hire candidates, the applicants will undergo an interview conducted by the hiring manager and/or hiring manager(s) of the department.
4. The applicant **must** apply for admission into the Graduate School and be accepted before the hiring manager(s) take any other steps. No offer should be given verbally or otherwise. Once hiring managers select applicants, they should notify April Girardin in Human Resources. She will confirm the student's acceptance into the Graduate School and check the student's conduct record with The Office of Community Standards.
5. Upon Human Resources approval, the hiring manager(s) may offer the position to the candidate. Human Resources will then send the offer letter to the applicant.
6. Guide your Graduate Assistant through the hiring process using the steps listed in the *APPOINTMENT PROCEDURE CHECKLIST FOR GRADUATE ASSISTANT* section of these guidelines.

## APPOINTMENT PROCEDURE CHECKLIST FOR GRADUATE ASSISTANT

1. **Before** the candidate is offered any Graduate Assistant position, the candidate will need to apply for admission into the Graduate School and be accepted.
2. How to apply for admission into the Graduate program:
  - i. Complete the application at <https://slate.nichols.edu/register/graduate>
  - ii. In the application, the applicant must note that they are applying for a graduate position. (Open positions can be found via the Graduate Assistant portion of the website.)
  - iii. Any questions throughout the application process should be directed to the Graduate School.
  - iv. If you graduated from Nichols, you **only** need to submit a personal statement and resume. The GPS counselor will obtain your transcript and omit letters of recommendation. If you are not a Nichols College graduate, please follow the standard application procedures on the website.
3. The Office of Community Standards will also conduct a conduct check to see if the candidate has completed their undergraduate degree at Nichols. Candidates must be in good standing with the college to be considered for a position. This conduct check will occur after the interview with the hiring manager and before the applicant receives an offer letter.
4. Upon Human Resources approval, the hiring manager(s) may offer the position to the candidate. Human Resources will then send the offer letter to the applicant.
5. Human Resources Hiring Process Includes:
  - a. Complete the Graduate Assistant New Hire Checklist. Human Resources will send the link to the preferred email.
  - b. Schedule a meeting with April Girardin to go over and complete any onboarding procedures.
6. Graduate Classes Registration:
  - i. The Graduate Assistant must schedule an appointment with The Director of Enrollment and Student Success to review program requirements and align the assistant's degree plan with their GA position commitment. Ultimately, it is the Graduate Assistant's responsibility to maintain academic eligibility for their GA position and ensure they complete their degree within the timeframe of their assigned position.
  - ii. A \$175 technology fee (subject to change) is due at the beginning of each academic session. It can be paid via the Self-Service Financial tab on OneLogin or Student Financial Services.
  - iii. All graduate students are required to complete an Orientation to the Graduate School
  - iv. The Graduate School automatically enrolls students in classes based on their agreed-upon degree plan throughout their program duration.

7. All Graduate Assistants must provide the following information to Health Services:
  1. Health Record form
  2. Student Health History Form
  3. Immunization Record form or a copy of your immunization records obtained from your home doctor, prior school, etc.

All documentation can be found on the Health Services websites and can be submitted directly to Health Services.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

Graduate Assistants at Nichols College are under the direct supervision of the department's hiring manager (s) who offers the appointment. The Hiring Manager(s) determines the GA's assignment and supervises his or her work. The Hiring Manager(s) is the primary source of information for the details of the position.

## **PERFORMANCE AND ASSISTANTSHIP REVIEWS**

Each department's Hiring Manager(s) will conduct a performance review at the end of each academic year on their Graduate Assistant, which is shared with Human Resources to be documented in the assistant's file.

## **RENEWAL AND NON-RENEWAL OF APPOINTMENT**

Nichols College does not guarantee that an appointment as a Graduate Assistant will be renewed each year. Although appointments are often renewed, the College cannot promise, and there can be no expectation, that a graduate assistantship will be continued for two years.

## **ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS**

GAs must work with the Director of Enrollment and Student Success to plan their academic program to align with their GA position commitment. To maintain their GA position, they must actively enroll in the fall and spring semesters and may enroll in summer courses as needed.

Graduate assistants must maintain a 3.0 GPA and are governed by all Graduate School academic policies.

## **TERMINATION AND WITHDRAWALS**

Failure to perform duties assigned satisfactorily or failure to comply with academic/college policies may result in the termination of the assistantship. If a Graduate assistant's appointment is terminated in the middle of a term, the tuition for that class will be prorated for the weeks worked as a graduate assistant. The GA will then be responsible for the remaining tuition for their program.

Resignation from any graduate appointment must be communicated in writing to the Human Resources department and countersigned by the Graduate Assistant's Hiring Manager(s).

## **DUTIES AND TIME COMMITMENTS**

Workload expectations of the department and working hours should be explicit and clear.

Departments are to provide work assignments that GAs can satisfactorily complete in no more than a 20-hour average work week. The number of hours required to complete assignments in any given week may vary per department.

GAs follow the academic school calendar. Consequently, if the campus is closed (for any reason), GAs who normally work those days will not be required to make up the missed hours.

## **EXTRA WORK OPPORTUNITIES AND HOURS**

Graduate Assistants, in addition to their 20 hours per week worked for their assistantship, may work for another area on campus at no more than 9.50 hours per week. These 9.50 additional hours must not interfere with the assistantship position. The maximum a Graduate Assistant may work is 29.50 hours per week and 59 hours (about 2 and a half days) per pay period.

## **TUITION REMISSION AND FEES**

GAs will be eligible for a tuition discount but will be responsible for fees, including the mandatory technology fee of \$175 per session (subject to change). A yearly student parking pass is required for all GAs, regardless of whether they reside on campus or commute. Applications can be found via the Nichols Hub under Public Safety. (The Price varies for Residents and Commuters.)

Graduate Assistants can enroll in one degree through the GA program. The student is responsible for any additional degree(s) or certificate (s) tuition and fees. In addition, the GA will be responsible for covering the tuition and fees for any classes taken beyond their planned employment period.

In addition, rooms are available on campus at 50% of standard room fees, based on a first-come, first-served basis. See the *GA Housing Application and Agreement* policy for more information.

Meal plans for Lombard Dining Hall are not required for GAs but are available. Students may elect a residential meal plan if they reside on campus or a commuter meal plan if they commute. More information about meal plans may be accessed through the Nichols Hub.

GAs who do not complete their degree(s) within the 2-year period will be required to pay the additional class expenses related to completing their degree.

All fees above will be charged to the student's financial account, which may be accessed through Self Service on the Nichols portal.

## **BENEFITS AND PAY**

Graduate Assistants do not receive benefits. They will accrue 1- hour sick time per 30 hours they work based on the MA sick time policy. Taxes will be deducted on a per-pay period basis.

Summer work is only available with prior approval from the division's Vice President. It is not guaranteed.

## **CONDUCT AND PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR**

GAs are held to the standards of both Student Life and Human Resources.

Violation of regulations constitutes a basis for disciplinary action in accordance with procedures outlined in the Nichols College Student Handbook regarding residential concerns and the Nichols College Employee Handbook for department-related misconduct.

Any residential misconduct will be handled through the Residence Life department and brought to the attention of the hiring manager(s) of your department and Human Resources. Misconduct could lead to termination of employment; however, the student could remain in their graduate program at their expense.

GAs may interact with other undergraduate and graduate students. They are expected to use discretion in all situations that may jeopardize the department they work for or the institution's reputation.

## **FORMAL GRIEVANCE PROCESS**

If a Graduate Assistant has a problem, he or she should review the issue with the department supervisor.

If the grievance concerns the immediate supervisor, the Graduate Assistant should review it with the appropriate Vice President of their division, where necessary steps will be taken to resolve the grievance.

## **HIRING MANAGER DUTIES**

The Hiring Manager(s) is responsible for tracking the Graduate Assistant's earnings to ensure they do not exceed the annual budget. They are also responsible for monitoring their GA's academic progress to ensure they follow their degree plan and complete their program within the specified employment period.

The graduate assistant's hiring manager(s) must carefully coordinate and monitor the integration of the assistantship responsibilities and academic program. Graduate Assistants should be assigned space, supplies, and equipment to carry out their assignments effectively.

## **HOUSING**

Housing is not guaranteed for any Graduate Assistant. All inquiries are determined on a first-come, first-served basis through the Division of Student Life. The Graduate Assistant must adhere to all the Residential Life Housing Policy policies if they choose to live on campus. Summer housing is based on availability. For more details, please see the GA Housing Application and Agreement Terms and Conditions of Residence.