

GA Handbook “Top 10” Important Facts For Students

Please note that this session is being recorded.

We will have time for Q & A at the end of the presentation, but feel free to ask questions any time.

KEY PEOPLE

Jeffrey Halverson

Associate Dean of the Graduate School

Isabel Garrido

Emeritus Assistant Dean, Graduate School

Shannon Mize

Business Service Specialist, Graduate School

Ruchita Reddy Gudipati

Chair, Graduate Assistant Advisory Committee (GAAC)

Adam Julian

Director, International Student and Scholar Services
Center for Global Engagement

#1

The GA HANDBOOK *“The Book”*

- Know where to find it!

Read it! Refer to it! Keep it handy!

<https://gradschool.umbc.edu/funding/assistantships/handbook/>

- Get to know the GAAC!

The Graduate Assistant Advisory Committee

<https://gsa.umbc.edu/gaac/>

<https://gsa.umbc.edu/contact-gaac/>



Graduate Assistant Advisory Committee



gsa.umbc.edu/contact-gaac/



gsa@umbc.edu

GAAC – TEAM



Ruchita Gudipati– Chair GAAC
Computer Science, M.S



Anoosha Fayyaz– Member GAAC
Physics, PhD



Nirandi Jayasinghe– Member GAAC
Atmospheric Physics, PhD

WHO WE ARE?

- One of the **standing committees** of **GSA**
- A team of Graduate Assistants (**GAs**)
facilitating the **GAs**

WHAT WE DO?

Facilitate

Facilitate formal discussions between Graduate Assistants (GAs) and university administration

Represent

Represent positions and opinions of UMBC GAs to the Graduate School, Graduate Senate, and other bodies, where necessary

Coordinate

Legislative work relating to GA's
Review of GA Handbook
Review of GA Health Insurance

Work

Work as the standing committee to resolve issues facing graduate assistants

Ensure

Ensure collaboration and collegial relationships with administrative partners

Issues Concerning GAs

Health Insurance

- We rigorously research solutions that are suitable to both Graduate Assistants and the administration in providing free, quality health insurance.

Communication

- We are improving communication mechanisms between the GAAC and all GAs at UMBC. At the same time, we are keeping a running dialogue with administration to convey and discuss issues brought up by GAs.

Performance Review Process

- We are working to find a way to encourage a high compliance rate for GAs' yearly performance review, while also providing the most beneficial feedback to students from their mentors/supervisors.

GA Handbook

- Collaborating with the administration to make timely updates to the Graduate Student handbook

#2

Basic Requirements

- GAs must be registered full-time (9 credits or more) in Spring and Fall
- GAs must be in a degree-granting program
- GAs must be registered in courses that lead toward the degree and/or GPD approved (a GPD may not allow a certain course to be covered under GA tuition funding)

#3

GA Classifications



Teaching Assistant



Research Assistant



Administrative Assistant (Only through spring 2022)



Peaceworker Assistant



Fellow



Grader (No tuition remission)

#4

GA Appointments

- Annual GAs - 12 Months (most common)
- Academic GAs - 9.5 months
- Single Semester GAs - (very exceptional)
- Full-time GAs - 20 hours, on average, per week
- Part-time GAs - 10 hours, on average, per week

Although appointment renewal is not guaranteed, more often than not, appointments are renewed.

International students, in general, are not permitted to work more than 10/20 hrs./week. Must consult with ISSS.

#5

Required Forms

Appointment Letter – Stipend, tuition remission, fees, insurance

Addendum - Duties, expectations, position description, department specific information.

Tuition Remission form

GA Health Insurance application

#6

Benefits!

- Stipend (all GAs)
- In-State Tuition (all GAs)
- Tuition Remission - Dept. discretion
- Health Insurance - Dept. discretion
- Mandatory fees - Dept. discretion
- Sick Leave - (all GAs)
- Vacation Leave - (12-month GAs only)
- Parental Leave Fellowship - (all GAs) 6 weeks

#7

Registration

Fall/Spring

- ☐ All GAs (FT and PT) must register for 9 credits
- ☐ FT GAs - *option* to register for GRAD 601 (5 credits)
- ☐ PT GAs - *option* to register for GRAD 600 (3 credits)
- ☐ GRAD 601 and GRAD 600 - no cost - no credit - not on transcript

Summer

- ☐ Registration is NOT required
- ☐ If you do register, GRAD 603 (2 credits at no cost) is available at no cost in the summer

Mandatory Fees

- Most Departments DO NOT pay mandatory fees
- Mandatory fees are usually paid by GAs

Read your appointment letter carefully before signing

- Mandatory fees are charged per credit
- A balance owed for mandatory fees will prevent registration

Fall 2021 Mandatory Fees

(per credit)

- Technology fee - \$17
- Athletics & Recreation fee - \$31
- Transportation fee - \$25
- Auxiliary Facilities fee - \$25
- Campus Engagement fee - \$29
- Grad Program fee - \$17

International Students

- International Student Fee - \$125 (flat, charged once each semester)

For more information on mandatory fees, please go to: <https://sbs.umbc.edu/fall-2021-graduate/>

#8

Timekeeping/Completion of Duties

- GAs cannot use biweekly employee timesheets
- GAs affirm once (at end of semester) that duties were completed*
- Completion of Duties form can be found on the GA Forms Page
<https://gradschool.umbc.edu/funding/assistantships/forms/>

Note that all GA forms can be found on page above

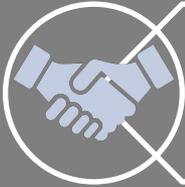
*FWS funded GAs must complete Completion of Duties form *per pay period*

#9

Resolving Issues



First attempt to resolve grievance within the program
(Supervisor, GPD, Chairperson, GPC, ISSS liaison)



If still aggrieved, consult with Associate Dean of the
Graduate School (Dr. Halverson)



GAAC is your advocacy group for matters that affect
ALL GAs

#10!!!

***Who You Gonna Call?
(or email)***



CONTACTS

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Chair, Graduate Assistant Advisory Committee (GAAC)

International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS)

www.iss.umbc.edu/contact

REMINDERS

- Read the GA Handbook!
<https://gradschool.umbc.edu/funding/assistantships/handbook/>
- Read your UMBC email regularly!
- Review your financial student account on myUMBC!
[myUMBC - Billing and Personal Finances](#)
- Open your e-bill!
[You will receive a notification via email when it is available](#)
- Don't wait! Ask for help right away!

Questions ?



FAQs

- **Do stipends get taxed?**

Stipends are taxable income. Graduate Assistants (GA) will receive a 1099 form at the beginning of each calendar year to use when filing taxes. We cannot advise as to how the income must be reflected on taxes and ask that GAs consult with a tax professional on those types of questions.

- **Does tuition remission get taxed if you are a Research Assistant? If not, how do you include it as non-taxable income in your taxes?**

If you are an Research Assistant (RA) or Teaching Assistant (TA), tuition remission is not taxed. If you are an Administrative Assistant (AA), your tuition remission is capped to \$5,250 annually; anything over this is taxed at 25%.

- **How much summer leave days do we get as a 12 months Graduate Assistant?**

40 hours if Full Time, 20 hours if Part Time.

- **Do we get sick leave days and study days too?**

Sick leave 40 hours FT, 20 hours PT; no study days. if so, how many days?

- **How early can we register to classes to avoid problems?**

Not sure what "problems" the student is referring to when they ask about how early they should register for classes to avoid problems. I would say it is always advisable to register early recommended to review their financial information on myUMBC and read their UMBC email regularly to avoid problems. This will ensure that they know if tuition remission is posted, if there is a balance, if any action is necessary, etc.

- **Can international students be full time GAs while they are completing an off campus unpaid mandatory internship from their your program?**

Overload restrictions only apply to on-campus employment.

FAQs

- **Are we (GAs at UMBC) a union/have collective bargaining?**
UMBC GAs are not unionized and do not participate in collective bargaining.
- **Grad 600 or Grad 601 count towards full time, right?**
Yes, Grad 600 and Grad 601 count towards full-time status each semester.
- **If you are NOT an international student, and wanted to work more than 20 hours through work that is not through the GA (like tutoring or part time coffee job) are you allowed to?**
Overload for additional on-campus employment may be approved by the Associate Dean of the Graduate School for domestic student GAs.
- **GAs are not eligible for FMLA.**
Correct but a Parental Leave Fellowship is available.
- **If we are already registered for 9 credits of courses in the fall or spring, do we still need to register for these "courses"?**
No you do not need to register for either GRAD 600 or 601.
- **We have pre-candidacy CMSC 898 in cs department, is it equal to grad 601?**
No.
- **So the purpose of the 600 level courses is to alleviate the academic burden while still qualifying as a full GA?**
Yes. They account for the time and effort put into the GA.
- **Would it count towards our degree? The 898 course?**
Yes, as a Ph.D. in pre-candidacy status.

FAQs

- **I have 3 credits next semester remaining in my program, should I get 601 and 600 to get full time?**

Yes.

- **When we get 5 credits cs 898, why do we need grad 601?**

If you have in addition to 898 4 other academic credits, for a total of 9, you don't need 601. But if you still need 4, then you may use 601.

- **Would certificate program credits fulfill the requirements of full time and GA application?**

Certificate program credits cannot be used. They must be from courses.

- **Could you register for an extra class?**

Yes but most classes are 3 credits. So that's 12 credits which is OK but anything beyond 9 credits is considered "term overload" and you need Associate Dean approval.

- **Do the fees apply to the credits of GRAD 601 as well?**

No fees are assessed on GRAD 600 or 601.

- **It's per ISSS an international student with less than 4 academic credits can work full time under CPT. Let's say a GA wants to do this could the GA register for less than 3 academic credits and 6 credits under 600 or 601 and also work full time in CPT?**

No. 9 credits is full time enrollment (regardless of whether or not 601 is part of the enrollment) and students are not eligible for full-time CPT while enrolled full time.

FAQs

- **I have an academic GA appointment, and I was told that I can apply to be a summer GA. How do I go about that?**
Work with your Graduate Program Coordinator or Director to get this established.
- **What classifies as work? If its unpaid or volunteer position, does it still count?**
Although unpaid volunteer positions are certainly considered work, all GAs must be paid for their service to the university. Every GAs receives a stipend.
- **Is health insurance provided for all GA's (including Grader)?**
For any GA contractor health insurance is at the department's discretion.
- **For Peace Workers if there is a conflict and it can't be resolved through the program do we still go to you for assistance?**
Please reach out to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School.