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## Offer Letter

[Date]

[Name and A#]

[Email]

Dear [Student Name]:

Congratulations on your appointment as a Graduate [Administrative Assistant (GAA) / Research Assistant (GRA) / Teaching Assistant (GTA)] in the [Graduate Degree Program] at The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH).

You are being offered a full-time equivalency appointment (FTE) of [0.25 (25%)/0.50 (50%)] in the Department of [XXXX], College of [XXXX], for the [Fall/ Spring/ Summer] semester(s) of the [XXXX – XXXX] academic year. During the period of this Assistantship, you will receive a stipend of [\$XXXX]. We will also provide in-state tuition, single coverage health insurance, and payment of college, infrastructure, and international fees (as applicable). The total estimated value of the Assistantship for this period is [\$XXXX]. Current tuition and fee information can be found on the [UAH Bursar's website](#). Current stipend levels for graduate assistantships can be found on the [Graduate School FAQs website](#).

As part of your Assistantship, you will be given assignments by your supervisor, [insert supervisor name]. Please note that the term 'Supervisor' is used solely to indicate an individual who oversees the Graduate Assistant (GA) program and provides guidance on assignments. This designation does not imply any employment relationship between you and the university. Your supervisor will further discuss with you the responsibilities of your assistantship, including expectations and applicable UAH policies and procedures, upon the commencement of the program. The service provided will be designed to enhance your professional development. The remainder of your effort should be devoted to carrying out those activities required by your program, including the original research necessary to fulfill thesis, pre-dissertation, and dissertation requirements, as applicable. The duties of your Assistantship will require [10 hours per week/20 hours per week]. During each semester, your academic work performed towards an advanced degree shall not exceed 20 hours per week.

Your appointment will commence on August [XX], 20XX, until December [XX], 20XX, for Fall; January [XX], 20XX, through May [XX], 20XX, for Spring; and May [XX], 20XX, through August [XX], 20XX, for Summer. Classes begin in the Fall semester on August [XX], 20XX; in the Spring semester, on January [XX], 20XX; and in the Summer semester on May [XX], 20XX.

The **reporting period** of your assistantship each semester is determined by your department/principal investigator/supervisor and will include, at a minimum, the full academic term.

Continuation of this appointment at any time is contingent upon continued enrollment in the [Graduate Degree Program], the availability of funding, satisfactory progress toward your degree objectives, remaining in academic good standing (3.000 or better overall GPA), and satisfactorily completing the duties associated with this assistantship.

This academic appointment is a way for you to earn funding while advancing your education and research and preparing you for a professional career. As a graduate assistant you are not an employee of UAH. You will be engaged in activities in the course of obtaining your advanced degrees, and therefore, there is no application of the minimum wage and overtime pay provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). You will not accrue sick or vacation leave.

Detailed information about your assistantship is provided on the attached Memorandum of Appointment. Please read this information carefully. If you wish to accept this offer, please sign, date, and include your student A# in the spaces designated below, and initial each of the paragraphs on the following pages. Return it to [department email] by [select April 15 or later, per Council of Graduate Schools Resolution]. Signing this offer indicates your acknowledgement of the terms and conditions of the assistantship. If you have any questions regarding this offer, please contact the Department of

[place on dept. letterhead]

[XXXX] at [email or phone]. Note that students are under no obligation to respond to offers of financial support prior to April 15; earlier deadlines for acceptance of such offers violate the [Council of Graduate Schools Resolution Regarding Graduate Scholars, Fellows, Trainees, and Assistants](#).

You were selected for funding from a pool of very talented applicants, and we hope that you choose to join UAH. Congratulations on receiving this assistantship, and we look forward to welcoming you to our campus.

Sincerely,

[Signature of Department Chair]

[Signature of PI (GRA), Dean (GTA), Supervisor (GAA)]

[insert Department Chair Name]  
Chair, Department of [XXXX]

[insert PI, Dean, Supervisor Name]  
Principal Investigator or Dean, College of [XXXX]

I accept this offer.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student A#

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Memorandum of Appointment

The following Memorandum of Appointment applies to your assistantship. Please read these terms carefully, initial in the square brackets [ ] at the beginning of each paragraph, sign and date at the bottom of the second page, and return it to the department office as soon as possible.

**GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANT RESPONSIBILITIES:** A GRA performs research duties as directed by their supervisor. GRA duties may include documentation, experimentation, interviews and other activities that support the academic endeavor of the supervisor. At times, a research project to which the GRA is appointed may eventually lead to a thesis or dissertation topic; however, a faculty member cannot guarantee that a particular project will provide suitable material for a thesis or dissertation. All GRA appointments are subject to the continuing availability of funds. Appointments are made only when resources to support them are assured, but a financial emergency to the University could cause the appointment, including those of GRAs, to be terminated prior to the end of the appointment period. Assistantship support normally will not continue past the end of the semester in which the GRA expects to complete degree requirements. Some contracts or grants may specify United States citizenship as a prerequisite for GRA appointments. If a GRA appointment is terminated due to the student's actions, the student will be required to repay a portion of the sponsored program funds that were allocated for their appointment, calculated on a pro-rata basis.

**GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT RESPONSIBILITIES:** A GTA shares the faculty's responsibility for teaching. The purpose of this assistantship is to aid the student's professional development. GTAs must have completed at least 18 semester hours of graduate coursework in their discipline to qualify as the Instructor of Record in any class. GTAs may also qualify for other duties as assigned, which do not require 18 semester hours of graduate coursework. These duties may include working as a laboratory instructor, tutor, grader, or other activities related to the educational mission of the department. The GTA's teaching load will necessarily vary from one department to another, and the load should be proportional to the normal full-time teaching load carried by other faculty members in the department. If a GTA appointment is terminated due to the student's actions, the student will be required to repay a portion of the funds that were allocated for their appointment, calculated on a pro-rata basis.

**GTA INSTRUCTOR OF RECORD ACKNOWLEDGMENT:** Students who hold an Instructor of Record position as a GTA must certify that they meet one of the following conditions **A)** holds at least a Master's Degree in the assigned teaching field or a related discipline; or **B)** has completed at least 18 hours of graduate credit in the teaching field, will be under supervision, and will receive regular training and evaluation. GTAs who serve as an Instructor of Record must have an approved Faculty Credentials form (to be completed by the department) on file for each course they teach. Student performance will be evaluated by the department chair or designee. If performance is not satisfactory, the student may be terminated before the end of the current term. In the event that a GTA instructor of record does not teach the entire semester, for any reason, they will be compensated solely for the time actually taught. Performance will also be considered in decisions relating to compensation and reappointment.

**GRADUATE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT RESPONSIBILITIES:** A GAA performs administrative duties under the direction of a faculty/staff member. Typical GAA duties might include clerical support, technical support, equipment or facilities management, or translation. If a GAA appointment is terminated due to the student's actions, the student will be required to repay a portion of the funds that were allocated for their appointment, calculated on a pro-rata basis.

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**STIPEND:** This assistantship is at Level [XX] and carries the following stipend(s) per semester:

Fall Term:            \$[XXXX]  
Spring Term:         \$[XXXX]  
Summer Term:        \$[XXXX]

Stipends are administered biweekly. For details of payment patterns, students should contact their department office.

**TUITION AND FEE PAYMENT:** Student tuition and fee charges for the period of appointment will be at the in-state graduate rate (*approximately \$[XXXX]/Fall; \$[XXXX]/Spring; \$[XXXX]/Summer – enter the amounts for the exact semesters listed on the first page of the offer*) and will be paid for up to [XX credit hours per Fall and/or Spring semester, and XX credit hours per Summer semester – enter the credit hours for the semesters listed on the first page of the offer]. The student is responsible for the tuition and fees exceeding this limit. Fees may include but are not limited to college fees, infrastructure fees, insurance, and international fees (as applicable to international students).

**FEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** Payment of fees not covered by this assistantship award is the student's responsibility.

**HEALTH INSURANCE:** The full premium for the student's health insurance coverage will be provided each semester during which the assistantship is in effect. International students **MUST** maintain this insurance coverage per SEVIS regulations.

**Do you accept the University's health insurance benefit?**

INITIAL ONE:

Yes, I accept

No, I decline

**INTERNATIONAL STUDENT FEE:** If the student is an international student, the International Student Fee will be paid on behalf of the student as part of this assistantship.

**COURSE LOAD:** A graduate assistant who holds a full-time assistantship appointment (GTA/GRA/GAAs) (20 hours per week) each Fall and Spring will receive a tuition and fee waiver at the in-state tuition rate for nine (9) to twelve (12) graduate credit hours, and at least six (6) graduate credit hours during the Summer term. A graduate assistant who holds a part-time assistantship (10 hour per week) appointment each Fall and Spring will receive a tuition and fee waiver at the in-state tuition rate for four and half (4.5) to six (6) credit hours. Part-time waivers will cover up to the maximum of 6 registered hours for single assistantship appointments. A graduate assistant who holds a part-time assistantship (10 hour per week) appointment in Summer will receive a tuition and fee waiver at the in-state tuition rate for 3 credit hours. Students who hold an international F-1 visa must be enrolled in at least nine (9) credit hours during the Fall and Spring terms for immigration compliance. F-1 international students who begin their first semester during a Summer term will be required to register for nine (9) credit hours but may only be supported a maximum of six (6) credit hours on a full-time assistantship offer. Summer course registration for both domestic and returning F-1 international students is optional, but students must be registered for coursework if they accept an assistantship during any semester of the academic year. Not meeting these conditions will result in penalties up to and including termination of the assistantship appointment.

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**[ ] PERFORMANCE:** Retaining the graduate assistantship is contingent on maintaining a minimum of a 3.000 grade point average (GPA); making satisfactory progress toward a graduate degree; performing assigned duties acceptably; complying with all policies in the Academic Catalog, the Student Code of Conduct, and the availability of sufficient funds. Student performance will be evaluated by the department chair or designee. If performance is not satisfactory or if the student fails to meet the requirements as stated above, the student may be terminated before the end of the current term. Students who resign or are terminated within an active semester will have their tuition and fee waiver benefits cease on the date of termination or resignation. In addition, compensation benefits will cease on the date of termination or resignation. Graduate students who continue in their program of study after a resignation or termination from an assistantship will not qualify for any of the above-referenced benefits, including, if applicable, in-state tuition. Graduate students will be required to reimburse the university for the remainder of the tuition and fee benefits beginning on the date of termination or resignation of their appointment.

**[ ] ACADEMIC PROBATION RELATED TO ASSISTANTSHIPS:** Students who fall below a 3.000 cumulative GPA will be placed on Academic Probation Status (APS). Students will be notified of their probationary status by the Graduate School as soon as the probation list is prepared by Graduate School staff. If a student holds a GTA/GRA/GAA and was not successful in obtaining a cumulative GPA of 3.000 or higher, the student will have one semester while working the assistantship to raise their GPA to a 3.000 or higher. Otherwise, the assistantship is immediately terminated at the end of the probationary semester. GTA/GRA/GAAs may only go on probation once during their period of enrollment. The GTA/GRA/GAA appointment for students will be terminated immediately if the cumulative GPA falls below 3.000 more than once.

**[ ] ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING:** All Graduate Assistants should be familiar with UAH guidelines for emergency prevention measures, how to prepare themselves and students for emergencies, and typical emergency responses. Graduate Assistants must provide leadership to underclassmen and visitors who may not be knowledgeable about buildings and classrooms on campus. All Graduate Assistants will participate in mandatory safety training conducted by the Office of Environmental Health and Safety (OEHS). The student should contact OEHS for training dates.

**[ ] LABORATORY SAFETY:** The student is required to attend all mandatory laboratory safety meetings required by their department prior to beginning their assigned duties. The student should contact their department for further details. Failure to attend will result in forfeiture of this assistantship.

**[ ] GTA TRAINING (ONLY APPLICABLE TO GTAs):** All new GTAs must participate in online training through Canvas, as well as in-person training. Details and instructions will be provided to all GTAs within Canvas. Failure to participate in any required training will result in forfeiture of this assistantship.

**[ ] GRA TRAINING (ONLY APPLICABLE TO GRAs):** All UAH faculty, staff, and students who do not hold a security clearance and are charging to a research grant or contract are required to complete the *Undue Foreign Influence: Risks and Mitigation Training* in CITI.

**[ ] OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT:** You may not engage in any other remunerated activities either on or off campus. Exceptions to this rule are rare and require prior approval in writing by the Graduate School Dean. Should an exception be granted, the combined full-time equivalency (FTE) shall not exceed 20 hours per week during the academic year. Students holding 20-hour per week assistantships may not hold employment during the term of this assistantship. Students with less than 20-hour per week appointments may supplement their assistantships with employment up to a combined 20-hour per week maximum. Students who violate this provision may forfeit and/or be required to refund their stipend and tuition benefit. International students may lose their immigration status.

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**DOMESTIC STUDENT ELIGIBILITY:** This offer is contingent upon unconditional admission by the student's department. Provisionally and conditionally admitted domestic students are not eligible for an assistantship. Students who are provisionally or conditionally admitted may qualify to hold an assistantship once they reach unconditional admission status.

**INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ELIGIBILITY:** This offer is contingent upon unconditional admission by the student's department. International students may not be admitted conditionally or provisionally. University policy requires that all noncitizens of the United States hold appropriate visas to accept graduate assistantships. The assistantship will be terminated if the recipient is in violation of any policy of the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (USCIS) and includes the prohibition of outside employment during the term this assistantship is in effect.

**ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION:** This assistantship appointment relies upon the student's satisfaction of the eligibility requirements established by the Federal Immigration control law. Specifically, the student must complete the first part of a government form (USCIS Form I-9) and submit it with original documents pertaining to their identity and appointment to the University for examination. This must be done by the **first day of the assistantship appointment** before the student begins formal duties for the University.

**IMMIGRATION PROCESSING:** If the student is studying at UAH on an international student visa, they must report for "immigration check-in," which coincides with New International Student Orientation. The student must complete immigration processing with the Office of International Services prior to beginning their assistantship duties in order to be eligible to register for classes. If the student anticipates any difficulty reporting to UAH in time for immigration processing, they should contact the Graduate School and the Office of International Services at 256-824-6055 or email [isss@uah.edu](mailto:isss@uah.edu). Failure or inability to comply will mean that, under federal law, the University will not be permitted to appoint the student.

**BACKGROUND CHECK:** Graduate students who accept a graduate assistantship appointment are subject to a background check, the results of which will be used to evaluate eligibility for the appointment. This offer of appointment is contingent upon receipt of a satisfactory background check. A Background Check Release Form will be sent to the student and the student must grant permission to Human Resources to conduct the background check.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** The terms and conditions described herein are dependent upon the timely completion and receipt of this letter.