



WORLD – CLASS EDUCATION



**KEAN UNIVERSITY**  
**Graduate/Doctoral Assistantship Handbook**  
**2023 Edition**

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## **PURPOSE**

Graduate and doctoral student assistantships serve the purposes of providing:

- Merit based scholarship to provide financial support for advanced academic study
- Graduate level learning opportunities
- Direct benefit to the university in the form of scholarly productivity, teaching assistance or staff resources for programs

## **ELIGIBILITY**

To be eligible for a graduate and doctoral assistantship, the student must:

- Hold a baccalaureate degree
- Be enrolled for no more than 12 credits per semester, but no less than 9 credits per semester of graduate study in their program at the university
- Have a cumulative undergraduate GPA of 3.25 or better, or GRE score in the 70th percentile or higher
- Have a 3.5 graduate GPA at Kean after completing at least 9 credits

## **DURATION OF ASSISTANTSHIPS**

### **Doctoral Assistantships**

Doctoral assistantships are offered for partial or full duration of a student's program, depending on the program, pending sufficient funds. Doctoral assistantships do not include tuition coverage of internship courses.

### **Graduate Assistantships**

Graduate assistantships are offered to Master's degree students only for one academic year (September through June) and are renewable for one additional academic year for students who have 18 academic credits or more of graduate study to complete their program. A student may have an assistantship for all or part of an academic year, but the credit limits (no more than 12 credits, no less than 9 credits) remain the same. All students receiving full tuition waivers must take a minimum of 9 credits each semester that they have the assistantship. If a student receiving a full tuition waiver is taking less than 9 credits, they are ineligible to keep the assistantship.

**GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP**  
**CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT**

I. My assistantship will be in effect for a full academic year, commencing with the fall semester and terminating at the end of the spring semester, unless otherwise stated. If I am being hired for the spring semester, my assistantship will be in effect for the spring semester only. I can be re-hired for the next academic year for additional semesters pending on my credit requirements and university funds.

NOTE: Graduate Assistants are not required to work Winter and Summer sessions.

If a GA is asked to work during the winter, the supervising department MUST request special permission from the VPAA Office and Human Resources. If approved, GAs are allowed to work a limited number of hours. These hours will be deducted from the required Spring hours. Tuition for Winter session classes are not covered.

In the summer, GAs can apply to be a student worker through Human Resources if their department has funding. Payment is in the form of hourly student wage. Tuition will not be covered for summer courses.

II. I will register for and complete a minimum of 9 credits in my graduate program each semester. Based on my Assistantship status, the University will waive tuition and fees accordingly. Should I drop or withdraw from a course, I will be subject to the same rules and regulations regarding withdrawal which apply to all students at the University. I understand that I may not register for more than 12 credits per semester. If I do so, I will be responsible for the tuition of the additional credits.

III. If I apply or plan to apply for financial aid, I understand that my assistantship award may have an impact on my financial aid eligibility.

IV. I am expected to maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.0 at the end of any given semester. Should my grade point average fall below 3.0 at any given semester, my assistantship will be terminated.

To be considered for future Assistantships, I must submit a written appeal to the VPAA Office at [ga@kean.edu](mailto:ga@kean.edu).

V. I am expected to participate in two campus events per academic year as a full-time GA, or one event per year as a half- or quarter-time GA for a maximum of 4 hours per event. I am aware that I must notify my supervisor of the date of such an event at least two weeks prior in order to adjust my work schedule.

VI. Should I receive an “F” or “NC” during any semester, I will be liable for payment in full for that course. Any course in which a grade of “Incomplete” is received must be made up by the 11th week of the next semester.

VII. In the event that I must resign from the Assistantship prior to the end of the appointment, the following conditions will apply:

- a. A minimum of two weeks’ notice, in writing, must be given to my supervisor.
- b. If my resignation or termination becomes effective prior to the completion of the fall or spring semester, I will be liable for payment in full for all tuition and fees applicable to that semester.
- c. If my resignation or termination becomes effective at the end of the fall or spring semester, my tuition waiver for the semester will not be jeopardized.

VIII. The hours of the Assistantship in a work week are as follows:

- a. Full-time shall not exceed 20 hours nor fall below 15 hours
- b. Half-time shall not exceed 10 hours nor fall below 7.5 hours
- c. Quarter-time shall not exceed 5 hours nor fall below 3.75 hours.

IX. I understand internships will be covered on a case-by-case basis. I MUST reach out to the GA coordinator to determine if my internship is eligible to be covered. Full-time internships that do not allow me to work the allotted GA hours will not be covered. Internships that are not part of my degree requirements will also not be covered.

X. I understand that if I am taking less than 9 credits during my last semester I am ineligible to be a GA. I will work with my department coordinator to ensure that my credit loads will be sufficient to maintain my Graduate Assistantship for the duration of my program.

XI. I acknowledge that I have received and read through the GA/DA Handbook, 2023 edition. I will abide by the GA policies outlined in the handbook.

**DOCTORAL ASSISTANTSHIP  
CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT**

- I. My assistantship will be in effect for the designated duration of my program including winter and summer sessions, until I go on full-time internship or go below 9 credits a semester.
- II. I will register for and complete a minimum of 9 credits in my graduate program each semester. Based on my Assistantship status, the University will waive tuition and fees accordingly. Should I drop or withdraw from a course, I will be subject to the same rules and regulations regarding withdrawal which apply to all students at the University. I understand that I may not register for more than 12 credits per semester unless I am a PsyD or DPT student (maximum 18 credits for these programs). If I do so, I will have to pay out of pocket for the additional credits.
- III. If I apply or plan to apply, for financial aid, I understand that my assistantship award may have an impact on my financial aid eligibility.
- IV. I am expected to maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.0 at the end of any given semester. Should my grade point average fall below 3.0 at any given semester, my assistantship will be terminated. To be considered for future Assistantships, I must submit a written appeal to the VPAA Office at [ga@kean.edu](mailto:ga@kean.edu).
- V. I am expected to participate in two campus events per academic year as a full-time GA, or one event per year as a half- or quarter-time GA for a maximum of 4 hours per event. I am aware that I must notify my supervisor of the date of such an event at least two weeks prior in order to adjust my work schedule.
- VI. Should I receive an “F” or “NC” during any semester, I will be liable for payment in full for that course. Any course in which a grade of “Incomplete” is received must be made up by the 11th week of the next semester.

VII. In the event that I must resign from the Assistantship prior to the end of the appointment, the following conditions will apply:

- a. A minimum of two weeks' notice, in writing, must be given to my supervisor.
- b. If my resignation or termination becomes effective prior to the completion of the fall or spring semester, I will be liable for payment in full for all tuition and fees applicable to that semester.
- c. If my resignation or termination becomes effective at the end of the fall or spring semester, my tuition waiver for the semester will not be jeopardized.

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- a. Full-time shall not exceed 20 hours nor fall below 15 hours
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IX. I understand internships will be covered on a case-by-case basis. I MUST reach out to the GA coordinator to determine if my internship is eligible to be covered. Full-time internships that do not allow me to work the allotted GA hours will not be covered. Internships that are not part of my degree requirements will also not be covered.

X. I understand that if I am taking less than 9 credits during my last semester I am ineligible to be a DA. I will work with my department coordinator to ensure that my credit loads will be sufficient to maintain my Doctoral Assistantship for the duration of my program.

XI. I acknowledge that I have received and read through the GA/DA Handbook, 2023 edition. I will abide by the DA policies outlined in the handbook.



## ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

**Financial Aid:** If you have applied for Financial Aid and then receive an assistantship, you may decide to cancel the aid or keep it for other expenses. If you decide you do not want to take the aid, please notify the Office of Financial Aid immediately. If you wish to retain the aid, it will be applied to your tuition and fees *before* the waiver from the Assistantship. *Therefore, your eligibility for the total original amount of the aid may be affected because of the assistantship funding.*

**Orientation:** All new GAs and DAs must attend an orientation run by the VPAA Office before starting their positions. GA and DAs need to sign in in order to show proof of attendance. Supervisors are highly encouraged to attend.

**Work Schedule:** Your appointment letter indicates the hours you must work per week. Assistantships vary from office to office but in all cases **you must not exceed the maximum number of hours per your assigned category: Full-Time (maximum of 20 hours), Half-Time (maximum of 10 hours); Quarter-Time (maximum of 5 hours).**

Your schedule is to be arranged with your supervisor. It is important to maintain your schedule as much as possible. Payment per week may not exceed your maximum hours per week.

Graduate/Doctoral Assistants are not required to work when classes are not in session. Before the Spring semester begins, and at other points during the semester, go over your work record with your supervisor to ensure you are in agreement.

**Winter Break (For GA/DAs):** If the supervisor determines that there is appropriate GA/DA work for the winter break, and the GA/DA is willing to do so, then upon approval by HR, the work may be done, although this is not a requirement of the position.

During break, GA/DAs can work up to 4 hours a week (if HALF) or up to 10 hours a week (if FULL) and keep track of the hours worked since one cannot be paid through HR over break. Then, during the Spring semester,

supervisors will log in the hours they completed into Workday so the GA/DA can be compensated.

During the entirety of the Spring semester, it is highly recommended that no GA/DA who worked during break goes above 7.5 hours a week if they are HALF, and 15 hours a week if they are FULL. GA/DA's are only allocated a certain amount of money per semester so it is up to both the GA/DA and the supervisor to monitor this process. Supervisors can input up to 10 hours for HALF and 20 hours for FULL every week during the Spring semester, so they can add extra hours to the 7.5 or 15 worked until the time is paid for.

If a GA/DA has too many hours logged and runs out of funds before the Spring semester ends, they will have to stop working when they run out of funds. In total, a FULL GA/DA cannot be above 280 hours max for the Spring semester and a HALF GA cannot be above 140 hours max.

Please also have the supervisor send the GA/DA coordinator the hours you worked over break at the start of the Spring semester.

**Spring Break:** If the supervisor determines that there is appropriate GA/DA work for the Spring break, and the GA/DA is willing to do so, then upon approval by HR, the work may be done, although this is not a requirement of the position.

**Summer Sessions (Graduate Assistants):** No graduate assistant can be a GA over the summer. Therefore, no tuition and fees will be covered if a GA wants to take a summer course. If a GA wants to work for a stipend during the summer, their supervisor needs to apply to switch them to be a student worker, pending HR approval.

**Summer Session (Doctoral Assistants):** As summer sessions are a part of the requirements for doctoral programs, all DAs who have required coursework over the summer will be covered for their tuitions and fees. A DA can only work their hours if they are taking courses. If a DA is only required to take one summer session, they are only able to work during that summer session.

**Internship Policy:** Given evidence that the student can continue to fulfill their appointed hourly GA requirements while on internship (including externships, practicum, clinical and fieldwork courses), students who have internships that are degree requirements for the student's program can be covered under the GA allocation tuition waiver. Decisions will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine if a given student will be able to fulfill their GA responsibilities while on internship. Eligibility for internship coverage is based on hourly requirements of the internship, which varies by program. Internship courses and academic courses that are degree requirements will both be counted towards the credit requirement for GAs (minimum 9 credits, maximum 12 credits)

**Payroll and Recording Hours:** All GA hours are monitored and then submitted by supervisors in the Workday time system. The supervisor will check reports of the Workday system to ensure that Graduate Assistants do not exceed their maximum hours in a scheduled period.

**Direct Deposits:** All payments per hour worked are made to bank accounts. All Graduate Assistants must complete a Direct Deposit form when onboarding.

**Position Descriptions:** Your specific duties and responsibilities will be provided by your supervisor. They will consist of ongoing tasks and projects that are under development. Make sure you understand your duties, and please do not be afraid to ask if you are unsure. You may offer ideas about what else you could be doing or how to do things differently – but only **after** you have understood the needs of the department or activity.

**Doctoral Assistants (DA)** – General work duties/administrative work. Assist faculty with teaching duties. Doctoral assistants sign a contract outlining their duties and responsibilities. Assist in Kean professional clinics. Assist faculty with research activities.

**Graduate Administrative Assistant (GAA)** - A full-time graduate student who holds at least a bachelor's degree and is enrolled in a degree

program leading to an advanced degree, working in any division of the University in roles that provide direct, substantive or sustained support for teaching or research initiatives, such as coordinating programs, organizing events, analyzing data, or supporting student services. These may include clinical or administrative duties but they must be inherently related to the student's graduate education and professional goals. Examples may include but are not limited to coordinating programs, organizing events, analyzing data, campus ambassador roles, support for special projects, peer mentoring, supporting student services, etc. GAA positions are not to be used for roles with primary responsibilities that are purely clerical or intended to provide routine secretarial, administrative or office staffing support.

**Graduate Research Assistant (GRA)** - A full-time graduate student who holds at least a bachelor's degree and is enrolled in a degree program leading to an advanced degree, who assists in conducting research of a scholarly nature typically under faculty supervision. The work of a GRA may include but is not limited to developing specific research projects, theoretical analyses and modeling, gathering and analysis of data, literature review, library searches, curating of exhibitions, special or independent projects that require substantive research, externally funded projects that support GRA involvement, the production and/or publication of scholarly journals and research reports, and other examples.

**Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA)** - A full-time graduate student who holds at least a bachelor's degree and is enrolled in a degree program leading to an advanced degree, who has instructional assignments in large-size or specialized courses, under the supervision of a faculty member who has ultimate responsibility for the course. Doctoral candidates are encouraged to fill these positions, which may be a requirement in certain assignments.

GTAs do not replace faculty in the classroom but enhance and permit instruction and instructional support to provide a higher quality educational experience than would be possible otherwise. GTAs benefit from developing teaching skills and a deeper understanding of the discipline by working closely under the supervision of an experience

faculty member. Responsibilities may include one or more of the following:

- Assist with classroom teaching (attending classes, taking notes, taking attendance, proctoring exams, tutoring undergraduate students, help to prepare lectures and discussion sessions), e-mail and other class correspondence, other duties as assigned.
- Coordinate or assist in instruction in laboratory courses, discussion, quiz or problems sessions, and writing experiences, etc.
- Meet with students or small groups, lead group discussions, and hold office hours for supporting instruction, mentoring, consultation etc. Depending on the nature of the teaching assistantship, GTAs are encouraged to hold office hours.
- Support in-classroom activities under the supervision of a faculty member.
- Lead discussion, recitation, tutorial, or supplemental sessions of courses that are taught by a faculty member.
- Special sessions and class meetings under the supervision of a faculty member.
- Administer colloquium programs or other special sessions.

**DEVELOP GOOD COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR SUPERVISOR!!**

***Assistantship Duties:*** Assigned to help the supervisor with university-related activities ONLY. You are not permitted to run personal errands off campus for your supervisor or perform other personal duties not related to university projects or programs.

***Supervision and Evaluation:*** Supervision of graduate and doctoral student assistants shall be the responsibility of the assigned assistant's senior professor or administrator. **A written description of the duties performed by the assistant and an evaluation of their performance shall be prepared by the supervisor at the midpoint and conclusion points of the academic year. These evaluations should remain filed for the full duration of the student's GA position.**

Supervision of graduate and doctoral student assistants will not be considered as a factor in determining faculty load.

***Abused Assistantships:*** Assistantship duties are designed for the overall professional development of the student. They should promote professional relationships and communication skills. If you feel that your assigned duties are not professional in nature or that you are expected to work more than your allotted hours, please notify the VPAA Office at [ga@Kean.edu](mailto:ga@Kean.edu) immediately.

***Assistantship Changes:*** Mid-Semester changes are not permitted unless there is a serious problem between you and your supervisor that cannot be amicably solved. If your supervisor has a serious concern about your job performance, this may result in the loss of the position for the second semester. If your skill sets do not meet the requirements of the position, but otherwise your performance is satisfactory, you will be placed in the pool of candidates for the following semester. Likewise, changes from partial assistantships to full-time assistantships will not be permitted in the middle of a semester.

***Reappointment for Fall:*** During the Spring semester the GA Coordinator will be sending you and your supervisor a number of forms to complete which will include information about your: a) performance evaluation, b) your supervisor's recommendation to retain you, c) total number of credits you have completed and how many remain in your program, etc.

Your reappointment is subject to successful academic completion of each semester. If your overall GPA is below **3.0** or your supervisor has less than a satisfactory rating for your performance, you may not continue. If your supervisor has a satisfactory rating for you but the position is going to require someone with additional skills, you may be placed back in the pool for consideration by other supervisors.

Please be advised, if you/your supervisors do not return all evaluation forms, the VPAA Office will assume you are no longer interested and you will be dropped from the GA Program.

## ACADEMIC ISSUES

**Course Registration:** You must be registered for a minimum of 9 credits in your program every semester that you are a GA/DA. Tuition for undergraduate prerequisites required for your program will also be waived, but you must always be registered for at least 9 credits.

**THE UNIVERSITY WILL NOT WAIVE THE LATE REGISTRATION FEE IF YOU WAIT TO REGISTER FOR THE FIRST TIME DURING DROP/ADD.**

**Academic Progress:** You must maintain a 3.0 GPA for each semester that you are a GA/DA. We are **most** concerned with your academic progress.

If you are having difficulty during your first semester, you may wish to consider withdrawing from the Assistantship for your next semester. Discuss this with your supervisor and keep the VPAA Office at [ga@kean.edu](mailto:ga@kean.edu) informed.

**Withdrawal During the Semester:** If you withdraw from your assistantship for other than **extreme** circumstances (e.g. serious documented illness), you are responsible for the entire tuition as if you were a regular student.

Extreme circumstances will be handled on a case-by-case basis. If you wish to withdraw from the Assistantship *and* your courses, you must notify both the VPAA Office at [ga@kean.edu](mailto:ga@kean.edu) and the Registrar's Office. Notifying the VPAA Office **does not** automatically withdraw you from your courses.

**Registration for Spring:** Your academic advisor can provide you with any petitions or approvals for your courses. If you have not registered for at least 9 credits you will need to add them during the Drop/Add period in the first week of the Spring semester.

## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

***Relationship with Supervisors and Colleagues:*** We trust that as a professional, you have developed standards of appropriate behavior for communicating with individuals in a professional setting. We encourage you to cultivate relationships with your immediate colleagues as well as with those from other departments.

***Confidentiality Responsibilities:*** You will be dealing with confidential issues regarding student records, faculty activities, departmental activities, etc. All rules of confidentiality – both statutory obligations and University policy, must guide your behaviors. Check with your supervisor about where confidentiality issues may surface before they happen.

***Overall Professional Development:*** We urge you to participate in the events and activities that take place on Kean’s extremely active campus. The Graduate and Part-Time Student Council is a dedicated group of graduate students who make decisions about funding events for graduate students. We encourage you to participate in their once a month meetings and volunteer to participate on college-wide committees requiring graduate student representation.

***Career-Related Development:*** There are not enough positions to satisfy the number of students who are looking for a perfect match between their academic program and their Assistantship responsibilities. Therefore, we suggest being creative in your approach to the work you do at your assistantship. You can offer to do the following to help bridge the perceived gap:

- Write a newsletter
- Participate in any projects emanating from college-wide committees, etc.
- Review and analyze data for self-study
- Develop and administer student surveys



## CONTACT INFORMATION

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Townsend Hall Suite T-129  
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Thank you for taking the time to read this. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns.

