

Graduate Assistantship Orientation  
Fall 2011

# Agenda

- Academic Human Resources/Graduate College Presentation
  - Academic Human Resources
    - *Joe Bohn, Labor & Employee Relations Specialist*
  - Graduate College
    - *Deborah Richie, Executive Assistant Dean*
- Graduate Employee's Organization Presentation
- Audience Questions

# Types of Assistantships

- Research Assistant
  - primarily involve applying and mastering research concepts, practices, or methods of scholarship.
- Pre-Professional Grad Assistant
  - primarily gain experience, practice, or guidance that is significantly connected to their fields of study and career preparation
- Teaching Assistant
  - primarily in support of instruction
- Administrative Grad Assistant
  - support of administrative functions

# Graduate Employees Organization (GEO)

- Teaching Assistants (TA) and Administrative Grad Assistants (GA) are covered by a collective bargaining agreement with GEO
- Research Assistants (RA) and Pre-Professional Grad Assistants (PGA) are not covered by the GEO agreement
- Under the contract, 8 units are identified that require a TA experience; the first TA semester in those units is exempt from the GEO

# Waiver Generating Assistantships

- Student Status
  - Must be degree-seeking student in good standing in academic program
- Registration
  - Required in Fall and Spring
  - May be required by academic program in Summer
- FTE
  - Total Assistantship FTE 25 - 67%
- Duration
  - $\frac{3}{4}$  of academic term, defined as 91 days FA & SP, 41 Summer (Summer I TA only, 21 days)
  - Term = first day of classes through last day of finals

# Information for International Students

- 50% FTE Maximum
  - May not work more than 20 hours/week (from all jobs) when classes are in session
  - May work additional hours in break periods when classes are not in session (usually hourly positions)
- TA's must have demonstrated Oral English Proficiency to hold the appointment
  - If TA offer letter does not specify offer is contingent on successful completion of spoken English exam, unit must provide an alternate appointment

# What do you get with an Assistantship?

- Monthly Wages
- Tuition and fee coverage
- University paid dental insurance
- University paid vision insurance
- Sick leave
- Holidays
- Vacation -- 12 month assistantships only

# What is included in a waiver-generating appointment?

- Tuition
  - Waiver
  - Base or full - type dependent on academic unit
  - <http://www.grad.illinois.edu/gradhandbook/chaptervii/section04>
- Fees
  - University paid health service fee – access to McKinley Health Center and Counseling Center
  - University paid 75% of health insurance fee
  - Academic Facilities Maintenance Fund Assessment (AFMFA) fee
  - Library/Technology fee
  - Service fee

# Appointment Percentages

- Total appointment limited to 67%
  - Can have smaller percentage appointments, that aggregate to no more than 67%
- Assistantships are professional level appointments, percent time is not rigidly equivalent to hours/week
  - 50% FTE assistant expected to provide an average of 20 hours/week over the course of the full appointment period
- Administrative GA positions are FLSA non-exempt and must keep record of actual hours worked
  - Electronic timesheet can be found on Nessie
  - <https://hr.uillinois.edu/PolicyCompliance/Toolkit/UniversityForms.cfm>

# Wages

- Paid monthly on the 16<sup>th</sup> of each month
  - 16<sup>th</sup> = Saturday or Sunday, paid on Friday
  - Pay period is 16<sup>th</sup> of month to 15<sup>th</sup> of following month
- Minimum rates for wages are set each year
  - GEO contract determines TA and GA minima
  - Campus administration sets RA and PGA minima
  - AHR monitors and ensures pay is at or above the minima
  - Units can have internal pay structures but must comply with campus and contract minima

# Wages continued

- Must be paid via direct deposit
  - New employees have 30 days to provide direct deposit information
  - Failure to provide banking information results in pay being provided via paycard
- NESSIE
  - <https://nessie.uihr.uillinois.edu>
  - Compensation Tab
    - *Provide bank information*
    - *Access earnings statements*
    - *Provide tax withholding information (W-4)*

# Overtime Pay

- Federal Labor Standards Act (FLSA) determines whether a position/employee is eligible to be paid overtime.
- TA's, RA's, and PGA's are FLSA exempt and therefore not eligible to receive overtime compensation
- Administrative GA positions are non-exempt and eligible for overtime if more than 40 hours are worked in a single week
- Required to keep record of actual hours worked
  - Electronic timesheet can be found on Nessie
  - <https://hr.uillinois.edu/PolicyCompliance/Toolkit/UniversityForms.cfm>

# Health Benefits

- McKinley Health Center
  - office visits with doctors, nurse practitioners, mental health therapists and health educators, as well as most x-rays and laboratory tests at no additional out-of-pocket expense. Many immunizations and medications are offered at low cost or no cost.
  - May enroll non-minor dependents
- Student Health Insurance
  - United Health Care is provider
    - *Coverage period begins August 21, 2011*
  - May enroll dependents
    - *Enrollment period ends September 23, 2011*
  - Student Insurance Office
    - *506 S. Wright Street, HAB, Rm 100A North*

- Dental
  - Delta Dental is provider
  - Assistants automatically enrolled
    - *Coverage period begins September 1, 2011*
  - May enroll dependents
    - *For fall: Sept 1 – Sept 30, 2011*
    - <http://www.deltadentalil.com/> .

For more information and access to forms –

<http://www.grad.illinois.edu/current/dental.htm>

- Vision
  - EyeMed Vision Care is provider
  - Assistants automatically enrolled
    - *Coverage period begins September 1, 2011*
  - May enroll dependents
    - *For fall: Sept 1 – Sept 30, 2011*

For more information and access to forms –  
<http://www.grad.illinois.edu/current/vision.htm>

# Other Benefits

- Paid Sick leave
  - Maximum 13 non-cumulative days per year
    - *6 ½ days for a semester appointment*
    - *Days are equal to your "work day", not set at 8 hours*
- Paid Vacation
  - Eligible only if appointment is for 12 month duration
  - 24 days per year (August 16 – August 15)
  - Days are equal to your "work day", not set at 8 hours

## ■ PARENTAL ACCOMMODATION

- The contract provides “Parental Accommodation” provisions.
- Eligible assistants are entitled to up to six (6) weeks of parental accommodation period immediately following the birth of a child, or upon either the initial placement or the legal adoption of a child under 18 years of age.
- The parental accommodation period may be comprised of a two week paid Parental Leave, use of paid sick leave in accordance with Article XVII, Section B of the contract, and a request of personal unpaid leave of absence.
- If an assistant does not have enough paid sick leave to cover the six (6) weeks of parental accommodation, a request to make up the balance of the six week period with an unpaid leave of absence must be approved.

- Jury Duty
  - Paid release time for the duration of jury duty
  - May retain funds paid for jury duty compensation
- Leave without Pay
  - May request an unpaid leave without pay
  - Approval at sole discretion of the University (except for parental accommodation period)

- Bereavement Leave
  - Up to 3 days paid leave upon death of
    - *Immediate family*
    - *Same-sex domestic partner*
    - *Household member*
    - *In-laws*
    - *Grandparents and/or grandchildren*
  - 1 day paid leave upon death of
    - *Other relative than above who is not a member of your household*
- Military Leave
  - Granted in accordance with the Illinois Military Leave of Absence Act
  - Contact Academic HR if need arises

- **Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)**
  - Must have 12 months of University employment
  - Must have at least 1250 hours of service in the last 12 months
  - Serious medical condition of self or family member
  - If eligible, FMLA provides 12 weeks of leave, leave not required to be paid
  - Additionally, University Family Medical Leave (UFML) policy covers leave for the serious health condition of a registered, same-sex domestic partner.
  
- **Worker's Compensation**
  - Covered under the University's plan
  - On the job, accidental injuries
    - *Report the accidental injury to your supervisor*
    - *Seek medical treatment*
    - *Complete the injury report form*

- 2011 – 2012 Holidays
  - Independence Day
  - Labor Day
  - Thanksgiving Day
  - Day after Thanksgiving
  - Christmas (December 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>)
  - Day After New Year's Day
  - Martin Luther King Jr. Day
  - Memorial Day

# Terms of Appointment

- Offer letter
  - Can be email
  - Details
    - *FTE*
    - *Wages*
    - *Appointment dates (duration)*
    - *Assistantship type, including noting if covered by GEO*
    - *Supervisor in the unit*
    - *Major responsibilities of the position*

- **Renewal of Appointments**
  - Unit determined
  - Units encouraged to confirm plans as soon as known
  
- **Resignation**
  - Assistants required to give a minimum 14 day notice of resignation
  - Written release from appointing unit if resignation is sought in order to accept a different unit's assistantship
  
- **Termination**
  - Failure to enroll, maintain academic eligibility or withdraws from University
  - Disciplinary reasons following a prescribed process

# Taxation of Tuition Waivers

- Those Teaching Assistants (TA) or Research Assistants (RA) that receive a tuition and partial fee waiver as a result of their TA or RA appointment will typically not have their tuition and service fee waivers taxed.
- University has a 127 plan, which is an educational assistance program that exempts the first \$5,250 (per calendar year) of the tuition and service fee waivers.
- Cumulative Pre-Professional Graduate Assistant (PGA) tuition and service waivers in a calendar year exceeding \$5,250 are considered taxable benefits.
- Tuition and service fee waivers for Pre-Professional Graduate Assistants (PGA) and Graduate Assistants (GA) are considered taxable income if 51% or more of all of her or his assistantship appointments combined are either a GA or PGA.

# Impacts of Taxation of Tuition Waivers

- The value of the tuition and service fee waiver that exceeds \$5,250 will have an estimated tax withholding of 30% to 36%.
- Additional withholding from your paycheck for any value above the \$5,250 limit.
- Possibility of significant paycheck reduction.
  - Possible for all of paycheck to be used for additional withholding
    - This will depend on the value of the tuition and service fee waiver and the pay the PGA or GA receives for the services they perform for the University.*

# Additional Responsibilities

- Annual Ethics Training/Certification Requirement
  - All University employees are required by state law to successfully complete annual Ethics training by a state determined deadline
  - Pay careful attention to notices and deadlines; generally notified via email with unit staff responsible for monitoring completion
- Absences
  - Learn unit expectations for notification and coverage procedures

# Emergency Preparedness

- Review the Campus Emergency Response Guide
  - <http://www.dps.uiuc.edu/emergencyplanning/emergency.response.html>
- Enroll in UI-Emergency notification program
  - <http://www.dps.uiuc.edu/emergencyplanning/alert.html>
- What to do in an emergency
  - Call 9-911 from a campus phone
  - Call 911 from a cell phone
  - Campus Emergency Response Guide

# Where do you go if you have an issue or concern?

- Campus Resources
  - Academic Human Resources
    - *Terms of your appointment*
    - *General employee relations concerns*
    - *Pay issues*
    - *Contact Information*
      - *Joe Bohn ([jbohn@illinois.edu](mailto:jbohn@illinois.edu), 217-333-6747)*
  - Office of Equal Opportunity and Access
    - *Concerns about possible discrimination*
      - *Sexual*
      - *Gender*
      - *Race*
      - *Disability*
      - *Age*

# Where do you go if you have an issue or concern?

- Campus Resources
  - Your Appointing Unit
    - *Best place to start with any question*
  - Graduate College
    - *Academic program*
    - *Tuition and fee waiver policies*
  - Payroll Customer Service Office
    - *Tax or pay questions*
  
- GEO
  - If holding a GEO covered position, the bargaining agreement provides a formal grievance procedure

- Fair Share/Union Dues

- Not required to join the union
- Are required to pay fair share fees when holding a covered position and electing not to join the union
- Fair share and dues are paid via payroll deduction
- Fair share and dues fees determined by the GEO
  - *Fair share is 2% of gross pay*
  - *Dues are 2% of gross pay when holding a covered position; \$3/month when holding a non-covered position*

# Helpful Links

- Academic Human Resources
  - <http://www.ahr.illinois.edu/employees/ler.html>
- Graduate College
  - <http://www.grad.illinois.edu/>
  - Graduate Handbook -  
<http://www.grad.illinois.edu/gradhandbook>
    - *Tuition Waivers*
    - *Campus Assistantship Policies*

# Helpful Links

- Office of the Registrar
  - Fee Assessment Information
    - [http://www.oar.uiuc.edu/future/cost/tuition\\_details.html#fees](http://www.oar.uiuc.edu/future/cost/tuition_details.html#fees)
- Student Insurance Office
  - <http://www.si.uiuc.edu/>
- Delta Dental graduate student plan
  - <http://www.grad.illinois.edu/current/dental.htm>
- EyeMed graduate student plan
  - <http://www.grad.illinois.edu/current/vision.htm>