Graduate students at Iowa State University benefit from pay they receive for performing duties that enhance their educational pursuits and/or support university business and service units. This document provides guidelines concerning:

1. Appointment as a graduate assistant, which is the standard practice for funding graduate students at ISU.
2. Employment on an hourly basis, which is permitted in certain circumstances, described below.

Purpose of Graduate Assistantships **When the duties performed by graduate students are integral to their academic pursuits at the university, they should be appointed as graduate assistants.** An assistantship is a form of financial aid that resembles an apprenticeship. Graduate assistantships ensure that students gain professionally from performing teaching, research, or administrative duties. Assistantship appointments include several forms of support, including health insurance, not provided to students with hourly jobs.  Examples of when a graduate student should be appointed to a graduate assistantship include when the duties involve:

* Teaching or the support of teaching and learning, including tutoring, grading, lab/studio set-up and clean-up, and the development of course materials;
* Research/scholarship that is aligned with their field of study, regardless of whether the research/scholarship will be represented in their dissertation, thesis, or creative component; or
* Administrative support that can be considered professional development related to their academic pursuits as a student.

Purpose of Hourly Work

Although an assistantship appointment often is most appropriate, employing a graduate student in an hourly position is allowed.  For example, hourly jobs that will last less than one month are usually allowed. In addition, hourly employment with some hiring units, such as the Parking Division and ISU Dining, generally is acceptable because the work duties are unlikely to be related to students’ academics. In other cases, students may choose to pursue hourly work to gain experience in activities unrelated to their academic pursuits, or to draw on their experience/skills to supplement their income.

**It is a violation of University policy to hire graduate students as hourly employees to perform duties that should be performed by graduate assistant appointees.**  Section 3.2 of the *Graduate College Handbook* states that “Students who will teach, perform research, or carry out administrative duties as part of their educational program should be appointed as GAs.” As such:

* + **Graduate students should not be offered hourly employment when the duties justify appointment as a graduate assistant.**
  + **Graduate students should not be offered hourly employment as a cost-saving measure or because there are not sufficient funds available to pay for a graduate assistantship appointment.**
  + Casual, freelance-type employment of graduate students (e.g., without specified start and end dates, but rather ‘if/as work is available’) for University business is not permitted.

 Allowable limits

*Total effort* refers to the sum of hours worked as a graduate assistant and hours worked in an hourly job.

* During fall and spring semesters, total hours of effort per week may not exceed 30 (domestic student) or 20 (international student).
* During summer, Thanksgiving Break, and Winter Break (including when Winter Session courses are offered), total hours of effort per week may not exceed 40 for all graduate students, regardless of residency.
  + To reflect Federal policy, the University appoints graduate assistantships in the following FTEs:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Appointment FTE | Corresponding hours of effort (weekly) |
| 0.25 | 10 |
| 0.4 | 16 |
| 0.5 | 20 |
| 0.75 | 30 |

Course enrollment

* Graduate assistants must be registered for at least one credit during any term in which they are appointed.
* If a graduate student holds an hourly job, they must be registered for at least one credit. The exception is hourly summer employment; students may register for at least one credit in the summer and/or the following fall semester.

Tracking Effort

* Graduate assistants are not required by the Graduate College to track/record hours of effort, though individual supervisors of graduate assistants may require this.
* Graduate students holding hourly jobs are required to track and report worked each week, and have those reports approved by their supervisors. *(Note: this process currently happens in Workday.)*

Processes and Responsibilities for Hiring Graduate Students into Hourly Jobs

Graduate assistant appointments are initiated in the department/unit in which the graduate assistant will be supervised. The Graduate College may be consulted for guidance and assistance.

The hiring unit may not initiate hiring until verifying that the student’s major professor or adviser approves of the student holding the hourly job.  When the student is classified as international, the hiring unit also is required to receive preapproval from the International Students and Scholars Office.

The hiring unit and the student should agree, in advance and in writing, on the number of hours and type of work to be done for hourly employment, and on concrete start and end dates for the period of employment.

It is the responsibility of the department/unit to ensure that total hours of effort per week (all hourly jobs and assistantship appointments combined) do not exceed allowable limits described above, and that students in hourly jobs submit time sheets in accordance with policy.

**Students will be provided information about the policies and procedures governing hourly work for graduate students to ensure they are making informed decisions on whether to accept the job.** This information ensures students understand that hourly work does not include tuition waivers, health insurance, and other benefits afforded to graduate students appointed to assistantships. The student will be provided with the contact information of relevant department/unit administrators to answer questions they have about entering into an hourly work agreement.

Hiring units are responsible for ensuring that the way a graduate student is paid (assistantship appointment or hourly job) aligns with policy and these guidelines. The Graduate College may periodically audit hourly positions on campus to ensure alignment with these policies.