

Guidelines for Working with Academic Student Employees (ASE's)

- Graduate student appointments (GSA's -- Research Assistants, Teaching Assistants, and Staff Assistants) and Reader/Grader appointments are employment relationships that are governed by [a union contract and UW policies](#). Students with these types of appointments are hired to perform a specific job and receive wages for work performed. These appointments are not the same as stipends for a fellowship, which are merit based awards with no associated work obligation and no FICA taxes deducted.
- A positive, productive, and respectful work environment is an essential part of the overall experience of our graduate students at the college. The primary employment concerns that college HR and OSS hears about from student employees are issues with workload and lack of clarity on work assignments.
 - Students recognize and feel the power differential between themselves and their supervisors (especially when the supervisor is also the faculty advisor). It is important for supervisors to recognize this; it also means that the onus for open communication and for creating a positive work environment falls on supervisors, not students.
 - Clear and consistent communication is essential to creating a positive work environment. Supervisors should invite communication from students and create regular opportunities for feedback.
 - It is recommended that the supervisor meet with the student employee at minimum at the beginning term of the appointment and then midway through the appointment to review the job description and discuss the appointment workload and adjust as needed.
- A 50% FTE GSA appointment has a work expectation of 220 hours per quarter. Alternate percentage appointments will have directly proportional workload expectations (i.e. 25% FTE appointments work 110 hours per quarter).
 - While a 50% FTE appointment is generally equal to 20 hours per week, workloads can be flexible as long as they do not exceed the total 220 hours in the quarter. Students with a 50% FTE appointment cannot be required to work more than 30 hours in a given week without their advance consent.
 - Departments are not required to track GSA hours. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to assign the workload to the student and it is the student's responsibility to manage their workload. If the student or faculty supervisor anticipates that the student will work in excess of the 220 hours, the college must offer additional paid hours for the excess workload OR relieve the student of the additional work BEFORE the additional work takes place.
 - The GSA bargaining union contract does not dictate or provide a mechanism for tracking hours worked. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to assign the workload to the student and it is the student's responsibility to manage their workload. If the student or faculty supervisor anticipates that the student will work in excess of the 220 hours, the college must offer additional paid hours for the

excess workload OR relieve the student of the additional work BEFORE the additional work takes place. Supervisors are encouraged to provide direction on hours and location of work when applicable to the position, and to communicate with all students on a regular basis regarding their hours, including an assessment of where they are in their hours worked. However, they are not allowed to ask them complete timesheets.

- Reader/Graders are hourly appointments that submit their timesheets on a weekly basis in Workday. They are paid only for actual hours worked. Reader/Graders have their maximum allowable hours per week set by the college's [large course support policy](#). Supervisors are not required to provide the maximum allowable hours in any given week if the workload does not support it. Reader/Graders cannot perform instructional activities such as leading discussion groups/lab sections or lectures of courses. See chart titled [Teaching Assistant versus Reader/Grader Duties](#).
- We cannot ask or allow a student to volunteer to provide work without appropriate compensation. Research or teaching apprenticeships/mentorships are separate from employment relationships and should be done in the context of independent studies or internships, where a learning contract defines learning outcomes, expected activities, feedback, and credit hours. Please work with OSS in advance if you need assistance structuring independent studies or internships.
- It is a requirement of the union contract that graduate students have job descriptions provided to them for each appointment.
 - Job descriptions are due to each student three weeks prior to the start of the quarter. If the appointment is the same work for an entire academic year, this only needs to be provided one time. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to create and provide the job description to the student.
 - Job descriptions must be clear on the work of the position. Of particular note are job descriptions for RAs whose personal scholarship may at times blend with the work they are performing; added clarity is important in these instances. Think carefully about work that is assigned versus work accomplished via the student's initiative for academic benefit. Work assigned by a supervisor counts towards the 220 hours worked each quarter.
 - Student employees of any type do not set their own work assignments, although many have latitude within their assignments to determine how the work will be accomplished.
 - Student work assignments and performance evaluation metrics should be equitable, and student concerns about inequities taken seriously.
 - Beginning in Winter Quarter 2018, and based on student feedback, the college revised its appointment contracts to provide students with information on who to contact in the Dean's Office if they have concerns about their workload or job descriptions. If concerns are received, the Dean's Office will reach out to you and help facilitate a resolution.

- Please do not hesitate to reach out to [Bernadette Dwyer](#) or [Marty Howell](#) with any questions that you may have regarding any of the above.