

Graduate student employee contracts:

Tasks:

- 1) Look into TA and GSR contracts to evaluate the protections provided for graduate student employees and to make recommendations if necessary for basic protections that should be provided.
- 2) Look into the existing TA/GSR marketplace and evaluate possible improvements to the marketplace to promote hiring equity and transparency.

Teaching assistants are represented by the United Automobile Workers (UAW) 2865. All modifications to TA contracts must be negotiated through said union. Inquiry into TA contracts were not explored due to this fact.

Recommendations:

Highlighted findings for graduate student researcher contracts and policy:

- The Office of Graduate Studies: Planned Educational Leave Program (PELP) makes it possible for students to suspend academic work for a time and resume studies with minimal procedural difficulties.
- Academic Personnel Manual
 - Section V: Benefits and Privileges
 - APM 710 Student academic appointees do not accrue sick leave
 - APM 720-4 Official holidays for both academic-year and fiscal-year appointees are those administrative holidays annually in the University Calendar. Periods of academic recess are not regarded as holidays. For both academic-year and fiscal-year appointees periods of academic recess are only recess from meeting formal classes. They are not recess from research, committee and other administrative duties, or other University obligations.
 - APM 730 Students appointed in the GSR title at 50% time or greater for 6 months are eligible for vacation benefits.
- UCD Appendix II-B of the Academic Personnel Manual:
 - List all eligibility requirements for the GSR title. These requirements include criteria for registration status; GPA and student status; standard dates of appointment; percentage of appointment; and quarters of appointment. Each graduate program, however, must adopt its own compensation plan that defines qualifications for placement within the salary steps of the title code.

- UC Davis Graduate Studies Policy: Appointment and Compensation of Graduate Student Researchers.
 - The GSR title is used primarily to fund graduate students who are conducting compensated research, normally as part of the research required for their thesis or dissertations. This policy formalizes the use of GSR title and updates policy regarding graduate program compensation plans.

- Graduate Student Researchers are covered under UC Davis Graduate Studies Policy, *Family and Medical Leave Accommodation for Graduate Students with Funding*. The intention of the policy is to provide a consistent and equitable leave accommodation for medical and familial needs.
 - Students shall not have their financial support reduced or eliminated while on an approved paid leave
 - The accommodations provided in this policy are per situation or incident
 - Any student on approved paid or unpaid leave will continue to receive benefits associated with their appointment/award for the duration of the approved leave under the same conditions that coverage would otherwise have been approved by the University or funding source if the student had not been in leave (tuition and fee remissions, health insurance premium, etc.)
 - Unpaid leave may be granted for periods beyond the terms of leaves at the sole discretion of the Principal Investigator; benefits associated with the appointment/award will continue to be paid by the fund source when a student is on unpaid leave.

Highlighted findings for teaching assistant and graduate student researcher appointments:

- Handshake and the TA/GSR Marketplace
 - The current job search resource, AggieJobs, is being replaced by a new resource called Handshake. Handshake is better suited to graduate student needs, and has features that are more conducive to searching for TA and GSR positions.
 - The Graduate Studies Advisory Committee has made it a priority over the past five years to increase transparency for TA/GSR job postings. While they are working with the Internship & Career Center to post opportunities to Handshake, they have also reiterated the speed and efficiency of the current practice of circulating postings via email among department administrators.

- Job Posting Requirements through Graduate Studies
 - Through several meetings with the Graduate Studies Advisory Committee (GSAC) Co-Chairs and other members, it has been maintained that administrative barriers already make finding graduate students to fill available

TAships in time for the quarter almost untenable. This problem will be exacerbated once UC Path goes live.

- The GSAC strongly urged us not to recommend any further, more stringent posting requirements for job openings. They see the current system as functional and effective. After further investigation, we agreed with this assessment, and are not offering any recommendations for job posting requirements at this time.

- Master's Enrollment Incentive Program
 - During our meetings with GSAC members, we learned that there is a disparity across campus of programs that have become involved in the Master's Enrollment Incentive Program (MEIP) and those that haven't. This disparity is a big reason why there is a mismatch between terminal Master's students who have not secured TA/GSR positions and programs with a need for TAs and (occasionally) GSRs.
 - Students recruited in programs primarily located in STEM disciplines are often told of the availability of unsecured TAships across campus before starting their program. Because these TAships are located primarily in Humanities departments, the students usually lack basic qualifications to fill these positions.
 - While our sub-committee recognizes both the ethical considerations for not enrolling in the MEIP and also the recruitment imperative behind advertising the possibility for securing a TAship as a Master's student, we recommend restrictions on what statements can be made during recruitment, to ensure the precariousness of these job postings are properly disclaimed.

- GSR Compensation Plans
 - While each program has compensation plans and memoranda of understanding on file with Graduate Studies (see Resources below), these compensation plans are non-binding.
 - It is discouraged for departments to pay graduate students below the posted compensation plan for TA/GSR positions, but there is no mechanism in place to prevent them from doing so. In addition, if a graduate student finds a TA/GSR position elsewhere on campus that has a payscale below their department payscale, their department is not obligated to compensate for this shortfall, though some departments make it their internal policy to do so.
 - Our recommendations for improving TA/GSR positions are two-fold:
 - Implement a procedure with Payroll so that TA/GSR filings are refused if compensation falls below the posted compensation plan for the department in question.
 - Institute a policy with Graduate Studies where departments are encouraged to compensate graduate students for a shortfall due to finding work through work study or outside of the department.

Resources/References:

- UC Davis *Graduate Student Resources* website

<https://grad.ucdavis.edu/resources/graduate-student-resources/student-employment/leave-accommodation>

- Academic Personnel Manual
<https://academicaffairs.ucdavis.edu/academic-personnel-manual>
- UC Davis Graduate Studies Policy: Appointment and Compensation of Graduate Student Researchers
<https://grad.ucdavis.edu/resources/faculty-staff-resources/academic-personnel/appointment-guide>
- UC Davis Graduate Studies Policy: Family and Medical Leave Accommodation for Graduate Students with Funding
<https://grad.ucdavis.edu/resources/graduate-student-resources/student-employment/leave-accommodation>
- UC Davis Office of Graduate Studies: Planned Educational Leave Program (PELP).
<https://grad.ucdavis.edu/current-students/forms-information>
- Employment Policies: Eligibility, Benefits (vacation accrual, etc.)
APM Appendix II-B: Appointment of Graduate Students to Academic Positions
<https://academicaffairs.ucdavis.edu/academic-personnel-manual>
- GSR Compensation Plans and Memoranda of Understanding for each program
<https://grad.ucdavis.edu/faculty-staff/academic-personnel/salary-scales/gsr-compensation-plan>