Procedure Number: 254	Effective Date: 11 May 2016
Policy Title: Graduate Assistantships	Revised: 2 May 2017
Approval Date: 11 May 2016	President's Signature: On File

Graduate Assistantships

I. PURPOSE: The purpose of Procedure 254 is to describe the nature of Graduate Assistantships at West Liberty University and to establish processes by which these positions may be established, individual students may apply for them, and by which appointments may be made.

II. DEFINITIONS:

A. A Graduate Assistant is a graduate student appointed as a University employee in a position that provides the student with an apprenticeship experience. Such appointments may include the waiver of graduate tuition, housing waiver, stipend, and/or other financial support for graduate education. West Liberty University recognizes student employment as a Graduate Assistantship only under the definitions, conditions and categories below. Student employment outside these parameters will not be deemed a Graduate Assistantship.

B. There are three categories of Graduate Assistantship:

1. Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA): The duties of the GTA are primarily instructional. These individuals are selected based on past teaching experience or academic promise as effective instructors in their field of study. A GTA may be assigned responsibility for a self-contained class, for a laboratory or discussion class accompanying a faculty-taught lecture class, or for assisting a faculty member with teaching-related tasks such as lecturing, leading discussion groups, serving as an assistant to laboratory classes, advising students, proctoring examinations, preparing class materials, assisting during class, grading tests and papers, and providing general assistance in the instructional process. Graduate students engaged as Assistant Coaches may be considered GTAs. GTAs who teach courses for credit and/or assign final course grades must meet the faculty qualification standards established by WLU Policy.
2. Graduate Research Assistant (GRA): GRAs are selected for excellence in scholarship and promise as researchers. They may be employed by any of the University's academic, research, or administrative offices. They engage in part-time research as a portion of their training and academic program under the direct supervision of graduate faculty members, or support the research initiatives of the institution. The nature of the assistance they provide may vary by discipline and can involve a variety of activities, such as library work, proposal writing, data gathering, and data analysis. While placement of GRAs within their program of study is a priority, some GRAs may be appointed to units outside their academic discipline.
3. Graduate Service Assistant (GSA): The title GSA refers to graduate students who are employed to aid faculty or staff members with functions of the unit in which the appointment is made. Any academic or nonacademic unit may establish service assistantships. The GSA is responsible to a professional member of the unit who supervises and trains the student in the service role. Duties vary depending on the needs of the unit.

III. ELIGIBILITY AND RIGHTS: To be eligible for a Graduate Assistantship, a student must have been accepted into a graduate program at WLU and be registered for at least six (6) credit hours for the term(s) in which they will receive the assistantship. They must also maintain the minimum GPA for the program in which they are registered. Graduate Assistantships will last no more than two (2) calendar

years. Appointment as a Graduate Assistant does not confer any rights to permanent appointment. The length of service of a Graduate Assistant does not alter the temporary nature of the appointment or confer additional rights. Appointments are generally made on a semester-by-semester basis.

IV. BENEFITS:

A. All WLU Graduate Assistantships cover a maximum of (eighteen) 18 credit hours of graduate coursework per academic year regardless of in-state or out-of-state tuition rate.
B. GA students living on campus will also receive a housing waiver.
C. Some positions may also include a stipend. Positions that include a stipend require the completion of additional paperwork in the WLU Human Resources Office.

V. EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION:

A. Full time Graduate Assistants can expect to work no more than 20 hrs/wk in both the fall and spring semesters. Summer work will vary based on position and academic program. The standard starting date for a graduate assistant should be one week before the first day of classes and the standard ending date shall be the last day of final exams. Graduate Assistants are NOT required to work when classes are not in session (ie holidays, between semesters), unless previously arranged with their supervisor. Graduate Assistants may receive compensation at an hourly rate of pay, or as a set stipend.
B. Graduate Assistants will be required to participate in mandatory West Liberty University training as needed and must comply with all WLU policies and procedures.
C. Resignation**:** A graduate assistant choosing to resign or terminate his/her employment must submit a letter of resignation to the Coordinator of Graduate Studies. If the student accepts the offer and then desires to withdraw, the student may submit, in writing, a resignation within two weeks.
D. Termination: Graduate students are expected to represent the University is a positive manner. A graduate assistant may be terminated for the following reasons:
   1. Suspension or dismissal of a graduate student from the University for disciplinary reasons and/or academic misconduct
   2. The student is found responsible for violations of the student code of conduct.
   3. The student's overall GPA drops below the academic program requirement.
   4. Failure to perform work assignments at a satisfactory level
E. The University reserves the right to terminate a graduate assistant if, in the discretion of the Provost, the circumstances of a particular situation warrant such action.

VI. PROCEDURES: The following procedures shall be followed:

A. Establishment of Graduate Assistant positions.
   1. A budget shall be established annually for the award of graduate tuition waivers, housing waivers and stipends.
   2. Any unit may request the establishment of an assistantship by submitting Form A, included with this procedure, to the Coordinator of Graduate Studies. Units requesting a GA position must also include a completed requisition to hire form.
   3. GA positions requested with stipends should also include the stipend in their unit budget request.
   4. The establishment of any GA position must be approved by the unit head, VP for Finance and Administration, and Provost.
   5. Positions must be renewed each academic year.
B. Student Application Process
   1. Applications for Graduate Assistantships must be submitted online through the Human Resource Office.

2. Applications will be considered as they are received.
3. Students wishing to continue as Graduate Assistants must submit a new application each academic year.

C. Award of Assistantships

1. The Coordinator of Graduate Studies will process student applications and match applicants with positions.
2. The office originating the position will conduct interviews with qualified candidate(s) identified by the Coordinator of Graduate Studies. The Unit Head will notify the Coordinator of Graduate Studies whether or not the candidate has been accepted for the position.
3. Notifications of awards will be made by the Coordinator of Graduate Studies as they are determined.
4. Awards are generally for one semester or summer term, but may be renewed.

FORM A: REQUEST TO ESTABLISH A GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP

Submit to: Sara Sweeney, Coordinator of Graduate Studies, Office of the Provost, CUB 100, 208 University Dr., West Liberty, WV 26074 Phone: 304-336-8109 Fax: 304-336-8829 email: gradstudies@westliberty.edu

UNIT REQUESTING POSITION: _____

CONTACT PERSON - NAME: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

TYPE OF ASSISTANTSHIP (circle one): GTA GRA GSA

JOB TITLE/DESCRIPTION OF THE POSITION: _____

_____

_____

_____

SPECIFIC SKILLS / KNOWLEDGE NECESSARY: _____

_____

_____

_____

WHO WILL SUPERVISE THIS POSITION? _____

WILL THERE BE A STIPEND? _____ IF SO, HOW MUCH? _____/_____

APPROVALS

_____ _____

Unit Head Date

_____ _____

Provost Date

_____ _____

CFO Date