UGS for Graduate Assistants

UGS funds are primarily used to support graduate students serving as graduate assistants. Programs may be able to save UGS funds by having advanced students register for fewer credit hours. This should only be done in instances where registering for fewer credits will not impact a student’s degree progress (for example, many students who have completed their coursework and are working on a thesis or dissertation may have the flexibility to register for fewer than 12 graduate credits for a semester). The key to whether a student can register for fewer credits is often the source of their stipend support.

- GA funding is provided by a variety of sources: the Graduate School, A&S, departments, grant funds, and other external sources. The GA allocation provided annually to the departments in A&S is made up of two sources of funds: the Graduate School general funds and the College of Arts and Sciences general funds. In the past, the College has administered the two funds similarly, keeping the requirements for College GA funds the same as the requirements set by the Graduate School. A change in this policy will be made for AY12-13.
  - Graduate assistants whose stipend support is provided by Graduate School funding (also referred to as University Dean funding) must register for 12 graduate credits.
  - (NEW) Graduate assistants whose stipend support is provided by A&S College GA funds may register part-time for one or more graduate credits
    - Approximately 15% of the total GA allocation are A&S college funds, so GA funding from this source is limited.
    - The college funding for GAs is arranged by working with Barb Huels in the A&S Business Office. This will allow us to support more students on UGS funds by having students who can take fewer hours be supported by College GA funds, and thus avoid the 12 credit hour requirement that is associated with stipend funding from the Graduate School.
  - Graduate assistants earning stipends from other funding sources (for example, A&S College adjunct funds, grants, endowments, external internships) may register for less than 12 graduate credit hours as long as the registration is in line with any requirements of their assistantship or fellowship.

- A UGS will be provided to all graduate assistants. The UGS will cover 100% of the eligible tuition and fees for the part time or full time registration.
- Graduate assistants enrolling for part time studies will pay the ITIE fee just as other students receiving the UGS. (In FS12, the part time rate for the ITIE is $18/credit. The ITIE fee is $180/semester for full time graduate registration.) The UGS pays the instructional fee, the General Fee, the Campus Life fee, and the non-resident surcharge, when needed.
For the purpose of this policy, graduate assistant refers to students with 50% FTE, work commitments of approximately 20 hours/week, earning at least $585/biweekly (minimum set by the Graduate School for University Dean funded GAs) or graduate fellows or trainees with stipends (processed through UniverSIS, no work requirement) of similar value. Graduate assistants with lesser stipends and work requirements can be awarded a UGS that is proportional to the stipend award. UGS awards for students working fewer than 20 hours/week must be approved by the A&S Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies.

Students that exceed the “old” 260/209 quarter graduate credit limit, now the 174/140 semester graduate credit limit, will continue to be ineligible university general fund stipends and UGS awards.

UGS for non-graduate assistants

- It is A&S policy to provide UGS to non-graduate assistants only rarely and with special permission.
- In the usual case, only partial UGS may be awarded for students with no assistantship/fellowship support only with prior approval of the A&S Associate Dean. These partial awards will require the student to co-pay a portion of his/her tuition and fees.

Students in a 4+1 program may receive a 25% UGS for one year of graduate study. The award is calculated as 25% of the instructional fee associated with the number of credits for which a student registers. The bachelors’ degree must be officially conferred prior to a UGS award. The student must be formally admitted and enrolled in the master’s degree program. The UGS award is used for the one year of graduate study that leads to the masters. The 4+1 programs are listed on the A&S college website: [http://www.artsci.uc.edu/collegemain/undergrad/4_1_programs.aspx](http://www.artsci.uc.edu/collegemain/undergrad/4_1_programs.aspx).

Information on various requirements for registration as a graduate student

- 10 graduate credit hours are considered full time, 5 graduate credit hours are considered half time by UC.
- Students must register for at least 1 graduate credit each semester to use university resources (space, laboratories, library, health insurance, etc.). If a student has been enrolled during the prior semester(s) and has not graduated, summer enrollment is not required for these privileges.
- To maintain graduate status at the University of Cincinnati, students must register at UC for at least one graduate credit that contributes to degree requirements (as determined by the graduate program) in an academic year. If the student is registered for at least one graduate credit, he or she will maintain graduate student status throughout the entire academic year, fall through summer (see the University Graduate Handbook).
- Students registered for 6 or more hours are automatically enrolled and billed for health insurance. Students registered for 1-5 credit hours must apply for the health insurance, since
they are not automatically enrolled. Students are eligible for student health insurance if they are matriculated in a graduate degree program and registered for at least 1 credit/semester that applies toward the degree.

- Graduate assistants who are otherwise eligible for the Graduate School Health Insurance Benefit (GSHI) are eligible for the $500/semester benefit as long as they are registered for 1 graduate credit in fall and spring semesters.
- International graduate students must register full time until the coursework for their degree program is completed. They can register part time as they complete a dissertation or thesis or other non-coursework degree requirements. A Reduced Course Load (Academic Reasons) must be requested and approved by ISSO prior to enrolling for a part time course load.
- A student, when originally hired at UC, can file forms to request an exemption from paying into OPERS (Ohio’s public employees’ retirement system) because they are a registered student. An exemption from contributions to OPERS is active when registered half-time, 5 credits or more for a graduate student. In semesters when registration is less than half-time, OPERS contributions must be taken from the check. The employee contribution to OPERS is currently 10% of pay. GAs have OPERS contributions taken out of their pay in the summer, since they do not register in summer. A refund of the retirement account can be requested from OPERS upon leaving UC.
- The ability to obtain student loans or defer loan payments is often predicated on a part time or full time enrollment, so occasionally students may need UGS funds simply to maintain lender-defined enrollment requirements. Lenders differ with respect to what they will accept as evidence for full time study. Students should contact their lender to determine the requirements of their lender(s).
- For Doctoral Students: Prior to admission to doctoral candidacy, all doctoral students shall complete a residency requirement by enrolling in 10 graduate credit hours (12 if funded by a UDean Graduate Assistantship) per semester for four out of five consecutive semesters of study (including summer) or three consecutive summer semesters (see the University Graduate Handbook).

Semester conversion and UGS and GA budgets in FY’13

- GAOOSC award is discontinued effective FY’13. The non-resident surcharge is to be processed as UGS.
- In FY’13, the UGS budget will cover expenses for 12U, 12FS, and 13SS. Summer semester 2013, although it starts May 6, 2013, will expense in July 2013, hence be a FY’14 expense.
- Once UC is fully transitioned to semesters, the fiscal year expenses on the UGS allocation will continue to be summer, fall and spring semesters, in that order, with the tuition expenses of future summer semesters being shifted to post in July.
- The GA budget for FY’13 will cover expenses from July 1, 2012, to June 30, 2013. The GA Pay calculator for FY’13 is posted on the A&S Business Office website. Dates for the GA payments and pay checks for the GAs for each semester can be found here.