

The Medical College of Georgia

Administrative Policies and Procedures

Office of Primary Responsibility
Human Resources Division

Subject:
Graduate Assistants, Work Study and Student Assistants

1.0 Purpose:

To provide policy guidelines for the appointment of Graduate Assistants, Federal Work-Study Students and Student Assistants and to specify their form of remuneration. Only Medical College of Georgia students qualify for employment under this policy. Other individuals must be hired as temporary employees, and are subject to Board of Regents and Medical College of Georgia guidelines regarding temporary employment.

2.0 Policy:

Students enrolled at the Medical College of Georgia may be employed by MCG as a student employee subject to institutional need and availability of funding. A student employee is a part-time employee who is currently enrolled at MCG with the primary goal of achieving a degree. In accordance with Board of Regents policy, a student employee is considered a temporary employee and is not eligible for benefits. Student employees are at will employees and may be terminated at any time. Student employees are not eligible for any of the procedural protections associated with regular employment.

The Program Director, Department Chair, Dean, or Administrative Manager will be responsible for determining qualifications, identifying the funding required for positions, advertising vacancies, selecting individuals to fill vacancies and submitting the required employment paperwork to Human Resources by the published payroll processing deadlines. The Human Resources Division will be responsible for payroll processing.

The term of employment for student employees is on a semester basis, which can be continued. Departments should notify the students if their employment is not to be continued beyond a semester. The Office of Student Financial Aid should be notified if the student is funded through work-study and employment is to be discontinued.

2.1 Fringe Benefits—Graduate Assistants and Work Study Students/Student Assistants are temporary employees and are not eligible for institutional fringe benefits. A student employee who drops below a half-time credit load is required by state statute to participate in the Georgia Defined Contribution Plan.

Note: Graduate Research *Trainees* and Postdoctoral *Trainees* who are at MCG for specialized programs, typically of a short duration, will not be placed on the MCG payroll, as an employer/employee relationship does not exist for individuals in these categories. They must be paid by check request ([see Policy 1.2.05](#)). These types of individuals should not be confused with MCG graduate assistants, graduate research assistants, or graduate teaching assistants.

2.2 Educational Records—Educational Records pertaining to graduate research assistants, graduate teaching assistants, and graduate assistants are coordinated by the School of Graduate Studies and are maintained in the Registrar's Office for certification, as needed.

3.0 Definitions

There are three types of student employment. They are as follows:

3.1 Federal Work Study Student Assistants

This is a federally funded program and students must apply for federal financial aid and be awarded work-study aid. Students eligible for this type of employment receive their award and a work-study authorization form through the Office of Student Financial Aid. To qualify as a student employee, the student must be enrolled at least half-time (6 semester hours or more for undergraduates and 5 semester hours or more for graduate students). The student must present the work-study authorization form to the hiring department. The Office of Student Financial Aid is responsible for determining student eligibility

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and award. Under Federal regulations, students who drop below half-time enrollment are not eligible for participation in the Federal Work-Study Program and must be terminated as employees or converted to an Institutional Student position.

Undergraduate work-study students should be paid at a rate equal to the federal minimum wage. The wage rate should compare to entry-level wage rates for comparable positions. Graduate work-study students may be hired as salaried employees. Pay increases should only be made at the beginning of a new academic term. The Office of Student Financial Aid should be consulted before increasing the pay rate of a work-study student. The actual award amount per year awarded the student determines the student's length of eligibility for employment.

Note: Other federal work-study students are student employees who qualify for financial assistance at a *neighboring* institution under the federal, or any other, student work-study program. These work study students are hired by the institution granting the work study aid and may be assigned to MCG through an arrangement with their home institution, but are not MCG student employees, and are not paid through MCG's payroll system.

3.2 Institutional Student Assistants

An Institutional Student Assistant is a general student assistant position which is subject to need and availability of departmental funding. To qualify as a student employee, the student must be enrolled in a minimum of six (6) semester hours.

All institutional student assistants are hourly, non-exempt employees and must be paid not less than the federal minimum wage.

3.3 Graduate Assistants

Graduate student employees can be categorized as follows:

- Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs) are graduate students who perform or assist with assigned research tasks.
- Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) are graduate students who are assigned a class or laboratory section or who have as a primary duty a teaching activity such as demonstrating laboratory experiments.
- Graduate Assistants (GAs) are other graduate students who are hired by a department for general departmental needs.

GRAs, GTAs and GAs must apply for and be awarded a graduate assistantship through the School of Graduate Studies. To be eligible for this type of employment, the graduate student must be admitted to a graduate degree program. A graduate student on assistantship must register for and earn at least nine hours of graduate credit per semester.

Graduate assistants are paid a set stipend according to the terms of their graduate assistantship.