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**Procedure**                      **General Funded Graduate Assistants Process and Allocations**

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Procedure Number: 303.20  
Date Adopted: 3/25/21  
Last Revision: 9/00, 4/30/08, 3/25/21  
Approved by: Graduate Council and Faculty Senate  
Reference: [Retitle and Change Policy Recommendations](#)

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**Graduate Assistant Classifications (General Fund Only):**

- *Research Assistant (RA)*: graduate student provides research support for an academic unit/program (e.g. supporting faculty in research and creative scholarship; supervising students research and creative scholarship projects; conducting independent research and creative scholarship, and disseminating findings; convening a conference, accreditation support; marketing/recruitment needs, or editorial support for departmental materials).
- *Teaching Assistant (TA)*: graduate student assists with the planning and management of a course (e.g., preparing course materials/lectures/examinations, assisting with labs, grading papers, maintenance of class records, leading discussion groups, teaching a course, and/or tutoring students outside formally scheduled classes).

**Allocation of Graduate Assistantships to Units**

1. Rotation: Every five years, the Graduate School Dean establishes total amount of **general funded** money available for graduate assistantships and notifies graduate programs and deans' campus-wide by July 1.<sup>2</sup>
2. Application process: Starting Fall 2021 (for allocations for Fall 2022), graduate program directors/program designee (determined by college), with approval from their deans, would submit proposals to the Graduate School Dean to request: **total number** of graduate assistants. Multiple graduate programs can consolidate on a joint application where appropriate (e.g. with other units or related undergraduate program directors). Joint proposals are welcome and should indicate the decision process for allocations among programs that have applied together.
3. Proposals: Submissions should indicate: 1) how the assistantship(s) will contribute to the success of the graduate program and 2) how the students will be used (e.g., support undergraduate courses that are highly enrolled, designated as upper division writing, or have clinicals, labs or experiential learning; programmatic support; advancement of research and creative scholarship).

*Details:* Electronically submit two-page proposals detailing graduate program needs

and justification for those needs in consultation and **approval** by the dean. The proposal should include:

- a. evidence of graduate program success (e.g. enrollment, student placement post-graduation; graduation rates) over the last five years, and potential for continued success.
  - b. details of support needed for:
    - course(s) that require teaching support (for each course, include average course enrollment over the last 5 years; whether course is a general education writing course or has studio, lab, field, or clinical components; other factors that indicate why a TA is needed);
    - research support for graduate students; and/or
    - program support
4. Decisions on allocations: The Graduate School Dean reviews proposals and determines awards to graduate programs for a five-year period by the end of September of each five-year cycle. There is not a weighting system in this process. The Graduate School Dean examines the unmet need across campus, and sends allocations to colleges upon review of applications. Colleges determine, with respective programs, how best to classify GAs to **meet graduate and undergraduate program needs. Once allocations are made, the proposer(s) has the discretion, with approval by their dean on how to classify GA assignments (see classifications above and footnotes 1 and 2 to best meet needs. This allocation is for five years and there is flexibility within this five-year period for the proposer(s), with their dean, to reclassify within this timeframe.**

### Common Questions

The goal of revised policy 303.20 is to provide classifications for graduate assistants and provide a process. Below are some answers to common questions.

1. Why 5-year cycle?
  - a. Stability; doctoral granting units; recruitment.
2. How are allocations weighted?
  - a. They are not. The Graduate School Deans decides (always has). Programs within colleges determine, with their dean, how to classify assignments to meet needs.
3. Why not have a committee to determine allocations?
  - a. Allocations are under the role of the Graduate School Dean. Graduate Council will review this process on a more consistent basis so 20 years does not lapse like the previous policy.
4. How does this impact other grant or donor funded assistantships? Or, how does this impact other money set aside by colleges for assistantship support?
  - a. It does not, this is for general funded graduate assistantships provide by the Graduate School.

5. Does this impact grant funded positions or the use of “research assistant” for grant funded projects?
  - a. No. This process is ONLY for general funded graduate assistants.
6. Can programs request RAs if not previously allocated? Meaning use Graduate School GA support to fund students to aid program or faculty research? Or is that expected to be covered by external grant money?
  - a. Once allocations are made by the Graduate School Dean, colleges can determine how to classify GAs to best meet demand. See classifications and samples above.
7. How do these criteria differ from the current process?
  - a. UM was not using a set process before or lacks clear data. This establishes a process and data tracking.
8. What happens if a program increases or decreases enrollment over the 5-year period? Can programs readjust their request depending on demand??
  - a. Every five years, a program puts in another request.
9. What’s the process if a new program develops outside of 5-year window?
  - a. Discussion with Graduate School Dean.
10. Are colleges/schools or units assigning the GA?
  - a. The application process is for **graduate programs** to work in consultation with other related programs and their dean to apply. The Graduate School Dean determines the allocations to programs after review of applications.
11. If a graduate program was awarded X GAs for a 5-year period, could they commit those funds to particular students?
  - a. Yes. Contingent upon budget availability.
12. If a program has always had X number of graduate assistantships, could they receive more or less student support if this policy is adopted.
  - a. Yes.
13. What if we don’t like our allocations?
  - a. Appeal to the Graduate School dean.