CCG/Antioch-Otterbein Graduate Assistant Program Guide

As members of the Coalition of the Common Good, Otterbein University and Antioch University are collaborating to offer Graduate Assistantships to eligible students enrolled in master's-level graduate programs.

A limited number of graduate assistantships is offered by Otterbein academic departments, administrative offices, and athletics. Below is an overview of the graduate assistant program and the procedures for requesting a Graduate Assistant position.

Graduate Assistant Program Overview

What "kinds" of GA positions are available?

Your GA position may be identified as a Teaching Assistantship or Graduate Internship, depending on the responsibilities associated with it. Both offer practical experience applicable to future professions.

- ***Teaching Assistantships*** (TAs) include responsibilities tied to coaching/training/educating undergraduate students under the supervision of a coach or other full-time employee of the Otterbein athletic program.
- ***Graduate Internships*** (GIs) focus on developing or strengthening specific skills and knowledge appropriate for a range of professional positions. In most cases, GIs are supervised by office or program administrators, staff, or faculty. GI positions are open to students in specific graduate programs. Look for this information in HR postings.

What are the GA benefits?

Graduate Assistant benefits include the following, most of which are taxable.

- **Stipend**
  - $6,020 for a 10-month position. $140/week, paid bi-weekly as earned.
  - $7,280 for a 12-month position. $140/week paid bi-weekly as earned.
- **Tuition Remission Benefit*** for classes required by the GA's graduate program**.**
  - Tuition benefits begin no earlier than the month of hire. With renewal the benefit may be received for 6 terms.
  - Tuition benefits cover 15-18 graduate credit hours for one academic year. If the GA appointment continues for a second year, 36 total credit hours may be covered by the tuition benefit. (The tuition benefit will not cover more than 18 credits in year one, or more than 36 total credits in two years.)
  - Graduate assistants are responsible for paying student fees and other related university charges.
  - Graduate assistants' tuition benefit applies to undergraduate classes *only if* the course is required to complete a graduate program.
- **Otterbein Parking Pass** (free).
- ***No-Cost Housing may be available*** to select GAs in athletics and student affairs. (This is a taxable benefit). A Board (meal) plan is *not* included when this housing benefit is offered. Students pay for their own Board plan.

Contact Otterbein Human Resources for details about taxes and GA benefits.

What is the length of a GA assignment?

GA positions are 10- or 12-month assignments that typically start in August.

- 10-month positions are August to May.
- 12-month positions are June to May.

Positions may be renewed for a second year (for six semesters total) if all GA eligibility requirements are met.

Who is eligible for a GA position?

You are eligible for an initial GA position if you

- *Have been admitted to* and *enrolled in* an Otterbein graduate or post-baccalaureate program, an Antioch Nursing (excluding CRNA) or HSS graduate or post-baccalaureate program, or any Antioch *online* graduate program. [See list of Antioch *online* graduate programs below.]
- *Have registered for graduate classes* in the program you are admitted to (or will soon register for classes).
- *Have submitted all application document*s related to the posted position and have completed the Otterbein University Employment Application (available online).

Antioch Online Graduate Programs as of August 1, 2024

MS in Allied Health
MA in Humanities
MA in Nonprofit Management
MA in School Counseling
MA in Social Sciences
Master of Human Services Administration
Master of Business Administration (MBA)

Otterbein University Graduate Programs as of August 1, 2024

MA in Teaching
MA in Education*
MS in Athletic Training**
Graduate Nursing***
*Expected transition to Antioch Spring 2025
**Expected transition to Antioch May 2025
***Expected transition to Antioch Fall 2025. CRNA students are not eligible for GA positions.

Note: Graduate students participating in the Otterbein-Antioch NCAA Consortium are ***not eligible*** for a GA position.

You are eligible to continue your GA position for a second year if

- You have successfully completed at least 15 *graduate* course credits over three consecutive semesters during your first year as a GA. This is typically Fall, Spring, and Summer terms.
- You remain in good standing—that is, you maintain at least a 3.0 GPA (Otterbein), **or** you maintain Graduate Minimum Completion Rates (Antioch).
- You have no registration holds.

Revised August 2024

- You have made satisfactory progress in your GA position.

GA performance evaluations are completed by supervisors at the end of each term.

Note: Six credit hours a semester is the minimum for full-time graduate student status.
GAs are *required* to successfully complete a minimum of 15 graduate course credits each calendar year to maintain their GA position (over 12 months, three consecutive semesters).
GAs are *encouraged* to complete 18 graduate course credits each calendar year (over 12 months, three consecutive semesters).
Graduate assistants' tuition benefit applies to undergraduate classes *only i*f the course is required to complete a graduate program.

Your will lose eligibility during an academic calendar year if

- Your GPA falls below 3.0/You are on academic probation (Otterbein), **or** you do not maintain Graduate Minimum Completion Rates/are on Academic warning (Antioch).
- You do not enroll in classes, or you drop/withdraw from all your classes.
- You fail to meet the responsibilities associated with the GA position you hold.

Losing eligibility *means you are no longer a GA and* will no longer receive a tuition benefit, a housing benefit (if applicable), or a stipend.

- The supervisor of a GA who is on academic probation (Otterbein) OR academic warning (Antioch) must submit an end PAF.
- The supervisor will need to submit another PAF to rehire for the GA position.
- If/when a former GA returns to good academic standing, they can reapply for a GA position.
- Any student fees paid or Board plan purchased is subject to Otterbein's refund policy and schedule.

What are GA responsibilities?

Each GA position has its own position description, which graduate students should review and understand prior to accepting the role.

- **Time commitment:** Graduate assistants are students first, so the GA position is targeted for 20 hours a week on average. Graduate assistants cannot hold another paid position on campus at Otterbein or Antioch.
- **Excused absences:** GAs working in the Athletic Department may receive excused absences to complete some graduate assistant work duties, which include competition events but not necessarily all practices.
- **GA financial responsibilities:** GAs must assume financial responsibility for books, supplies, lab fees, overload fees, library and parking fines, student teaching fees, and any other fees.
    - The tuition benefit is subject to IRC Section 127; up to $5,250 can be excluded from taxes annually.

What are obligations of GAs who resign or are dismissed?

GAs may be responsible for tuition for the term if they resign or are dismissed while a term is in session. The stipend and all tuition benefits will cease upon resignation or dismissal.

- **If a GA resigns or is dismissed while a term is in session but wishes to continue with their coursework**, the student will be billed prorated tuition based on the resignation date. The stipend will discontinue upon resignation or termination, and any final payment of the stipend will be prorated based on the resignation or dismissal date.
- **If a GA resigns and withdraws from the University,** the GA will not be billed for any tuition (and will not receive a refund for any fees paid).

What are the responsibilities of GA supervisors?

The GA's direct supervisor is responsible for assuring that the GA meets all GA requirements related to job performance. University Registrars will be relied upon to determine if GAs meet required academic standards and academic progress toward a degree.

Prior to hiring

- Share and discuss the GA position description with the student being considered for the GA position.
- Ensure that the student is accepted to a graduate program and registered for classes/set to register for classes.
    - Supervisors can contact HR to confirm this. Students will be asked to submit their acceptance letter to HR as proof of acceptance. Anyone who is provisionally accepted must be fully accepted prior to hire.)

At the time of hire

- Share or request that the relevant graduate program's academic policy document be shared with the GA.
- Share this Graduate Assistant Program Overview with the GA.
- Clarify hours, expectations for communication, and other details needed to start the position.

Ongoing

- Guide, mentor, supervise GA as required by the position.
- Report GA's progress at the end of fall, spring, and summer terms by completing the Graduate Assistant Progress Review form. This form serves as a tool and a reminder for all GA supervisors to discuss Graduate School progress with graduate assistants, including academic progress. This form can be accessed on the Graduate Assistant Opportunities webpage. Submit the GA Progress Report Form to Otterbein's Associate Provost for Graduate Studies/Antioch's Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs for Coalition Initiatives.
- *If the GA becomes ineligible,* submit an end PAF to HR.

Graduate Assistant Program Procedures

Hiring a New Graduate Assistant (TA or GI)

These guidelines apply to Graduate Assistantships requested or established between June 2024 and June 2027. Any updates to this process will be shared each summer or immediately if necessary.

Note: Creating a new GA position requires approval of the Otterbein Cabinet.

Revised August 2024

After initial consultations including the department head or chair

1. The department completes a Position Requisition Form (PRF) and submits a position description clarifying the GA role, graduate-level learning outcomes, and expectations. PRF and GA Position description forms may be found on Ozone under Departments/Human Resources/Supervisor Information/Supervisor Information.

2. The department forwards the PRF to Otterbein Human Resources (HR) to collect electronic signatures.
   - **Required signatures:** Department Chair/Head, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs (if the GA position is in Academic Affairs), the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies, divisional Vice President, HRIS/FIS Operations Director, and the University Budget & Resource Admin.

3. After receiving all signatures, HR (a) posts open GA positions on the Otterbein University website, Handshake, and other websites suggested by the hiring manager, and (b) sets up Hiring Committee in Neoed OHC to view applications.

Selecting & Hiring New Graduate Assistants

1. Before conducting interviews, the department must confirm that the candidate
   - Has been *admitted to* and *enrolled in* an Otterbein graduate or post-baccalaureate program, an Antioch Nursing or HSS graduate or post-baccalaureate program, or any Antioch *online* graduate program.
   - Has registered for classes (or will soon register for classes).
   - Has submitted all application documents related to the posted position and has completed the Otterbein University Employment Application (available online or through the Office of Human Resources).

2. The department interviews candidates in alignment with Otterbein staff hiring guidelines.

3. The department notifies the recommended candidate that (a) they are the selected candidate, and (b) the offer is contingent on the successful completion of the background check and completion of all required HR forms as well as confirmation that the student has been admitted to a qualifying graduate program. (See #1 above.)

4. The department informs HR of its recommended candidate, the offer details, and the candidate's contact information.

5. After the candidate verbally accepts the position, HR
   - Removes the posting from the websites.
   - Prepares and sends the appointment letter to the candidate.
   - Provides the candidate instructions for initiating and completing the background check.
   - Provides the candidate with the Tuition Benefit Request form to be completed and returned to HR.

Any information about housing will be conveyed to TAs by their supervisor.

6. The Department provides the new GA with a copy of the Graduate Assistant Program Overview document and reviews the academic standards required to maintain a GA position. The Program Overview may be accessed at https://www.otterbein.edu/gradschool/graduate-student-resources/.

7. The Department Chair completes the Personnel Action Form (PAF) for the candidate and forwards it to HR to collect electronic signatures.
    - **Required signatures:** Department Chair/Head, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs (if the GA position is in Academic Affairs), the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies, divisional Vice President, HRIS/FIS Operations Director, and the University Budget & Resource Admin.
    - Failure to obtain the necessary signatures at least five business days in advance may delay the start date.
        - **PAF start and end dates:** Otterbein approves all GA positions on a rolling basis, so start dates vary. Start dates must align with a bi-weekly pay schedule. Contact HR for the specific start date. Otherwise, the stipend amount will be prorated. The end date for all GA positions aligns with the bi-weekly pay schedule for the end of May of the current academic year. This end date applies even for GAs who will continue for a second year of service.
    - For a second year of service, a new PAF must be completed and approved at least 30 days before the start date for the second year.
    - If a GA continues to work without a break, the department must submit a new PAF, indicating a new start date and end of May as the second year's end date.

8. After the successful completion of the background check, HR notifies the candidate and provides remaining HR paperwork electronically via Neoed.

9. The candidate completes HR forms in Neoed. (The candidate must complete Form I-9 and show acceptable identification documents in person to HR unless this form is already on file with HR.)
    - The first day of work is either the date Form I-9 is completed or the start date identified in the appointment letter, whichever date is later.

10. Human Resources (a) sends the approved PAF and appointment letter to Otterbein's Associate Provost for Graduate Studies and (b) notifies the Financial Aid Office about the new GA.

11. The Financial Aid Office awards the appropriate tuition benefit.

12. HR informs the candidate and supervision that the hire is official.* At this point, the responsibilities identified on p. 2 and 3 apply.

13. HR includes all GA names on a benefit roster shared with Financial Aid and Otterbein's Graduate School each term and when there is a change in the GA roster.

Note:

- *The hiring process is not complete, **and the GA cannot begin working** as a GA until the background check clears and all HR paperwork is completed. This includes submitting the I-9 form to HR.
- Graduate Directors may contact HR for information about current graduate assistants.
- Unfilled Graduate Assistant positions are posted on the HR website.

Terminating Graduate Assistants

If a Graduate Assistant is leaving the position or is not returning due to graduation

1. The Department completes an end PAF and forwards it to HR.
   - The PAF end date should be the last day the GA works. If this step is not completed, the GA will continue to receive their stipend and tuition benefit.

2. The Department completes an Off-Boarding Checklist.

3. HR sends a copy of the end PAF to Otterbein's Associate Provost for Graduate Studies.

Impact on Tuition Benefit and Stipend

- **If a GA resigns or is dismissed while a term is in session but wishes to continue their coursework**, the student will be billed prorated tuition based on the resignation date. The stipend will also discontinue upon resignation or termination, and any final payment of the stipend will be prorated based on the resignation or dismissal date.
- **If a GA resigns and withdraws from the University,** the GA will not be billed for any tuition [and will not receive a refund for any fees paid].

Renewing Graduate Assistantships for a Second Year

- After the GA completes their first year, the Department must submit a new PAF. (See step 7 of the "Selecting and Hiring" section above.)
- If the GA continues to work without a break, the Department must still submit a new PAF, indicating a new start date and the end of May as the end date for the second year. (The end date is earlier if the GA will graduate after Fall term.)

Stipend Policies

- Typically, stipends are $6,020 or $7,280 paid on a bi-weekly schedule, depending on the number of months (weeks) identified as one year of service.
- Stipend costs for a GA are assessed to the respective departmental budget for all new GA positions.

Graduate Internships Alignment with Program Outcomes

Survey results—Summer 2024

Position	**NURS**	**MAT & MAE**	**MBA & MANAGEMENT***	**MSAT**	**MSAH**	**IMA****
HR	X		X	-	-	-
Lib Circ	X	X	X	-	-	-
Lib Ref	X	X	X	-	-	-
Maker Sp	X		X	-	-	-
Events			X	-	-	-
Promise H		X	X	-	-	X
Educ	X	X	X	-	-	-

- Management: MA in Nonprofit Management and MA in Human Services Administration
- Individualized Master in Humanities and Individualized Master In Social Science