

University of Michigan-Flint

Graduate Student Research Assistantship (GSRA) Program

The Graduate Student Research Assistantship (GSRA) program at the University of Michigan-Flint is a vehicle to provide financial support for the academically-related research activities of active UM-Flint graduate students. A GSRA is an appointment which may be provided to a student in good standing in a UM-Flint graduate degree program who assists UM-Flint faculty performing research that is relevant to his or her academic goals or who performs personal research (including thesis preparation). Appointments to the GSRA program at UM-Flint are made for one or two semesters/terms and are contingent upon the recommendation of the faculty member of the sponsoring in an academic department and the approval of the Dean of Graduate Programs.

UM-Flint GSRA Minimum Eligibility Criteria

1. GSRA's must be admitted to a graduate program with standard or conditional admission. For students with conditional admission, preference will be given to students whose conditions of admission are fulfilled before the appointment start date. A student admitted on probation is not eligible for an appointment until 12 graduate credit hours have been completed and a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better has been achieved unless no other qualified student applies and the graduate program director of the student's program of study approves of the appointment.
2. GSRA's must be enrolled in at least six (6) credit hours of graduate-level courses in each semester of appointment if appointed for Fall and/or Winter semesters, or, with the written approval of the student's faculty advisor, not less than five (5) credit hours consisting of not less than two (2) courses relevant to the student's degree program. GSRA's in Spring and/or Summer terms have no specific enrollment requirement. *Exception: If the student is enrolled in the semester in which the degree will be granted, the student must enroll for at least the number of credits required to complete the degree, or if no more credits are needed, at least meet the university minimum registration requirement of one credit (i.e., If the person is at the thesis stage but doesn't need to register for the thesis course, he/she would have to enroll in at least 1 credit to get an assistantship).*
3. GSRA's must be in good standing as a student in a graduate degree program and maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.0 (B) in each semester of the appointment.
4. GSRA's must be performing research that is related to their degree program. If the research is not performed specifically for their degree program or for a faculty member in their program's academic department, the GSRA must consult with the Dean of Graduate Programs to ensure that the research will contribute to the student's academic experience at UM-Flint.
5. Lifelong Learning graduate students and graduate guest students are not eligible for GSRA positions.

Appointments and Responsibilities

GSRA appointments will typically be made for periods coinciding with academic terms. Appointments may be structured to begin or end during the course of a term, as the result of unanticipated needs or variations in external grant or contract support. It should be noted, though, that appointments of less than a full term are not accompanied by some of the benefits described in this document. In all cases, the appointment period should closely coincide with the period of personal research or services rendered.

Once a commitment has been made to provide a given level of funding for a specific period to a student, this support would not normally be reduced during a period of appointment nor would an appointment normally be terminated prior to the originally processed end date unless the appointee fails to meet the stated program enrollment requirements at the University of Michigan-Flint.

If it is determined that the appointee is not making satisfactory progress towards a degree, or when appointment performance is unsatisfactory (including cases involving misconduct) the appointment duties may be reduced and the appointment fraction and stipend may be reduced correspondingly, or the appointment may be terminated. Prior to initiating a termination, the matter should be discussed with the GSRA in an effort to correct the problem. Where efforts at correction are inappropriate or prove to be unproductive, the proposed termination of appointment and support should be reviewed and approved in advance by the department chairperson or an equivalent level of authority (in an Institute or Center) prior to proceeding. In addition, the Employee Relations and Compensation Office should be made aware of the pending action.

It is the responsibility of the GSRA to understand weekly workload expectations during the entire period of their appointments; including work assigned and the time frame within which the work must be completed, essential duties and responsibilities, and work conditions. GSRA's are expected to be available during the entire term of the appointment unless prior arrangements have been made with the supervising faculty member and approved by the Office of Graduate Programs.

Benefits

Benefits of a GSRA position at UM-Flint include the experiential learning opportunities provided by performing research for an academic unit in the student's area of interest. Close contact with faculty and other graduate students, an employment experience in an academic setting, and the opportunity to devote one's energies to academic work are some of the other intangible benefits of this program.

Stipend

The minimum amount for stipends associated with GSRA appointments is announced annually in a late-summer memorandum from the Office of Academic Human Resources to Deans, Directors, and Department Heads. The Flint Campus minimum stipends are different, based on budget and salary programs, from the published Ann Arbor rates and approved through Academic HR each summer. GSRA's are paid monthly. Most graduate assistants qualify for additional financial assistance in the form of scholarships, grants, and student loans. The Office

of Financial Aid should be consulted for further details at 810-762-3444 or on their website at www.umflint.edu/finaid.

Travel Accident Insurance

Graduate Student Research Assistants who travel on University business (other than trips to and from their regular work site) are covered by the University's Travel Accident Insurance plan.

Vacation and Sick Leave

GSRA appointments do not provide for paid vacations or holidays. However, remuneration is not reduced during the term of the appointment for class recess or holidays. Graduate Student Research Assistants are eligible for sick pay not to exceed three (3) weeks in a consecutive twelve (12) month period, beginning on the first day of the initial appointment period when unable to meet appointment obligations because of personal illness or injury. Pay during such periods is subject to approval of the department chairperson, head of the research unit, or the GSRA's supervisor or mentor, as appropriate.

Leaves of Absence Without Salary (F.M.L.A.)

Leaves of Absence from an academic program are academic issues handled locally by each academic unit. In general, due to the limited term nature of GSRA appointments, no leaves of absence are available during the course of the appointment period. However, if an individual has been appointed by the University, in any capacity, for 12 months or more and has worked at least 1250 hours during the 12 months immediately preceding the request for leave, a federally mandated Family Medical Leave may be available. In no case can an FMLA leave extend beyond the previously-processed appointment end date. The University complies fully with the Family Medical Leave Act.

In addition, Periods of absence immediately following the birth or adoption of a young child may be covered under provisions 'Graduate Student Parental Accommodation Policy' of the Rackham Graduate School. (Refer to: <https://rackham.umich.edu/navigating-your-degree/parental-accommodation-policy/>.)

Other Benefits

GSRA's responding to a subpoena may serve on jury duty or as a witness without loss of compensation. Other benefits include instructional staff library privileges and bereavement time.

GSRA's with a 25% or greater appointment fraction are eligible for additional benefits in the form of a tuition waiver and group health, life, and dental insurance. Appointments of 25% or greater are rare on the Flint campus. Consult Academic Human Resources at <http://www.umich.edu/~hrraa/acadhr/grads/gsra/index.html> for details on these benefits.

Procedures

Students seeking a GSRA appointment must check the Office of Graduate Programs Web site at <https://gsra.umflint.edu/> for available positions provided through that office. Those wishing to apply for an available position must complete a UM-Flint Graduate Student Research Assistant Application and submit it to the Office of Graduate Programs by the priority deadline dates. The priority deadline for Fall and Fall/Winter assistantships is June 1; for Winter only (if available) is November 1; for Spring/Summer (if available) is March 1. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Other departments at UM-Flint may also offer GSRA positions; interested students should check with their program of study's department and the appropriate Dean's Office for position availability.

GSRA appointments are related to the academic terms of enrollment with the first day of the appointment on the first of the month classes begin and the last day the month classes end. An I-9 form (Employment Eligibility Verification) must be completed before or within the first three days of employment. A staff member from HR or the hiring department must see the documents used to verify eligibility and identity.

Complaints and Grievance Resolution

A GSRA with questions or concerns about any aspect of his or her appointment should be encouraged to raise the concerns with his or her mentor, supervisor and/or department chairperson. The faculty member chairing the project is the first point of contact for the GSRA and should be contacted first before moving to other resources.

Staff of the Office of Graduate Programs (810-762-3171), University Human Resources (810-762-3150), or Academic HR Services Office (734-763-8938) are available to advise and assist students and departments in the resolution of non-academic issues which may arise relating to the terms and conditions of GSRA appointments.

Additional Information

Students with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations at Disability and Accessibility Support Services (<https://www.umflint.edu/disabilitysupportservices>), 264 UCEN (810-762-3456).

UM-Flint GSRA's are covered under all University of Michigan policies for GSRA's. Details can be found at <http://www.umich.edu/~hrraa/acadhr/grads/gsra/index.html>. Other University of Michigan employment policies also apply. Contact Human Resources for additional information at 810-762-3150.