

GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP INFORMATION

2018-2019

INTRODUCTION

The Graduate School of Engineering awards Stipended Graduate Assistantships (SGAs) to students with strong academic backgrounds. SGAs include Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs), Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs), Dean's Fellowships, Distinguished Dean's Fellowships, and Chair's Fellowships.

GRAs are awarded to students who demonstrate an interest and proficiency in research. These appointments are typically funded by research grants made to faculty members by industry or governmental agencies. The duration of any GRA appointment is therefore contingent upon funding availability.

GTAs are awarded to students with proficiency and interest in teaching. These positions generally require the performance of teaching-related duties such as grading, conducting recitations and laboratories, and occasionally teaching undergraduate classes. GTAs are required to attend various training sessions and workshops sponsored by the College of Engineering and the University.

Dean's Fellowships, Distinguished Dean's Fellowships, and Chair's Fellowships are awarded to the most outstanding applicants to the College of Engineering PhD programs. The Fellowship consists of a stipend, tuition waiver, and NUSHP health insurance fee waiver.

After the first two semesters, Fellows transition to research grant funding as specified in their award letter. A Fellow's primary responsibility is research. As part of their education program they are required to enroll in at least two Teaching Practicums during the course of their doctoral degree. Through the Teaching Practicum, Fellows will have the opportunity to engage in teaching experiences while benefitting from the mentorship of experienced professors. Students who receive these Fellowships are designated Dean's Fellows, Distinguished Dean's Fellows, or Chair's Fellows for the entire duration of their degree.

SGA STIPEND PAYMENT

SGAs who earn stipends are paid twice monthly on/about the 15th and on the last day of each month during the semester(s) of appointment. Should either of these dates fall on a weekend or holiday, Human Resources/Payroll will disburse pay on the last working day prior to the regular pay date.

All SGAs must have a valid checking account and enroll in Direct Deposit via their myNEU account in order to receive pay. SGAs are also required to report their Social Security Number to the Office of Student Employment, Graduate Assistantships & Fellowships located at 271 Huntington Avenue.

TUITION REMISSION

The University sends tuition bills to all students who register for coursework, including students who hold assistantships. These bills will include charges for tuition and fees. Students who hold assistantships may disregard the tuition and health insurance portion of their bill, but must pay all other fees promptly.

Tuition remission information will appear on your student tuition account by the eighth week of each semester. If your tuition charge exceeds the maximum amount of your award, you must pay the balance. You may only use tuition provided as part of an assistantship during the dates of the appointment for

courses in your degree program as approved by your academic adviser and by the Graduate School. You must complete all courses taken during the period of your award. If you leave the University or switch to another program within the University mid-semester, you must pay tuition for that semester.

TAXES

Assistantships do not cover state or federal taxes. U.S. citizens and permanent residents must complete Form W-4 at the Office of Student Employment, Graduate Assistantships & Fellowships. International students should contact the Office of Global Services (OGS) for information regarding taxation.

SGAs stipends are taxed as income. Tuition remission is not subject to taxation.

The Human Resources/Payroll Office deducts the federal and state taxes and credits your account with the balance. SGAs are not subject to FICA (Social Security) tax because of your status as a full-time student. You must remain enrolled as a full-time student throughout the duration of the appointment; failure to maintain full-time status as defined in the University Graduate Catalog may subject you to FICA tax withholding, including back taxes and/or penalties for any semester that you held an assistantship and did not maintain proper full-time status.

HEALTH INSURANCE

SGA awards cover the University Health Insurance fee. Like your tuition, this fee will be paid within the first eight weeks of the semester. If after the eighth week, your health insurance fee has not been paid, please contact the Graduate School of Engineering so that we can make sure the credit is applied to your account.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International students who do not have a Social Security Number will need to complete an SGA Social Security Number Letter Request form, which can be found on the OGS website under Employment Forms. This completed OGS approved letter must be submitted to a local Social Security Office in order to request a Social Security Number. This should be done at the beginning of the semester because it may take a few weeks for the Social Security Office to issue you a Social Security Number once they have received the appropriate paperwork from you. You must then report your Social Security Number to the Office Student Employment, Graduate Assistantships & Fellowships located at 271 Huntington Avenue.

If you entered your degree program without an SGA (and provided evidence of sponsor or personal funds on your Declaration and Certification of Finances in order to obtain an I-20), you will need to report the change in funding source by submitting a Request for SEVIS I-20/ DS-2019 form for current students. This form can be found on the OGS website's forms and guides for current students section. The OGS will issue you a new I-20 based on your new funding source (the SGA).

ORIENTATION PROGRAM FOR NEW TEACHING ASSISTANTS

There will be a University-Wide New PhD Student Orientation prior to the fall semester and this orientation will have an overview for teaching assistants. More in depth teaching and communications workshops for all students (including international students) will be held by CATLR and OGS during the Fall term.

More information regarding this orientation and trainings will be sent to you prior to the start of the Fall semester.

New international or domestic Dean's Fellowship, Distinguished Dean's Fellowship, or Chair's Fellowship recipients may wish to attend the training described above and should discuss their interest with their funding contact.

DEFINITION OF FULL-TIME STATUS

You must register for a full-time course load during each fall and spring semester you hold an assistantship. This is especially important for international students. The Department of Homeland Security regulations dictate that all international students must maintain full-time registration at all times. Failure to do so may constitute a violation of immigration status and be cause for action.

Full-time status for SGAs is defined as follows:

- A minimum of 6 semester hours of course credit per semester.
- Registration in PhD Candidacy Preparation, Research 8986 (MS students) or Research 9986 (PhD students), at academic advisor and GSE discretion.
- Registration in Dissertation (valid only for students already accepted into an academic program and who have reached PhD Candidacy status).
- Registration in Dissertation Continuation or Thesis Continuation (valid only for students already accepted into an academic program and who have already satisfied Dissertation or Thesis registration requirements).

Please note that you must consult your department for any additional registration requirements.

Students who receive any form of federal financial aid should be aware that the U.S. Government sets its own definition of full-time status. In addition, if you apply for financial aid, Student Financial Services will consider your assistantship a resource in determining your eligibility. More information is available on the [Student Financial Services website](#).

REGISTRATION

Stipended Graduate Assistantships are considered "academic engagement" rather than employment, and as such a student receiving an SGA must be registered for a full-time course load by the end of the second week of the spring and fall semesters. Per University regulations, failure to comply may result in loss of benefits. Students register through the [myNortheastern](#) web portal. Any registrations made after the second week of the semester require the approval of the Graduate School.

DROPPING A COURSE

You may add and drop courses without penalty during the first two weeks of a semester. If dropping a course will cause you to fall below the limits that define full-time status (see above), you must have the approval of your program adviser, the Graduate School, and the Office of Global Services (if international).

STUDENTS COMMENCING THEIR PROGRAM DURING THE SUMMER SEMESTER WITH AN SGA

If your first term of enrollment is the summer semester and you hold an SGA, you must register for a minimum of 6 SH (or a full-time equivalent course) in order to be considered full-time. Unless you are considered a full-time student, FICA (social security tax) will be withheld from your paycheck, and you cannot get this tax back.

GPA REQUIREMENT

Students appointed on an SGA must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.000 or higher. Student's whose GPA falls below 3.000 are placed on academic probation and risk the SGA being withdrawn.

HUSKY ID CARDS

The Northeastern Husky Card is the official identification card of Northeastern University. All students at Northeastern must obtain a Husky ID Card from the Husky Card Office located in Speare Commons. Students who hold a Stipended Graduate Assistantship may obtain an SGA sticker from the Graduate School Office, 130 Snell Engineering, to affix to the ID Card. This sticker entitles you to a 10% discount at the University Bookstore and is renewed each year.

SUMMARY

The following list details important tasks to complete as soon after your arrival on campus as possible:

- Complete Form W-4 (available on-line on the Office of Student Employment, Graduate Assistantships & Fellowships web site).
- Report Social Security Number to the Office of Student Employment, Graduate Assistantships & Fellowships (271 Huntington Avenue).
- International students must request and obtain an SGA Social Security Number Letter from the Office of Global Services (OGS) to apply for a social security number.
- International students who obtain an SGA after their entry into the degree program must report the change in funding source to OGS, and be issued a new I-20, as described above.
- Complete a Direct Deposit form with your bank account information for your paycheck to be directly deposited. Complete the form via your myNortheastern portal.
- Obtain a Husky card and SGA decal (if applicable). Many University services such as Snell Library and the Marino Center require a Husky card for access.
- Access the myNortheastern web portal and update your account with your local residential address as soon as it is known. **You cannot use a departmental mailbox as your home address.**
- Register for a full-time course load for each spring and fall semester you hold an assistantship.
- Finalize your registration no later than the end of the second week of the semester.
- When you receive a bill from the University, immediately pay fees and any tuition not covered by your award. Do not wait for your tuition waiver to be processed before paying fees and tuition not covered by your award.

- Attend all applicable orientation activities.
- Immediately contact the Graduate School should any problems arise with your assistantship.