



GRADUATE STUDENT APPOINTEE INFORMATION 2026-2027

Please note the start dates of your graduate assistantship when making housing arrangements.

Service Requirement: The kinds of service required of graduate appointees vary among departments, each of which determines its own range of appropriate responsibilities subject to administrative review. The number of hours of service required per week is stated in the appointment letter and ranges from 20 for a full appointment to 10 for a half appointment. Assigned activities shall be relevant professional experiences. Graduate appointees can expect professional guidance and timely evaluation in the performance of their duties from their department supervisor.

Failure to fulfill any of the conditions listed in the letter of appointment shall result in the termination and/or adjustment of the appointment award, including University payment of salary, tuition award, fees, or other expenses. The University also reserves the right to evaluate the circumstances involved for failure to fulfill the required conditions and to require repayment of all funds.

Notification and Verification of Status: At the time of appointment, graduate appointees shall be informed in writing of the specific conditions of the appointment by the department or unit funding the appointment. This notification shall include the amount of the salary and any tuition award, details of the work assignment, the dates of the appointment, and any other conditions particular to an individual appointment. The appointee's signature on the letter of appointment constitutes agreement to the appointment's terms.

Eligibility Requirement: To be eligible to hold any type of graduate appointment, students must have regular admission status in a graduate degree program, remain in good academic standing, and meet the enrollment requirement for the term of appointment (see below). Appointments that do not meet these requirements will be cancelled by the Graduate College.

Background Checks:

Domestic Graduate Assistants hired in Colleges, Departments and Units that report to Provost & Vice Provost of Academic Affairs in compliance with applicable law, Western Michigan University will conduct a background check of you as an applicant, including a criminal conviction history. Western Michigan University will comply with all applicable laws related to the use of information obtained through the background check. For purposes of background check, you are required to provide your date-of-birth and social security number on a Disclosure and Consent Form. A Summary of Your Rights Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act will be included for your information.

Enrollment Requirement: The minimum enrollment requirement for assistantships, and fellowships each semester is **six** graduate credit hours per semester. In a session, **three** graduate credit hours are required regardless of type of appointment. Individual departments *may* require an enrollment of more than the minimum number of credit hours. Registration is required in the semester(s) and session(s) in which you receive an assistantship.

Under Enrollment: Full time enrollment is required by all appointees (**6 hours/semester; 3 hours/session**), unless granted approval by the Graduate College. Appointees on partial appointments must also be enrolled full-time and pay the difference in tuition that is not covered by the tuition award. Enrollment by graduate appointees that is less than full-time are approved in limited circumstances only. *To qualify for under enrollment status, please fill out the required form and obtain your Graduate Advisor/ Chair signature. Send the required form to the Graduate College for approval before the end of the drop/add period to avoid having a hold and service charge placed on student accounts.* Email the completed form to grad-awards@wmich.edu. Please allow up to two weeks from the drop/add period for processing. The form is located at <https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u1528/2022/permission-under-enroll%2C%202018.pdf>

Enrollment Fee: Students registered for five or more credits in a semester (four or more credits in a session) are assessed, as part of the enrollment fee, student health center and recreation center fees that allow access to health center services and recreation center facilities. Students enrolled for four or fewer credits in a semester (three or fewer credits in a session) are assessed a reduced enrollment fee and may pay an additional fee to enable them to have either health center access or recreation center privileges.

Student Email Account: All WMU students receive a University email account at the time of creation of a Bronco Net ID. The University communicates with students via WMU email. In the case of graduate appointees, important information regarding required training, financial aid and other matters will be sent to students' WMU email accounts. ***Appointees should begin checking their email account for this information on a regular basis even before their appointment begins.***

REQUIRED TRAINING

If you are a new graduate assistant on an appointment for the first time or have accepted a teaching appointment for the first time, you are required to complete the University-wide Graduate Assistant Training located on the Graduate College's website under [Graduate Assistantship \(GA\) Orientation](#). This required training can be completed online and will also be presented as a virtual live session by the Graduate College on either Monday, August 31 from 4-5 p.m. or Tuesday, September 1, from 9-10 a.m.. Teaching Assistants are required to attend GTA Training on Monday, August 31, from 9 a.m. – noon. Research Discovery GAs (RD) must attend training on Tuesday, September 1, from 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. All training is virtual, and invitations will be emailed in July. RAs do not require additional training.

Tax Implications: Detailed records of all your educational expenses (e.g., tuition, fees, books, and related expenses) and check stubs from any payment you receive from the University should be kept for tax purposes. For detailed information, you should review IRS publication 970, "Tax Benefits for Education." If you are an international student your salary may be eligible for exemption from taxation; international tax treaty information specific to WMU is posted at <https://wmich.edu/payroll/payroll/yourpay/international-employees>. You should also review IRS publication 519, "U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens," for further clarification. All IRS publications are available on the IRS website at www.irs.gov/formspubs/ or by phone at (800) 829-1040.

Privileges and benefits:

Tuition Award: Graduate appointees shall, at the discretion of the University, be granted a full or partial tuition award depending on their degree level and type of appointment. Any such tuition to be awarded will be described in the appointment letter. **Students who are granted a tuition award and subsequently withdraw from a class after the refund period and/or resign from the appointment will be required to repay the tuition that was granted as a benefit of the appointment.** Payment of any remaining tuition expenses and fees is the responsibility of the student. Any overpayment or underpayment due to a change in your enrollment will be corrected after the drop/add period through an adjustment to your student account. **Under no circumstances will an appointee receive a cash refund of paid tuition.** If you are the recipient of other tuition support (employer-paid, veteran's benefits, foreign sponsorship, etc.) your University tuition award may be adjusted as a result.

University Payment Plan: Appointees may enroll in the University installment payment plan, please review at <http://gowmu.wmich.edu>. There is a \$35 fee for this service that is charged at the time of enrollment. Once your graduate assistantship award pays to your student account, the \$35 enrollment fee will be credited back to your student account. Delinquent accounts are subject to all University collection procedures, including referral to an external collection agency. Service fees may begin being charged as early as 30 days after the start of each term and a hold placed from future registrations until the student account is paid in full.

Paychecks: The University issues payroll checks on a bi-weekly basis on alternate Tuesdays. Appointee pay schedule can be located at <https://wmich.edu/grad/current-students/appointments>. All employees must enroll in direct deposit or they will receive a Visa® payroll card. **Stipend payments are split up through the semester so that the student receives a regular paycheck every two weeks.*

Paid sick leave: All graduate assistants are eligible for paid sick leave under the Michigan Earned Sick Time Act (MI-ESTA). Paid sick leave accrues at one hour per 30 hours paid. Report sick leave to your department (hiring agent) to enter in to WMU's timekeeping system. Authorized uses of paid sick leave have expanded under MI-ESTA. Visit <https://wmich.edu/hr/policies/sickleave> for a comprehensive list and more information on the policy.

Appointment Validation: Upon verification of appointee status, the appointee will become eligible to receive certain privileges from Parking Services, WMU Bookstore, and the University Libraries. Appointees with academic year (both Fall and Spring) appointments may continue to have access to certain privileges (e.g., library borrowing privileges) during the summer sessions if they pre-enroll for the upcoming Fall semester.

Parking: Graduate appointees are exempt from paying the \$300 vehicle registration fee but must register their vehicle with Parking Services at <https://wmich.edu/parking/request-permit>. Your permit will be valid only on the semester(s) you are on appointment.

Bookstore: In the term(s) they hold an appointment, graduate appointees shall receive a 10% discount at the WMU Bookstore in the Bernhard Center on books and supplies (excluding class rings and sale items) purchased for personal use. To receive this discount, appointees must identify their status as graduate appointees at the service desk before purchases are made.

Library: Appointees will receive certain privileges at the University Libraries when they identify their status as graduate appointees before checkout. The borrowing period for graduate appointees is one semester. Appointees may borrow up to 50 items and are exempt from ordinary overdue fines. The exemption does not include fines for overdue recalled items, or replacement and processing charges for lost items. Details are available at the library circulation desk.

Facilities: Graduate appointees will be accorded the use of university facilities (e.g., offices, research facilities, etc.) authorized by the director of the facilities on the same basis as faculty. This does not include the West Hills Athletic Club.