



**WAYNE STATE**  
**College of Fine, Performing**  
**and Communication Arts**

**Department of Communication**

**GRADUATE ASSISTANT WORK RULES AND POLICIES**

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## **WORK RULES FOR DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION GRADUATE ASSISTANTS**

The Department of Communication offers competitively awarded Graduate Assistantship (GA) funding to graduate students enrolled in the Ph.D. and M.A. programs. The assistantship typically is a 9-month/academic year Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA) or a 12-month/calendar year Graduate Student Assistantship (GSA), and infrequently a 9- or 12-month Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA). Occasionally, GA appointments may also be made for one academic semester only.

All GA positions carry a monthly stipend (semester, 9-month, or 12-month appointment), a tuition scholarship for up to 10 credits per regular (fall and winter) semester, and option of annual subsidized medical, vision and dental insurance. Tuition scholarship may also be available to Graduate Assistants for the spring/summer term dependent on availability of funds with the Graduate School and the Department.

Graduate Assistants should note that *tuition payment is not disbursed for any courses dropped/withdrawn after the semester deadlines and students are liable for this tuition bill.*

Graduate Assistants typically take 3 courses (9-10 credits) and are *required to register for at least 6 credits every regular semester.* However, doctoral students who have completed all required doctoral credits, including all dissertation credits, may register for less than 6 credits.

All GA (GTA, GSA, GRA) positions in the department are covered by the Department Graduate Assistant Work Rules and Policies. These work rules state the responsibilities of all Graduate Assistants in the Department.

All GA positions in the department are covered by the University Graduate Employee Organizing Committee (GEOC) Agreement (information is available at: [wayne.edu/gradschool/funding/assistantships/geoc](http://wayne.edu/gradschool/funding/assistantships/geoc)). According to the GEOC contract, the Department needs to distribute a copy of the departmental work rules to all graduate employees covered by the contract.

Every Graduate Assistant is expected to read the work rules carefully and comply with them. Graduate Assistants should conduct themselves in a manner which is professional, courteous, and conducive to a professional atmosphere in the Department and University at large. Instances of serious misconduct, even when such instances are not explicitly covered in this work rules document, may be cause for discipline.

Questions and clarifications about the work rules should be brought to the attention of the designated immediate work supervisor (see below) or the Director of Graduate Studies. Concerns about the work rules and their implementation should be directed to the Department Chair.

## Overview of Duties and Hiring Criteria

The duties Graduate Assistants perform include teaching undergraduate courses (GTA position), assisting the Basic Course/Public Speaking Director (GSA position), coaching debate or forensics (GTA position), television or film production (GSA position), and assisting faculty members on grant-funded research projects (GRA position).

The immediate supervisors for these positions are as follows:

GTA COM 1010-Oral Communication Basic Speech	Director, Basic Course/Public Speaking
GSA COM 1010-Oral Communication Basic Speech	Director, Basic Course/Public Speaking
GTA COM 3300 – Business & Professional Presentations	Director, COM 3300 courses
GTA all other courses	Area Heads
GTA debate and forensics	Director of Forensics
GTA/Media Arts Equipment Room (MAER) assistant	Media Arts & Studies Area Head
GSA Midtown Television Studio	Director, Midtown Television Studio
GRA	Faculty member in charge of research grant
GRA – Thomas Rumble Fellowship	Faculty Advisor & Graduate School

At the time GA awards are made, no specific types of GTA or GSA duties are typically assigned by the Department. Such assignments are made by the Department later when the teaching, coaching, media production, and other needs of the Department become clearer. GRA duties are assigned by the faculty member whose research grant is funding the student.

The contractual time commitment for a GA position is 20 hours per week *on average* over the time period of a semester. Given the nature of the ebb and flow of the activities for a specific position, the amount of work will vary from week to week over the course of a semester. The average time commitment across a semester should be 20 hours per week.

Except in extraordinary situations that affect the entire university or are pre-approved by the Director of Graduate Studies in consultation with the Department Chair, all GA position awards require students to be available physically on-site at Wayne State University. GTA positions are awarded to students who have demonstrated that they have the potential for effectively teaching communication classes at the university level. GSA positions for assisting the Basic Course/Public Speaking Director are awarded to students who have demonstrated effective teaching of the public speaking course. Coaching assistantships, also treated as GTA, are awarded to students who have experience in and a demonstrated commitment to intercollegiate debate and forensic competition. GSA and GTA positions the Department's Midtown Television Studio and Media Arts Equipment Room (MAER) are awarded to students who have experience in or a demonstrated potential for film, media, and television production. GRA positions are funded by research grants obtained by faculty members and are typically awarded to students recommended by the grant recipients.

## Appointment and Renewal

Most GA awards for an upcoming academic year (August-May) or calendar year (August-August) are made by April 30th, but no later than June 15th, of the preceding year. However, vacancies may

occur throughout the year and doctoral students in the program are given preference for these open positions.

GA positions for doctoral students are renewable for up to two years and master's students for up to a year after the initial year of appointment. The renewal is dependent on good academic standing as indicated by satisfactory progress in the program (e.g., timely completion of coursework), record of academic and scholarly success (e.g., GPA), and satisfactory fulfillment of assistantship responsibilities (e.g., effective teaching).

### **Penalties, Remediation, and Appeal**

When a Graduate Assistant fails to comply with the work rules, a range of possible penalties and/or remediation steps may be imposed depending upon the seriousness and nature of the violation. Possible actions include (but are not limited to) scheduling a formal meeting with the immediate supervisor, Director of Graduate Studies, and/or the Department Chair, completing remediation activities within the Department or outside such as through the Office for Teaching and Learning, developing a behavioral contract between the student and the Department, being given low priority for additional funding opportunities such as summer teaching assignments, being given low priority for GA assignments in future years, or having the current GA contract terminated.

A Graduate Assistant in violation of a work rule will be notified in writing and will typically be given a reasonable length of time to remedy the situation before any disciplinary action beyond the notification is taken. The Graduate Assistant will be informed in writing of the time given to remedy the situation and what means, if any, need to be taken to do so.

If a Graduate Assistant wishes to appeal the imposed penalties and/or remediation steps, the first step should be to discuss it with the immediate supervisor and the graduate advisor. If these meetings do not resolve the appeal, a meeting should be arranged with the Director of Graduate Studies. If this meeting does not resolve the appeal, a meeting with the Department Chair should be requested. If a Graduate Assistant prefers not to meet with any of these people, a meeting with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Research in the College may be requested.

Graduate Assistants in GA positions governed by the GEOC contract should refer to the appropriate articles in the GEOC contract regarding the appeal process. They also have a right to request GEOC union representation at any investigatory or disciplinary meeting.

## WORK RULES PERTAINING TO ALL GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

- You must provide the Department with current contact information and update it as necessary. The faculty advisor, graduate director, and immediate work supervisor of the GA position all must have your most current contact information. You should also ensure that your most current contact information appears in Academica.
- You must use your Wayne State University email address for all work-related email correspondence. The Department will use only your Wayne State email address for its correspondence with you.
- If you miss work for any reason, you are responsible for notifying by email your immediate work supervisor, with a carbon copy (cc) sent to the Department main office ([communication@wayne.edu](mailto:communication@wayne.edu)), and the Department Chair of your absence and of your arrangement to cover the work as early as possible.
- You must attend all orientation and training sessions as required by the Department and the immediate work supervisor.
- You must attend work-related meetings with the immediate work supervisor as required.
- The Department sponsors several events, programs, and colloquia designed to promote discussion and awareness of communication scholarship, practice, and creative works and the Department's strong expectation is that you attend these. If you are unable to do so, you must inform either your graduate faculty advisor or the Director of Graduate Studies with an explanation of your absence.
- Your duties for the semester do not end until all assigned duties are completed. For example, for GTA positions the semester does not end until all assignments are graded, the final exam is given and graded, the final paper is graded, and the final grades submitted. Your duties may extend up until the last day of your GA contract assignment. Some additional tasks such as late grade appeals, finishing incomplete grades might fall outside the contract period.
- You must have regular attendance in the courses you are taking. Barring legitimate reasons, you should not use your GA duties irresponsibly as an excuse for not meeting your coursework obligations. Likewise, you should not use your coursework and other academic responsibilities irresponsibly as an excuse for not meeting your work obligations.
- You must maintain a professional manner with students, colleagues, and staff at all times. You represent our profession, our Department, and the University.
- You must keep all your relationships with students professional and must not cross any relational boundaries, such as dating your students or colleagues over whom you have supervisory responsibilities. You must not indulge in any behaviors that can constitute or be perceived as sexual or other types of harassment.
- You must follow the directions and guidelines provided by your immediate work supervisor.

**Next are work rules that refer to specific GTA or GSA positions in the Department. In addition, your immediate work supervisor will provide work rules for the GTA or GSA position you are occupying. You are expected to adhere to them.**

## WORK RULES FOR GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS

- The department will seek your input on course teaching preferences and course modalities (e.g., in-person or asynchronous). If you need a certain modality of teaching due to medical, parental, or other significant reasons, please communicate those reasons to the department chair and they will be given consideration. However, course scheduling is extremely complicated and includes the needs and interests of many instructors. Thus, the department may not be able to fulfil your requests. See departmental placement policy of GTAs at: [http://comm.wayne.edu/aanewfolder/gta\\_teaching\\_placement\\_and\\_asa\\_guidelines\\_8\\_29\\_20-1-11\\_.pdf](http://comm.wayne.edu/aanewfolder/gta_teaching_placement_and_asa_guidelines_8_29_20-1-11_.pdf)
- If you need support for any modality of teaching, the department provides instructor training and support for COM 1010 during the summer and throughout the academic year. You may be referred to the Office of Teaching and Learning (<https://otl.wayne.edu/resources>) for additional training and support.
- These work rules must be read in conjunction with the Department Policies and Procedures document. If you do not have this document, please obtain it from your immediate supervisor or the Department main office.
- Prepare for, be present, and be on time for teaching your assigned courses.
- Your teaching assignment will involve preparation time, course delivery, assessment (including recording student participation, midterm grades, general education or departmental course assessment, and end-of-term grading), meetings with your immediate work supervisor and/or mentor, and office hours.
- Do not start classes late or routinely end classes early. Fully utilize your entire class period.
- If you must be absent from a class for which you are responsible or must miss your posted office hours, notify by email your immediate work supervisor, with a carbon copy (cc) sent to the Department main office ([communication@wayne.edu](mailto:communication@wayne.edu)), and the Department Chair of your absence and of your arrangement to cover the session as early as possible. Whenever possible, you must arrange to have another instructor step in to cover the class.
- Be aware of and comply with University class and exam schedules. Exam policies are listed at [classschedule.wayne.edu](http://classschedule.wayne.edu).
- Develop your syllabus with care and in compliance with Department and University policies. Follow the standard template provided by the Department to construct your syllabus. Submit a copy of your syllabus to the Department main office no later than the first week of classes.
- Cheating and plagiarism are serious problems that must be handled according to WSU's Student Code of Conduct (see [dos0.wayne.edu/student-conduct-services.html](http://dos0.wayne.edu/student-conduct-services.html) and [dos0.wayne.edu/assets/codeofconduct.pdf](http://dos0.wayne.edu/assets/codeofconduct.pdf)), with special attention to Section 10.1. Suspected cases of cheating and plagiarism must be reported to your immediate work supervisor before taking any action.
- Correct, grade, and return student work promptly. Be consistent and fair in grading and when assigning points for attendance, course assignments, and exams.
- Adhere to the University's grading system as explained in the [Undergraduate Bulletin](#), and if applicable, the [Graduate Bulletin](#). Never lose student grades; you must always use the Canvas Gradebook to keep an easily retrievable back-up. It is best practice also to maintain a current electronic (e.g., Excel file) and a paper back-up as well. Keep accurate, current records of all points earned by students.

- Final grades must be submitted via [Academica](#) within 72 hours after the final exam. If there is any reason that you cannot do this, clearly indicate that on your syllabus, course Canvas, as well as in an email message to each student. You must also notify your immediate work supervisor and the Department Chair if you are not able to submit final grades within the required time period with an explanation for the delay.
- Keep all student emails for at least one year, in case of a grade dispute. If you are graduating in less than a year, please provide electronic and paper copies to your immediate work supervisor.

- Post your office hours and hold them each week. A minimum of 1 office hour for each section/course you teach must be scheduled and held each week; you must also offer times by appointment for students who cannot make it to your posted office hours. You must submit your office hours to the main office, prior to the beginning of classes, using the form provided by the Department. The office hours will be posted in the Department main office. Office hours can be held virtually.

**Note:** *Your immediate work supervisor for the course you are teaching will also provide work rules specific to your teaching position and you are expected to adhere to them.*

## **WORK RULES FOR GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS**

IN

### **DEBATE AND FORENSICS**

- These work rules must be read in conjunction with the Department Policies and Procedures document. If you do not have this document, please obtain it from your immediate supervisor or the Department main office.
- You will be travelling with students on a regular basis and so you will be in close contact over a period of time. You can have fun, but you must always behave professionally. You must keep all your relationships professional and must not cross any relational boundaries that can constitute or be perceived as harassment.
- You must never consume alcoholic drinks with students.
- You must drive carefully and never take any risks.
- You must always travel safely and responsibly.
- When you travel, you must plan and make sure all expenses remain within the allotted budget.
- When you are travelling, you must not forget the primary purpose of your assistantship is about student education and competitive success, not sightseeing or other recreational activities.
- When you are travelling, you must always remember that you are an ambassador of the Wayne State Debate and Forensics program. Treat other judges, coaches, and competitors with respect.

***Note:** Your immediate work supervisor of your debate and forensics coaching assignment will also provide work rules specific to your assistantship position and you are expected to adhere to them.*

**WORK RULES FOR GRADUATE STUDENT ASSISTANTS  
IN THE  
MIDTOWN TELEVISION STUDIO**

- These work rules must be read in conjunction with the Department Policies and Procedures document. If you do not have this document, please obtain it from your immediate supervisor or the Department main office.
- You must prepare for, be present, and be on time for your assigned production-related activities.
- Your assistantship position involves preparation time, independent scheduling of workload, and meetings with your work supervisor.
- If you must be absent from a meeting or a scheduled production activity for which you are responsible, notify your immediate work supervisor of your absence and of your arrangement to cover the session as early as possible.
- You must complete tasks by scheduled deadlines.
- You must manage your time efficiently in order to meet expected deadlines. You must be prompt in executing the designated assignments.
- You must keep accurate and current records of the hours you work.
- You must maintain a professional manner with students, staff, and employees at all times.

**Note:** *Your immediate work supervisor for the media production activities will also provide work rules specific to your assistantship position and you are expected to adhere to them.*

**WORK RULES FOR GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS**  
**IN**  
**Media Arts & Studies and the Media Arts Equipment Room (MAER)**

- These work rules must be read in conjunction with the Department Policies and Procedures document. If you do not have this document, please obtain it from your immediate supervisor or the Department main office.
- You will teach up to an average of 10 hours a week one or more introductory courses in film/digital media production, film studies, screenwriting/storytelling or emerging media, based upon expertise (e.g. COM 1600 labs, 1610, 2010, 2020, 2210, 2310). Please see GTA policies on pages 6-7.
- The other average 10 hours per week will be centered on providing instructional support to production courses based in the Media Arts Equipment Room (MAER). Specific duties may include assignment as teaching assistant to one or more courses where the GTA may be responsible for working with the instructor of record in curriculum development, delivery of instruction, equipment/process demonstrations and assistance in grading.
- GTA is expected to participate in all MAER staff meetings, training sessions and production faculty bootcamps. The student should take COM 7810 Seminar in Communication Education within the first year in the graduate program.
- You must inform your immediate work supervisor of any absences or lateness.
- When you are at MAER, you are expected to work on projects related to MAER. Working on homework or other personal projects is prohibited.
- If you have nothing to do, ask your immediate work supervisor for guidance.

**Note:** *Your immediate work supervisor for the media production activities will also provide work rules specific to your assistantship position and you are expected to adhere to them.*

## Acknowledgement of Graduate Assistant Work Rules and Policies

I have read the Department of Communication Work Rules and Policies document for Graduate Assistants in the Department and familiarized myself with the rules, policies, and procedures governing my Graduate Assistantship.

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Student Name and Access ID (Please Type or Print)

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Signature and Date

Please sign and return this form to the Director of Graduate Studies of the Department of Communication *by September 17th*.

*For office use only:*

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Received by and date