USA GRADUATE STUDENT EMPLOYMENT POLICY

Effective Date: June 10, 2016

1. Purpose:

1.1. The purpose of graduate student employment at the University of South Alabama is to assist with meeting the business needs of the University, to provide University students with financial support in pursuit of their academic goals, and to provide opportunities for academic or administrative and business-related job experience.

1.2. The policies and guidelines contained herein meet or exceed the requirements for compliance with all Federal employment regulations including but not limited to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), and Federal Financial Aid legislation.

1.3. The Graduate Student Employment policy has been established to define the requirements and obligations for graduate students when they are employed at USA. This policy does NOT apply to:

   a) undergraduate student employees;
   b) graduate students employed through the Federal Work-Study program;
   c) graduate students in programs that provide both stipends for full time study AND health insurance;
   d) graduate students holding appointments in which the expectation is for work duties to require 30 and above work hours per week on a regular basis beyond three months in duration. This would include those graduate students appointed to full time (40 hours per week) graduate assistantships.

1.4 All graduate student employees not in the categories of employees defined in section 1.3 are subject to this policy. These polices apply regardless of funding source or pay type. These policies apply to graduate students holding graduate assistantships as well as those graduate students working on an hourly basis.

1.5. Additionally, provisions included herein ensure that USA meets or exceeds the requirements for compliance with the regulations and guidelines of the University’s accreditation bodies which apply to graduate student employment – including the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE), Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), and Southern Regional Education Board (SREB).

2. Qualifying Requirements:

2.1. To be appointed as a graduate student employee, the graduate student must be:

   a) normally enrolled in at least 6.0 hours of on-campus graduate classes for the whole period of the student employment appointment (subject to the minimum registration requirements and dispensations listed in Section 4 below); and
   b) admitted to and actively pursuing a graduate degree program; and
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c) maintaining satisfactory academic progress; and
d) in addition, the graduate student must sign an employment agreement.

2.2. In programs where a student is taking both undergraduate and graduate classes, the individual may NOT be employed as a graduate student employee unless and until they have completed their baccalaureate and have been accepted into a graduate program at USA.

2.3. Due to federal tax considerations, graduate students cannot be employed simultaneously as both a faculty or staff member and a student employee.

2.4. Faculty/staff enrolling in graduate courses cannot be considered graduate student employees.

2.5. Graduate students employees may NOT also be employed in undergraduate student positions.

3. Employment Limits:

3.1. All graduate student employees - domestic and international - are limited to working no more than 20 hours per week (or 0.50 FTE) during Fall and Spring semesters. They may work up to, but no more than, 40 hours per week during Summer terms and academic year break periods.

3.2. Where additional or multiple on-campus assignments are taken, this limit applies to the combined hours or aggregate FTE of all assignments.

4. Minimum Registration Requirements for Graduate Student Employees:

4.1. Generally, all graduate student employees must be full-time graduate students taking the equivalent of a minimum of 6 semester hours.

4.2. Dispensations for registration below the minimum levels stated in 4.1 are permitted when:

   a) it is the student’s graduating semester and all degree requirements have been met. A minimum registration of 1 hour may apply under this exception;
   b) any semester when the graduate student is registering in thesis or dissertation research hours only and in accordance with the department or program policies. The minimum number of research hours must be commensurate with the progress a graduate student is expected to make on the thesis or dissertation as well as reflective of the extent to which University facilities and faculty time are invested;
   c) during summer and interim terms, active students may be employed without any minimum registration requirement. Note however that students holding a graduate assistantship type of employment during a summer term are required to register for a minimum of six credit hours unless granted an exception under parts 4.2 (a) or 4.2 (b) above.
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d) the dispensations listed above apply to domestic students only; international graduate students need to be aware of special restrictions due to their status. Please check with the USA Office of International Admissions and Student Services.

5. Rates of Pay and Benefits:

5.1. Graduate student employees as defined by this policy are considered non-exempt employees.

5.2. In order to qualify for any semester-related benefits the appointment must be made before the last day to register or drop classes as published in the Academic Calendar.

5.3. Graduate student employees are paid in accordance with the federal minimum wage legislation. The student will be paid at least a minimum wage as required under federal guidelines.

6. Calculation of FTE:

6.1. The Full Time Equivalent value for each graduate student employee appointment is calculated by dividing the number of hours per week the appointment represents by the hours for a regular work week of 40 hours. So, a graduate student who works 20 hours per week, the FTE is 20/40 = 0.50.

6.2. As a guide for graduate teaching assistantships, the FTE is based on the number of hours worth of teaching assignment. Teaching one 3-hour class equates to 0.25 FTE; two 3-hour classes or one 6-hour class equates to 0.50 FTE.

6.3 Maintenance of hours worked will be accomplished by graduate student employees’ completion of time sheets each pay period with said time sheet being verified and signed by the graduate student and his/her immediate supervisor. The completed timesheet is required as a condition for receipt of pay.

7. Exceptions to This Policy:

7.1 No exceptions to this policy are allowed for this employee category.