

FAQs for Graduate Assistants at UF Center for Latin American Studies Version 08.16.2021

SCHEDULING & ABSENCES



What is the official GA work calendar?

GAs across the University of Florida work according to the 9-month UF academic work calendar. Official start and end dates are indicated on each GA contract; this year, from 16 August 2021 until 15 May 2022.

Within the 9-month academic year work calendar, UF provides 8 paid holidays. In 2021-22, the Center for Latin American Studies provides an additional 20 paid holidays altogether applied at the start of the contract period, winter break, and the end of the contract period.

All GAs at the Center are hired on a 13.2-hours per week contract. Divided equally into 5 work days per week, the assignment equals 2.64 hours per day. For purposes of holidays, conference leave and sick days, the unit of “one work day” is calculated at 2.64 hours.

How are GA hours calculated in relation to holidays?

For each day of university-wide holiday and each Center-designated holiday, the Center for Latin American Studies subtracts 2.64 hours from the total hours that each GAs is required to work in a given semester.

May I perform GA work on weekends or on UF or Center holidays?

Weekends and days designated by UF or by the Center as paid holidays are not calculated into total work-time expected.

However, with the approval of supervisors, GAs may certainly carry out work on days designated as holidays and on weekends. It is fine to arrange work in those times by mutual agreement, as long as actual work is carried out within the UF GA annual contract period (this year, from 16 August 2021 until 15 May 2022).

Hours worked during week-ends, UF or Center holidays are calculated at regular hourly rates – there is no overtime or holiday pay. GAs should simply report hours worked during holidays on bi-weekly hour-sheets together with work carried out during regular weekdays.

Do I get sick days as a GA? How do I use/record them?

UF allows personal leave with pay for illness, family emergencies and other. Each employee is allowed up to five days available each semester, pro-rated to work hours of contract.

A 13.2-hour work week divided equally into five work days equals 2.64 hours per day. So, for each sick day taken, the Center for Latin American Studies credits the GA 2.64 hours of work.

In order to take leave from programmed work hours or tasks, GAs must contact their GA supervisors and Jessica Baker before taking a personal day. When taking a personal day, the GA must also make a note of the date of personal leave in the comments section of the time sheet so that the responsible person can count the appropriate hours toward the total expected hours of work.

Do I need to make up GA hours if I'm out of the office for a conference?

No – Attending and/or presenting at a conference (or other professional development event approved by the Center) will count toward GA work hours.

For each day a student is at an approved conference or professional event, the Center credits 2.64 hours. A 13.2-hour work week divided equally into five work days equals 2.64 hours per day.

How do I meet my hours if my supervisor doesn't assign enough work for me that week?

Each GA is responsible for maintaining an average of 13.2 hours per week. A GA who has completed all the work assigned by the GA supervisor, and needs to fulfill more hours, must contact Jessica Baker and Clate Korsant for a Center-based assignment that supports another faculty member or Center office.

How many hours can I be required to work each week?

A GA who chooses to work less than 13.2 hours in a given week is required to work more than 13.2 hours in other weeks in order to make up the difference.

The current Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between University of Florida Board of Trustees and Graduate Assistants United and United Faculty of Florida, section 7.1 indicates that Graduate Assistants employed at 0.33 FTE shall not be assigned employment responsibilities *during a semester* that exceed *an average of 13.2 hours per week* (<https://www.ufgau.org/nextcontract.html>).

Under the current arrangement, GAs employed by the Center actually work less than 13.2 hours per week across the 9 month contract due to Center paid holidays.

If I do not fulfill my obligation of 13.2 hours in a given week, what is the procedure to make up hours?

It is the responsibility of each GA to maintain an average of 13.2 hours per week during each semester. After each pay period, the hours you worked during the two-week period are subtracted from the total hours required for the semester, and you will be provided with a count-down of your worked hours. Each GA should reach 0 hours remaining at semester's end.

If a GA cannot work 13.2 hours in a given week, a plan must be made with your supervisor to make up missed hours in advance or following an absence. It is not wise to wait to make-up hours at the end of the semester, when GA commitments often conflict with final papers, exams, and travel.

What happens if I do not fulfill expectations for Graduate Assistant work?

In cases where a GA is unable to maintain an average of 13.2 hours of assigned work completed per week, or to fulfill assigned duties with a positive attitude and respect for instructions, that student will receive a written notification that documents the problem. If a situation does not improve, a disciplinary action may be initiated, leading to termination during a term. Alternatively, a GA who does not meet expectations may not be renewed for the following semester.

FINANCES



What financial coverage does my Graduate Assistantship provide?

A GA is not responsible for paying tuition; the Center pays the GA tuition directly to the university. The GA appointment offers a living stipend, which is paid biweekly, and health insurance. You are responsible for your fees each semester, plus a \$6 bi-weekly (or \$12 per month) fee for Gator Grad Care.

What taxes are withheld from my salary?

Federal taxes are withheld from biweekly checks. In Florida, there is no state personal income tax, so no state taxes are withheld. For more information, please check the University Payroll and Tax Services website: www.fa.ufl.edu/departments/payroll-tax-services

Different students may have different tax rates and procedures, corresponding to differences in their W-4 forms. <http://www.fa.ufl.edu/directives-and-procedures/tax-services/>

When will I receive my first payment of the semester?

US students are usually paid at the first payroll after the academic year begins, *if* they have completed their GatorStart packet that has been emailed to them by HR. If you already have another appointment in PeopleSoft, you will need to let the department and Center know when you will be terminated, or if you will be continuing with two parallel appointments.

International students without a SSN will have to be in the US for 10 days before they can apply for a SSN. After the 10 days are up and the student applies for the SSN, it takes about 2 weeks for the student to receive the SSN. After the student gets the SSN, the department receives a copy of the SSN to go along with their Foreign National Tax paperwork and other documents. Once this form has been generated with your tax information, it's sent to the department for your signature. We input the appointment in Peoplesoft for HR approval, which takes a couple of days. After everything is approved in the system, the stipend will be disbursed to the student on a bi-weekly basis.

International students entering USA with a SSN will need to complete the Foreign National Tax information form along with other documents to determine your tax information. This paperwork gets processed through the Tax Services Office and takes about 1-2 weeks. Once these forms have been generated with your tax information, it's sent to the department for your signature. The department then inputs your appointment in PeopleSoft for HR approval, which takes 3-4 days. After everything is approved in the system, the stipend will be disbursed to the student on a bi-weekly basis.

ADMINISTRATION



What academic requirements do I have to meet to keep my Graduate Assistantship?

GAs must be registered full-time (9 credits fall, 9 credits spring) and maintain above a 3.00 GPA.

May I take on a second job in addition to Graduate Assistant?

Graduate Assistants are committed to complete 9 hours of graduate coursework each semester, maintaining above a 3.0 average, and to fulfill an average of 13.3 hours of GA work throughout each semester. This adds up to a demanding load that requires careful management, while maintaining personal health and vitality. If your situation requires that you to seek additional sources of employment, please consult with Jessica Baker in the decision process.

What roles do Jessica Baker, Jessica Caicedo, Po Echeguren and Clate Korsant fulfill in GA administration? (Whom do I contact about what?)

Jessica Baker is responsible for finding work spaces in the Center for GAs and assigning tasks to GAs who need to meet their hours. She processes Pre-Docs Fellowship (FLAS). She supervises the GA evaluation process, oversees HR matters, approves leaves, and deals with work equity issues in the Center, including fairness of conditions and compensation.

Jessica Caicedo communicates information to new GA hires, ensuring that they complete appropriate hire paperwork. She processes graduate assistantships and non-resident aliens (NRAs) appointments in PeopleSoft, and also processes tuition waivers for GAs and Fellowships.

Po Echeguren records GA's hours worked bi-weekly and disseminates documented hours to student/supervisors.

Clate Korsant should be contacted with questions about UF or Center policies concerning Graduate Assistants, and with any concerns or suggestions about workplace interactions, relationships or environments.

How do performance reviews work, and who sees them?

Performance reviews are surveys sent to all GAs and supervisors at the end of each semester. If a GA has more than one supervisor, the GA will fill out a review for each supervisor and be reviewed by each supervisor. Every GA fills out a self-evaluation and an evaluation of the supervisor. Every supervisor fills out a self-evaluation and an evaluation of the GA. Jessica Baker and Clate Korsant are the only people with access to the full results of these reviews.

Each GA will be given access to his/her supervisor's evaluation of the GA and his/her supervisor's self-evaluation. Each supervisor will be sent the GA's evaluation of his/her role as supervisor, along with the GA's self-evaluation.

The Center also sends an anonymous survey to GAs and supervisors at the end of each semester. The survey is sent by our HR Assistant and responses are only seen by the Center's director.

INSURANCE



Does Gator Grad Care provide coverage outside of the 9-month work calendar?

GAs with a valid appointment in the spring receive health insurance coverage throughout the summer. Please regularly check the health insurance benefits at gatorcare.org, as policy and coverage may change from year to year. <https://benefits.hr.ufl.edu/health/gatorgradcare/> (352) 392-2477