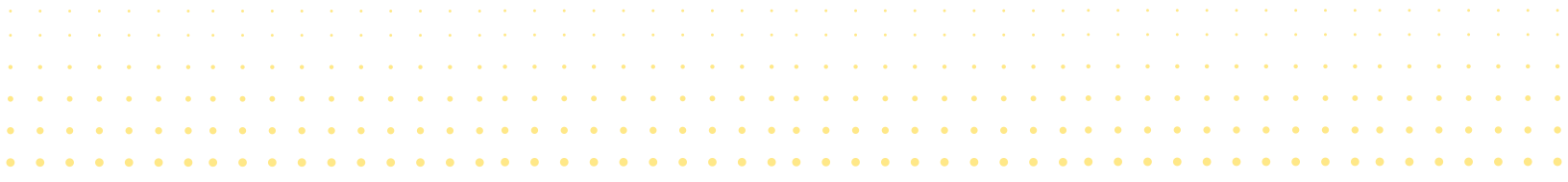




Graduate Assistant Handbook

*Policies, Procedures,
and Resources for GA's*

2025/2026



Introduction

Welcome to the Graduate Assistantship Program at Bowie State University (BSU). This handbook outlines the policies, procedures, and resources for Graduate Assistants (GAs). It is designed to ensure consistency, transparency, and fairness while supporting both academic and professional development.

Section 1. Purpose and Scope

1.1 Purpose

The Graduate Assistantship Program at Bowie State University (BSU) is established to:

- Support graduate education through supervised teaching, research, and assistant experiences that enhance professional development
- Provide financial assistance through tuition remission and stipends to eligible graduate students
- Advance the University's mission by engaging graduate students in activities that promote academic excellence, research innovation, and institutional effectiveness

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to all graduate students appointed as GAs across all academic departments and administrative units. All GAs are subject to University System of Maryland (USM) regulations, BSU institutional policies, and applicable State of Maryland employment laws.

Questions

Any questions regarding this handbook should be addressed to the BSU Graduate School Administration Office or the Office of Human Resources for employment questions.

BSU Graduate School Administration Office

Center for Business and Graduate Studies, Suite 1312

Bowie State University

Bowie MD 20715

Voice: 301-860-3406

Fax: 301-860-3414

E-mail: graduateschool@bowiestate.edu

Office of Human Resources

Robinson Hall, Room 100

Bowie State University

Bowie MD 20715

Phone 301-860-3450

Email: humanresources@bowiestate.edu

Section 2. Definition of a Graduate Assistant

2.1 Graduate Assistant (GA)

A GA is a matriculated, degree-seeking graduate student at BSU who holds a temporary academic appointment requiring up to 20 hours of supervised service per week in exchange for tuition remission and a stipend.

2.2 Classification of Appointments

Graduate Assistantships are categorized as follows:

1. **Teaching Assistant (TA)** – provides instructional support, facilitates classroom activities, or teaches under faculty supervision.
2. **Research Fellow (RF)** – conducts research, assists in grant activities, or supports academic research projects under faculty guidance.
3. **Graduate Assistant (GA)** – provides administrative or programmatic support to academic or administrative offices.

The terms “Graduate Assistant” or “GA” in this policy refer to all categories listed above.

Section 3. Duration and Enrollment Requirements

3.1 Full-Time Registration Requirement

- GAs must be enrolled full-time (minimum of nine (9) graduate credit hours per semester).
- Tuition remission covers up to nine (9) credit hours per semester. Credits beyond nine (9) are the financial responsibility of the student unless approved in writing by the Graduate Dean.

3.2 Award Period

- Assistantships are awarded on a semesterly basis for the fall and spring semesters only.
- Assistantships do not extend automatically into winter or summer sessions.
- The maximum duration of assistantship eligibility is:
 - **Master’s programs:** two (2) academic years (four (4) semesters)
 - **Counseling programs:** three (3) academic years (six (6) semesters)
 - **Doctoral programs:** four (4) academic years (eight (8) semesters)

Section 4. Compensation and Benefits

4.1 Stipend

- GAs are compensated at a fixed stipend rate established by BSU each fiscal year.
- Current rate: **\$15.00 an hour for 20 hours/week**, paid bi-weekly.
- Compensation is treated as salary and subject to applicable state and federal tax withholdings.

4.2 Tuition Remission

- Tuition remission is granted at the in-state rate for up to nine (9) credits per semester.
- Out-of-state students will be billed at the in-state level upon appointment.
- If the assistantship is terminated, tuition charges revert to the student's original residency status.

4.3 Benefits and Leave

- GAs are not eligible for paid vacation or sick leave.
- GAs are not eligible for employee health benefits.
- Retirement and Social Security deductions do not apply.

Section 6. Application, Eligibility, and Appointment Process

6.1 Application

- Interested students must submit the Graduate Assistantship Application via the Graduate School application portal. They must include a CV/resume, personal statement, and references.
- Applicants must have a CGPA of 3.5 and above.
- Applications are reviewed by the Graduate School Administration office.

6.2 Appointment Letters

- Awarded applicants will receive an official appointment letter outlining compensation and duration.
- An appointment letter specifies the assigned department or office and responsibilities of the position.
- The GA must sign and return the appointment letter by the stated deadline.

6.3 Approval and Start of Service

- Appointments require 14–21 business days for processing.
- GAs may not begin work before the signed appointment is accepted and processed.
- Appointments are not retroactive.

6.4 Continuous Eligibility Requirements

To be considered for appointment or reappointment, students must:

1. Be enrolled in a BSU graduate program and have completed one full academic semester in that program
2. Maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 during the appointment period
3. Remain enrolled full-time during the appointment period

4. International students must maintain appropriate visa status permitting on-campus employment.

6.5 Human Resources Requirements

Before beginning the assistantship, GAs must complete and submit:

- I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification
- W-4 Tax Withholding Form
- Direct Deposit Authorization with wet signature
- Proof of Enrollment and GPA
- Background check

Section 7. Responsibilities and Workload

7.1 Time Commitment

- GAs are required to work 20 hours per week, not to exceed 40 hours per bi-weekly payroll period.
- GAs must submit timesheets bi-weekly by the stated deadlines. All timesheets must have a wet signature from the GA's supervisor.

7.2 Restrictions on Employment

- GAs may not engage in additional employment (on- OR off-campus) during an active assistantship.

Section 8. Categories of Duties

8.1 Graduate Teaching Assistants

May perform:

- Instructional assistance
- Grading, proctoring, attendance tracking
- Laboratory supervision or leading classroom discussions
- Supporting faculty with course-related responsibilities

8.2 Graduate Research Assistants

May perform:

- Data collection and management
- Literature reviews and research dissemination
- Laboratory or technical support
- Assistance with grant-funded projects

8.3 Graduate Assistants

May perform:

- Program coordination

- Office management tasks
- Student support services
- Event planning and documentation
- Instructional assistance

Section 9. Supervision and Evaluation

- GAs report to their assigned supervisor or faculty advisor.
- Each unit is responsible for performance evaluation.
- Annual or semesterly evaluations are required and shared with the Graduate School.
- Unsatisfactory performance may lead to non-renewal or termination.

Section 10. Professional Conduct and Compliance

- GAs must adhere to University, USM, and State of Maryland codes of conduct.
- Discrimination, harassment, or violation of student and employee standards is prohibited.
- GAs are expected to maintain professional behavior in all interactions with faculty, staff, students, and University stakeholders.

Section 11. Termination of Appointment

Assistantships may be terminated for the following reasons:

1. Unsatisfactory work performance or misconduct
2. Failure to meet academic requirements
3. Violation of employment restrictions
4. Loss of visa eligibility
5. Financial exigency or discontinuation of the assignment
6. Voluntary resignation (must be submitted in writing)
7. Non-attendance at the monthly GA meetings

GAs will receive written notice of termination from the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Section 12. Grievance and Conflict Resolution

- GAs should seek informal resolutions with supervisors.
- If unresolved, the issue may be escalated to the Department Chair, Graduate Program Coordinator, or Graduate Dean.
- Formal grievance procedures follow BSU and USM policy III–7.11, ensuring due process and protection from retaliation.

Section 13. Professional Development and Governance

- In-person attendance at all monthly GA meetings is mandatory. Accumulating three (3) unexcused absences per semester will result in dismissal from the program. Virtual attendance requires special permission.
- Participation in the Graduate Student Association (GSA) is mandatory.
- Professional development opportunities are provided through workshops organized by the Graduate Research Center, seminars, and faculty mentoring.

Section 14. Policy Enforcement and Amendments

- This policy is governed by the Graduate School and enforced by the Dean of Graduate Studies.
- BSU reserves the right to amend policies in accordance with directives from the Board of Regents and State of Maryland law.
- All updates will be communicated to GAs in a timely manner.

The handbook was originally prepared and released in September 2007 by:

Dean of the Graduate School
Bowie State University
14000 Jericho Park Road Bowie
MD 20715

Graduate Assistantship Handbook Acknowledgment Form

I, _____ (print full name), acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the Bowie State University Graduate Assistantship Handbook.

I agree to comply with all policies, procedures, and requirements outlined in the handbook, including but not limited to:

- ✓ Eligibility and enrollment requirements
- ✓ Tuition remission and compensation policies
- ✓ Workload, duties, and performance expectations
- ✓ Human Resources requirements and documentation
- ✓ Grievance and conflict resolution procedures - Terms of appointment and renewal conditions
- ✓ Termination policies

I understand that failure to adhere to the policies and requirements outlined in this handbook may result in the termination of my graduate assistantship appointment.

I further understand that this handbook does not constitute a contract of employment and that Bowie State University reserves the right to amend policies as necessary.

Graduate Assistant Information

Full Name: _____

Student ID Number: _____

Graduate Program: _____

Department: _____

Appointment Term: _____

Signatures

Graduate Assistant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Graduate School Representative: _____ Date: _____