

DATE: November 17, 2023

TO: COA Heads, Graduate Chairs, Graduate Administrators, Ag Business Office & Employment Center Staff

RE: Hourly Appointments for Graduate Students

FROM: Linda S. Lee, Assistant Dean of Research & Graduation Education

As of October 1, 2023, the Graduate School will no longer require pre-approval of all hourly appointments for Graduate Students and is delegating that authority to the Colleges.

The College's goal in this area is two-fold:

- (1) Reduce administrative burden/delays when a unique situation requires an hourly appointment.
- (2) Ensure the number of robust graduate assistantship appointments available to eligible students continues to grow (e.g., protect against graduate assistantships being reduced to hourly appointments).

**Guidelines:**

To this end, the COA has defined the following guidelines. Each school/hiring supervisor can feel confident offering an hourly appointment if **ANY** of the following criteria are met:

- 1) The position is open to any level, undergraduate or graduate student, and is a general non-research related position.
- 2) The position is for grading only. No classroom instruction, office hours, etc.
- 3) The position averages less than 10 hours per week for the duration of the appointment and is not research related, OR the appointment duration is less than ten weeks and is not research related.

**Exceptions:**

- Fellowships
  - Graduate students on fellowships, including those administered as assistantships, can have their income supplemented with an hourly paid position, provided they are already receiving tuition waivers or fee remits and benefits through the fellowship. This arrangement helps prevent additional charges to the funding allocated for their studies, particularly tuition. Approval from the graduate school is not required.
- Professional master's students
  - Teaching appointments for specific classes that would typically be awarded as a graduate assistantship but where the only qualified applicant is a professional master's student and all other potential applicants from the school are already funded may be offered to the professional master's student as an hourly appointment.
  - Administrative professional appointments (not research or teaching) that would typically be awarded as a graduate assistantship but where the most qualified applicant is a professional master's student may be offered to the professional master's student as an hourly appointment.
  - Research appointments to nonthesis or professional Master's students who are doing research but are not interested in doing a thesis or a special research project. This is not encouraged, as

research support should be aimed at thesis-based students. Research-related appointments should be awarded as research assistantships and should not be hourly. A professional or nonthesis master's student wishing to gain research experience may have two options if allowed by their program: (1) transfer to a traditional master's program and serve as an RA or (2) take an independent study or project-based course for academic credit. These options may not be available in all programs; options should be discussed with the program administrator.

The need for these exceptions must be assessed each hiring cycle, which occurs every semester. If an appointment is hourly for one term, it does not necessarily stay hourly for the future. Any appointment that does not fit these guidelines should be awarded as a graduate assistantship rather than an hourly appointment.

**Minimum Pay Rate:**

If a Purdue graduate student is determined eligible to hold an hourly paid position, they must be paid a minimum hourly wage of \$25, as stipulated in the university's policy outlined in the Graduate Staff Employment Manual. This rate is determined based on the current \$26,000 minimum fiscal year rate set forth in "APPENDIX B: 2023-24 PURDUE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE STAFF APPOINTMENT ANNUAL MINIMUM SALARIES" found within the Graduate Staff Employment Manual, available at:

<https://www.purdue.edu/gradschool/documents/gpo/graduate-student-employment-manual.pdf>

**Compliance:**

The College will monitor the number of hourly appointments held by Purdue graduate students, and if it appears that quarter or half-time assistantships are being reduced to hourly appointments to bypass paying tuition remission and benefits, a policy could be implemented to require pre-approval of all hourly appointments. The reason for this is that by not placing Purdue graduate students in graduate staff positions when appropriate, they would be required to cover the cost of tuition. This poses a financial burden on the student. In general, this has not been a major issue in our college, and I hope that will continue to be the case.

Note: To ensure that we remain compliant with the federal guidelines regarding work authorization, all new student employees must complete the onboarding process and be set up in SuccessFactors before starting work. Additionally, please be aware that some international students are restricted in the number of hours per week they may work.

For additional guidance or questions regarding these guidelines, please send an email to me ([lslee@purdue.edu](mailto:lslee@purdue.edu)) as well as:

- Lynn Grimes, Business Manager & Ag Fund Accountant ([grimesl@purdue.edu](mailto:grimesl@purdue.edu))
- Ag Employment Center ([boffagpayroll@purdue.edu](mailto:boffagpayroll@purdue.edu))