






Graduate School  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

MEMORANDUM

DATE: 25 October 2019

TO: School/College Deans

FROM: John Karl Scholz, Provost   
Laurent Heller, Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration   
William J. Karpus, Dean of the Graduate School 

RE: FY21 Graduate Assistant Stipend Minima and Principles

With the new academic year as well as the fall 2020 graduate student application process well underway, it is time to start planning graduate assistantship (GA) rates for FY21 and this memorandum provides information for your planning. The Graduate School, in consultation with the Offices of the Provost and the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, sets the **MINIMUM** rates for all GA titles.

This message is being sent to you ahead of an announcement to graduate programs and departments to allow your teams to put processes in place with your departments and faculty making the rate setting decisions.

**Programs (with approval from their school/college) are required to determine and submit their FY21 assistantship rates to the Graduate School by December 6, 2019, at [Assistantship Rate Document](#).** The actual graduate assistant stipend dollar amounts (per 50% appointment) should be entered in the worksheet. For example, if you plan to pay teaching assistants (TAs) in your graduate program the minimum stipend, you enter that dollar number. If you plan to supplement the minimum TA stipend with gift funds, enter the total dollar amount for the 50% assistantship appointment. Programs that intend to set stipends at the campus minimum rate will still need to submit information to the form link above.

As you will recall, the rate-setting procedure allows programs to set market stipends for all GA mechanisms (RA, TA, PA, and LSA), which makes it simpler for prospective graduate students to compare offers from UW-Madison and other institutions, thus helping us compete for top students. **We now use adjustments to the dollar amount, rather than to appointment percentage, to set stipends.**

The following principles should be considered as you determine rates for FY21:

- Graduate programs/departments will work with their school/college dean's office to establish rates at or above the campus minima, allowing for flexibility to accommodate different market factors while maintaining the principle that graduate students will not get a stipend cut from the previous year.
- The Graduate School's *Academic Policies and Procedures* describes policy on [maximum levels of appointments](#) and [concurrent appointments](#).

Office of the Dean

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- **Graduate students appointed as a RA must be paid the rate associated with the academic program in which they are enrolled.** If a graduate student is appointed as a RA in a different department, they are paid at the rate associated with their academic program home.
- Departments/programs who have not done so to date must **provide written offers at the time of admission decision of 4- or 5-year funding packages** for applicants who will enroll in fall 2020.
- The FY21 minimum rate for TA appointments shown below reflects a **2.5% increase**; the minimum PA rate is an **11.7% increase**; and the minimum LSA rate is a **2.3% increase** over current fiscal year. For Fund 101-funded TA, PA and LSA students, the Budget Office will provide a permanent supplement in your 2020-21 budget planning allocations to cover the cost of the increase. The RA minimum rate remains the same as last year as we remain at or above the AAU peer median in this category.

The FY21 GA **MINIMUM** funding rates are as follows:

**Teaching assistantship (per 50% appointment)**

Academic: \$20,500

**Lecturer Student Assistant (per 50% appointment)**

Academic: \$22,500

**Project assistantship (per 50% appointment)**

Academic: \$20,500

Annual: \$25,056

**Research assistantship (per 50% appointment)**

Academic: \$20,341

Annual: \$24,816

**PA grader/reader**

Hourly rate: \$21.57

**University Fellowship, Advanced Opportunity Fellowship and Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowship**

Annual: \$28,000

Academic: \$22,909

The Graduate School will review rates reported by departments and programs in all categories and communicate back whether they are acceptable or not by December 19, 2019.

Should you have any questions, please contact Associate Dean Lisa Martin ([lisa.martin@wisc.edu](mailto:lisa.martin@wisc.edu))

cc: Rebecca Blank, Chancellor  
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