

# Georgia Tech Graduate Student Employment Manual

Office of Graduate Education



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# Graduate Student Employment Manual

## Office of Graduate Education

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## 1.0 Overview

Graduate students are an integral part of the Georgia Tech community, both as students and in their role as employees. This manual provides guidance for graduate student employees, their supervisors, and administrative personnel. This manual focuses solely on students who are enrolled or employed on the Atlanta campus. The goals of this manual are to:

- Provide a cohesive and unified summary of federal and state employment laws, USG policies, and existing Georgia Tech policies as they apply to graduate student employment.
- Facilitate the smooth functioning of the graduate student-faculty supervisor relationship.
- Give clear guidelines of what is and is not allowed under current policies.
- Give an overview of relevant governing principles such as Academic Freedom, Freedom of Expression and Association, Ethics, Codes of Conduct, Intellectual Property Rights, among others.

Additional employment guidance given by hiring units is permissible but should not conflict with guidance given in this manual.

## 2.0 Governing Principles and Policies

Governing principles and policies provide the foundation for the rules and practices outlined in this manual. If a particular situation arises that is not explicitly discussed in the sections of this manual, then these governing principles and policies provide a framework for decision making. Below is a brief description of each principle or policy, and several of these topics are discussed in more detail in relevant sections of this manual.

**Freedom of Expression and Association:** These principles ensure that students can freely express their ideas and associate with groups of their choice. For graduate student employees, this means they can engage in academic and extracurricular activities without fear of retribution under the generally applicable additional provisions stated [Section 5.2.1 of the Faculty Handbook](#) here.

**Equal Opportunity, Nondiscrimination, and Anti-Harassment Policy:** This policy promotes a work environment free from discrimination and harassment. Graduate student employees are protected from disparate treatment based on race, age, color, disability, genetic

information, national origin, race, religion, sex, or veteran status. See the [policy statement](#) for details.

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in everyday activities. Graduate student employees with disabilities are entitled to apply for necessary accommodations to perform their job duties effectively. See [Employee Accommodations](#) for details on the ADA and the application process.

**Title IX Sex Discrimination:** Title IX is a federal civil rights law, part of the Education Amendments of 1972, that prohibits sex-based discrimination in education programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance, ensuring equal opportunities for all. Title IX covers sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, interpersonal violence and pregnancy discrimination. Title IX applies to graduate students in both academic and employment environments. See [additional information here](#) on Title IX and other Federal and State Laws for more details. The USG and Georgia Tech also prohibit Sexual Misconduct, a form of sex-based discrimination. See the [USG](#) and [Georgia Tech](#) policy statements for details.

**FERPA and Student Data:** FERPA (the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records, granting students access to their records and controlling their disclosure to third parties without consent. Graduate student employees must handle student data responsibly and maintain confidentiality. See Georgia Tech's [FERPA](#) page for details.

**Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR):** All graduate student employees involved in research must adhere to standards of integrity, honesty, and accountability in their work. See the [RCR](#) website for more details. This policy emphasizes ethical research practices and describes the training requirements for employees funded by [specific sponsors](#).

**Intellectual Property Rights:** These rights protect the creations of the mind, such as inventions and literary works. Graduate student employees must understand their rights and responsibilities regarding intellectual property generated during their employment. See [Intellectual Property Policy](#) for more details.

**Authorship:** Authorship guidelines ensure that individuals who contribute significantly to scholarly work receive appropriate credit. Graduate student employees should be aware of authorship criteria and ethical responsibilities. See [Authorship and Publication](#) information for more details.

**Codes of Conduct:** These codes outline expected behaviors and ethical standards. Graduate student employees must adhere to the University System of Georgia Code of Conduct, Georgia Tech's Student Code of Conduct, and the Employee Code of Ethics to maintain professionalism and integrity.

**University System of Georgia Code of Conduct:** All employees of Georgia Tech, including graduate student employees, are expected to uphold the ethical standards and integrity outlined in [University System of Georgia Personnel Conduct](#). The values and code of conduct include intellectual honesty, respect for others, excellence in performing duties, and responsibly using university resources.

**Student Code of Conduct:** The [Student Code of Conduct](#) is particularly relevant to graduate student employees as it governs their behavior both as students and as members of the university community. Students must adhere to academic integrity, respect for others, and compliance with university policies. This code ensures that they contribute to a safe and supportive learning environment while balancing their academic and employment responsibilities.

**Employee Code of Ethics:** Graduate student employees must also follow the Employee Code of Conduct, which sets standards for professionalism, ethical conduct, and appropriate use of university resources. This code includes managing conflicts of interest, maintaining confidentiality, and using digital devices and social media responsibly. Adhering to these standards helps create a respectful and productive work environment, essential for their roles as employees. Visit Georgia Tech's Code of Ethics [website](#) for more information.

**Cybersecurity:** Cybersecurity is essential to protect information systems from cyber threats. Graduate student employees must follow cybersecurity protocols to safeguard sensitive data and maintain system security. See [Information Security Procedures, Standards, and Forms](#) for additional information.

**Environmental, Health, and Safety:** Good environmental health and safety practices, including compliance, are the responsibility of every faculty member, staff employee, student and visitor at Georgia Tech. The Institute shall make all reasonable efforts for providing a safe, secure and healthy environment for all Georgia Tech community members and visitors. See the [EHS Policy](#) and [OSHA](#) website for more information.

## 3.0 Position Definitions

### 3.1 General Criteria for Student Employment

Degree-seeking students currently enrolled at Georgia Tech, and previously enrolled students taking only a one- or two-semester break from classes, are eligible for student employment at the Institute. In specific instances, a student enrolled at another University System of Georgia (USG) school may be eligible to be employed in a student position at Georgia Tech. The eligibility rules for specific student employee positions depend on the type of position and the student's status as a graduate, undergraduate, Federal Work Study (FWS) student, Resident Assistant (RA), or President's Undergraduate Research Award (PURA) recipient. Student employee positions are considered temporary and non-benefits eligible. Georgia Tech will comply with all federal, state, and local laws regarding the employment of USG students.

### 3.2 Types of Graduate Student Positions

Graduate students are eligible for several types of student positions, including:

1. **Graduate Research Assistant (GRA)**
2. **Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA)**
3. **Graduate Assistant (GA) Monthly**
4. **Graduate Assistant (GA) with Fellowship Monthly**
5. **Graduate Assistant (GA) Hourly**
6. **Student Assistant (SA)**
7. **Active-Duty Military GRA**
8. **Affiliate**

Definitions of these positions follow. For details on eligibility, compensation, and workload see sections 4.0 and 5.0. Additional guidance is contained within the Employment Enrollment Guidance table on the [Student Hiring & Supervision for Faculty & Staff](#) webpage.

#### 3.2.1 Graduate Research Assistant (GRA)

Graduate research assistantships provide research-related work experiences for graduate students that contribute to their education. A GRA position involves tasks such as setting

up equipment, gathering and analyzing data, participating in research team interaction and training, and writing up and presenting results.

### 3.2.2 Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA)

Graduate teaching assistantships provide teaching-related work experiences for graduate students that contribute to their education. A GTA position involves activities such as planning and delivering classes, laboratories, or online educational experiences, grading, evaluating the teaching and learning experience, and any other additional duties assigned by the instructor of a course.

A graduate student may be hired as a GTA to serve as the Instructor of Record for undergraduate courses (see Sections 4.0 and 10.3 for more details).

### 3.2.3 Graduate Assistant (GA) - Monthly

Graduate Assistant (GA - monthly) positions are only offered to graduate students already hired as a Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) or a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA). Graduate Assistants (monthly) usually perform administrative tasks for a department, unit, school, or college during a semester. This position may also include research-related work or instructional support (such as grading). Graduate students in a Graduate Assistant (monthly) position can be hired at 17% or less effort (up to 6.67 hours per week), and the total hours per week combined with their GRA or GTA assignment cannot exceed 20 hours. Graduate Assistants (monthly) are paid monthly (normally on the last business day of the month).

### 3.2.4 Graduate Assistant with Fellowship – Monthly

Georgia Tech graduate students primarily funded by fellowships are eligible for Graduate Assistant with Fellowship - Monthly positions. These positions allow fellowship students to be hired and compensated to supplement a student's fellowship funding.

### 3.2.5 Graduate Assistant (GA) – Hourly

Graduate Assistants – Hourly (GA-Hourly) are positions that are paid on an hourly basis and do not come with a tuition waiver. The GA Hourly positions are appropriate only for the following circumstances.

- Administrative duties: These students can work up to 20 hours per week. International students must check with OIE to determine how much time they can work.
- Small projects involving research or instructional support duties: The allowable cases are:
  - fewer than 10 hours per week for the semester

- short period of time, less than 50% of a semester, spanning a maximum of eight weeks

### 3.2.6 Student Assistant (SA)

The Student Assistant position is used for graduate students doing administrative work and is not appropriate for research or instructional support duties. Previously enrolled Georgia Tech and USG students taking only a one or two semester break from classes or students enrolled for less than a half-time credit load during a semester can be hired in this position. This position is paid hourly and does not come with a tuition waiver. There are two pay codes for this position:

- Student Assistant 03T Pay Group: up to 20 hours per week
- Student Assistant 03C Pay Group: >20 to 40 hours per week

For more information on eligibility, see Section 4.0 and the “Registration, Courseload and Allowable Employment Hours” section of the [Eligibility for Student Employment](#) policy.

### 3.2.7 Active-Duty Military GRA

The Active-Duty Military Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) position is specifically designed for graduate students who are also on active-duty status with the U.S. military. Active-Duty Military GRAs perform part-time research that counts towards their academic program. They are not paid a stipend by Georgia Tech in consideration of their active-duty status.

### 3.2.8 Affiliate Hires

The Affiliate position is used when graduate students cannot be hired in a traditional graduate student position but require system access. This situation typically arises when a graduate student receives a fellowship that pays for tuition and fees and isn’t otherwise hired. Affiliates are not considered employees but are granted access to necessary systems to fulfill their academic and research responsibilities.

## 3.3 GTA and GRA Employment Documentation\*

\*Note: There is an ongoing automation project lead by the Administrative Services Center to fully automate the production of all required employment documentation. Please refer to the Office of Graduate Education website for the most up-to-date guidance. This manual will be updated once the automation project is complete.

Hiring units must give initial employment documentation to all GRAs and GTAs that contains the information listed below. This documentation must be updated anytime there

is a change to the information below. The student must be provided with the updated information within two weeks of the effective date, and this employment documentation must be held centrally for a period of 5 years in accordance with [USG Records Retention Schedules 0472-04-025 – Payroll Record](#). See Section 5.3 of this employment manual for further documentation details if the student stipend differs from the standard rates for that hiring unit. Sample employment letters are posted on the [Student Hiring & Supervision website](#), in the section on GTA/GRA Employment Documentation.

Detailed instructions are listed in the [GTA and GRA Employment Documentation website](#), including the instructions for hiring units to submit the record of the documentation to Graduate Education.

Students should review this employment documentation and compare it to their stipend amounts. Any underpayments or overpayments must be reported immediately to their supervisor. All overpayments will be due back to Georgia Tech.

- *Employment Documentation should contain the following information:* Supervisor
- Hiring manager (if different from supervisor)
- Term of employment (e.g. the semester(s) and/or start and end dates of employment)
- Workload expressed in hours/week
- Stipend expressed in \$/month
- Job duties (generic GTA and GRA duties as described in Sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 are acceptable)
- Tuition waiver details including responsibility for paying applicable differential tuition and all fees
- Full-time registration requirements
- Mandatory student health insurance plan information
- Conditions on maintaining that appointment

## 4.0 Student Eligibility for Employment

### 4.1 Graduate Research Assistants and Graduate Teaching Assistants

1. **Full-Time Enrollment and Registration Requirements:** Only Georgia Tech graduate students registered for full-time coursework (12+ credit hours) are eligible for GRA and GTA positions. See [Hour Loads](#) policy for more information.

- a. **Fall and Spring Semesters:** Students must register for at least twelve (12) hours each semester. Of these, nine (9) hours must be graded/pass/fail, and the remaining three (3) hours can be audit.
  - b. **Summer Semester:** Students must register for at least twelve (12) hours, with six (6) hours being graded/pass/fail and the remaining six (6) hours can be audit.
2. **Instructors of Record:** GTAs hired for teaching an undergraduate course need to be approved as the Instructor of Record. More information on this approval process is on the [Faculty Affairs site](#). To be eligible, the GTA needs to have a master's degree in the discipline or related area of instruction or have at least 18 hours of graduate-level course credit in that field.

## 4.2 Graduate Assistants

Graduate Assistants (GAs) must satisfy [minimum graduate student enrollment requirements](#) to be eligible for a GA position. Students who are registered for a half-time or greater courseload are eligible to be employed for a maximum of 20 hours per week across all Georgia Tech jobs combined. A half-time courseload is considered three (3) credit hours for graduate students.

## 4.3 Student Assistants

Student Assistants at the graduate level must be enrolled for less than a half-time credit load (or only for Co-Op or Internship credit hours). A half-time credit load is defined as three (3) credit hours for graduate students. Student Assistants who are not currently enrolled must be previously enrolled Georgia Tech or USG students taking only a one or two semester break from classes. Student Assistants cannot exceed 40 hours per week across all Georgia Tech jobs combined.

# 5.0 Employment Workload and Compensation

## 5.1 Allowable Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Appointment

Graduate students must be hired for a workload that falls within the following ranges for the following positions.

| Position     | FTE         | Hours per week |
|--------------|-------------|----------------|
| GRA          | 0.33 – 0.5  | 13.3 – 20      |
| GTA          | 0.33 – 0.5  | 13.3 – 20      |
| GA – Monthly | 0.01 – 0.17 | 1 – 6.7        |

|                   |            |        |
|-------------------|------------|--------|
| GA – Hourly       | 0.01 – 0.5 | 1 – 20 |
| Student Assistant | 0.01 – 1.0 | 1 – 40 |

Under the [tuition waiver policy](#), students can also be hired as a “half” (i.e., half of the normal effort of 0.50 FTE) GRA or GTA at an effort of 0.25 with a half tuition waiver. By definition, a half waiver reduces a student’s tuition bill to half the in-state rate regardless of tuition residency classification. This mechanism is only currently allowed for positions funded by state funds unless approved by the Vice Provost for Graduate and Postdoctoral Education.

## 5.2 Relationship to Academic Workload

Graduate student employment is often entangled with work towards the completion of a degree. For example, a GRA may be employed under a sponsored contract to do research that will also be used towards the completion of a dissertation. A student’s total effort will likely exceed their compensated employment (GRA) effort and is accounted for by the sum of their GRA effort as well as their academic workload (e.g. thesis hours) towards the completion of their degree. Only effort directly related to a sponsored project and compensated through the GRA appointment will be documented and charged to the award.

## 5.3 Stipends

For the 2026-2027 academic year, the minimum stipend level for any doctoral graduate research or teaching assistant is set at \$2,291 per month, for any position one-third time or greater. For master's students, the minimum stipend is \$1,184 per month for any position one-third time or greater. See [Minimum Stipend Policy](#) for more details.

Each academic unit must publicly post standard stipend levels on the [Graduate Education site](#). These rates should reflect the unit’s consistent compensation practices for graduate assistants. If a student is appointed at a stipend rate that deviates from the unit’s posted standard, the hiring department must provide a written justification for the difference. Any such justification must be retained by the hiring department for a minimum of five years, in compliance with the University System of Georgia (USG) records retention schedule. See Section 3.3 for documentation and retention procedures.

When graduate assistants are funded by federal or other sponsored projects, the stipend charged must:

- Be reasonable and consistent with institutional compensation practices,

- Reflect the level of effort devoted to the sponsored project, and
- Comply with applicable federal regulations, including 2 CFR 200.430 (compensation for personal services) and **2 CFR 200.405** (allocable costs).

## 5.4 Tuition Waivers for GRA and GTA Positions

Graduate students who are employed as GRAs or GTAs at an FTE of 0.33 or higher at Georgia Tech receive full tuition waivers. These waivers reduce the tuition to \$25 per semester. However, students with full tuition waivers remain responsible for paying any applicable differential tuition (i.e. additional tuition charged for some degree programs) and all mandatory fees. More information on program tuition rates, differential tuition, and tuition charged for GRAs and GTAs is compiled on the [Bursar's Tuition and Fees webpage](#).

All GRA or GTA assignments outside the colleges must be approved by the Vice Provost for Graduate and Postdoctoral Education except for the Center for Teaching and Learning and the Library.

## 5.5 Student Health Insurance Plan, Enrollment, and Subsidies

Students receiving tuition waivers, among other classifications of students, are required by Board of Regents Policy to be enrolled in the USG's Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP). If a student is already covered under a health insurance plan that meets the USG's waiver standards, a student can apply for a waiver of this requirement. See [Georgia Tech's SHIP](#) website for more information.

Graduate students employed as Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs) and Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) qualify for the subsidized Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP). The subsidy reduces the cost of this health insurance plan substantially. The subsidized rates are published by the Bursar's Office and are reflected in a student's account via OSCAR. To find the subsidized SHIP rates; see page 2 of the tuition and fee summary for a given term linked on the [Bursar's Tuition and Fees webpage](#).

## 5.6 Institute Holidays, School Breaks, Campus Closures

Employment terms for Graduate Research and Teaching Assistants are nominally aligned with the academic term calendar. The dates listed below are the normal fall, spring, and summer terms. Note that employment is contingent on the completion of all required onboarding procedures. Failure to complete onboarding prior to an employee's start date may result in a student's employment start date being adjusted to comply with federal employment regulations.

|      |                         |
|------|-------------------------|
| Fall | August 16 – December 31 |
|------|-------------------------|

|        |                    |
|--------|--------------------|
| Spring | January 1 – May 15 |
| Summer | May 16 – August 15 |

Student employees, as employees of the Institute, are not required to work on official Institute holidays defined by HR. Academic breaks such as spring break, fall break, and breaks between terms are not official Institute holidays and students may be expected to work at the discretion of the supervisor in alignment with their job responsibilities. When hazardous weather and other emergencies impact campus operations, modified operations are possible. Student employees should determine appropriate contingency plans for remote work in consultation with their supervisor and work department. See the [Modified Operations](#) policy for more information.

## 5.7 Schedule Flexibility and Personal Time

Student employees do not accrue vacation or sick time, nor are they eligible for protections under the Family and Medical Leave Act. However, the [Schedule Flexibility Policy](#) can be employed to afford students the ability to take time away from work. Graduate Research and Teaching Assistants are monthly (not hourly) appointments. As such, workload can be bunched or averaged over a period of time consistent with this policy.

Georgia Tech does not currently have an active graduate student parental and medical leave program. However, graduate student employees do have access to pregnancy modifications by virtue of their [student status under Title IX](#) and their [employment status under the Pregnancy Workers Fairness Act](#).

## 5.8 Income Taxes

Student employees are paid via Payroll with compensation and income tax withholding reported on a W-2 form. Student employees should plan to file an income tax return by the normal tax filing deadline each year. Students receiving fellowship funding, while not reported as employment income, may also owe income taxes on that funding. See the [Taxes 101](#) webpage for more information.

## 5.9 Working from Other Jurisdictions

In some circumstances, it is permissible for graduate student employees to work remotely from locations outside of Atlanta. In all cases, a student's job must be compatible with remote work at the discretion of the employee's supervisor. The arrangement must be reviewed by the Office of International Education when it involves a student on an F-1 or J-1 student visa. Resources for ensuring safety during fieldwork include the Field Research

Safety Planning Guide and the Field Research Hazards Reference Guide. Resources for safety in the field area available from the [Environmental Health and Safety](#) Department.

Students working in the U.S. outside the state of Georgia for an extended period of time might be required to pay state income tax where the work is being performed. All employees working outside the U.S., including students, must complete an “[International Assignment Assessment](#)” through Global Human Resources. International Assignment Assessments consider several factors including cybersecurity, export control, and international income taxes. This assessment and approval process must be initiated at least 30 days before the assignment begins. For supervisors with students working in California, New York, or Illinois, please contact GT HR.

## 6.0 Other Administrative Policies

### 6.1 Late Hires, Withdrawals, and Termination

In the rare case in which a student is hired as a GRA or GTA after tuition and fees are due for the term, responsibility for full tuition up to the month of hiring remains with the student, at the applicable rate. Responsibility for tuition from the month of hiring shifts to the account to which the GRA or GTA position is being charged using a prorated tuition waiver amount reflecting the portion of the term remaining based on the last day of the hiring month.

If a graduate student employee needs to withdraw completely from courses for a given term, they should be terminated from their employment if the withdrawal renders them ineligible for the position they are currently holding. For positions that come with a tuition waiver, the tuition waiver will remain in full force on the student’s financial account so long as they completely withdraw from the Institute.

Graduate Research or Teaching Assistants may be terminated mid-semester if students withdraw, complete their degree work, or leave campus permanently. In these cases, stipends will be paid up to the date of termination. Any tuition waiver applied at the beginning of the semester will continue to be in force. Sponsored projects will be charged the monthly rate for tuition remission up to the date of termination. If a student does not complete the work commitment for any reason other than withdrawing and leaving school, then the tuition waiver will be removed, and the student will be responsible for paying tuition for the full term at the applicable rate. See more in the [Tuition Waivers](#) policy.

## 6.2 Travel

- Students who travel on behalf of the Institute in their role as an employee must adhere to [travel policies and procedures](#), including receiving travel authorization prior to traveling, adhering to appropriate and allowable travel expenses, and submitting requests for travel reimbursements on a timely basis (within 45 days).
- Travel advances (i.e. money received prior to travel to assist with paying travel expenses) may be requested from GTRC. See [Travel Advances – Georgia Tech Research Corporations](#) for details.

There are several options available to Graduate Students that can help reduce or eliminate the amount that students have to pay for travel out of pocket. Those options are:

- Eligible travelers may utilize [GTRC travel advances](#) to obtain funds before travel occurs.
- Airfare can be direct billed through the Institute's contracted travel agency, eliminating the need for travelers to personally purchase airline tickets.
- Conference registration fees can often be paid in advance by departments using a P-Card or through the Supplier Invoice Request (SIR) process.
- Departments may also have options to coordinate other travel-related expenses in advance, depending on the circumstances.

## 6.3 Purchasing and Reimbursements

Graduate student employees should consult their unit-level personnel for assistance in purchasing on behalf of Georgia Tech and for requesting reimbursements. Additional resources on this topic can be found on the [Procurement and Business Services website](#).

# 7.0 Performance Expectations

## 7.1 Performance Management

- Performance Expectations: GTAs and GRAs should receive information on their duties at the beginning of their appointment period from their supervisor. All graduate student employees are responsible for working the expected number of hours with the expected level of productivity, asking for help from the supervisor as needed. The student is responsible for knowing and complying with all relevant safety regulations, ethical standards, and policies, per Section 7.3. The student is responsible for keeping careful records of data collection procedures and leaving all data and records with the supervisor at the appropriate time. See specific

information about performance expectations of GTAs in Section 10 and expectations of GRAs in Section 11.

- Performance Reviews: GTAs and GRAs must be evaluated at least annually on the performance of their duties. See Section 10 for more details of processes that meet the requirements of GTA evaluations listed in [Section 8.3.5.2 of the BoR Policy Manual](#). A [sample GRA evaluation form](#) is given here for reference, and units or individual faculty may use other formats.
- Performance Improvement Plan: The hiring unit may choose to employ a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP), a best practice, in situations where performance is deemed to be unsatisfactory. As examples, HR has a [PIP form for staff](#), and the Catalog discusses PIPs for doctoral students who are not making satisfactory academic progress (see [Section VI.D.3.c](#) for the policy and [here for an example](#)). Common elements of a PIP are the following:
  - A description of what is expected in performance for that position and examples of unsatisfactory performance by the employee
  - List of actions that the employee needs to take to remedy the situation
  - List of actions that the supervisor needs to take, such as noting how often they will review progress
  - Deadline for which the actions must be completed and consequences if the actions are not met

## 7.2 Professional Boundaries

Graduate student employees should only be asked to complete tasks that fit within the professional scope of their position. They should not be asked to do things that go beyond their role or violate any Georgia Tech, state, or federal policies. For example, graduate student employees are not expected or required to do personal favors for their advisors or coworkers, including childcare, shopping, driving, or other errands. To help students understand what kinds of requests are inappropriate, and how to respond to them, Georgia Tech offers a free, optional training course called [“Navigating Professional Boundaries: A Guide for Graduate Students and Postdocs.”](#)

## 7.3 Compliance

Graduate Student employees must complete all mandatory Georgia Tech employee compliance trainings and any reporting that is mandatory for their position. “Compliance” refers to complying with federal and state regulations, and USG and Georgia Tech policies.

- [New Hire Learning & Compliance](#): All new employees must complete the New Hire Learning and Compliance course within the first 30 days of employment. The course is designed to introduce employees to various compliance requirements at Georgia Tech. The topics employees will review include Cyber Security, Conflict of Interest, Policy Library, Tools for an Ethical Workplace, and Preventing Harassment and Discrimination.
- [Biannual Compliance Training](#): All employees receive email notices during the training period, and it is essential that all active graduate student employees complete these training courses during the designated training period.
- [Environmental Health & Safety \(EHS\)](#) provides oversight, resources, and trainings to assist Georgia Tech community members maintain a safe and compliant workplace environment. Their [Training Tool](#) lists what trainings are available and which ones are required based on the type of job duties and working environment.
- [Responsible Conduct of Research \(RCR\)](#): The RCR Program provides resources and training in the realm of ethics and RCR and manages the three RCR policies on campus. Graduate students funded by certain grants must complete [RCR training](#) to comply with sponsor requirements.
- [Effort Reporting](#): Students who are funded on sponsored projects must report their time and effort. Additionally, students will be enrolled in the Sponsored Program Mandatory Awareness training to fully understand their responsibilities when charging effort to sponsored awards. This training should be completed within 30 days of enrollment. See the additional considerations for students on funded projects in Section 12.
- Additional expectations and training specific to a student's position as a GTA, GRA, or working on sponsored research activities are in sections 10-12.

## 8.0 Working Environment and Conduct

Georgia Tech promotes a positive work environment for all employees, including respect and integrity. The expectations of how a graduate student employee should conduct themselves and how they should be treated by others is outlined in the [USG Personnel Conduct policy](#), the [Georgia Tech Student Code of Conduct](#), and the [Georgia Tech Code of Ethics](#).

## 8.1 Employee Accommodations

Georgia Tech provides a mechanism for employees to seek reasonable accommodations in their work environment. See the [Employee Accommodations site](#) for information on accommodations for disabilities, religious beliefs, and pregnancy.

## 8.2 Working with a Faculty Mentor or Supervisor

The advisor-advisee relationship is crucial in research-based graduate programs at Georgia Tech, requiring mutual contributions for success. In many cases, the relationships of advisor-advisee and supervisor-graduate student employee overlap. Advisors are expected to respect students, provide clear communication, and offer guidance on research and career development. Students, in turn, must respect their advisors, communicate openly, and commit to their research and academic responsibilities. Both parties must navigate inherent tensions between educational goals and employment responsibilities, ensuring a productive and supportive partnership. For more information, see [Expectations of Advisors and Advisees](#). It is especially beneficial for advisors and advisees to discuss these expectations, with customization to individual research groups, when the working relationship starts in order to avoid possible conflicts later.

## 8.3 Conflict Resolution

The [Advocacy and Conflict Resolution](#) team within the Office of the Provost assists Georgia Tech community members in addressing a variety of conflicts arising within courses or in working relationships with a faculty member. Their services include online resources, consultation, mediation, training, and coaching. One member of that team specializes in conflicts between graduate students or postdoctoral scholars and their research mentors (advisors).

When a graduate student employee is faced with a conflict with their supervisor or research advisor, the Advocacy and Conflict Resolution team suggests following the steps listed below. They also offer Conflicts Resolution workshops to help develop skills of participants for handling conflicts.

1. Attempt to informally resolve conflict with the individual faculty member.
2. If the conflict is not resolved with the faculty member, the student may consult the Director of Graduate Studies within their program, often an associate chair, or another member of the graduate office for that unit.
3. The student may seek the help of the Advocacy and Conflict Resolution team for informal help or may wish to [report a formal complaint](#).

## 8.4 General Work Rules

The [General Work Rules Policy](#) lists a number of examples of violations of conduct for Georgia Tech employees. While many of these examples are more applicable to staff employees with set working hours, others apply equally to graduate student employees including negligence, refusal to perform their duties, safety violations, sexual misconduct, and failure to complete mandatory training.

Employees accused of a crime (other than a minor traffic violation) must report this within 72 hours of becoming aware of the charge. Employees convicted of a crime (other than a minor traffic violation) must report this within 24 hours. Use this [form](#) to report an accusation or conviction within the required timeframe. More information on general working environment and rules can be found on the [Employee Relations website](#) and within the [USG HRAP Manual](#).

## 8.5 Amorous Relationships

Georgia Tech employees are prohibited from having a romantic or sexual relationship with any student or other Georgia Tech employee that the individual supervises, teaches, or evaluates in any way. ([BoR Policy Manual Section 8.2.18.6](#)). This policy applies equally to GTAs/GRAs who may supervise or evaluate other students as well as faculty and staff who supervise or evaluate graduate students (without distinction of the graduate student being an employee or simply a student). See the [HR document](#) on the reporting of these relationships.

## 8.6 Complaints and Violations

There are several mechanisms for reporting and investigating concerns when a member of the Georgia Tech community is suspected of violating laws, regulations, or policies. Below is a list of offices that handle both complaints as well as violations. Those offices also provide resources and guidance on their websites.

- Ethical violations and violations of federal and state laws including those listed below should be reported via the [Ethics and Compliance Reporting Hotline](#).
  - Information Technology Accessibility
  - Non-Retaliation
  - Ethics violations, illegal activity, or fraud
- Violations of the [Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) and [Equal Opportunity, Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy](#) should be reported to the [Office of Equal Opportunity, Compliance and Conflict Management](#).

- [FERPA](#) violations should be reported to the Office of the Registrar through their [comments email address \(comments@registrar.gatech.edu\)](mailto:comments@registrar.gatech.edu), which is read only by authorized staff.
- The [Scholarly misconduct policy](#) discusses how to handle violations associated with research or other scholarly activities and is applicable to graduate students who are working on sponsored research projects. The main types of scholarly misconduct are plagiarism, fabrication of data, and falsification of data.
- Complaints surrounding graduate student employment working conditions or conduct can be addressed through the mechanism to [report a formal complaint](#) offered by the Office of Advocacy and Conflict Resolution.
  - Of special note for graduate student employees is the [non-retaliation policy](#). Some students have expressed concern about retaliation if they submit a complaint or report a supervisor for conduct or ethics violations. This policy gives graduate student employees protection against retaliation.
  - A complaint submitted against a graduate student might be routed to the Office of the Dean of Students, depending on the nature of concern, even if the concern was related to employment actions since a graduate student's role as a student and role as an employee may overlap. The [Office of the Dean of Students](#) handles violations of the student code of conduct.
- For reference, students who wish to make a complaint may follow up with the contacts listed in the [Student Complaint Matrix](#). .
- Complaints about employment issues (e.g. hiring status, pay discrepancies, and effort) should first be addressed by a student's graduate program staff and directed to the department HR or the team handling student hiring. In most cases, they know the reason a student was not hired or paid on time. The department can escalate the matter to the Administrative Services Center ([support@asc.gatech.edu](mailto:support@asc.gatech.edu)) if needed.

## 8.7 Discipline

The [USG policy 4.6 Discipline of Students](#) provides an overview of disciplinary actions for all students, including graduate student employees.

The corresponding offices listed in the section “8.6 Complaints and Violations” have mechanisms for handling Georgia Tech community members who are found in violation of policies and laws under the purview of those offices. By virtue of their dual status as both student and employee, a graduate student employee is likely subject to more than one conduct policy. All appropriate offices must be consulted prior to disciplinary action. For

example, the Dean of Students Office has processes outlined by the [Office of Student Integrity](#). For situations that do not fall under student conduct categories, Georgia Tech may impose corrective actions or sanctions against employees who do not abide by the standards of conduct. The purpose of these actions is to provide employees with opportunities to address concerns and improve performance. The [Progressive Discipline Policy](#) gives more details on this process as it applies to staff, and the [Faculty Handbook](#) gives information on its application for faculty. The unit hiring a graduate student may follow these same principles in addressing concerns. The corrective actions for graduate student employees may include coaching, counseling, and training for initial or minor infractions. More severe infractions or repeated violations may include verbal warning, written warning (with a performance improvement plan), or dismissal. Additional guidance or information can be requested from [David Anderson, Assistant Director for Advocacy and Conflict Resolution in Graduate and Postdoctoral Education](#).

## 9.0 Additional Considerations for Students with F-1 and J-1 Visas

F-1 and J-1 student visa holders are allowed to work on-campus as long as they are maintaining their student visa status.

- During the academic year, student visa holders are permitted to work a maximum of 20 hours per week.
- During school breaks (summer, winter) student visa holders are permitted to work more than 20 hours per week if approved by their hiring unit.

**Types of positions:** On-campus employment can include work in institutional dining halls, libraries, research labs, or student centers. Student visa holders can also work as teaching assistants and research assistants. Please note that Knack student tutoring is not considered an on-campus entity and student visa holders are not eligible to work as Knack tutors. There is an English competency requirement for GTAs. See Section 10.2 for details.

For additional information, please visit the OIE web resource: [International Student Employment Overview | Office of International Education \(gatech.edu\)](#).

## 10.0 Additional Considerations for Graduate Teaching Assistants

In addition to the performance expectations described in Section 6 and conduct expectations described in Section 7, GTAs should be timely in grading, responding to emails, and completing other duties assigned. GTAs are responsible for turning in grades by any deadlines set by their supervisors at the end of the semester. They must abide by the additional requirements and complete mandatory GTA preparation described below.

### 10.1 Privacy of Student Information

GTAs generally have access to sensitive student information, such as grades, as part of their work duties. The Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act ([FERPA](#)) assures that students have rights with respect to their education records, and GTAs are required to abide by the FERPA regulation. GTAs must familiarize themselves with this regulation; see the information in the [FERPA tutorials](#). Note that this topic is also covered in the mandatory GT TA Training course discussed in the next section.

### 10.2 GTA Preparation and Assessment

The requirements given below satisfy the University System of Georgia (USG) [Board of Regents Policy 8.3.5.2](#) GTA requirements for training, assessment, and competency in English.

- All new GTAs at the Atlanta campus must complete the Part 1: GT TA Training course. See the [CTL TA Preparation and Development site](#) for information and registering. The course covers foundational topics including FERPA.
- The Center for Teaching and Learning recommends that all new GTAs complete CETL 8000 or its equivalent as part of their training.
- GTAs for the OMS program will complete a separate course tailored to the online course delivery. See the [CTL TA Preparation and Development site](#) for information and registering.
- International students are required to have competent English language proficiency. Each graduate TA with a TOEFL speaking subscore of less than 26 or an IELTS speaking score less than 8 will be contacted for a screening. For more information on ITA screening as well as relevant resources, programs, and events visit the [International Teaching Assistants](#) page.
- All academic programs must have a process in place for assessing GTA performance.

- Programs may utilize the [TAOS evaluation](#) to provide GTAs with feedback from students in the course. See [TAOS Setup](#) for instructions for departments to use the TAOS instrument.

### 10.3 GTAs Serving as the Instructor of Record

[Instructors of Record](#) must be approved by the Office of Faculty Affairs, including GTAs serving in that role. The [GTAs serving as the Instructor of Record](#) for an undergraduate course must have a Master's Degree in a related field or a minimum of 18 hours of graduate-level course credit in that field, and be directly supervised by an experienced faculty member in that field. These instructors will receive feedback from students on their teaching through the CIOS survey.

### 10.4 TA Development Resources

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) offers a robust set of opportunities for students to enhance their teaching skills. This includes a Fall TA Development Academy, a shorter Spring version, as well as a collection of formal pedagogy courses (CETL 2000/8000) and workshops. See the “*TAs and Future Faculty*” menu item at the top of the [CTL homepage](#).

- **GT TA Training Canvas Course** is the required minimum. This is asynchronous and covers essential policies and procedures that govern TA work.
- **TA Development Academy (TADA)** is an in-person event that CTL offers before the start of the Fall semester. TAs are introduced to best practices around being an effective TA.
- **TA Orientation Panel (TADA Lite)** is a virtual event hosted by CTL at the beginning of the Spring semester, where experienced TAs share practical tips and best practices with new TAs.
- **TA Preparation Courses:** Several partner schools teach credit-based CTL-branded undergraduate and graduate TA prep courses.
- **International Teaching Assistants:** CTL offers programming and resources tailored for international TAs, including language assessment.

## 11.0 Additional Considerations for Graduate Research Assistants

In addition to the performance expectations described in Section 7.0 and the conduct expectations described in Section 8.0, all students working on research, regardless if it is paid or is taken for credit, must abide by the following rules and standards of behavior:

### 11.1 Research Integrity

- The Office of Research Integrity Assurance (ORIA) oversees many regulations for compliance with federal guidelines, and all researchers must abide by them. For more information [visit the ORIA site](#).
- All student researchers must abide by the principles of [Responsible Conduct of Research](#) (RCR), which include avoiding scholarly misconduct (plagiarism, falsification, and fabrication of data) and acquiring Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval for human or animal research.

### 11.2 Export Control

- Export control laws and regulations restrict the export of information, software, and tangible goods deemed critical to U.S. economic, national security, and foreign policy interests. This includes sending or taking these items to a foreign country, releasing information or software to foreign persons within the U.S., and providing defense services to foreign persons.
- Failure to comply with these complex laws and regulations can result in severe civil and criminal penalties. Because of this risk, Georgia Tech has established internal review processes to ensure that activities with an international nexus are conducted in a compliant manner. Some representative examples of such activities include international travel, work or study from abroad, international fieldwork, international collaborations, international exchange of materials, and participation in research restricted under export controls.
- Foreign graduate students may be restricted from participating in research projects that generate or require access to export-controlled items without prior authorization from the U.S. government and are reminded that this authorization is not guaranteed.

- For a more detailed discussion of export controls at Georgia Tech, please visit [Export Control & Trade and International Collaboration | Office of General Counsel](#) or contact the export control team at [export@gatech.edu](mailto:export@gatech.edu).

## 11.3 Off-Boarding Steps for Student Researchers Leaving Georgia Tech

Student researchers who are permanently leaving Georgia Tech, either through graduation or by terminating their enrollment in their degree program, have a responsibility to make a plan to transfer their data and to off-board their employment. The checklist below contains information on data transfer, facility and platform access, leaving forwarding contact information, and completing an Annual Statement of Reasonableness.

[Student Researcher Exit Checklist](#)

## 12.0 Additional Considerations for Graduate Student Employees Funded on Sponsored Projects

Graduate students who receive funding from a sponsored grant or contract must abide by additional requirements to ensure compliance with federal, state, and Georgia Tech policies and regulations as well as terms and conditions of contracts.

### 12.1 Training

The Sponsored Program Mandatory Awareness Course includes the following modules:

- *Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Awareness*: A brief overview of RCR policies and RCR training at Georgia Tech.
- *Personal Services Reporting*: All GRAs or GTAs working on non-GTRI sponsored awards must complete a [Personal Services Reporting training tutorial](#)

Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Compliance Training:

- Graduate students funded by [covered NSF, NIH, or USDA-NIFA grants](#) must complete [RCR training](#). ([Master's students](#) and [doctoral students](#) should refer to the [RCR website](#) for specific information regarding Academic vs Funding Source RCR requirements, as the training required for the degree does not necessarily satisfy the requirement to comply with the terms of these funding agencies.)

## 12.2 Grants and Contracts Terms and Conditions

Students whose funding, either GTA or GRA, is being paid through an external grant or contract must abide by the terms of the grant or contract. Common terms and conditions include:

- *Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA)*: Some sponsors require students to sign an NDA to protect their intellectual property rights or sensitive information. These forms are legally binding, and students must adhere to them.
- *Data Management and Ownership*: Data that is generated through funding from an external sponsor may have limits in usage, management, and ownership. All researchers funded by that project must abide by the following rules (see this [government reference](#) for more background on data usage):
  - If the funding sponsor stipulates how the data should be managed and used, researchers must abide by those terms.
  - Many funding agencies require a data management plan for the research, which must be followed by the researchers.
  - The Georgia Tech Research Corporation (GTRC) owns the data. As such, when researchers leave Georgia Tech, they must leave the original data record, such as a lab notebook, at Georgia Tech.
  - While the data is owned by the GTRC, federal and other external sponsors may retain certain rights to access, use, or disseminate this data, as described in 2 CFR §200.315(b).
- *Teaching Assistantship Duties*: “Research grants may not be used for teaching assistantships unless the grant terms specifically allow it” per [Georgia Tech policy](#). Duties traditionally performed by Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) such as grading, leading discussion sections, or teaching should not be assigned to GRAs paid by research funds unless approved as part of the grant. If [teaching duties are part of a degree requirement](#), then a GRA would perform those duties under an academic workload rather than consider it part of their employment workload.
- *Publication*: Research funding may include terms restricting, delaying, and/or requiring advance approval of publications. Students must understand and abide by these terms.

- *Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)*: Refer to 12.1 Training. RCR training is a condition of certain sponsored awards [s](#).

## 12.3 Intellectual Property Rights and Ownership

Georgia Tech's Intellectual Property policy applies to all students, including graduate students, who are involved in sponsored projects.

- Graduate students must assign their rights to any intellectual property they create to the Georgia Tech Research Corporation (GTRC) if they are working on a project funded by an external entity.
- Sponsored project agreements may include clauses that delay or restrict the publication of research findings to protect patent rights or proprietary information. This can affect how and when graduate students can share their work in academic journals or conferences.
- Sponsored project agreements may also include limitations on how graduate students can use the intellectual property they developed in future research projects. For example, they might need permission from GTRC or the sponsoring entity to use the intellectual property in new projects or collaborations.
- In the case of inventions resulting from federally funded projects, all inventions are subject to the [Bayh-Dole Act](#) and [2 CFR §200.315](#).

## 12.4 Conflicts of Interest

Georgia Tech has a comprehensive policy to manage conflicts of interest (COI) for all its members, including graduate students working on sponsored projects. See the [Conflict of Interest site](#) for more details.

- *Disclosure*: Graduate students must disclose any potential conflicts of interest. This includes financial interests or external activities that could influence their research or responsibilities at Georgia Tech.
- *Review and Management*: Disclosed conflicts are reviewed by supervisors, the COI Office, and the Conflict of Interest Review Committee (if necessary). If a conflict or the appearance of a conflict is identified, a management plan is put in place to mitigate or eliminate the conflict.
- *Training*: Graduate students involved in sponsored projects must complete COI training to understand their responsibilities and the importance of maintaining research integrity.

## 12.5 Payrate, Time and Effort, and Documentation

Federal regulations and agreements that Georgia Tech negotiates with federal sponsors govern allowable charges, including payrate and documentation of effort. (Ref: [Code of Federal Regulations Section 200.430](#)). Georgia Tech has created policies to help ensure compliance with these federal regulations and agreements as well as USG rules, such as the [Graduate Student Enrollment and Employment Policy](#).

- *Payrate:* compensation on federal awards must be reasonable and consistent with compensation paid to others performing similar work, regardless of funding source (such as that paid to other employees in the same unit with similar experience and duties).

*Responsibility of the Programs (from the [Graduate Student Enrollment and Employment Policy](#))*

- i. “Hire graduate students doing similar kinds of work through the same mechanism at similar rates (including pay scales and tuition charges).”
  - ii. “If a student is hired on a federal project as a Graduate Research Assistant, the employment of the student shall remain as a GRA throughout their involvement with the project.” This means that a student who is hired in the spring and the fall as a GRA and who would be doing similar work on that grant during the summer for at least 33% time, should be hired as a GRA during the summer term rather than using an hourly position.
- *Documentation and Effort Reporting:* All compensation charged to non-GTRI sponsored projects must be supported by auditable documentation and effort certification as required by 2 [CFR §200.430\(i\)](#) and as discussed in Section 3.3 and effort reporting. This documentation must be held by the Institute for 5 years. These tools are part of Georgia Tech’s internal control system for verifying that personal services charged to sponsored projects reflect actual effort performed and are certified by individuals with direct knowledge of the work performed.
    - i. **Terms of the Position:** Section 3.3 of this manual discusses the acceptable information for documenting a particular GTA or GRA position, typically given to the GRA or GTA near the time of hire or within two weeks of the effective start date of the position.

- ii. Personal Services Reporting: All GRAs or GTAs working on non-GTRI sponsored awards will be enrolled in and must complete the following Sponsored Program Mandatory Awareness Training.
- The Workload Assignment Form (eWAF) is available in [Techworks](#) on a monthly basis. Students required to review the eWAF will also receive a direct link via email and should report any discrepancies immediately to their unit financial contact.
  - The Annual Statement of Reasonableness (ASR) is due in August of each year. A student who will permanently be leaving Georgia Tech must complete this form prior to leaving. Additional information regarding Persona Services Reporting can be found in [Policy No. 3.2](#). As indicated in the policy, if an employee is unable to certify their ASR, a firsthand confirmation can be signed by the employee's supervisor, Principal Investigator (PI), or other organization unit head. If additional information is needed, review the past training sessions from [The Latest Buzz with Grants and Contracts](#) or reach out directly to [easr.ask@office365.gatech.edu](mailto:easr.ask@office365.gatech.edu).