

**Department Name**

118 College Drive #XXXX | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

Phone: 601.266.XXXX | Fax: 601.266.XXXX | [www.usm.edu/XXXX](http://www.usm.edu/XXXX)

Graduate School Memorandum for Assistantship Award

Graduate Assistant’s Name: GA’s EMPLID:

Congratulations! We are pleased to offer you a Graduate Assistantship for the 2017-2018 academic year. These appointments are awarded to students who have excellent credentials. Below is information pertaining to your assistantship award.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Department Name for Assignment |  |
| Begin Date\* |  |
| End Date \* |  |
| Stipend Amount  |  |
| # of Hours to be worked per week (not to exceed 20 hours per week) |  |

\*Dates established by Graduate School and HR

The following is included with your assistantship:

1. [Insert Full/Partial] tuition waiver. *(Tuition waivers cover 9-13 hours per semester. Hours over 13 are the sole financial responsibility of the student. Tuition waivers do not cover course fees, special activity fees, international fees, lab fees, etc.)*
2. Out-of-state tuition waiver (if applicable).
3. Basic health insurance (The University of Southern Mississippi requires that all Graduate Assistants have a qualified healthcare plan. To support that goal the University provides a healthcare plan where GAs are required to either enroll and or waive the plan. If the plan is waived, the GA must provide evidence of comparable coverage).

 ***In order for a tuition waiver to be posted to your student account***, you must meet the following conditions:

1. Must be admitted with a **regular** admit status and matriculated into a degree program (Conditional Admits cannot hold an assistantship).
2. ***Must be registered*** in a minimum of **nine (9) graduate credit hours during the fall and/or spring term (3 hours during the summer). GA’s not registered in the required number of hours will not have their assistantship paperwork processed; therefore, employment cannot commence.** Summer tuition waivers may be granted up to 3 graduate credit hours pending funding availability. If you plan to graduate during the summer term, additional hours may be requested by your department and will be considered if funding permits.
3. Has completed all required paperwork with the Human Resources (HR) Office (PAF, tax forms, I9, background check, etc.). GA acknowledges that working prior to HR approving the Background Check and I9 E-Verify process could result in termination.
4. Has opted to purchase health insurance through the University at a reduced rate which is withheld from the student’s paycheck. Enrollment is automatic unless you provide proof of comparable insurance to the Office of Human Resources. Waivers are due by the date set by HR and must be completed each year. Failure to enroll or provide documentation of comparable insurance will result in the premium being withheld from the student’s paycheck and is **non-refundable**. Go to <http://www.usm.edu/employment-hr/ga-ra-international-student-information> for more information.

Continuing your assistantship appointment and the possibility for renewal requires the following:

1. Adherence to all University, Graduate School and departmental policies.
2. Satisfactory progress to degree and be in good standing.
3. Satisfactory execution of assigned duties (provided by your academic unit).
4. Available funding for assistantship stipend and tuition waivers.
5. Continuous enrollment in a minimum of required graduate credit hours. If during the course of the semester graduate enrolled hours falls below required minimum and/or you are terminated for any reason, tuition and health benefits will cease. Effective the termination date you will become financially responsible for any remaining pro-rated charges relating to tuition and/or out-of-state fees. If the assistantship is terminated for any reason and you have opted in for University Health Insurance, your final pay check will be assessed health insurance premiums for the remainder of the term.

Assistantship Remediation: In the event it is determined you are not meeting your assigned responsibilities, you will receive a written warning outlining steps required to complete in a 2-week period in order to continue your assistantship. At the end of the remediation period, you will undergo a review at which time the department will determine if the assistantship will continue.

*Southern Miss Hotline/EthicsPoint: In order to maintain the highest standards of responsible behavior, you are encouraged to become familiar with the Southern Miss Hotline. This new initiative, in partnership with EthicsPoint, provides an easy way to discreetly and confidentially report activities that may involve criminal, unethical or otherwise inappropriate violations of University policies. Although the Southern Miss Hotline is not a substitute for established channels of responsibility, it does provide opportunities for reporting behavior when those mechanisms are not suitable. The Southern Miss Hotline is operated 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and can be accessed at* [*https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/31502/index.html*](https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/31502/index.html) *or by calling 877-310-0424.*

*CGS April 15 Resolution: By agreement of the member institutions of the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), you may postpone your decision of acceptance of this assistantship until April 15th and/or change your decision before that date. More information on this resolution can be found at* [*http://www.cgsnet.org/april-15-resolution*](http://www.cgsnet.org/april-15-resolution)*.*

Please sign below your intent to accept or decline this support and return to our office by [insert date but must coincide with CGS April 15 Resolution dates for fall hires]. If we do not hear back from you or receive a signed copy of this letter by [list date that supports CGS date], we will presume you have declined the assistantship offer and it will be withdrawn. *All offers of assistantships are contingent upon available funding pending the University’s final budget for the 2017-2018 academic year.* We recommend you keep a copy of this signed letter for your records. If you have any questions, please contact us at 601-266-XXXX or by email at XXXXXXx@usm.edu. Again, congratulations and we look forward to having you join us.

Sincerely,

Name

Title & Department

 I accept the assistantship offer for the 2017-2018 academic year.

Name & Signature Student ID Date

Assigned duties include (but are not limited to): - BE SPECIFIC IN LISTING DUTIES

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cc: Graduate Assistant & Graduate School

Notes to department completing the Memorandum of Assistantship Award:

1. The information contained in this Memorandum of Assistantship Award (MAA) is the minimum that all GA Award memos must contain. Departments can add additional information in a letter that pertains to their area; however, all memos must contain the information included in this sample.
2. The begin date of the assistantship cannot be before the official start date of an academic term. Any employment for a new hire prior to the start date of the term should be processed on a PAF with Human Resources. \*
3. Ending dates for an assistantship must coincide with the official end-of-term date (commencement date).\*
4. All GA employment dates should be within a fall/spring and/or summer term and should not extend beyond this period. If an assistantship is to continue outside the academic calendar year, new GA paperwork must be processed.
5. All summer assignments must be on a separate GA Assignment Form.
6. The University is a member of the Council of Graduate Schools. As a result, all departments should be aware of the April 15 Resolution Regarding Graduate Scholars, Fellows, Trainees and Assistants (<http://www.cgsnet.org/april-15-resolution>).
7. Copies of the MAA must accompany the Graduate Assistantship Assignment Form (GAAF) in order for the Graduate School to process. No GAAF will be processed until the MAA has been received.
8. Registration – no assistantship paperwork will be processed until the student is registered for a minimum of 9 graduate credit hours for a fall/spring appointment and/or a minimum of 3 graduate credit hours for a summer appointment.
9. GA’s are not allowed to begin employment until HR has completed the Background Check and all appropriate hiring paperwork (I9, tax, etc.). Any GA working prior to his/her Background Check and/or I9 E-Verify approval from HR is subject to termination per HR policies.
10. Any changes to the rate of pay, stipend, dates of employment, and/or duties will require an amended MAA to accompany the new GAAF. Reassignments to a different department will require a new MAA.

\* GA work dates cannot begin any earlier than 2 working days before the first day of classes and no later than four + 1working days from the terms confer/graduation date.

**Fall/Spring Assignment**: The first day of the fall 2017 term is August 16th and the spring confer date is May 11th. GA Assignment Form Effective date is August 14th (2 working days before classes start). GA Assignment Form End date is May 17th (4 working days after the confer/graduation date) + 1 day = May 18th.

**Fall Only Assignment**: The first day of the fall 2017 term is August 16th and the fall confer/graduation date is December 8th. GA Assignment Form Effective date is August 14th (2 working days before classes start). GA Assignment Form End date is December 14th (4 working days after the confer date) + 1 day = December 15th.

**Spring Only Assignment**: The first day of the spring 2018 term is January 16th and the spring confer date is May 11th. GA Assignment Form Effective date is January 11th (2 working days before classes start but excludes the Martin Luther King Holiday). GA Assignment Form End date is May 17th (4 working days after the confer/graduation date) + 1 day = May 18th.

**Summer Assignment**: The first day of the summer 2017 term is June 5th and the summer confer date is July 31st. GA Assignment Form Effective date is June 1st (2 working days before classes start). GA Assignment Form End date is August 4th (4 working days after the confer date) + 1 day = August 5th.