

Determining Bargaining Unit Status for Graduate Employees Represented by the Coalition of Graduate Employees

The determination of who is in the bargaining unit (represented by CGE) and who is not in the bargaining unit (not represented by CGE) is based on the specific assignment of assistantship duties on an individual student basis. As certified by the State of Oregon Employment Relations Board, the bargaining unit includes all graduate students with Graduate Teaching Assistant or Graduate Research Assistant appointments employed by Oregon State University in a given academic term with a minimum 0.15 FTE appointment, provided that at least 0.10 FTE is devoted to service as an OSU employee. Excluded from the bargaining unit are graduate assistants whose appointments include teaching or performing research primarily to fulfill an advanced degree requirement.

The determination of whether a graduate assistant's appointment is "service" or is primarily to fulfill an advanced degree requirement ("academic") is made by you, the department Chair/Head. Your determination is relayed to the Office of Human Resources through the completion of a Job Form. Use of the "05" suffix indicates that the graduate assistant is performing "service" duties. Use of the "00" suffix indicates that the graduate assistant is performing "academic" duties.

To ensure that departments understand the distinction between "service" and "academic" assignments, the following examples may assist you in making the determination.

1. The graduate assistant is teaching a class for your department. The teaching assignment is not part of the graduate assistant's degree requirement. This graduate assistant's appointment would be "service".
2. As in example #1, the graduate assistant is teaching the same class for your department. Although she is a graduate research assistant, her home department requires all GRAs to gain teaching experience by teaching two terms. This graduate assistant's appointment is "academic" as the teaching assignment is part of her degree requirement.
3. The graduate assistant is conducting research that will be used in his thesis. This graduate assistant's appointment is "academic" because the appointment includes research primarily to fulfill a degree requirement.
4. The graduate assistant in example #3 has become an expert in using a piece of specialized equipment in his research. Although he has completed the use of this equipment for his own research, you have hired him to assist other graduate assistants in using the equipment for their research. This graduate assistant's appointment is now "service" as his assignment is no longer to fulfill his advanced degree requirement.
5. The graduate assistant is hired to care for and feed animals to be used in research. The graduate assistant will not be using any animals in her own research. This graduate assistant's appointment is "service".
6. A graduate assistant is hired to care for and feed animals to be used in research the same as the graduate assistant in example #5. However, this graduate assistant will be using animals in her research. Learning how to care for and feed the animals is a necessary first step for her to eventually work with the animals in her research. This graduate assistant's appointment is "academic" as her assignment is part of the continuum of learning how to conduct research which does fulfill a degree requirement.

As you can see from the examples, in some instances, two graduate assistants can be performing similar duties but one would have her appointment characterized as "academic" while the other would have his appointment characterized as "service".

It is important that all graduate assistants are correctly classified. Your assistance with this matter will be greatly appreciated. If you are uncertain whether an appointment is "service" or "academic", feel free to contact Deb Fernandez at 7-8222, to discuss the situation.