January 28, 2003

MEMO TO:  Deans, Directors, Department Chairs and Heads

FROM:  Sally Francis, Dean
        Graduate School

SUBJECT:  2003-04 Recommended Graduate Assistant Stipend Guidelines

Appointment Guidelines

Appointments of graduate teaching assistants typically are computed on the basis of an academic year (9 months). Appointments of graduate research assistants typically are computed on the basis of a fiscal year (12 months). In each instance, an appointment may be for a portion or all of the 9- or 12-month period. No appointment can be for less than 0.20 FTE or more than 0.49 FTE for any academic term. All graduate assistants are required to be enrolled for a minimum of 12 credits each term of their appointment during the academic year (9 credits during summer term) to be eligible for the assistantship stipend, tuition remission, and Health and Wellness Stipend (HWS).

Graduate assistants not performing service are required to perform duties at OSU to justify their stipends. For example, graduate assistants on 0.30 FTE appointments are expected to provide effort of 156 hours during each 13-week term of their appointment. Graduate assistants at other FTE levels are expected to provide proportional levels of effort. Since graduate research assistants ordinarily use research under their appointment as part of a thesis, separating work for which they are paid and work for their thesis is not an easy task. Therefore, it may be appropriate to spend more hours per week on research activities when they are related to the student's thesis. In any case, care should be taken to assure that the level of effort is commensurate with the level of FTE for both graduate teaching and graduate research assistants.

Although a tuition remission accompanies an assistantship and enhances the value of the appointment to the student, the tuition remission is not a part of the stipend. The tuition remission per se is not to be considered in determining the hours of service required of the assistant.

Departments are encouraged to articulate in each graduate assistant’s letter of offer the details of the appointment (e.g., contract dates, FTE, annual rate, stipend, tuition remission, health and wellness stipend, etc.), and expectations regarding specific work assignments and work schedules (i.e., the number of normally required hours per week, whether work will be expected between terms or over University breaks, etc.) Model appointment letters are available on the Office of Human Resources web site (see http://oregonstate.edu/admin/hr/gradstud/home.html.) Specification of these details at the onset diminishes the potential for miscommunication later and is good practice.
Administrative-Academic Unit Partnering for Graduate Assistantships

Only academic units may award tuition remissions (see Graduate Tuition Remission Policy, http://oregonstate.edu/dept/grad_school/Graduate_Funding/tuition%20remission%20policy.htm). The intent of this policy is to maximize the use of graduate tuition remissions for the purpose of recruiting the best and most qualified graduate students to OSU for graduate study. Administrative units may, however, fund graduate assistant stipends by supplying the stipend dollars and OPE to a unit eligible to award tuition remissions (i.e., to an academic program, department, college and/or interdisciplinary degree program reporting to the Dean of the Graduate School.) That is, administrative units may continue to use graduate assistants, but they must do so by partnering with an academic unit/program and coupling their stipend funds to the academic unit’s tuition remission.

To achieve this objective, administrative units are required to work in the following way with the academic units where students will be enrolled:

- Specify the specific qualifications and skills associated with the graduate assistant position to be filled;
- Identify the academic program(s) that is most likely to attract a pool of graduate student applicants who will have the desired qualification/skill set;
- Collaborate with an academic unit to make the assistantship offer with the goal of maximizing the recruitment of the best and most qualified graduate students to OSU;
- Make every effort to engage this process during the graduate student recruiting season with the goal of making the assistantship offer by the national offer deadline of April 15;
- Transfer the stipend and OPE funds to the academic unit in which the student is to be enrolled.

Recommended Stipend Guidelines

Recommended guidelines for graduate stipends in 2003-04 are attached to this memorandum. Examples are given for graduate assistants appointed at 0.30 FTE. Adjustments to other FTE levels between 0.20 and 0.49 may be computed by the department as necessary. The recommended 2003-04 minimum annual rates have been developed to begin to equalize actual monthly stipends for appointments at 9- and 12-month terms of service. In addition, the recommended minimum annual rates are at a level that will provide full financial certification for international students appointed at .49 FTE.

The Graduate School recommends that stipends not be less than the minimum specified in Level I for graduate assistants at either the 9- or 12-month levels (0.20 FTE). It is further recommended that graduate assistants being continued from a previous year should be granted a stipend increase. Departments are strongly encouraged to provide stipends above these recommended levels as resources permit. Please review FTE and stipend levels to assure that there are no inadvertent gender or ethnic disparities among appointments. Levels II through IV portray recommended stipends that correspond to assignments with increased experience and education requirements. For your information, the University of Nebraska national stipend data are available in entirety in the Graduate School and summary data may be viewed at http://www.unl.edu/gradstud/stipend/survey.html.

PLEASE NOTE:

- To fully satisfy financial certification requirements established for international students entering 2003-04, a minimum annual 9-month salary rate of $25,969 at .49 FTE would be required.
- TFor graduate students who are included in the bargaining unit, the Collective Bargaining Agreement specifies a required minimum salary rate (Article 11, Section I).


**CGS Resolution**

Attached is a copy of a Resolution adopted by the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) concerning offers of financial support and their acceptance during the graduate student recruitment cycle. This long-standing policy states that, “Students are under no obligation to respond to offers of financial support prior to April 15; earlier deadlines for acceptance of such offers violate the intent of this Resolution.” Offers of financial support include scholarships, fellowships, traineeships, or assistantships. Signing bonuses should also be considered as an offer of financial support. This Resolution also states that, “…acceptance given or left in force after April 15 commits the student not to accept another offer without first obtaining a written release from the institution to which a commitment has been made.”

Oregon State University is a participant in this Resolution, and as such, we seek your assistance in complying with its terms. Please read the resolution carefully so that all parties understand the expectations implicit in agreements for financial support. As recommended by CGS, a copy of this resolution should be provided with each letter of offer, or you may refer students to the CGS web site at [http://www.cgsnet.org/pdf/resolution.pdf](http://www.cgsnet.org/pdf/resolution.pdf).

**TOEFL and SPEAK Requirements**

Regular admission requires international students to meet minimum TOEFL score requirements of 550 (paper and pencil test) or 213 (computer based test). As in the past, regular or provisional admission is necessary to be eligible to hold an assistantship. Conditionally admitted students are not eligible.

The SPEAK test, administered by the English Language Institute, will be required to establish the types of assignments given to international teaching assistants. The appointing department is responsible for assuring the SPEAK test has been taken, and for assuring compliance with language guidelines.

Attachments:  Recommended Stipend Guidelines  
CGS Resolution
### Graduate Assistants — 9-Month Appointments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>FTE</th>
<th>Annual Stipend</th>
<th>Monthly Stipend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GTA I (beginning graduate)</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>$8,013</td>
<td>$ 890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GTA II (one year experience)</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>$8,414</td>
<td>$ 935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GTA III (MS or equivalent)</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>$8,835</td>
<td>$ 982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GTA IV (oral prelim completed)</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>$9,277</td>
<td>$1,031</td>
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</table>

1. $26,711  9-month minimum annual rate

2. Stipend levels vary among programs. Although the minimum stipend allowed is specified, units may elect to offer higher stipends than those shown. Stipends are computed here at .30 FTE for illustration purposes only, and may be adjusted proportionately for other FTE levels.

### Graduate Assistants — 12-Month Appointments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>FTE</th>
<th>Annual Stipend</th>
<th>Monthly Stipend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GRA I (beginning graduate)</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>$10,232</td>
<td>$ 853</td>
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<tr>
<td>GRA II (one year experience)</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>$10,744</td>
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<tr>
<td>GRA III (MS or equivalent)</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>$11,281</td>
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<tr>
<td>GRA IV (oral prelim completed)</td>
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<td>$11,845</td>
<td>$ 987</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. $34,108  12-month minimum annual rate

2. Stipend levels vary among programs. Although the minimum stipend allowed is specified, units may elect to offer higher stipends than those shown. Stipends are computed here at .30 FTE for illustration purposes only, and may be adjusted proportionately for other FTE levels.

**Note:** One year's experience is defined as:
- Registering for at least three terms as a full-time student here or elsewhere.
- Maintaining satisfactory progress toward the degree.
- Filing an acceptable graduate program.

The equivalent of a master's degree is defined by OUS as 45 graduate credits.