

Graduate Assistants and Tuition Scholars, Responsibilities

Graduate assistants and tuition scholars are expected to attend the University full-time, and perform various duties for their individual department, such as research assistance to faculty, and classroom or laboratory teaching assistance. For more information, read the responsibilities and privileges of graduate assistants and tuition scholars below.

Tuition Remission for Graduate Assistants and Tuition Scholars

Graduate assistants (GA) and tuition scholars (TS) are awarded a certain number of credits of tuition remission for each academic year. They may receive tuition remission for a total number of credits up to but not exceeding the number of credits required for their degree. Credits for certificate completion are not covered. (Note: If circumstances arise that compel a GA or TS to WX from a course, the tuition for that course counts toward the total number of credits allocated. In those cases, the student is responsible for paying for the additional course(s) to complete degree requirements.)

Tuition remission will be credited automatically to the accounts of all graduate assistants and tuition scholars at the beginning of each semester. They do not need to come to the Office of Graduate Studies.

Graduate Assistant Stipends

Stipends are paid to graduate assistants on a monthly basis. The stipend is paid on the last business day of each month. Most graduate assistants and tuition scholars do not receive summer stipends.

Required Forms

New Graduate Assistants (not Tuition Scholars) must complete several forms in order to receive their stipend. Incoming Graduate Assistants will be notified by email regarding the onboarding process.

Graduate Assistants and Tuition Scholars are required to fill out the Responsibilities of Graduate Assistants and Tuition Scholars form.

Academic Performance and Expectations

Graduate assistants and tuition scholars are required to maintain at least a "B" average (G.P.A. = 3.00) - the minimum required of all graduate students. Some graduate departments require that assistants and tuition scholars maintain a minimum grade point average that is above 3.00. Since the number of applicants far exceeds the number of available awards, assistants and tuition scholars should strive to do much better than the "B" minimum. Those whose GPA falls below 3.0 are placed on academic probation and lose their assistantship or scholarship.

Graduate assistants and tuition scholars are also expected to participate actively in the intellectual life of their departments. They should attend all colloquia provided by their departments and assist in seminars and forums as directed by their chairperson.

Department Responsibilities

Graduate assistants and tuition scholars are required to provide service to their department or other unit of the university each semester from the first day of class through the end of final examinations. Schedules vary by department and service may be required during Fall and Spring breaks, depending on the nature of the work needed. The student should consult with his/her faculty advisor or the graduate program director to determine the distribution of these hours throughout the semester.

Graduate assistants are expected to give 20 hours of service a week to their department, and tuition scholars 7 hours a week. Students holding a half assistantship owe 14 hours of service a week. Department chairpersons supervise assistants' and tuition scholars' service to the department and their programs of study. In many departments, chairpersons delegate their supervisory role to the graduate program director or other faculty members. Graduate assistants and tuition scholars may be asked to sign a department-specific contract detailing work expectations.

GAs are not entitled to paid vacation or sick days. In the event a GA cannot perform their assigned duties, they must communicate their absence clearly to their supervisor and settle on a mutually agreed upon make-up plan. This plan should be made in writing.

Graduate assistants and tuition scholars are expected to carry out their assigned duties and responsibilities in a thorough, timely, and professional manner. Failure to do so can lead to the non-renewal of awards even when the student's grades are at or above the minimum GPA. In some cases, continued failure of a graduate assistant to fulfill work responsibilities may result in the award being terminated mid-semester or mid-year. In the instance of an award termination, the bi-weekly stipend payment can be stopped at any time. Tuition remission for that term would already be applied, but future terms would not be covered.

When graduate assistants and tuition scholars serve as teaching assistants in the classroom or in the laboratory, they function as members of the faculty and should be treated as faculty by students. Graduate students who hold keys and who have access to departmental offices and laboratories are responsible for the security of these facilities just like members of the faculty. All keys must be returned to the department before the student leaves the University. The chairperson may ask for the return of the keys at anytime. Finally, in some departments, students are required to pay a "key deposit" which is refunded to the student upon return of the keys.

Outside Employment

Full-time graduate assistants are not permitted to take other employment while holding their assistantship. Exceptions to this must be worked out in consultation with the Program Director and documented in writing. Students holding tuition scholarships are cautioned against taking other employment. The loss of time to other employment may make it more difficult to maintain the minimum "B" average.

Enrollment in Summer Courses and Extra-departmental Courses

If a graduate assistant, tuition scholar or lab technician wishes to take summer courses, they may use some of their tuition remission credits (from 3 to 6) for courses taken during the Summer Sessions following their first year. The number of credits taken during the summer is included in the total credits awarded during each academic year.

The tuition waiver is given in return for services to the respective graduate departments. The waiver of tuition for one or for two summer courses requires 35 hours of service for each three-credit course over the course of the summer at the discretion of the student's advisor.

IMPORTANT: Students must initiate the request for summer tuition waivers to their graduate program directors **no later than April 15**. The graduate program director is responsible for alerting the Office of Graduate Studies of requests for summer tuition waivers no later than May 1. Summer tuition is not automatically credited to student accounts, so if Graduate Studies is not notified in a timely manner, students may receive bills.

Graduate assistants and/or tuition scholars who wish to register for a Villanova graduate course outside of their discipline will be approved for tuition remission if the course in question is demonstrably related to the completion of their degree requirements. For example, a graduate student, with the consent of his or her advisor, might wish to enroll in a particular graduate course in order to gain the expertise necessary to complete a thesis. The demonstrable relationship to the degree should be documented in writing by the graduate student's department chairperson or program director, who then makes a recommendation to the Office of Graduate Studies. Tuition remission may not be used for non-degree related courses, even though the courses may be taken for legitimate professional purposes, e.g., fulfillment of some type of professional certification requirements, or for courses offered by another academic institution.

Library Privileges

Graduate assistants and tuition scholars may borrow books from the library. They may keep books out for a fixed term loan with the possibility of two term renewals. The term loan due date is normally the last day of finals in a given semester. There is a waiver of daily fines for overdue Main Stacks books. They are, however, responsible for replacement costs and processing fees on unreturned books. They may also use [ILLiad](#) to request digitized scans of articles from our print journal collection (current and bound). (The Office of Graduate Studies supplies Falvey Memorial Library with a list of current graduate assistants and tuition scholars.)

Change of Address

Graduate Assistants and tuition scholars must report any changes in personal information, including address changes, to the [Registrar here](#).

International Students

All international students are required to furnish the Office of Graduate Studies, the Registrar, and Mr. Hubert Whan Tong, Director of the Office of International Students and Scholars, with address changes. All requests for extension of program end date should be directed to Mr. Hubert Whan Tong (610-519-8017). All international students with student visas are required to carry a minimum of three credit hours per semester. For more information on support services and international student onboarding, visit [The Office for International Students and Scholars](#).

Graduate Student Council (Liberal Arts & Sciences)

Graduate assistants and tuition scholars are strongly encouraged to participate in the [Graduate Student Council](#). The Council is the representative group of the graduate student body, and consists of one (or more) representative(s) from each Liberal Arts and Sciences department or program. Extracurricular activities for the benefit of the graduate student body are organized and promoted by the Council.

Graduate Student Ambassadors (Liberal Arts and Sciences)

A Graduate Student Ambassador (GSA) is a distinguished role that allows you to interact more with the Dean and staff of the Office of Graduate Studies while participating in a variety of events on and off

campus. Ambassadors help with open houses, graduate fairs and similar recruitment events during the academic year. The Dean of Graduate Studies also forms focus groups of ambassadors so that the Dean and staff can keep current with what Villanova graduate students want and need. [**Find more information and apply to be an Ambassador.**](#)