

GRADUATE ASSISTANT HANDBOOK

Southern Connecticut State University

School of Graduate and Professional Studies

2026-27



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Graduate Assistantships at Southern

The purpose of graduate assistantships is to allow well qualified matriculated graduate students to participate in institutional activities academically relevant to the student's program of study.

There are different types of Graduate Assistantships at Southern that vary based on their funding source. The terms and conditions vary slightly depending on the type of graduate assistantship awarded.

Department-funded Graduate Assistants

Graduate students apply to academic department-based graduate assistantships (GAs) advertised year-round on the SGPS and Human Resources websites.

Graduate assistants are appointed by the campus unit or dean of the school in which the graduate assistant (GA) is to be employed upon recommendation of the department chair/supervisor.

Eligibility

- 1) **Enrollment Status:** Graduate assistants must be fully admitted to the Graduate School and pursuing work leading to a Master 's degree, Ed.D., sixth-year certificate, post-master's planned program, or post-baccalaureate teacher certification.

GAs are expected to be enrolled in required courses within their planned program of graduate study and/or prerequisites necessary to offset any undergraduate deficiencies prior to undertaking the graduate program of study.

For students in a thesis, special project, or dissertation phase) Must be enrolled in the required number of credits to complete the thesis as determined by program of study.

- 2) **GPA:** To receive or maintain a GA position, a minimum GPA of 3.00 for all post-baccalaureate course work completed at SCSU is required.

- 3) **Additional Departmental Criteria:** GAs may be required to meet other specific criteria within the department.

Renewal

Academic department graduate assistantship appointments are annual but may be renewed on a semester-to-semester basis. Graduate assistantships may be renewed for additional semesters at the discretion of the employing department or unit provided the student meets all eligibility criteria for that GA position, i.e., enrollment status, GPA, and any other departmental criteria.

Restrictions on Concurrent Employment

GAs cannot hold other University supported positions (such as graduate student worker; graduate teaching assistant; research administrative assistant; resident advisor; graduate intern, or adjunct faculty) while holding the GA position. Additionally, GAs cannot be employed at any other state agency or state college/university during their GA appointment.

Hours of Service

There are two levels of academic department graduate assistantships. For both full-time and part-time graduate students, all credit hours for which the student is registered must be part of the approved program plan on file with the department and the Registrar's office.

Full-Time Graduate Assistants

Full-time graduate assistants are appointed to provide 20 hours of service per week or 300 total hours of service per semester. Full-time graduate assistants must be enrolled as full-time graduate students (9 or more credit hours per semester).

Half-Time Graduate Assistants

Half-time graduate assistants are appointed to provide 10 hours of service per week or 150 total hours of service per semester. Half-time graduate assistants may be either full-time graduate students, as defined above, or part-time graduate students. This policy is defined as a graduate student enrolled for 1.0 or greater credit hours but fewer than 9 credit hours per semester.

Compensation

Full-time graduate assistants

Full-time graduate assistants will be compensated at the rate of \$5,280 per semester.

Graduate Assistants enrolled at Southern as full-time graduate students shall pay full-time tuition.

However, the following fees shall be waived for graduate assistants:

1. **University Fee**
2. **University General Fee** (except for that portion attributable to student accident insurance)
3. **Student Activity Fee**

Per Connecticut Board of Regents 12/19/2019. For more information, please visit <https://grad.southernct.edu/financing-your-education/>.

Half-time graduate assistants

Half-time graduate assistants will be compensated at the rate of \$2,640 per semester.

Effective Spring 2024, Graduate Assistants enrolled at Southern **for less than nine hours** shall pay appropriate registration and course fees for part-time students. However, the following fees shall be waived for graduate assistants:

1. **90% of the General University Fee.** Per Connecticut Board of Regents 12/19/2019. For more information, please visit <https://grad.southernct.edu/financing-your-education/>.

Half-time graduate assistants enrolled at Southern **for nine hours or more** shall pay appropriate registration and course fees for full-time students. However, the following fees shall be waived for graduate assistants enrolled full-time:

1. **University Fee**
2. **University General Fee** (except for that portion attributable to student accident insurance)
3. **Student Activity Fee**

Per Connecticut Board of Regents 12/19/2019. For more information, please visit <https://grad.southernct.edu/financing-your-education/>.

Doctoral Students are charged per credit and **90% of the General University Fee** will be waived. Per Connecticut Board of Regents 12/19/2019. For more information, please visit <https://grad.southernct.edu/financing-your-education/>.

Assistantship Termination, Fee Reinstatement, and Repayment Provisions

If the assistantship is discontinued or the appointment is terminated between the 1st and 8th week of the semester, the university fee waiver is revoked, and all associated fees are reinstated to the student account, for which the student is held financially responsible.

Failure to maintain regular attendance or abandoning the position may result in termination of the assistantship. In such cases, the student may be required to repay any stipend and university fee waivers received, and additional charges may be applied to the student account, for which the student will be held responsible.

Changes to Enrollment Status during GA appointment

If a Graduate Assistant changes their enrollment status from full-time to part-time at any point during the appointment period, the following will apply:

- The GA's appointment will be revised to reflect **part-time graduate assistant status**, effective as of the date the enrollment change occurs.
- The GA will no longer be eligible for benefits associated with full-time GA appointments, including full-time fee waiver and stipend.

It is the responsibility of the Graduate Assistant to promptly notify their supervisor and the office of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies (gpsinfo@southernct.edu) of any change in enrollment status in writing (by email). Failure to do so may result in adjustments to compensation, benefits, and/or eligibility for continued appointment. As soon as the supervisor is notified, the department is required to submit another [Graduate Assistantship Appointment form](#) with the student's email attached and check the cancellation box.

Resignation of Assistantship

IMPORTANT: If a student chooses not to continue working as a graduate assistant, the student is required to inform their supervisor in writing (by email) indicating the anticipated end date and cc' the School of Graduate and Professional Studies (gpsinfo@southernct.edu).

Graduate Assistants who stop reporting to work without prior supervisor notification must repay any wages received after their final day of employment.

As soon as the supervisor is notified, the department is required to submit another [Graduate Assistantship Appointment form](#) with the student's email attached and check the cancellation box.

Additional Terms of Appointment and Renewal

Appointments may be renewed each semester, contingent upon satisfactory academic progress toward the degree, maintenance of a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher (3.5 GPA for GSGA students), and satisfactory work performance in the prior semester. Graduate assistants may be terminated during an appointment at the request of the sponsoring supervisor and upon review by the Graduate Dean.

Annual Review

Annual review of full-time equivalent (FTE) graduate assistantships will take place between the dean of the school, the department chairperson, and the graduate coordinator as appropriate.

One full-time equivalent graduate assistantship is defined as a full-time graduate assistant employed for both the fall and spring terms of an academic year (300 hours of service for two semesters receiving compensation of \$10,560 for the two semesters.)

During the annual review, the decision of the dean after consultation with the department may be made to hold the number of FTE graduate assistantships steady for the department, decrease the number of FTE graduate assistantships as dictated by the needs and size of the graduate program in the department, or request an increase in the number of FTE graduate assistantships as dictated by the needs and size of the graduate program for the department. The ability to maintain or increase FTE graduate assistantships will be dependent on the overall university budget allocation assigned to support graduate education for any academic year.

Graduate School Graduate Assistantships (GSGA)

The Graduate School Graduate Assistantship (GSGA) is a non-need-based award administered through the School of Graduate and Professional Studies. GSGAs may be full or part-time, experiential learning opportunities. Faculty apply for GSGAs based on project proposals. If selected by SGPS, faculty select a student to serve as a teaching or research assistant.

Eligibility

- 1) **Enrollment Status:** Graduate assistants must be fully admitted to the Graduate School and pursuing work leading to a master's degree, Ed.D., sixth-year certificate, post-master's planned program, or post-baccalaureate teacher certification.
- 2) **GPA:** To receive or maintain a GA position, a student must have achieved a minimum 3.50 Grade Point Average for all undergraduate coursework; and a 3.75 grade point average for all graduate coursework.
- 3) **Selection by faculty member**

Hours of Service

There are two levels of academic department graduate assistantships. For both full-time and part-time graduate students, all credit hours for which the student is registered must be part of the approved program plan on file with the department and the Registrar's office.

Full-Time Graduate Assistants

Full-time graduate assistants are appointed to provide 20 hours of service per week or 300 total hours of service per semester. Full-time graduate assistants must be enrolled as full-time graduate students (9 or more credit hours per semester).

Half-Time Graduate Assistants

Half-time graduate assistants are appointed to provide 10 hours of service per week or 150 total hours of service per semester. Half-time graduate assistants may be either full-time graduate students, as defined above, or part-time graduate students. This policy is defined as a graduate student enrolled for 1.0 or greater credit hours but fewer than 9 credit hours per semester.

Specific activities will depend upon the nature of the assistantship as outlined in the faculty's application and must be approved by the Dean's Office in the School of Graduate and Professional Studies (SGPS). At the end of each semester, faculty and students must submit an evaluation and final report to the School of Graduate and Professional Studies.

Renewal

Appointments may be renewed each semester, contingent upon satisfactory academic progress toward the degree, maintenance of a cumulative GPA of 3.5 GPA for GSGA students, and satisfactory work performance in the prior semester. Graduate assistants may be terminated during an appointment at the request of the sponsoring supervisor and upon review by the Graduate Dean.

Restrictions on Concurrent Employment

Students cannot hold other University supported positions (such as graduate student worker; graduate teaching assistant; research administrative assistant; resident advisor; graduate intern, adjunct faculty, etc.) while holding the GSGA award.

Additionally, GAs cannot be employed at any other state agency or state college/university during their GA appointment.

Assistantship Termination, Fee Reinstatement, and Repayment Provisions

If the assistantship is discontinued or the appointment is terminated between the 1st and 8th week of the semester, the university fee waiver is revoked, and all associated fees are reinstated to the student account, for which the student is held financially responsible.

Failure to maintain regular attendance or abandoning the position may result in termination of the assistantship. In such cases, the student may be required to repay any stipend and university fee waivers received, and additional charges may be applied to the student account, for which the student will be held responsible.

Changes to Enrollment Status during GA appointment

If a Graduate Assistant changes their enrollment status from full-time to part-time at any point during the appointment period, the following will apply:

- The GA's appointment will be revised to reflect **part-time graduate assistant status**, effective as of the date the enrollment change occurs.
- The GA will no longer be eligible for benefits associated with full-time GA appointments, including full-time fee waiver and stipend.

It is the responsibility of the Graduate Assistant to promptly notify their supervisor and the office of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies (gpsinfo@southernct.edu) of any change in enrollment status in writing (by email). Failure to do so may result in adjustments to compensation, benefits, and/or eligibility for continued appointment. The supervisor will then complete the GA revision form and submit it to SGPS and HR.

Resignation of Assistantship

IMPORTANT: If a student chooses not to continue working as a graduate assistant, the student is required to inform their supervisor in writing (by email) indicating the anticipated end date and cc' the School of Graduate and Professional Studies (gpsinfo@southernct.edu).

Graduate Assistants who stop reporting to work without prior supervisor notification must repay any wages received after their final day of employment.

As soon as the supervisor is notified, the department is required to submit another Graduate Assistantship form with the student's email attached and check the cancellation box.

Compensation

Full-time graduate students

Full-time graduate students awarded a GSGA will receive \$6,000 each semester. Graduate Assistants enrolled at Southern as full-time graduate students shall pay full-time tuition.

However, the following fees shall be waived for graduate assistants:

- 1) **University Fee**
- 2) **University General Fee** (except for that portion attributable to student accident insurance)
- 3) **Student Activity Fee**
Per Connecticut Board of Regents 12/19/2019. For more information, please visit <https://grad.southernct.edu/financing-your-education/>.

Half-time graduate students

Half-time graduate students will receive \$3,000 each semester.

Effective Spring 2024, Graduate Assistants enrolled at Southern **for less than nine hours** shall pay appropriate registration and course fees for part-time students. However, the following fees shall be waived for graduate assistants:

- 1) **90% of the General University Fee.** Per Connecticut Board of Regents 12/19/2019. For more information, please visit <https://grad.southernct.edu/financing-your-education/>.

Half-time graduate assistants enrolled at Southern **for nine hours or more** shall pay appropriate registration and course fees for full-time students. However, the following fees shall be waived for graduate assistants enrolled full-time:

1. **University Fee**
2. **University General Fee** (except for that portion attributable to student accident insurance)
3. **Student Activity Fee**

Per Connecticut Board of Regents 12/19/2019. For more information, please visit <https://grad.southernct.edu/financing-your-education/>.

Doctoral Students are charged per credit and **90% of the General University Fee** will be waived. Per Connecticut Board of Regents 12/19/2019. For more information, please visit <https://grad.southernct.edu/financing-your-education/>.

Categories of GSGAs

Research Assistants

A research assistantship should be considered if the faculty mentor seeks a graduate student to assist with an approved research project that will support the academic department. The student will work under the supervision of a faculty mentor in a field related to the student's overall academic and professional development.

Please note that the GSGA – Research Assistant cannot be the primary investigator of record.

Research assistants may conduct various research responsibilities that may include assisting faculty mentor with tasks listed below:

- Data collection and analysis;
- Operation and maintenance of equipment;
- Dissemination of research findings;
- Conducting and guiding laboratory experiments,
- Literature review;
- Preparation of manuscripts, musical compositions, or other scholarly endeavors;
- Identifying and troubleshooting problems;
- Maintaining records and inventories; and,
- Recruiting research participants

Teaching Assistantships

A teaching assistantship should be considered if the faculty mentor seeks a graduate student who has the academic ability and commitment to teaching necessary to successfully assist in the classroom under their supervision.

Please note that the GSGA – Teaching Assistant cannot be the instructor of record for a course.

Teaching assistants may cover various teaching responsibilities that may include assisting faculty mentor with the tasks listed below:

- Curriculum design, development, revision;
- Planning and preparing course materials;
- Organization and direction of group activities;
- Preparing presentations and other methods of instruction;
- Tutoring and other forms of individualized instruction; and,
- Assessment and grading.

Additional Required Activities for GSGAs

Please note: The following **required activities** in Fall 2026.

- **GSGA Graduate Student/Faculty Orientation**
All students and faculty members who are awarded a GSGA are required to attend this in-person orientation, which will be held on **Monday, August 17th, 2026 from 1-4PM** in the Scholars' Space. Students and faculty will participate in a mentor-mentee relationship building activity and goal-setting workshop.
- **First Fridays: GA Connect & Grow**
All students awarded a graduate assistantship are also required to attend **at least three** First Fridays per semester: GA Connect & Grow meetings, held on the first Friday of each month at 10 –11 a.m.

These gatherings offer an opportunity to discuss assistantships, address concerns, and participate in professional development. Faculty are always welcome and encouraged to attend. Meeting details will be shared before the semester begins, and supervisors are asked to allow their GAs to attend.

- **Participation in the 2027 Graduate Student Research and Creativity Conference: May 3, 2027**
As a Southern Graduate Assistant, the student will be required to attend and present at the annual Graduate Student Research and Creativity Conference. This conference is a showcase of graduate student research, posters, papers, presentations, and more! All stages of work will be accepted. The conference was created to highlight graduate student research, help students gain professional development experience, and to form an interdisciplinary community among SCSU graduate students and faculty.
- **Completion of all feedback surveys** each term (beginning, mid-semester and end-of-semester).

Graduate assistants who do not fulfill the above-mentioned requirements may be terminated by SGPS or at the request of the sponsoring supervisor and upon review by the Graduate Dean.

Hiring Process

Department-based Graduate Assistantships

GA openings are announced as they become available year-round on the SGPS website <https://grad.southernct.edu/graduate-assistantships-2/>.

Graduate School Graduate Assistantships

Faculty apply for GSGA awards in the spring semester. In May, they nominate a student to serve as their GSGA in the following fall semester. Graduate Assistant paperwork is processed in June for a Fall Semester start date.

Position Training

Graduate Assistants may need to complete both university-wide and position-specific training programs as a condition of their appointment. These trainings are designed to support compliance with institutional policies, promote a safe and inclusive campus environment, and ensure Graduate Assistants are equipped to perform their assigned responsibilities effectively. Completion of all required trainings by designated deadlines is expected and may be necessary for continued participation in the assistantship.

Required Hiring Forms

To complete the hiring process, Graduate Assistants must submit all required documentation, which may include federal and state tax forms, employment eligibility verification (Form I-9), direct deposit authorization, and any other university-required paperwork. Failure to submit required forms by established deadlines may delay the start of employment and/or payment of assistantship compensation.

Payroll Checks

Payroll checks will be mailed to the home address on file by the Office of the State Comptroller/Central Payroll unless you have signed up for direct deposit.

Delays may occur with your first check if all forms are not completed before SCSU's payroll run date.

For questions regarding the pay schedule or to set up direct deposit, please contact the Payroll Department at (203) 392-5430 or email payroll@southernct.edu.

Schedule

Graduate Assistant appointments begin on the first day of classes and conclude on the last day of final examinations for each academic term. Specific working schedules should be decided in consultation with working needs or the department. Graduate Assistants are expected to perform their duties in person and are not eligible for remote work arrangements without prior documented approval from appropriate departmental leadership.

- [Payroll calendar](#)
- [Academic Calendar](#)

Holidays and Breaks

Graduate Assistants are not expected to work during official university holidays or designated academic breaks when the university is closed. Any exceptions to this practice, based on operational needs or specific assistantship responsibilities, will be communicated in advance by the supervising department.

University Closures and Inclement Weather

Graduate Assistants are not required to work when the University is officially closed due to inclement weather or other emergency conditions. Official notifications regarding weather-related delays, closures, and operational changes will be communicated through university email, and Graduate Assistants are responsible for monitoring their email for timely updates.

Concerns or Questions

- **School of Graduate and Professional Studies :**
<https://grad.southernct.edu/about/meet-the-sgps-team/>
- **Title IX:** <https://inside.southernct.edu/sexual-misconduct/reporting-staff>
- **Office of the University Ombuds:** If you experience or witness an academic, professional, or interpersonal conflict during your assistantship, the Ombuds Office provides a strictly confidential, neutral, and off-the-record space to discuss your options. You can review university policies and safely explore solutions by scheduling an appointment: <https://inside.southernct.edu/ombuds>
- **Office of International Education:**
<https://inside.southernct.edu/international/contact>