

Terms and Conditions for Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs)

Students engaged as Graduate Teaching Assistants hold a unique position in the University; they are both registered students in receipt of a studentship award and employees of the University. As such they hold two mutually dependent agreements with the University of Kent and are required to abide by the terms and conditions of both agreements, as well as having the opportunity to enjoy the privileges afforded them in each scheme.

1 Higher Degree and General Regulations

- 1.1 A University Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) will normally be admitted to a doctoral programme and will be registered at the University of Kent as a postgraduate student for a higher degree under the relevant University degree regulations and the General Regulations of the University. ¹

2 Agreement

- 2.1 All students in receipt of a GTA will be required to sign and return a copy of the Terms and Conditions and the Letter of Appointment for Graduate Teaching Assistantships. Signed copies of these documents must be returned to the Scholarships Unit at the University of Kent. Students are advised to keep copies for their records.
- 2.2 The letter of appointment will specify the start date of the Graduate Teaching Assistantship, the value of the award, and the method and frequency of payment.

3 Length of Assistantship

- 3.1 A GTA will normally be tenable for one year in the first instance renewable annually to the maximum period equivalent to the student's period of registration for the degree programme to which they were admitted and awarded the GTA. For full-time doctoral students this would normally be a maximum of three years (36 months), for a part-time doctoral student this would normally be five years (60 months) or equivalent depending on a student's programme of study.
- 3.2 A student who has completed part of the period of registration for a degree may only be offered a GTA for the remaining period required for the completion of their registration.

4 Mode of Study

- 4.1 The mode of study will be agreed in advance of registration and the award of the GTA. This is accepted and agreed with these Terms and Conditions. The transfer of mode of study may affect the student's funding and individual cases will be considered by the Dean of the Graduate School in accordance with these Terms and Conditions.

5 Intermission

¹ Only in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School may postgraduate students registered on taught programmes of study be considered for the Graduate Teaching Assistant scheme.

- 5.1 Intermission from registration will only be granted in cases of grave and exceptional circumstances. During the periods of intermission, payments of the GTA studentship element will be suspended. The salary element may be affected based on circumstances and the length of service (see 6 and 7 below) in accordance with Human Resources policy.
- 5.2 Periods of intermission will not normally be granted for periods longer than 6 months. Applications for intermission should be made in advance and require the support of the Supervisory Chair/Programme Director and approval from the School Director of Graduate Studies on behalf of the Head of School.
- 5.3 Where the intermission precludes fulfilment of the responsibilities of the GTA contract, the contract may be terminated.

6 Sickness Absence

- 6.1 Periods of illness for a more than 5 days require medical certification and should be reported to the Supervisory Chair/Programme Director, the School Director of Graduate Studies and Head of School.
- 6.2 GTAs who satisfy the criteria for paid sickness leave will be remunerated in accordance with the University's stated policy (see HR <http://www.kent.ac.uk/hr-staffinformation/policies/sicknessabsence.html>)
- 6.3 During the first 12 months of the GTA, when a student has a certified period of illness, the studentship element of the GTA may be paid at the full rate of their maintenance stipend for the first 4 weeks within any 12 month period after which the studentship element will be suspended until the student resumes study.
- 6.4 After the initial 12 months of the GTA, the maintenance element may be paid at the full rate for 8 weeks after which the studentship element of the GTA will be suspended until the student resumes study.
- 6.5 Should a period of illness exceed 4 weeks, students are advised to request a period of intermission.
- 6.6 Where a period of absence precludes the fulfilment of the responsibilities of the GTA contract, the contract may be terminated.

7 Parental Leave

- 7.1 Students who satisfy the eligibility criteria may apply for University parental leave from their employment contract. Students may also wish to apply for intermission from their programme of study during this period of leave; as such students must apply both for parental leave via the Human Resources Office as well as for an intermission via their School.
- 7.2 For students who take maternity leave, a maximum period of 12 months intermission from study may be granted during which the studentship element of the GTA will be paid for three months. For full-time students the total period of the studentship element may thus be extended to a maximum of 39 months and for part-time students 63 months. The financial support available will not extend beyond period of registration plus the period of up to three months maternity leave.
- 7.3 For students who take paternity leave, a total of ten days leave may be taken during a partner's pregnancy or within three months following the birth. This period will be regarded as additional leave of absence from studies and the award will not be extended. Parental leave entitlement will be considered in the context of national legislation.

8 Teaching/Demonstrating

- 8.1 Students will be expected to provide teaching assistance and/or demonstrating in accordance with the Letter of Appointment and the Conditions of Service for the GTA.

9 Training

- 9.1 Students will be required to participate in relevant modules of the University's Postgraduate Certificate for Higher Education (PGCHE) and/or Associate Teacher Accreditation Programme (ATAP) or other equivalent training offered by the University appropriate to the teaching or demonstrating required.

10 Absence from the University

- 10.1 Any absence from the University must be agreed in advance with the Supervisory Chair/Programme Director and approved by the School Director of Graduate Studies and Head of School.

11 Monitoring

- 11.1 Continuation of a GTA is subject to satisfactory academic progress in the programme of study as determined in the relevant regulations and conventions. At the end of each academic year, the Supervisory Chair/Programme Director must recommend whether or not the student should be permitted to continue on the GTA scheme. This recommendation will be considered by the School's Director of Graduate Studies and Head of School. Should progress be satisfactory then the GTA will be renewed for a further 12 months, or until the end of the period of registration, whichever date is sooner. If progress is unsatisfactory, the Supervisory Chair/Programme Director, in conjunction with the Director of Graduate Studies and the Head of School should recognise either:

- 11.1.1 that the GTA be renewed for a further limited period (e.g. three months) after which the student's progress will be reviewed again to determine whether or not the GTA may be renewed for the remainder of the academic year, or
- 11.1.2 that the student's GTA be terminated.

- 11.2 Some students on a doctoral programme following a progress review may be required to transfer from PhD to MPhil registration. The GTA contract will be modified to reflect the revised period of registration, to a maximum period of 24 months for full time students and 36 months for part-time students.

12 Submission of Academic Work

- 12.1 All students are expected to submit academic work for assessment in accordance with the relevant degree regulations. In the case of research students a thesis must not be submitted later than 12 months after the completion of the period of registration. Extensions to this period will only be given in grave and exceptional circumstances and in accordance with Faculty guidelines.

13 Termination of GTA

- 13.1 The University will terminate a GTA when a student's academic progress or performance is deemed to be unsatisfactory. Students should therefore inform their Supervisory Chair/Programme Director and the School Director of Graduate Studies and Head of School of any problems or difficulties at the earliest opportunity. Similarly, Supervisory Chairs/Programme Directors should assist in identifying problems so that a student's academic progress is not impeded.
- 13.1.1 Should the studentship element of the GTA be terminated for whatever reason, the employment contract will also terminate on the same day.

- 13.1.2 Should the employment contract with the University be terminated for whatever reason, the studentship payments will cease on the same date.
- 13.2 The GTA is contingent upon the recipient remaining as a registered student for a higher degree at the University of Kent. If for any reason the student's registration is terminated, then the GTA will terminate on the same day.
- 13.3 If a student completes the programme before the end of the GTA, the GTA will be terminated on the date of completion.
- 13.4 If a student takes up full-time employment whilst in receipt of a GTA, the GTA will be terminated as of the first day of employment.
- 13.5 If a GTA is terminated prematurely for any reason, a student must repay to the University any monies including maintenance, travel, subsistence, fees overpaid from the date of the termination of the GTA.
- 13.6 A student who secures alternative or additional sources of funding should inform the University via the Scholarships Unit. Depending on the circumstances, the GTA may be withdrawn or reduced. It is University policy to use its funds in the most efficient manner and support in excess of the published cost of attendance for a programme of study will not normally be provided.

Explanatory Notes

1. University regulations will take precedent over the GTA Terms and Conditions.
2. Postgraduate taught student intermission is normally granted for a complete academic year. See 5.
3. On the recommendation of the Graduate School Board the Senate may in special circumstances and subject to the Statutes and Ordinance dispense a candidate from any of these regulations.

I accept the offer of a Graduate Teaching Assistantship and I agree to abide by the Terms and Conditions as set out above:

Name: (PLEASE PRINT) _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____