GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS (GTAs)

Terms and Conditions

Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) hold a unique position in the University; they are both registered students in receipt of a scholarship award and employees of the University of Kent. As such GTAs hold two mutually dependent agreements with the University and they are required to abide by both the staff conditions of service and the student conditions outlined in this set of Terms and Conditions. GTAs are also afforded the privileges of both sets of conditions.

GTAs receive:

- A stipend (regular, fixed payment) which comprises a tax-free scholarship, a salary element and a tuition fees award as outlined in the GTA scholarship offer letter and;
- Fees paid teacher training through the Associate Fellowship Scheme (AFS).

The contractual documentation includes:

- The GTA Letter of Appointment specifying the start date of the Graduate Teaching Assistantship and the method and frequency of the salary payment including its value.
- GTA Terms and Conditions (this document) specifying the staff conditions of service (Part A) relating to the salary payment and the student conditions relating to the scholarship payment (Part B).

All GTAs will be required to sign the above documentation electronically. You should keep a copy of this documentation for your own records.

PART A – STAFF CONDITIONS OF SERVICE (SALARY ELEMENT)

A1 SALARY

The salary element is calculated using spine point 24 on the University’s single pay spine. This is increased in line with nationally agreed pay awards. When the salary element is increased, usually on 1st August each year, the scholarship element is reduced so that the overall stipend paid is at least the equivalent of the minimum amount specified by UKRI (UK Research and Innovation) for the scholarships it awards. The salary is calculated on 240 hours per year, including 40 hours annual leave and will not be subject to incremental pay increases.

A2 ELIGIBILITY TO WORK IN THE UK

A2.1 All GTA offers are conditional upon provision of evidence of eligibility to work in the UK. Relevant documentation must be provided, in person, to Human Resources on or before the start date of the GTA.
A2.2 A GTA contract cannot be commenced until the appropriate documentation has been received and checked by Human Resources; neither the scholarship nor salary elements will be paid until checks are completed. Guidance on the acceptable forms of documentation to evidence eligibility to work in the UK is available on the HR website www.kent.ac.uk/hr-managementinformation/documents/eligibility-to-work/checking-eligibility-guidance.pdf.

A3 TEACHING COMMITMENT

A3.1 A GTA will normally be tenable for a maximum of three years (36 months) for full-time students, or five years (60 months) for part-time students, subject to satisfactory progress and continued registration as a student on a doctoral programme at the University of Kent.

A3.2 As a Graduate Teaching Assistant you will normally be expected to work for 200 hours per annum, including teaching (maximum 96 contact hours per year) or demonstrating (maximum 130 contact hours per year) and related duties such as marking, preparation and examination. Your exact pattern of working will be agreed with your Head of Academic School or their nominee; the number of hours may vary from term to term and potentially from year to year. In agreement with your Head of Academic School, there is flexibility to carry over hours from year to year with a limit of 40 hours (either surplus or deficit) with a maximum of 19 contact hours for seminar-style teaching or 26 hours for demonstrating per annum included within this. The number of hours shall be reasonable in the context of your academic commitments and will never exceed a maximum of 240 working hours per annum (not including annual leave).

A3.3 If you are deemed not to be teaching or demonstrating to a satisfactory standard, then the Head of School, in conjunction with your Supervisory Chair may redirect your work placement to include other duties commensurate with your academic studies. This may include additional marking or other teaching-related duties.

A3.4 It is the normal expectation that Graduate Teaching Assistants will be full-time doctoral students. However, in exceptional circumstances, a GTA may be offered to a doctoral student who is registered part-time. In such cases, the GTA employment contract will be offered on a pro-rata basis per annum. For example, a 0.5 doctoral student will be expected to work for a maximum of 100 hours per year.

A3.5 You will be required to participate in the Associate Fellowship Scheme (AFS) and any other training the University decides is appropriate to the teaching or demonstrating required. The taught hours of such programmes do not form part of your total working hours for the year. The taught hours of any school-specific training you are required to attend will be deducted from your working hours for the year.

A4 ACADEMIC REVIEW

GTA appointments are subject to ongoing academic review of teaching performance. The school is responsible for carrying out reviews, giving feedback on performance and for providing any necessary training to help you ensure you successfully complete your GTA. This is in addition to teaching feedback provided as part of the Associate Fellowship Scheme.

A5 WHO YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE TO
GTAs are responsible to the Head of Academic School or their designated nominee, who will determine the duties.

A6  **PENSION**

Upon appointment, all eligible (as defined by the scheme rules) GTAs will be deemed to be members of the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS), which is the occupational pension scheme for academic and research staff. USS is a contributory scheme and appropriate contributions will be deducted from the member of staff’s salary. Full details of the scheme can be found at [https://www.uss.co.uk/members/members-home](https://www.uss.co.uk/members/members-home)

A7  **YOUR NORMAL PLACE OF WORK**

Your normal place of work will be the work place stated in your letter of appointment.

A8  **TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT and NOTICE PERIODS**

A8.1 Employment under these terms is conditional on progressing successfully with the doctoral degree.

A8.2 Employment can be terminated with immediate effect and without notice if, for any reason, the holder leaves the GTA scheme.

A8.3 The notice period attached to this appointment is one month in writing on either side. A shorter notice period is possible if mutually agreed with the Head of School.

A8.4 Should the employment contract with the University be terminated for whatever reason, the scholarship payments will cease on the same date.

A8.5 If a GTA takes up full-time employment whilst in receipt of GTA payments, the GTA will be terminated from the first day of the new employment.

A9  **SICKNESS ABSENCE**

To be read in conjunction with Part B (point 5)

A9.1 In order to qualify for payment under the University’s sick pay arrangements, on the first day of sickness absence, employees should notify the Head of School or their designated nominee that they will not be attending work. Contact should be made before work is due to commence or within one hour of this start time, and should be made personally by telephone. Only in exceptional circumstances should contact be made by somebody else.

A9.2 It is the responsibility of the GTA to keep their Head of School or their designated nominee informed of the reason for absence, possible length of absence and likely return date, and any medical advice they have been given. Individuals who report their absence must provide this information and either give an expected date of return or information on when they will be able to call again with further information. If a GTA is unsure of the possible length of absence then it is their responsibility to contact the Head
of School or designated nominee at least every three days or as agreed and submit the relevant certificates as soon as possible.

A9.3 GTAs absent from duty owing to illness shall be entitled to a salary payment on the same basis, pro rata, as full-time teaching staff in accordance with the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale of Allowance</th>
<th>During First 3 Months' Service</th>
<th>2 weeks full pay 2 weeks half pay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Months to 1 Year</td>
<td>2 months full pay 2 months half pay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd and 3rd Year of Service</td>
<td>3 months full pay 3 months half pay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4th and 5th Year of Service</td>
<td>5 months full pay 5 months half pay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After 5th Year of Service</td>
<td>6 months full pay 6 months half pay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A9.4 If a GTA intermits from studies due to sickness absence, the salary element may be suspended until studies are resumed; this includes the contractual and statutory elements of sick pay.

A9.5 Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) is a minimum level of sickness benefit which all employers must pay their employees regardless of length of service. University sick pay is inclusive of SSP. Where the entitlement to SSP exceeds or is equal to University sick pay then SSP alone will be paid. SSP is paid for absences of up to a maximum of 28 weeks. For the purposes of SSP “qualifying days” have been agreed as Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

A9.6 SSP is payable only to those employees whose average earnings are over the lower earnings limit for National Insurance. The current amount is available from the Pay Office. The SSP regulations are very complex and it is not proposed to give an exhaustive recitation of them here. Please refer to the Pay Office for further details: [www.kent.ac.uk/finance-staff/services/payrollandpensions/payroll.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/finance-staff/services/payrollandpensions/payroll.html).

A9.7 For information about the appropriate documentation/certification which needs to be provided please see the Managing Sickness Absence Procedure which is available on the HR Website at: [www.kent.ac.uk/hr-staffinformation/policies/sicknessabsence.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/hr-staffinformation/policies/sicknessabsence.html).

A10 FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES

GTAs, who meet eligibility criteria, are able to apply for paid University maternity leave, adoption leave and paternity leave on the same basis, pro rata, as full-time teaching staff. Information on these policies can be obtained from Human Resources [www.kent.ac.uk/hr-staffinformation/](http://www.kent.ac.uk/hr-staffinformation/)

A11 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY (EDI)

All University staff are expected to read, comply with, and support the University’s policies with regards to ensuring and promoting equality, diversity and inclusivity. Relevant training and development should be undertaken, as required. Further information about EDI is available from the University’s website at: [www.kent.ac.uk/hr-equalityanddiversity/](http://www.kent.ac.uk/hr-equalityanddiversity/)

A12 CONFIDENTIALITY
You must not disclose to anyone outside the University (or to any University employee who does not have a need to know) any confidential information about the University, which you have acquired during your employment. This duty continues to apply after your employment comes to an end. It is not limited in time but does not apply to information ordered by a court to be disclosed or otherwise required by law to be disclosed. Amongst other things, confidential information includes commercially sensitive information, lists of and details of customers, suppliers, agents and distributors, the working of computer systems, pricing structures, advertising, financial and marketing information and business development plans and information. For the avoidance of doubt, any databases belonging to the University are considered confidential information for the purpose of this clause. You must not make any copies of any documents or items that belong to the University or remove them from the University’s premises at any time without proper advanced authorisation. You must return property of whatever kind when requested to do so by the University and which belong to the University when you leave its employment.

**A13 DATA PROTECTION**

Personal data stored in University data systems, such as the Student Data System, is held subject to the provisions of relevant legislation and regulations. It may only be accessed and stored as needed for the normal function of the University, and must not be disclosed to unauthorised third parties. All University staff must agree, as a condition of access to these systems, that they will not release information of any kind from these systems to unauthorised third parties either within or outside the University. GTAs (in common with all University staff) must be aware of, and comply with, the requirements of the Data Protection Act. Information is available from the University’s website at: [www.kent.ac.uk/data-protection/](http://www.kent.ac.uk/data-protection/)

**A14 UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS AND USE OF FACILITIES**

A14.1 GTAs should read and be aware of the important regulations which govern health and safety, information technology and the use of facilities.

A14.2 GTAs are bound by the Regulations for IT and Library Use at Kent. These are available from the Information Services website at: [www.kent.ac.uk/is/regulations/](http://www.kent.ac.uk/is/regulations/) or on paper from Information Services. University staff must not breach the copyright of software provided by the University for use on University-owned computers or on computers owned by staff. All University staff are also expected to follow good practice guidelines published by Information Services and available from their website.
PART B – STUDENT CONDITIONS (SCHOLARSHIP AND TUITION FEE ELEMENT)

B1 HIGHER DEGREE AND GENERAL REGULATIONS

A GTA will 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.

www.kent.ac.uk/regulations/Regulations%20Booklet/generalregs.html

B2 LENGTH OF AWARD

B2.1 A GTA will normally be tenable for one year in the first instance, renewable annually to the minimum period equivalent to the student’s period of registration for the degree programme to which they were admitted and awarded the GTA.

B2.2 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.

B2.3 Only in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School can students be permitted to register with a GTA award on a part-time basis.

B2.4 A student who has completed part of the period of registration for a degree may only be offered a GTA for the remaining minimum period required for the completion of their registration as above.

B3 MODE OF STUDY

The mode of study will normally 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.

B4 INTERMISSION

B4.1 Intermission from registration will only be granted in cases of grave and exceptional circumstances.

B4.2 During the periods of intermission, payments of the GTA scholarship element will be suspended. Periods of intermission will not normally be granted for periods longer than 6 months. Applications for intermission should be made in advance where possible 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.

B4.3 Where the intermission precludes fulfilment of the responsibilities of the GTA contract, the contract can be terminated by the University.
SICKNESS ABSENCE

B5.1 Periods of illness for more than 7 calendar days require medical certification and should be reported to the Supervisory Chair/Programme Director, the School Director of Graduate Studies and Head of School.

B5.2 During the first 12 months, if the GTA has a certified period of illness, the scholarship element may be paid at the full rate of the maintenance stipend for the first 4 weeks within any 12 month period, after which the scholarship element will be suspended until the student resumes study.

B5.3 After the first 12 months of the GTA, the scholarship element may be paid at the full rate for 8 weeks after which it will be suspended until the GTA resumes study.

B5.4 If a period of illness exceed 4 weeks, GTAs are advised to request a period of intermission.

B5.5 Where a period of absence precludes the fulfilment of the responsibilities of the GTA contract, the contract may be terminated by the University.

ABSENCE FROM THE UNIVERSITY

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.

MATERNITY, PATERNITY AND SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE

(To be read in conjunction with Section A point 10)

B7.1 GTAs who wish to apply for intermission from their programme of study during this period of leave must apply both for parental leave via the Human Resources Office as well as for an intermission via their Head of School.

B7.2 GTAs who have requested a period of parental leave are entitled to a period of 52 weeks (12 months) of intermission corresponding with UKRI regulations. The first 26 weeks should be paid at the full stipend rate; the following 13 weeks should be paid at a level commensurate with employee entitlements to statutory maternity pay. This is c. 41% of the minimum doctoral stipend. The final 13 weeks are not paid. The studentship element will be extended by the length of minimum registration remaining when the maternity leave commences.

B7.3 GTAs who have requested a period of paternity leave are entitled to up to 10 days paid Ordinary Paternity Leave on full stipend.

B7.4 GTAs must refer requests for shared parental leave to the Dean of the Graduate School who will also refer to the Human Resources Office. Partners may be entitled to up to 50 weeks of Shared Parental Leave; this may include paid and unpaid leave, depending on the individual

1 The scholarship element of your award is adjusted accordingly to meet this level, based on any entitlement from your University employment contract.
circumstances, any paid leave should be at full stipend. There is no qualifying period for maternity, paternity, adoption or shared parental leave.

B8 MONITORING

Continuation of the GTA contract is subject to satisfactory academic progress in the programme of study as determined in the relevant University 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, the GTA contract will be renewed for a further 12 months, or until the end of the period of registration, whichever date is sooner.

B9 SUBMISSION OF ACADEMIC WORK

It is expected that GTAs submit academic work within 3 years of the commencement of their programme. A thesis must be submitted no later than 12 months after the completion of the minimum period of registration. Extensions to this period will only be given in grave and exceptional circumstances and in accordance with University regulations: www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/regulations/index.html?tab=research-programmes

B10 TERMINATION OF GTA CONTRACT

B10.1 The University will terminate a GTA contract if academic progress or performance is deemed to be unsatisfactory. Students should therefore inform their Supervisory Chair/Programme Director, the School Director of Graduate Studies, Head of School and GTA Coordinator of any difficulties that may impede their progress at the earliest opportunity. Supervisory Chairs/Programme Directors should maintain a strong awareness of any student issues and monitor both research and teaching workload.

B10.2 If the scholarship element of the GTA is terminated for whatever reason, the employment contract will also terminate on the same date.

B10.3 If a GTA is terminated prematurely for any reason, or if a GTA is overpaid after the scheduled end date of their funding, the University will inform the recipient and they must repay any monies including maintenance, overpaid from the date of the termination of the GTA.

B10.5 A GTA who secures alternative or additional sources of funding should inform the University via the Scholarships Unit scholarships@kent.ac.uk. 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.

B10.6 If the thesis is submitted before the end of the GTA, the GTA will be terminated on the date of submission.
Explanatory notes

1. University regulations will take precedent over the GTA Terms and Conditions.

2. 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 GTA Terms and Conditions as set out above:

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)
SIGNATURE
DATE