

# Montana Tech University Policy

**Subject:**

*Graduate Tuition Waiver*

**Policy:**

*Modification to TARA policy*

**Revised:**

*December 1, 2022*

**Effective date:**

*Fall Semester 2023*

**Review date:**

*August 2025*

**Responsible Party:**

*Graduate School; Finance and Administration*

---

**Introduction and Purpose:**

This policy clarifies fringe benefits in the form of tuition waivers that are available for graduate students who are employed as either a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) or Graduate Research Assistant (GRA). This policy also clarifies the procedures by which GRAs/GTAs tuition waivers are tracked in student records and campus accounting, and replaces the policy previously referred to as the "TARA policy".

**Policy:**

Both Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) and Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs) that are appointed as a student employee with a semester stipend of at least \$4000 are eligible for full tuition waivers, provided they meet other conditions of student employment and remain students in good standing with satisfactory progress towards degree. The fractional tuition waiver is determined based on the total FTE, summed from all funding sources, with a 0.5 FTE appointment receiving a 100% tuition waiver (independent of student residency). A student may receive a combination of GTA and GRA duties, providing the delineation of duties is specified in the employment contract and the funding is appropriated in a way proportional to the expected duties. All GTAs and GRAs will be charged tuition based on their residency, and then the applied tuition waiver is for the full charged tuition. The tuition waiver will be applied to the student's account.

A limited number of University-wide graduate fellowships are also available from a combination of internal funding sources and/or development funds. These graduate fellowships are competitively awarded, and applied as a student scholarship through the financial aid office. The University-wide fellowships are used to both enhance graduate recruiting and provide financial assistance to existing graduate students that face a disruption in funding status. A disruption of funding status includes an end of an external grant or contract from which the student was previously supported as a GRA, and/or partial support for students supported by external funds for which the funding limit on the solicitation is insufficient to support the full tuition waiver. Colleges and/or Departments may provide additional funding to support graduate student fellowships.

### **Procedures:**

Assignment of a student as a GTA or GRA is made to an individual student by the Department on a semester-by-semester basis, when the following criteria are met:

- Availability of funds
- Satisfactory progress toward the degree
- GTA or GRA is relevant to the field in which the graduate student seeks and advanced graduate degree
- Student maintains a 3.0 Grade Point Average
- Student must maintain continued registration for at least 6 credits at the 400-500 level for the duration of the award. (Enrollment in fewer credits during the final semester is acceptable, if the student is taking all the credits needed to complete the degree. This enrollment exemption is applicable to one semester only.)
- The combined stipend from all sources is at least \$4000.

Tuition waivers are implemented by the Business Office, upon review of student employment contracts and student residency status. A student with an FTE appointment of 0.5 receives a full tuition waiver of the tuition bill, independent of residency status. A 0.5 FTE appointment corresponds to 20 hours per week (on average); similarly, a 0.25 FTE appointment corresponds to 10 hours per week (on average), etc. In all cases, the expectations of student duties for the GTA/GRA must be clearly specified in the contract, and represent a reasonable expectation for completion in the corresponding time commitment.

In general, a student may engage in activities related to progress toward degree in excess of the student employment contract (e.g. studying for examinations, thesis writing, literature review, etc.), provided it is at the student discretion.

GTA appointments are allocated to department/program chairs by the Graduate Dean based on available funds, typically in integer values, where one appointment constitutes a Grade I stipend (see the Student Employment policy for definition of Grades, at [job-classifications-acc.pdf \(mtech.edu\)](#)) and a full tuition waiver. As noted on the student employment page, higher grades of stipend may be allocated, upon approval by the Department, academic Dean, and Graduate Dean. GTA appointments are allocated to departments at least one month prior to the start of a semester, subject to


the University-wide budget and with review of teaching needs and strategic investment of the GTA funds.

GRA appointments are allocated by individual faculty based on available funds, typically those that serve as an investigator on a grant or contract, for which tuition has been budgeted on the award, subject to applicable state and federal regulations and the contractual agreement with the sponsor. The GRA must be pursuing an advanced degree in a field related to the sponsored work, and continue to make satisfactory progress toward the degree. The GRA employment contracts will be reviewed by the Director of Sponsored Programs to ensure compliance with the sponsor. As in the case of GTAs, and outlined on the student employment page, the stipend of a GRA is determined by prior experience, progress toward degree, and satisfactory performance on past assignments.

As student employees, all GTAs and GRAs are subject to student employment contracts. The employment contract should clearly state conditions of continued appointment and expectations of the supervisor. After both student and supervisor sign the contract, the student employment contract is reviewed by the graduate school, research office (for GRAs), and by the Director of Financial Aid.

**Internal control considerations, if applicable:**

This policy is consistent with the Board of Regent policy 940.31, which grants campuses the flexibility to set non-resident tuition rates for graduate research and teaching assistants. The policy is also consistent with 2CFR 400.231(j) and 2CFR200.466

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Adopted by: (Chancellor)

12/8/22  
Date