TA & AI Appointment Information for Production Students

Some of the below information also applies to screenwriting students who are appointed as TAs. Note that normally production classes employ one TA for 10 hours per week (a 25% time appointment). Therefore, it is common that students are appointed to work for 2 classes for 10 hours per week for each class. A few classes use one 20 hour/week TA.

When making appointment decisions, the faculty take into account the needs of the undergraduate curriculum in general, as well as the academic careers of graduate students and the faculty's personal knowledge of graduate students' abilities, skills and experience.

It is your responsibility to coordinate your own course schedule with the times of classes that you will teach. The department tries to schedule required graduate courses and undergraduate courses you are likely to teach at non-conflicting times. However, if there is a conflict between a course you want to take and one you will teach, please do not expect the time to be changed for either of them. Instead, talk to the faculty involved and see if the conflict can be resolved.

If you need something clarified, please contact the RTF graduate coordinator.

Benefits of employment:

Salary:
The salary for MFA students who work as TAs or GRAs for 20 hours/week (50% time) is approximately $1,166 per month or $5,250 for the semester. The salary for MFA students who work as TAs or GRAs for 10 hours/week (25% time) is approximately $583 per month or $2,625 for the semester. These are the gross salary, before the deduction of taxes, etc.

Tuition assistance:
AI's and TA's who are employed for at least 10 hours per week (25% time) receive a tuition reduction benefit which is credited to their tuition and fee bill. For those employed 50% time (20 hours/week) the amount is $3,784, and for those employed 25% time (10 hours/week) the amount is $1,892. The tuition assistance is considered compensation and is taxable by the IRS, so appropriate payroll taxes are withheld.

Second Year MFA in Production students are appointed as 25% TA and 25% GRA. See more on this below.

In-state tuition rates:
TA's and Graduate Research Assistants (GRA's) who are employed for 50% time are entitled to a waiver of out-of-state tuition charges and are required to pay only the
Texas resident tuition rates. It is the student’s responsibility to complete a web-based form located at https://utdirect.utexas.edu/acct/fb/waivers/ at the beginning of each semester in order to be charged these reduced tuition rates.

Medical Insurance:
TA’s, and GRA’s who are employed for 50% time are entitled to receive the standard medical insurance provided to all University employees, free of charge. The University provides a choice of several insurance plans. This benefits package also includes modest life insurance coverage. For an additional monthly charge, employees may purchase several other types of insurance (e.g., dental, vision, disability) and may purchase coverage for spouses and dependents. Detailed information about the insurance plans. If you are an International student, you must also complete an insurance waiver. Otherwise you will be charged for insurance by the International Office. After the 12th class day, that charge is non-refundable. The waiver is available at: http://www.utexas.edu/international/isss/insurance/waiver.shtml

The insurance coverage is not available if you work less than 50% time.

New 50% time employees will be covered from the first day of their employment and may select the insurance carrier of their choice within the first 31 days of employment.

Students who continue 50% time employment from the Spring semester into the Fall semester will have the opportunity to change their insurance company and/or levels of coverage during July. Continuing employees will not be able to make insurance changes in September. The Office of Human Resources will send further information about this before the Spring semester ends.

Employment criteria:

The Department tries to support all MFA production students in the second and third years of study. We are sometimes able to support students in the fourth year, although there is absolutely no guarantee.

The only students who have guaranteed employment in the Department are PhD students in the first through fourth years of study. The faculty make every effort to employ 2nd and 3rd year MFA students, based upon a variety of criteria, including:

a) the best interest of the undergraduate program  
b) the student’s successful progress toward the degree  
c) the student’s suitability for the assistantship  
d) previous performance as a TA, when applicable  
e) available funding

Faculty decisions regarding appointments take into account a variety of factors. For example, at times a newer student has clear advantages of experience and training over more advanced students and receives an appointment on that basis.
Class Assignments:
Students are appointed as TA for a specific class. Because we are planning months in advance, the Department reserves the right to change a specific class assignment to accommodate schedule and/or faculty changes that may occur before the semester begins.

Incompletes:
The University’s rule is that students who wish to hold graduate student employment may have no more than one temporary incomplete grade (X) and one permanent incomplete grade (I), or two temporary incompletes (X) on their record.

However, the Department of Radio-Television-Film in general holds to a stricter rule: in order to be employed as a TA or Al, the student may have only one incomplete from the previous semester only.

A temporary incomplete (X) must be cleared within one long semester or it becomes a permanent incomplete (I).

Eligibility requirements for TA positions:
   a) be enrolled as a graduate student for at least 9 hours,
   b) abide by the rules concerning incompletes as above, and
   c) be in good academic standing and making satisfactory progress toward a graduate degree.
   d) Making satisfactory progress toward your degree means a 3.0 GPA, no more than one incomplete, and continuous enrollment for at least 9 hours in the long session. The faculty considers successful academic work to be the primary qualification of student employment in the Department. See the end of this section for a detailed list of the eligibility criteria of being employed as a TA.

Admission to the program with conditions:
You cannot be appointed during your first year of study if you were admitted with conditions. If you were admitted to an RTF graduate program "with conditions," you must satisfy all of these conditions during your first year of study prior to being appointed as a TA during your second year in the program.

Non-US Citizens:
All non-U.S. citizens without experience as a TA at UT must take an English proficiency exam and attend a teaching workshop before they can be appointed. The exam is offered beginning in mid-August and mid-January. The mandatory Teaching Workshop is held approximately one week before classes begin. You should plan to be in Austin for these dates.

Regarding GRA positions
Normally, second year MFAs are employed both as Graduate Research Assistants (GRA’s) for 10 hours/week and as TAs for 10 hours/week. The GRA job title is used for technical roles within the classroom or lab setting. GRA’s are paid at the same rate of pay as TA’s, and students working for 50% time receive the same insurance and in-state tuition benefits as TA’s. These benefits are described below. However, GRA’s are not entitled to the tuition assistance which TA’s receive.

The following are the university’s requirements for employment as a teaching assistant or graduate research assistant or assistant instructor. Please read carefully. It is your responsibility to ensure that you meet all these requirements before accepting an appointment.

**The student must:**

- Be admitted to Graduate School without conditions.
- Have a GPA of 3.0 or better.
- Be registered for at least 9 semester hours that can be counted toward the graduate degree in the long session of employment and 3 semester hours during any session of the summer of employment.
- Be making satisfactory progress toward an advanced degree -- students registered as "Degree Holder-Non-Degree Seeker" or "In absentia" and non-students are ineligible for appointment to these titles.
- Have no more than one temporary incomplete grade (X) and one permanent incomplete grade (I), or two temporary incompletes (X) on their record. Beginning with Incompletes given in the Fall 1997 semester, graduate students will have only one long session semester to finish an Incomplete. At the end of one long session semester, an incomplete grade will become permanent.
- Not be appointed as a TA, AI, GRA, AA or A(G), alone or in combination, for more than 20 hours during the first two long-session semesters of graduate study at UT.
- Not be appointed for more than 30 hours in a long-session as a TA, AI, GRA, AA or A(G), alone or in combination, if they are in the third semester of graduate study or beyond. (See information below regarding teaching appointments for international students.)
- Have held no more than 12 long-session semesters of employment as a TA, AI, GRA, AA or A(G) alone or in combination.

**A word of explanation about Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) positions.**

GRA’s are paid at the same rate of pay as TA’s, and those working for 50% time receive the same insurance and resident tuition benefits as TA’s. These benefits are described below. However, GRA’s are not entitled to the tuition assistance benefit that TA’s receive. Normally, second-year MFA students are appointed as a TA for 25% time and as a GRA for 25% time, and therefore receive a portion of the tuition assistance benefit. The reason we split the appointment the first year is first,
because we want you to get use to the role of TA and secondly, because we are only allowed a certain number of TA positions, but we do want to support you for 50% in your second year, so we grant GRAs for the rest of the appointment. If you need more information about this, please come by and see me, but essentially you will be performing TA duties and the two appoints will not affect these duties.