

**Graduate Compensation and Benefits Committee (GCBC)
2023-2024 Annual Report
The Ohio State University Senate
30 June 2024**

Duties and Responsibilities

The Graduate Associate Compensation and Benefits Committee (GCBC) is a standing committee of the University Senate at The Ohio State University as defined in the University Faculty Rules, Chapter 3335-5-48.18.

The following are the duties and responsibilities of the GCBC, as defined under Chapter 3335-5-48.18. (B) of the University Faculty Rules:

1. *Study the adequacy and other attributes of the university's policies and provisions including stipends, outside professional services, and supplemental compensation.*
2. *Conduct research and provide advice on economic support of graduate associates, professional development, quality and design of benefit programs, and appointment terms.*
3. *Make recommendations to the university senate, the graduate council, the graduate school, and the office of academic affairs as appropriate.*

Summary of the Committee's Work

Recommendations on Graduate Associate Compensation

In discussing the state of GA stipends, the committee's work this year has been an extension of the existing work taking place across the University. Notably, the report submitted in September 2022 by Doctoral Funding Task Force convened by the Office of Academic Affairs¹, as well as the January 2023 Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA) Graduate School Peer Comparison generated by the Graduate School and the Student Success Research Laboratory², provided ample discussion and implementation points. While both of these reports did not concern themselves specifically with Graduate Associates, there is significant overlap in terms of populations being considered. Recommendations stemming from discussion of these reports, and the engagement of the committee with Dean of the Graduate School Mary Stromberger and former Senior Vice Provost for Student Academic Excellence Charlene Gilbert, are noted below:

Raise the minimum GA stipend in consideration of a living wage.

As noted in the GCBC reports for the three years preceding, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted gaps in resources that graduate students need to be successful. Graduate students experienced a widening of said gaps over the course of the 2023-2024 academic year, primarily due to exacerbation of inflationary pressures combined with an increase of cost of living in Columbus and the Central Ohio region.

The minimum GA stipend increase announced in May 2024 will raise the current minimum stipend amount by 5%, from \$21,280 for a 9-month .5 FTE GA appointment to \$22,347, and from \$28,373 for a 12-month .5 FTE GA appointment to \$29,792, effective autumn semester 2024. The last increase of the minimum stipend for a 50% nine-month Graduate Associate (GA) appointment

¹ Appendix 1: https://senate.osu.edu/sites/default/files/links_files/GCBC%20Report%202022-2023.pdf

² Appendix 2: Ibid.

had taken place in 2021 to \$21,280. While this stipend increase is an encouraging and much-needed sign that the new administration of this University is sensitive to the needs of Graduate Associates, there must be continued and sustained improvements on this front should the University wish to continue its goal of recruiting and retaining the best and brightest graduate students.

The inflationary pressures experienced post-pandemic, combined with the ever-increasing cost of living in Central Ohio, will continue to ameliorate the positive economic, emotional, and social impacts a GA stipend increase can have for graduate students if the University does not take agile and expansive action. The Doctoral Funding Task Force Report recommends usage of the MIT Living Wage Calculator to determine the base GA stipend amount. Using these data for 2024³, in order to be considered a living wage for a graduate student without dependents, **GCBC recommends that the minimum GA stipend be no less than \$32,695 for a 9-month 0.5 FTE GA appointment and no less than \$43,593 for a 12-month 0.5 FTE GA appointment.**

The Peer Comparison attached demonstrates that in the BTAA, Ohio State is 5th out of 14 institutions in the ranking of minimum stipends, and 8th out of 14 in the ranking of average stipends. Crucially, the data in the Peer Comparison is from the 2020-2021 academic year. Three academic years have taken place since, and it is clear that the competitiveness of Ohio State in recruiting students based on compensation has been negatively affected since.

Establish an annual percentual cost-of-living-adjustment for all GA appointments.

The existing graduate compensation adjustment structure, whereby graduate compensation is reevaluated every several years, leaves both graduate students on appointment and the University in a disadvantageous position when it comes to agility and responsiveness to market conditions and peer institution competitiveness. For this reason, the committee recommends that the Office of Academic Affairs, in conversation with Business and Finance, the Graduate School, college leadership (as relevant), and this committee, undertake a revision to the existing GA compensation structure whereby the base GA stipend increases on a percentual basis from one year to the next. This structure would ensure the longevity of the positive impact GA stipend increases have on GA quality of life and reduce the negative impact inflation and increasing cost of living inflict on compensation, recruitment, and retention of Graduate Associates.

Establish a centralized funding mechanism to cover fees for all GAs.

Student fees presently are deducted from GA Period Activity Pay for each monthly disbursement. These include, *inter alia*, program fees, learning technology fees, and course fees. While the current GA minimum stipend takes into account a number of graduate student-specific factors, it does not take into account fees that students pay. This constitutes a hidden expense, as the Doctoral Funding Task Force Report notes, especially for GAs from first-generation and/or low-income backgrounds, as GAs may not have accounted for these fees in their budgeting. We recommend that a centralized funding mechanism for reduction or elimination of all fees applies to GAs be established by the Office of Academic Affairs in conversation with the Graduate School, specific programs, and other relevant University units.

³ <https://livingwage.mit.edu/metros/18140>

Provide summer funding stability to GAs from areas of study with 9-month appointments.

According to data obtained from the Graduate School in June 2023, for AY 2022-2023, out of 8,772 Graduate Associateships, 7,350 (83.8%) appointments span 12 months, while 1422 (16.2%) span 9 months (see Appendix 4). For those GAs with 9-month appointments, there is a state of financial precarity which must be recognized compared to the significant majority of GAs on 12-month appointments.

In particular, international students, first-generation students, and low-income students on 9-month appointments are in a position of relative, systemic disadvantage, as lack of funding/compensation guarantee in the summer can leave those graduate students struggling to pay for housing, food, medical expenses, and all other costs of living. This in turn can negatively impact time to degree, retention, milestone achievement, and other metrics of graduate student progress and success, in addition to mental health and general wellbeing.

While the majority of GAs, who are on 12-month appointments, do not need to concern themselves with their financial stability during the summer term, those on 9-month appointments are oftentimes competing for a limited amount of GA summer appointments, and notification of non-appointment can come late in the spring term, leaving these students to scramble to look after their financial stability and well-being on short notice, all while balancing the responsibilities that the end of the academic term carries in terms of research, instruction, satisfactory academic progress, and others.

Therefore, the committee recommends that the Office of Academic Affairs and the Graduate School determine and establish pathways for all Graduate Associates, regardless of program of study, to receive summer appointments, if so desired. The committee is sensitive to the fact that different structures and operations across programs of study requires the continued existence of 9-month GA appointments, but this reality should not continue to place the burden on the individual Graduate Associate to find a compensated position without institutional guarantees in place.

Clarify and improve language on funding guarantees.

The committee understands that at present, language and phrasing on funding letters provided to graduate students upon admission is determined by the respective program, center, and/or department (as applicable). Furthermore, the committee understands that at present, there is no centralized depository or administrative reference tool to compare and contrast funding offers made across the University.

As such, anecdotal evidence collected by some committee members suggests that as funding letters and their wording change from year to year and from admitted student to admitted student, a lack of clarity regarding GA appointment eligibility, and length of eligibility, has resulted, leaving the administrative burden of clarifying funding guarantees on graduate studies chairs, department chairs, college leadership, and/or Graduate School staff (as applicable).

The committee recommends a harmonization of the languaging used throughout admission and/or funding letters across the University when it comes to GA appointment eligibility, specifically, and that implementation of said harmonized languaging be administered through the Graduate School to ensure uniformity and consistency in expectations across all relevant programs of study at the University.

Provide guaranteed paid parental and sick/bereavement leave.

Per [Section 11.2](#) of the Graduate School Handbook, “most graduate associates are part-time student employees (50 percent time) and therefore do not meet the eligibility criterion for the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) [Policy 6.05](#).” Additionally, the same section observes that “each program unit can determine the policy or guidelines for graduate student paid leave. Any leave additional to legal holidays is optional, but are strongly encouraged by the Graduate School.” Although the Graduate School Handbook provides recommended guidelines for categories of family and medical leave, this policy is not a guarantee and the language is program-centric, leaving its application to the judgment of graduate studies chairs, department chairs, and/or Principal Investigators (as applicable). While that is certainly an appropriate and important level that must be consulted, the committee recommends the language be clarified to guarantee parental and sick/bereavement leave to all Graduate Associates at the University. Until such time as that is possible, the committee recommends that the Graduate Handbook reflect that Graduate Associates denied leave by their supervisor can file a formal grievance through the Graduate School as a *de facto* appeal of this determination.

Establish a funding mechanism for out-of-pocket expenses.

Graduate Associates typically pay out-of-pocket for a variety of expenses beyond tuition and fees. Specifically, in many disciplines, graduate students pay for professional development opportunities, professional/conference travel, and moving expenses, as well as equipment expenses such as computers and other necessary technology for instruction and research. While funding exists at various levels for specific expense categories across the University, this funding is not accessible or guaranteed to all graduate students. Providing centralized funding for these types of expenses could assist in recruitment and retention.

A review of equity in labor load and expectations for GA appointments must be undertaken.

A .5 FTE GA appointment may constitute a variety of roles and responsibilities. Depending on program of study, this may involve, for example, serving as a TA or grader for an instructor of record, serving as an instructor of record for one or more sections of one or more courses, or conducting research under varying styles and types of laboratory/research center hierarchies. Because of this heterogeneity, whether the labor load of a given .5 FTE GA appointment is commensurate with 20 hours of work per week remains an open and contentious question.

Therefore, the committee recommends the Office of Academic Affairs and the Graduate School audit all GA appointments across the University to ensure that the roles and responsibilities of each GA position are consistent with the expected amount of labor hours per week as described in the respective Period Activity Pay document.

Recommendations on Graduate Associate Benefits

While the increase of the Student Health Insurance Plan benefit for .5 FTE GA appointments from 85% to 100% for AU23 is a significant improvement for the University’s graduate population, *access* to care remains a challenge, due in part to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on staffing. Recommendations are as follows:

Improve quality of and access to counseling and psychiatric care.

The committee heard anecdotally of issues on this front, including Counseling and Consultation Services (CCS) group therapy sessions attended by GTAs who found their student(s)

from the same term also in attendance, representing an inappropriate blurring of lines and roles. This, in turn, harms the quality of access and participation in care for both GTAs and their undergraduate students. Additionally, psychiatric care referral wait times for GAs have been observed to be of excessive length. Therefore, the committee recommends that the Office of Student Life, under whose purview stands CCS, expand the offering graduate student-specific/-exclusive group therapy sessions.

Recommendations on Other Areas

Presently, this committee is the only body within the University Senate charged specifically and exclusively with considering the graduate student population at Ohio State. While a majority of the University's graduate students hold a GA appointment, a considerable population of graduate students is excluded from this committee's purview. Additionally, the Graduate Council operates separately from, albeit in conversation with, the University Senate. This leaves graduate affairs with incomplete, and at times disjointed, integration into the shared governance instruments of the University. Therefore, the committee recommends the University Senate Steering Committee explore a new avenue for graduate affairs to be fully represented in the Senate's structure, as this would position the University to respond to all challenges regarding graduate education at Ohio State in an agile, responsive, and impactful manner.

It is crucial to the functioning of this Committee to have buy-in and engagement from all stakeholders. GCBC recommends that going forward, faculty appointees should be available and willing to regularly engage with the Committee from the start of the academic year. The nature of this Committee's work for this past academic year was significantly hampered by lack of timely appointment.

Furthermore, this Committee is without any governing documents or bylaws beyond the charges established. It is therefore important that future leadership establish standing operating procedures and bylaws to facilitate the functioning of this Committee.

Summary

The recommendations in this report have been informed and shaped by various qualitative and quantitative data and comprise a selection of specific action items the Ohio State University can take on to improve the present state of graduate associate compensation and benefits. These recommendations are rendered with the intention of improving the quality of the existing and future graduate associate experiences in alignment with the University's academic mission and strategic enrollment objectives.

Appendix 1: Minimum, Mean and Median Values for 0.5 FTE GA Appointments by College on a Semesterly Basis			
College	.5FTE		
	Minimum	Mean	Median
Graduate School	\$ 5,321	\$ 10,296	\$ 10,643
Engineering	\$ 1	\$ 12,796	\$ 11,336
FAES	\$ 1,774	\$ 11,779	\$ 11,120
Arts and Sciences	\$ 200	\$ 13,409	\$ 11,970
CCC	\$ 1,773	\$ 14,356	\$ 12,119
Medicine	\$ 2,694	\$ 17,304	\$ 12,122
Dentistry	\$ 1,773	\$ 9,351	\$ 10,638
Student Life	\$ 299	\$ 8,040	\$ 7,093
Fisher College	\$ 3,800	\$ 16,367	\$ 12,550
EHE	\$ 1,809	\$ 11,908	\$ 10,854
Public Health	\$ 4,728	\$ 23,544	\$ 11,408
Pharmacy	\$ 1,263	\$ 12,263	\$ 12,083
Academic Affairs Administration	\$ 3,547	\$ 10,912	\$ 10,640
Social Work	\$ 2,083	\$ 13,358	\$ 12,500
John Glenn	\$ 5,320	\$ 10,401	\$ 10,640
ERIK	\$ 7,092	\$ 14,572	\$ 11,768
Diversity and Inclusion	\$ 3,547	\$ 11,063	\$ 10,640
Undergraduate Education	\$ 10,638	\$ 16,556	\$ 13,020
International Affairs	\$ 7,093	\$ 10,564	\$ 10,640
Veterinary Medicine	\$ 3,764	\$ 11,632	\$ 10,957
Health Sciences	\$ 7,650	\$ 12,798	\$ 12,753
Newark	\$ 7,092	\$ 8,918	\$ 8,918
Optometry	\$ 3,750	\$ 27,462	\$ 22,875
Medical Center	\$ 7,092	\$ 13,071	\$ 7,851
University Hospital	\$ 9,281	\$ 9,881	\$ 9,661
James	\$ 9,281	\$ 10,469	\$ 10,638
Nursing	\$ 7,095	\$ 9,174	\$ 10,640
Wexner Center for Arts	\$ 5,040	\$ 12,949	\$ 10,743
Law	\$ 3,125	\$ 3,125	\$ 3,125
Veterinary Medical Center	\$ 16,443	\$ 20,951	\$ 16,443
Athletics	\$ 3,548	\$ 10,069	\$ 10,423
Administration and Planning	\$ 10,843	\$ 13,728	\$ 10,993
Office of Institutional Equity	\$ 10,640	\$ 11,922	\$ 10,640
Student Academic Excellence Administration	\$ 7,092	\$ 8,511	\$ 7,092
Academic Programs	\$ 10,640	\$ 10,640	\$ 10,640
Ambulatory Services	\$ 7,650	\$ 11,250	\$ 11,250
Health System Shared Services	\$ 11,240	\$ 11,240	\$ 11,240
OHTECH	\$ 11,925	\$ 11,925	\$ 11,925
Mansfield	\$ 11,071	\$ 11,071	\$ 11,071

Source: Graduate School, June 2024

Appendix 2: Total Expenditures on GA Appointments for AY 2023-2024 by College			
College	Total Expenditures on GA		
	Minimum	Mean	Median
Graduate School	\$ 813,733	\$ 844,052	\$ 782,479
Engineering	\$ 6,614,823	\$ 14,842,758	\$ 12,771,137
FAES	\$ 2,999,444	\$ 6,925,643	\$ 6,224,099
Arts and Sciences	\$ 10,266,163	\$ 19,847,000	\$ 17,715,711
CCC	\$ 1,959,152	\$ 2,443,963	\$ 2,602,534
Medicine	\$ 3,101,965	\$ 5,911,664	\$ 5,868,233
Dentistry	\$ 715,325	\$ 1,096,349	\$ 1,171,449
Student Life	\$ 33,433	\$ 425,188	\$ 441,882
Fisher College	\$ 519,385	\$ 1,554,055	\$ 1,281,821
EHE	\$ 321,688	\$ 2,314,631	\$ 2,686,623
Public Health	\$ 156,094	\$ 1,311,001	\$ 1,617,128
Pharmacy	\$ 333,286	\$ 711,416	\$ 758,025
Academic Affairs Administration	\$ 104,994	\$ 302,574	\$ 159,838
Social Work	\$ 317,231	\$ 824,740	\$ 808,309
John Glenn	\$ 17,590	\$ 70,342	\$ 78,479
ERIK	\$ 99,588	\$ 263,929	\$ 408,823
Diversity and Inclusion	\$ 31,920	\$ 232,004	\$ 233,922
Undergraduate Education	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 49,668
International Affairs	\$ 30,875	\$ 42,765	\$ 42,560
Veterinary Medicine	\$ 680,159	\$ 696,403	\$ 705,561
Health Sciences	\$ 79,932	\$ 183,104	\$ 159,299
Newark	\$ 21,277	\$ 21,489	\$ 10,745
Optometry	\$ 407,890	\$ 1,072,177	\$ 991,491
Medical Center	\$ 77,751	\$ 96,962	\$ 60,570
University Hospital	\$ -	\$ 109,841	\$ 38,370
James	\$ -	\$ 226,963	\$ 118,501
Nursing	\$ 85,140	\$ 106,423	\$ 74,482
Wexner Center for Arts	\$ -	\$ 98,550	\$ 5,040
Law	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,125
Veterinary Medical Center	\$ 49,328	\$ 27,713	\$ 27,713
Athletics	\$ 30,841	\$ 28,073	\$ 31,708
Administration and Planning	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 54,913
Office of Institutional Equity	\$ -	\$ 34,287	\$ 37,244
Student Academic Excellence Administration	\$ 21,276	\$ 10,640	\$ 10,640
Academic Programs	\$ -	\$ 10,640	\$ 10,640
Ambulatory Services	\$ -	\$ 7,650	\$ 14,850
Health System Shared Services	\$ -	\$ 11,240	\$ -
OHTECH	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 11,925
Mansfield	\$ -	\$ 11,071	\$ 11,071

Source: Graduate School, June 2024

Appendix 3.1: Count of GA Appointments by FTE Amount per Unit/College			
College	SU23		
	Count of .25 Appointments	Count of .50 Appointments	Count of Concurrent Appointments
Graduate School	0	1	0
Engineering	12	11	1
FAES	3	8	0
Arts and Sciences	18	22	6
CCC	3	1	0
Medicine	3	6	1
Dentistry	27	1	0
Student Life	0	0	0
Fisher College	0	0	0
EHE	8	5	2
Public Health	1	0	0
Pharmacy	2	0	0
Academic Affairs Administration	1	0	1
Social Work	12	0	0
John Glenn	0	0	0
ERIK	1	1	0
Diversity and Inclusion	0	0	0
Undergraduate Education	0	0	0
International Affairs	0	0	0
Veterinary Medicine	0	3	1
Health Sciences	0	0	0
Newark	0	0	0
Optometry	0	0	0
Medical Center	0	0	0
University Hospital	0	0	0
James	0	0	0
Nursing	0	0	0
Wexner Center for Arts	0	0	0
Law	0	0	0
Veterinary Medical Center	0	0	0
Athletics	0	2	0
Administration and Planning	0	0	0
Office of Institutional Equity	0	0	0
Student Academic Excellence Administration	0	0	0
Academic Programs	0	0	0
Ambulatory Services	0	0	0
Health System Shared Services	0	0	0
OHTECH	0	0	0
Mansfield	0	0	0

Source: Graduate School, June 2024

Appendix 3.2: Count of GA Appointments by FTE Amount per Unit/College			
College	AU23		
	Count of .25 Appointments	Count of .50 Appointments	Count of Concurrent Appointments
Graduate School	0	0	0
Engineering	8	43	1
FAES	7	12	0
Arts and Sciences	53	42	11
CCC	0	4	0
Medicine	2	6	0
Dentistry	0	0	0
Student Life	1	3	0
Fisher College	2	2	0
EHE	35	3	4
Public Health	12	2	1
Pharmacy	2	1	0
Academic Affairs Administration	2	1	0
Social Work	27	3	2
John Glenn	0	1	0
ERIK	1	1	0
Diversity and Inclusion	1	0	0
Undergraduate Education	0	0	0
International Affairs	0	0	0
Veterinary Medicine	0	3	0
Health Sciences	0	0	0
Newark	0	0	0
Optometry	0	0	0
Medical Center	0	0	0
University Hospital	0	0	0
James	0	2	0
Nursing	0	0	0
Wexner Center for Arts	1	0	0
Law	0	0	0
Veterinary Medical Center	0	0	0
Athletics	1	1	1
Administration and Planning	0	0	0
Office of Institutional Equity	1	0	0
Student Academic Excellence Administration	0	0	0
Academic Programs	0	0	0
Ambulatory Services	1	0	0
Health System Shared Services	0	1	0
OHTECH	0	0	0
Mansfield	0	0	0

Source: Graduate School, June 2024

Appendix 3.3: Count of GA Appointments by FTE Amount per Unit/College			
College	SP24		
	Count of .25 Appointments	Count of .50 Appointments	Count of Concurrent Appointments
Graduate School	0	63	0
Engineering	6	673	4
FAES	3	297	2
Arts and Sciences	5	931	15
CCC	0	102	0
Medicine	0	233	1
Dentistry	0	28	0
Student Life	2	52	3
Fisher College	0	58	0
EHE	4	131	9
Public Health	0	31	2
Pharmacy	0	50	3
Academic Affairs Administration	1	10	2
Social Work	7	13	5
John Glenn	0	5	0
ERIK	1	13	2
Diversity and Inclusion	0	14	0
Undergraduate Education	0	2	0
International Affairs	1	2	0
Veterinary Medicine	0	38	0
Health Sciences	0	10	0
Newark	0	1	0
Optometry	0	7	0
Medical Center	0	4	0
University Hospital	0	1	0
James	0	6	0
Nursing	0	5	0
Wexner Center for Arts	0	0	1
Law	0	1	0
Veterinary Medical Center	0	0	0
Athletics	0	1	1
Administration and Planning	0	2	0
Office of Institutional Equity	0	0	0
Student Academic Excellence Administration	0	1	0
Academic Programs	0	1	0
Ambulatory Services	0	0	0
Health System Shared Services	0	0	0
OHTECH	0	1	0
Mansfield	0	1	0

Source: Graduate School, June 2024

Appendix 4:		
GA Appointment (9mo vs 12mo) by College for AY22-23 (.25 and .5 FTEs)		Total
Grad Education & Human Ecology		482
12mo		276
9mo		206
Grad Environment & Natural Res		134
12mo		107
9mo		27
Graduate Agriculture		613
12mo		532
9mo		81
Graduate Architecture		144
12mo		15
9mo		129
Graduate Arts And Sciences		2951
12mo		2553
9mo		398
Graduate Bridge		2
12mo		2
Graduate Business		146
12mo		120
9mo		26
Graduate Dentistry		162
12mo		162
Graduate Engineering		2251
12mo		1881
9mo		370
Graduate Hlth&Rehabltn Sci		48
12mo		42
9mo		6
Graduate Medical		479
12mo		462

9mo	17
Graduate Non-Degree Program	6
12mo	6
Graduate Nursing	38
12mo	24
9mo	14
Graduate Optometry	9
12mo	9
Graduate Pharmacy	189
12mo	168
9mo	21
Graduate Public Health	155
12mo	105
9mo	50
Graduate Social Work	67
12mo	45
9mo	22
Graduate Veterinary Medicine	135
12mo	127
9mo	8
Interdisciplinary	733
12mo	701
9mo	32
John Glenn Col, Public Affairs	28
12mo	13
9mo	15
Grand Total	8772