**Policy QA135 GTA Policy Engagement of Graduate Teaching Assistants**

**HR Frequently Asked Questions**

**Date: 01-09-2023**

**GTA Frequently Asked Questions:**

**When does the reviewed GTA Policy apply?**

All Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA) engaged on or after the 1st of August 2023

# **Defining a Graduate Teaching Assistant**

A Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) is a registered postgraduate student at University who is also engaged part-time by the University to provide teaching support, as a Tutor or Demonstrator, under the direction and guidance of a supervising member of staff.

A GTA is a training role offered to postgraduate students to gain tutoring and demonstrating experience during their postgraduate studies.

A GTA can undertake up to 6 lectures on a module, as well as one hour of preparation for each hour of that lecturing under the direction and guidance of the Module Owner.

**How long can a GTA be engaged?**

A GTA can be engaged for the duration of their graduate studies subject to a maximum of four (for full time students)/six (for part time students) years and can be renewed on an annual basis for this period. Employment as a GTA will terminate when they cease to be a registered postgraduate student.

**Is it mandatory to provide GTA for all postgraduates?**

The University will only employ GTA where there is a real demonstrable need.  While teaching support is not a mandatory element of all graduate studies in all Disciplines/Units, a Teaching and Learning module may be a core programme requirement to do teaching support practice, and postgraduate students may opt not to do teaching support. The University has a reasonable expectation that research postgraduate students would contribute to the teaching support mission of the University.

**Can a GTA work from abroad?**

No. GTA are required to reside in the Republic of Ireland, in such a place as will allow them to attend the University and discharge their duties in full. It is understood that a GTA place of work will principally be one of the University’s recognised campuses, however it may be varied from time to time to include other locations consistent with the requirements of the work.

**How many hours can a GTA work?**

A GTA, who is a full-time registered student, can undertake an average maximum of 20 hours per week (teaching support and associated duties) up to a maximum of 250 hours per year and no additional work should be undertaken in the University. In no circumstances may the total hours worked in any one 12-month period exceed 250 hours.

Registered part-time students may work up to 820 hours per year, under the same conditions as above for a full-time student.

Where the GTA provides teaching support and associated duties, the average weekly hours worked, may not normally exceed the lesser of 20 hours per week (up to a maximum of 250 hours per annum for full time students or 820 hours per annum for part-time students).

**What work can a GTA do?**

* Demonstrating practical skills in laboratory/field settings
* Teaching support, including seminars and tutorials.
* Up to 6 hours of Lectures and one hour of preparation for each of the Lecturing hours

This is an important part of postgraduate training and therefore the University makes such work available to postgraduate students as a priority where such work is available.

***Note:*** while a GTA may contribute to grading/assessment with a rubric provided by the module owner, the module owner is ultimately responsible for all grades returned to students.

A GTA is not responsible for the design of modules and/or the design of associated assignments or examinations.

**Can a GTA take annual leave?**

A GTA is paid 8% of their hours worked as annual leave in their monthly salary. This figure is noted separately on their payslip.

**Can a GTA do exam corrections?**

Yes, if they do not exceed 250 hours (for full time students)/820 hours (for part time students) per annum. Use the exam corrections timesheet to compute the number of hours, to be paid at the GTA Demonstrator rate, to provide payment equivalent to the per-item rate. Where there is not a per-item rate the number of hours to complete the work, to be paid at the GTA Demonstrator rate, should be agreed in advance. Payment is only if marking is not undertaken during class contact hour(s).

**Can a GTA do essay corrections?**

Yes, only as part of the overall supervision provided by the module owner. Use the essay corrections timesheet to compute the number of hours, to be paid at the GTA Demonstrator rate, to provide payment equivalent to the per-item rate. Where there is not a per-item rate the number of hours to complete the work, to be paid at the GTA Demonstrator rate, should be agreed in advance. Payment is only if marking is not undertaken during class contact hour(s).

**What are GTA pay rates?**

The GTA is paid an hourly rate of pay on the GTA salary scale depending on work undertaken.

1. GTA Tutors - €29.20 per hour
2. GTA Demonstrators - €20.07 per hour

GTA are paid on a monthly salary on the 3rd last working day of the month. The salary is spread over the duration of the contract.

**Is Garda Vetting required for all GTAs?**

In accordance with the 2012 to 2016 National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts, *Garda Vetting is conducted in respect of any person who is carrying out work or activity, a necessary and regular part of which consists mainly of the person having access to, or contact with, children or vulnerable persons.*

Please note that Garda vetting is only required if the contact with such individuals is part of the **regular line of work** of the proposed employee. It is not required if the contact is **merely incidental** in their line of work.

**What if the individual is a registered student at another university, can they be taken on as a GTA?**

All registered post graduate students at any university will be processed as GTA.

**What if the student is working as a library shelver/computer assistant in the University already? Can they still do GTA work?**

They must be a post graduate student and can still do GTA work provided both roles do not exceed the maximum of 250 hrs per annum for full-time students and 820 hours for part-time students i.e this 250 /820 hours to include their other work e.g., library shelver/computer assistant etc.

**What if they are already full time in the private sector?**

This is allowable but cannot exceed 48 hours per week as per Organisation of Working Time Act and under 250 hours max per annum for full time students and 820 hours per annum for part time students. Also, there should be no conflict of interest between the two roles.

**What if they are already full time in the public sector?**

They are not eligible for GTA work if they are already full time in the public sector.

**What if their registered studies end mid -Academic Year? Can they apply for TSS work?**

A GTA will remain under the GTA policy for the remainder of that academic term. Units are encouraged to hire the next generation of PhD students to give them the experience within the Discipline before taking on TSS.

**What if the post graduate student takes a leave of absence from their studies or defers their studies? Can they continue to work as a GTA?**

No as this is not part of the Terms and Conditions of the Leave of Absence.

All GTA work should cease on commencement of a leave of absence from their studies.

**Can I take on additional work in the university up to 250 hours (for full time students)/820 hours (for part time students) per annum?**

So long as it is GTA work and not exceeding the maximum permitted per annum on the aggregate.

**Where can I find the policy?**

You can find the policy on the Engagement of Graduate Teaching Assistants [here.](https://www.universityofgalway.ie/human-resources/duringemployment/policiesandproceduresforms/)

**Where can I find the contract set up form?**

The GTA contract set up [form](https://apps.powerapps.com/play/e/default-13e3b186-c446-4aab-9c6d-9ab9bb76816c/a/d4ee8c8d-1132-45c7-8c10-500ce769a095?tenantId=13e3b186-c446-4aab-9c6d-9ab9bb76816c&source=portal&skipAppMetadata=true) is available on the TSS [website](https://www.universityofgalway.ie/human-resources/recruitment-and-selection/recruitment-and-selection/teachingsupportstaff/).

**Will they be entitled to a contract of indefinite duration at the end of the 4 years (for full time students) 6 years (for part time students)?**

No, the work is for a specific purpose (work experience) related solely to their studies and will end when their studies end.

**What if the proposed GTA happens to be a student but we are employing them due to their expertise in a certain field? Do we take them on as a GTA or can they be taken on as TSS?**

If they are a registered student, they must be taken on as a GTA.

**How do I gather the information required to complete the online form?**

Both the hiring manager and student can complete the form together and submit.

Alternatively, when a college publishes an expression of interest to their students for a role, they can request all the documentation and information required at that point in order to complete the form.

**How should you process a GTA contract?**

A GTA contract should be submitted per academic term to support the GTA who wish to take up other employment, focus on their studies and take up seasonal employment and to receive statutory entitlements as required.

Contract dates and working hours should be discussed in advance with the employee. Contract dates should reflect the exact work dates of the employee. This is because a contract of employment is a legal document which must cover the period worked by the employee rather than covering the duration of the semester/academic year. It is also important for both Revenue and PRSI reasons that the dates of the contract reflects the period worked as per above.

For example – John Smith starts on 15th of September until 30th November – the contract dates should reflect this rather than the duration of the term.

**Do I need to provide paperwork such as copies of my qualifications? I studied at the University of Galway so my paperwork should be on file.**

For GDPR purposes, HR do not have access to student records.

**What do I send for proof of my qualifications?**

A scan or photo of your qualifications or university transcripts will suffice.

**When/how they will be paid e.g. will they be paid Monthly pay or through timesheets?**

GTAs will always be paid by monthly salary over the duration of the contract.

**I have some Social Welfare forms for completion on behalf of a GTA member in my School, who completes these?**

These social welfare forms should be completed by the employee in the first instance before forwarding to the school admin for confirming it is correct, branding it and returning it to the employee. Some forms require input from HR (salary/PRSI/tax information) and in this instance, once the school has confirmed that the details are correct, the form can be forwarded to HR at [hrta@universityofgalway.ie](mailto:hrta@universityofgalway.ie) or [payroll@universityofgalway.ie](mailto:payroll@universityofgalway.ie)  by the school for completion and branding before returning to the GTA.

**What is the Notice Period for GTA?**

One month’s notice in writing.

**Sick Leave:**

All GTA are entitled to sick leave – Please refer to QA105 Sick Leave policy

**Organisation of Working Time Act:**

The Organisation of Working Time Act 1997 limits the maximum average working week to 48 hours. Weekly working time can be averaged over a 4-month reference period.

**Equality:**

The University provides equality of opportunity and treatment to all regardless of a person’s gender identity /expression (this includes Transgender and Non-Binary people); pregnant or maternity status; marital or civil partnership status; whether or not they have dependants (including caring responsibilities); religious belief or political opinion; race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, including Irish Travellers); disability; sexual orientation and age.

Workers with disabilities or long-term conditions will be encouraged to disclose this in the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form, and to the relevant school and discuss reasonable adjustments which may be required to support them in undertaking the activities.

**How to engage a GTA?**

Complete GTA online [form](https://apps.powerapps.com/play/e/default-13e3b186-c446-4aab-9c6d-9ab9bb76816c/a/d4ee8c8d-1132-45c7-8c10-500ce769a095?tenantId=13e3b186-c446-4aab-9c6d-9ab9bb76816c&source=portal&skipAppMetadata=true) to be approved by HoS and college Finance Business Partner

**Who can I contact if I have any further questions?**

[**hrta@universityofgalway.ie**](mailto:hrta@universityofgalway.ie)

# **Responsibilities**

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| --- | --- |
| ***Name*** | ***Responsibility*** |
| *Director of Human Resources* | *Policy Owner* |
| *Head of School/Unit* | *Engagement of the Graduate Teaching Assistant, Initial approval of application, submission of forms for processing. Further responsibilities laid out below.* |
| *Graduate Teaching Assistant* | *Submission of paperwork related to their engagement. Further responsibilities laid out below.* |
| *Human Resources Office* | *Processing of forms and providing advice to Heads of Schools on the engagement of Graduate Teaching Assistants. Facilitate Garda Vetting process.* |

## **Head of School/Line Manager is responsible**

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| **Action** | **Check** |
| * Ensure that GTA are appropriately selected, trained, supported and supervised and that any necessary supports are provided to the employee. |  |
| * Confirm College approval (financial and headcount) for the engagement of a GTA **prior** to them commencing in post. |  |
| Check hours of work are compliant |  |
| Submit contract request forms |  |
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## **Graduate Teaching Assistant**

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| **Action** | **Check** |
| * Complete all paperwork required accurately and in full and submit same |  |
| * Declare on contract set up form all other employment and advise of any changes |  |
| Please provide your PPS Number |  |

**Related documents/websites**

* [QA135 Engagement of GTA](https://www.universityofgalway.ie/human-resources/duringemployment/policiesandproceduresforms/)
* [University Guidelines for Research Degree Programmes](https://www.nuigalway.ie/graduate-studies/currentstudents/guidelines-regulations-forms/)
* [Teaching Assistants – University of Galway](https://www.nuigalway.ie/human-resources/recruitment-and-selection/recruitment-and-selection/teachingsupportstaff/)