

## **TO: Psychology Graduate Teaching Assistants**

The Department of Psychology, College of Liberal Arts, University of Minnesota, is pleased to offer you a Graduate Teaching Assistant appointment. This is a single-semester appointment which may be extended based on the needs of the department, availability of funding, and satisfactory performance of assistantship duties.

**Your individual “Teaching Appointment Form” with assignment and salary information will be placed in your Elliott Hall mailbox** (please note that information regarding research assistantship or fellowship funding will not be included in that form). If the terms of this appointment are acceptable, please sign and date one copy of your Appointment Form and return it to Judy Peterson (S257 Elliott) within one week of its receipt. Your acceptance is an explicit agreement that you intend to fulfill this assignment. Please retain this letter and one copy of your appointment form for your records.

### **Graduate Assistant Employment**

You are responsible for knowing the policies, guidelines, and benefits applicable to your appointment as a graduate assistant. Employment terms and conditions for this position are attached. Graduate employment information (including tuition benefits, graduate assistant insurance, pay and taxes) is posted at [www1.umn.edu/ohr/gae/](http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/gae/). Graduate assistantships are contingent upon satisfactory job performance, current registration as a graduate student, and satisfactory progress in your degree program. Courses and appointments may be canceled due to low enrollment or funding limitations.

The University of Minnesota (University) requires high standards of English language proficiency for nonnative English speaking graduate students who are appointed to teaching assistant positions. All nonnative English speaking Teaching Assistants (TAs) must demonstrate proficiency in spoken English appropriate to the demands of their teaching assistantship. Go to [www1.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/](http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/) for information on the required UMN SPEAK test and English Proficiency requirements for Graduate Teaching Assistants.

### **Teaching Information**

A summary of general position responsibilities and expectations in Psychology is attached. Important teaching policies/procedures/resources may be found at <http://online.psych.umn.edu/> (select “Instruction”) and at the Center for Teaching and Learning Services site: [www1.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/](http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/).

### **Payroll Information**

If this is your first appointment at the U of MN, please see Kamran Motevaze (S252 Elliott, 612-626-8146) at your earliest convenience to complete payroll documents. Proof of citizenship is required for the payroll documents and, under Federal law, must be provided no later than three days after your appointment start date. To prevent delays in your appointment processing (and paycheck), we encourage you complete this well before the deadline. Visit the Human Resources Self Service website at <http://hrss.umn.edu/> to check your pay statement and to arrange for Direct Deposit of your check. See <http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/compensation/paytaxes/paydays.html> for bi-weekly pay periods and pay dates.

If you have any questions about this appointment, please contact Judy Peterson ([erick005@umn.edu](mailto:erick005@umn.edu), 612-626-1732, S257 Elliott Hall).

We hope you will find this assistantship to be a valuable work experience and we appreciate your contribution to the teaching mission of our department.

Sincerely,

Gordon Legge, Distinguished McKnight University Professor and Psychology Department Chair

## **Attachment I:**

### **Department of Psychology Teaching Assistant Appointments**

#### **Position Descriptions:**

- 1) Assisting TAs** - assist either a professor or instructor with their day or evening course. The level of responsibilities can vary from course to course, depending on the requirements of the professor or instructor. TAs are expected to assist with the proctoring of up to two exams in another class.
- 2) Section Leaders** - are in charge of weekly section(s) in one of our larger undergraduate courses. This usually involves some lecturing, assignment grading, and group facilitation. There is an overall course plan or structure within which you will operate and weekly staff meetings with the other leaders and course supervisor.
- 3) Instructors** - have full responsibility for their course, including book selection, lectures, preparation of course materials (syllabus, exams, handouts), grading, course administration, and TA supervision. Course content and format are expected to be comparable to that presented by faculty during the regular academic year. Instructors usually have considerable expertise relating to the course material and have had prior teaching experience.

**Appointment Information:** An application for the following academic year's teaching appointments is usually available in February and due in March. Applications for summer positions (of which there are considerably fewer) are due earlier in March. An application must be submitted for each academic year and summer session. The Coordinator of Instructional Services makes the TA assignments in cooperation with the appropriate faculty and academic staff members. Appointment letters are provided on a term-by-term basis. Once you accept a position, it is expected that you will fulfill that obligation. Last minute appointment changes should be avoided.

Teaching appointments may be canceled due to low enrollments or funding limitations. Graduate students who have been promised TA funding as part of a fellowship package will be reassigned. Other graduate students will be reassigned if possible. Every effort is made to provide our graduate TAs with sufficient funding. In addition to the salary, a TA appointment provides a tuition and insurance benefit. The website, [www1.umn.edu/ohr/gae/](http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/gae/), provides more information on these benefits. Please notify Judy Peterson of your other UMN funding. Total funding must not exceed 75%, unless an exception is approved by the Graduate School.

For important teaching policies and procedures in the Department of Psychology, select "Instruction" at <http://online.psych.umn.edu/>. This site also includes important resources and staff contacts. Teaching or appointment questions should be directed to Judy Peterson ([erick005@umn.edu](mailto:erick005@umn.edu)).

**Graduate TAs are expected to be on campus to begin their duties at least one week before classes begin** and to provide a professional level of support to their assigned course(s). The expected hours per week (on average) for your appointment are stated in your appointment form. Instructors will be asked to complete a "TA Evaluation" form at the end of the term, which will be reviewed by the Coordinator of Instructional Services. All graduate student instructors should have their class complete Student Evaluation of Teaching forms at the end of the term. TA and teaching evaluation information will be kept on file in the Coordinator's office. Satisfactory performance as a TA and in one's graduate program is required for continued appointment.

The Psychology Department views TA appointments as an integral part of your graduate program. Not only are these appointments an important source of funding, they are valuable opportunities for teaching experience and skill development. A progression of teaching-related appointments, increasing in responsibility and in a variety of topics, is encouraged. Participation in teaching-development activities (such as the free workshops offered by the Center for Teaching and Learning) is also encouraged. Be sure to keep a record of your teaching and development experiences!

## **Attachment II:**

### **Employment Terms and Conditions for University of Minnesota Graduate Assistants**

Policy and Guideline information pertaining to graduate assistantship employment is available online (<http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/gae/>), from your hiring department, or from Graduate Assistant Employment. Please be aware you are responsible for knowing the policies and guidelines applicable to your appointment as a graduate assistant.

In addition to the terms and conditions set forth in your graduate assistant appointment letter, graduate assistantships are contingent upon admission to the Graduate School, current registration as a graduate student and satisfactory progress toward a Graduate School degree. In order to hold a graduate assistantship during fall or spring semester, you are required to be registered for credit (audit registration only is not acceptable). For regular assistantships, six credits of registration are required; for Advanced Masters and Ph.D. Candidate positions, one credit is required. If personal circumstances require registration for fewer than six credits, you may apply for an exception. For details, see the above website. Registration during May Intersession and summer term are not required to hold an assistantship.

Registration must be completed by the end of the second week of classes and maintained for the entire semester or your graduate assistantship will be terminated. Withdrawal from all credits will result in termination of your assistantship. If your assistantship is terminated, the hiring department has the option of converting your appointment to a non-student classification for the remainder of that semester only; however, benefits such as your graduate assistant health insurance plan and tuition benefits may be adversely affected.

Tuition benefits will be available to you if you meet eligibility requirements. Details are summarized at: <http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/gae/>.

You may enroll in the Graduate Assistant Health Insurance Plan if you meet eligibility requirements. If you are interested in this coverage, you must enroll through the Graduate Assistant Insurance Office located at N323 Boynton Health Service, 612-624-0627.

If you have F-1 or J-1 visa status, federal law prohibits the University from employing you more than 20 hours per week (50% time) during scheduled class periods and finals weeks. Exceptions exist if you have been authorized for 'practical or academic training.' Consult with the Office of International Student and Scholar Services over these matters.

*The University of Minnesota is an equal opportunity educator and employer.*