**Graduate Assistantship Handbook**

## Department of Administration, Rehabilitation

**& Postsecondary Education**



Master of Arts in Postsecondary Educational Leadership and

Masters of Arts in Postsecondary Educational Leadership with a Specialization in Student Affairs

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**INTRODUCTION**

Students in the MA Postsecondary Educational Leaders/Student Affairs program have the opportunity to participate in the graduate assistantship program. Graduate assistantships are offered at both San Diego State University and UC San Diego across a variety of student service and student academic support and development areas. Assistantships allow students to apply in-class learning to real-world experiences. In addition, they serve as valuable professional development opportunities.

**GENERAL GUIDELINES**

*Number of Assistantships*: Students can hold 1-2 assistantships per academic year. If a student would like to hold two assistantships, they must not be at the same university. For example, a student could not hold two assistantships at San Diego State University, but they could hold one assistantship at San Diego State University and one assistantship at UC San Diego if the graduate assistantship site supervisors are in agreement with the student holding two assistantships at one time. Please note that some assistantship supervisors may specifically request that a student in their office’s position only hold one assistantship.

*Time Commitment*: Graduate assistantship appointments are typically for one academic year, though there are several assistantship appointments that are two academic years. You can find a specific assistantship’s time commitment expectation by navigating to the *Assistantship* tab of the program website and downloading individual position descriptions.

Precise hours may vary amongst assistantships, but the majority of assistantship opportunities place students for 16 to 20 hours per week. Always check with the graduate assistantship site supervisor about specific compensation.

**GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP PROGRAM GOALS**

1. *Guide students toward the development of specific professional skills and technical knowledge relating to the direct delivery of one or more particular student service and/or academic support and development areas.*

2. Supplement the students’ knowledge and skills learned in the academic setting with opportunities for hands-on application.

1. *Provide opportunities for students where they can develop confidence in their ability to apply new learning and techniques.*

4. Assist students in developing skills in planning for efficient use of time and resources.

1. *Assist the students in analyzing the success of their efforts.*

*6. Assist the students in developing inquiry skills to help them gain insight into their own interests and abilities subsequent to making their own decisions about goals, and assist them in identifying steps to be taken in reaching those goals.*

*7. Help students develop positive working relationships with their supervisor, staff, and related constituents at all levels.*

*8. Assist students in co-creating an environment that reflects emotional intelligence, social justice, and compassion in its practice.*

1. *Expose students to emerging technologies and related contemporary issues.*
2. *Foster embodied professionalism, emotional intelligence, social justice, compassion and the ability to embrace ambiguity in today’s work environments.*

**STUDENT EXPECTATIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES**

The following expectations exist for every student accepting a graduate assistantship placement at either SDSU or UCSD.

* Attend all scheduled GA program events (orientations, professional development opportunities, etc)
* Communicate work schedule with site supervisor; discuss any foreseen or unforeseen absences with site supervisor in a timely fashion
* Engage in reflective discussions with site supervisors about your progress in this role, areas for growth, how the position fits in with your professional goals, and other relevant items (Ideally, this meetings should take place once a week)
* Proactively seek assistance first with site supervisor, secondly with the MA administrative program coordinator advisor, thirdly with academic faculty if you encounter a challenge with your assistantship
* Engage in professional behavior at all times, which includes expectations to consistently demonstrate emotional intelligence, social justice, and compassion.
* Embrace the ambiguity of a dynamic learning environment; ask questions; take responsibility for co-creating your work environment. We are not expecting you to be perfect. We are expecting that you practice who you are, who you are becoming and what you are discovering in the workplace and in the academic community.

**PROCESS FOR EXITING AN ASSISTANTSHIP EARLY**

The time commitment for most assistantships is a minimum of one academic year. Some assistantships expect the student to remain in the position for two years. Occasionally, a student may need to exit an assistantship before the end of the academic year or before they have completed two years. When this situation arises, students should adhere to the following process:

[1] Set up a meeting with the administrative program coordinator to discuss the reason(s) behind exiting their current assistantship and explore how this impacts their professional development. Students are welcome to meet with their faculty advisor, **in addition to the administrative program coordinator,** to discuss this decision.

[2] If the student and the administrative program coordinator agree that exiting the assistantship early is the most responsible path, students should set up a meeting with their current site supervisor to inform and discuss their decision and discuss logistical details, such as an end date, transference of current responsibilities, and potential availability to train the next hire.

[3] Student should email the administrative program coordinator, assistant program coordinator, and GA Coordinator for the university that corresponds with their current position to make sure all parties are aware that they are exiting their position early. In this email, include acknowledgement that the aforementioned process was followed as well as indicating the end date.

**SITE SUPERVISOR EXPECTATIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES**

Agreeing to host and supervise a graduate assistantship is a tremendous responsibility and time commitment for the site supervisor. As opposed to simply hiring a temporary employee to assist with current workload, hiring a graduate assistant means that you as a site supervisor are committed to expanding the professional development of the student you hire. We are grateful to you for making this commitment. Students who have graduated from the masters program have credited their graduate assistantship with fostering the professionalism and real life experience needed to “land their full-time jobs.” Nonetheless, from time-to-time, we have students report a disengaged site supervisor. As such, we have developed the following list of expectations for graduate assistant site supervisors. Providing a graduate assistantship opportunity to students enrolled in our program or accepted for enrollment into our program means the following.

* Attend the site supervisor orientation for your campus
* Complete template for position description to post on website by the designated deadline outlined in the General Timeline on Page 7
* Dedicate your time to the professional and holistic development of the grad assistant(s) you supervise
* Ideally, conduct a weekly one-on-one meeting with your GA to discuss items such as your grad assistant’s progress in their role, areas for growth, how the position fits in with their professional goals, and other relevant items
* Engage in professional behavior at all times, which includes expectations to consistently demonstrate emotional intelligence, social justice, and compassion.
* Embrace the ambiguity of a dynamic learning environment; take responsibility for co-creating your work environment.
* Communicate first, with your campus GA Coordinators, and second with the administrative program coordinator about any challenges that arise with your GA
* Complete a mid year and annual evaluations for your GA

**APPLICATION & MATCHING PROCESS- GENERAL TIMELINE**

**August:** GA orientations take place at San Diego State and UC San Diego respectively

**August/September**: Graduate assistantship appointments begin at the start of the academic year.

**September:** Site supervisors review and revise their graduate assistantship position descriptions to ensure all items are accurate and up-to-date (See Appendix B for the position description template supervisors are to use, effective Fall 2015). Send updated position descriptions to the Assistant Program Coordinator at [mapostsecondaryedinfo@mail.sdsu.edu](mailto:mapostsecondaryedinfo@mail.sdsu.edu) in a Word Document.

**November**: [1] Students speak to graduate assistant supervisors to determine if they plan to remain in the position for the following academic year or pursue different opportunities. Supervisors report their decision to their Campus Graduate Assistantship Coordinator, who then provides this information to the Masters Program Coordinator and Assistant Program Coordinator. [2] Site supervisors and graduate assistants discuss an out-of-class artifact that the student can use for their reflective learning portfolio, if the student would like to use an artifact from their assistantship. The student can draft their reflection paper and discuss the paper with their site supervisor for feedback and advice, if interested. See the Reflective Learning Portfolio Handbook for more information on this process.

**December**: [1] The online GA application opens for current and prospective students. Students choose the top five GA opportunities they are most interested in and rank them in order of 1 representing the most desired position to 5 representing the least desired position. [2] The Mid year evaluation between graduate assistant and site supervisor takes place. (See Appendix C for an example template) [3] GA Coordinators will distribute a detailed timeline for the Spring GA hiring process. Please note that the dates listed here in relation to this process serve as a general overview.

**Mid-January**: The assistantship application closes.

**Late January-Late February**: Site supervisors interview first-year students and prospective students. Please note that the interview time frame for interviewing first-year students and prospective students is slightly staggered. Site supervisors will interview first-year students from approximately late January to early February and interview prospective students in late February ***only if*** they were unable to place a first-year student in their assistantship.

**Late January- Mid March**: Site supervisors use the Google Sheet that GA Coordinators to distribute to input information such as students they plan to interview, whether they will extend an offer to the student, etc.

**Mid March**: Final placements for the following academic year are complete.

**April**: Site supervisors and graduate assistants discuss an out-of-class artifact that the student can use for their reflective learning portfolio, if the student would like to use an artifact from their assistantship. The student can draft their reflection paper and discuss the paper with their site supervisor for feedback and advice, if interested. See the Reflective Learning Portfolio Handbook for more information on this process.

**May**: The Mid year evaluation between graduate assistant and site supervisor takes place (See Appendix \_\_\_ for an example template)

**CONTACTS**

The following are a list of contacts for the Graduate Assistantship program:

Dr. Lisa Gates, Administrative Program Coordinator: lgates@mail.sdsu.edu

Dr. Marilee Bresciani Ludvik, Faculty Program Coordinator: [mbrescia@mail.sdsu.edu](mailto:mbrescia@mail.sdsu.edu)

Assistant Program Coordinator: [mapostsecondaryedinfo@mail.sdsu.edu](mailto:mapostsecondaryedinfo@mail.sdsu.edu)

Dr. Robyn Adams, San Diego State University GA Coordinator: [robyn.adams@mail.sdsu.edu](mailto:robyn.adams@mail.sdsu.edu)

Dr. Cynthia Dávalos, UC San Diego GA Coordinator: [cdavalos@ucsd.edu](mailto:cdavalos@ucsd.edu)

**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A**

**Fact Sheet: Master of Arts in Postsecondary Educational Leadership- San Diego State University**

**Mission**: Prepare self-aware, emotionally intelligent, adaptable, compassionate, and highly competent transformational leaders who will improve access, equity, and holistic student success in all of higher education.

**Program Learning Outcomes**:

1. Explain how the theoretical foundation of student success can be implemented and evaluated in daily practice
2. Apply self-awareness and self-regulation practices towards one’s own leadership strengths and identify areas of continued development
3. Identify varying leadership styles that are prevalent and explain strategies to work with those styles
4. Identify ethical leadership and social justice issues in postsecondary education and propose solutions and strategies to address these issues
5. Engage in meaningful outcomes-based assessment of collaboratively designed student learning and development programs and initiatives
6. Apply research to practice in order to advance access, equity, and student success
7. Communicate ideas and concepts effectively
8. Work collaboratively with diverse group members in diverse settings

**Program Cornerstones**:   
  
 - Self-Aware, Compassionate, Adaptive, Transformational Leaders

- Evidence-Based Inquiry to Advance Access, Equity, and Student Success  
- Socially Just Resource Stewards

**APPENDIX B**

**GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP JOB DESCRIPTION TEMPLATE**

*UNIVERSITY:*

*JOB TITLE:*

*DEPARTMENT:*

*DIVISION:*

*SUPERVISOR:*

*TIME COMMITMENT:*

*COMPENSATION:*

*GENERAL POSITION DESCRIPTION:*

*DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES:*

*REQUIREMENTS:*

*KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS NEEDED:*

*EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES:*

*CORRESPONDING PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES (PLOs):*

**APPENDIX C**

Site supervisors and graduate assistants are expected to complete a Mid-Year and End-of-Year evaluation of items related to the graduate assistant’s professionalism, job duties, etc. See below for an example provided by the Office of Student Life & Leadership at San Diego State University. Site Supervisors are welcome to use this example or develop their own for evaluations.

**Graduate Assistant Evaluation**

**Graduate Assistant Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Site Supervisor Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Semester/Year \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Student Affairs Graduate Assistants are evaluated mid-semester and at the end of the academic year on their performance in various areas outlined below

Within each category, the GAis evaluated on specific tasks and roles using the performance measures:

Below Expectations (**BE**), Meets Expectations (**ME**), or Exceeds Expectations (**EE**).

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| GA Role in Perspective | | | |
| *Specific Expectation* | BE | ME | EE |
| Effectively balances the demands of the GA job with student and personal life. |  |  |  |
| Demonstrates a positive attitude toward the university and the office within which they work. |  |  |  |
| Supports the goals and objectives of their office. |  |  |  |
| Seeks guidance and support when appropriate. |  |  |  |

**Strengths in this Area:**

**Items for Improvement in this Area:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Relationships with Students | | | |
| *Specific Expectation* | BE | ME | EE |
| Act as an appropriate role model for students. |  |  |  |
| Knows the students they are in contact with and serve as an effective resource. |  |  |  |
| Responds appropriately to students with problems and refers to other resources as necessary. |  |  |  |
| Encourages students to take responsibility for positive behavior in the community. |  |  |  |
| Maintains confidentiality with sensitive student information (if applicable). |  |  |  |
| Ability to communicate effectively, even though times of conflict. |  |  |  |
| Ability to maintain proper boundaries and professional relationships with students. |  |  |  |

**Strengths in this Area:**

**Items for Improvement in this Area:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Student Affairs Assistantship Expectations | | | |
| *Specific Expectation* | BE | ME | EE |
| Responds appropriately to changes in work assignments or programmatic responsibilities. |  |  |  |
| Respects and follows supervisory lines as a first resource for information. |  |  |  |
| Ability to professionally represent self and office to constituents on and off campus. |  |  |  |
| Communicates effectively and appropriately with staff and other graduate assistants. |  |  |  |
| Maintains appropriate levels of privacy and/or confidentiality. |  |  |  |
| Develops and maintains proper and professional relationships with peers. |  |  |  |
| Responds to incidents in a pertinent, timely and professional manner. |  |  |  |
| Demonstrates professionalism through actions, attitude and appearance. |  |  |  |
| Shows initiative to learn about the student affairs field and acquire understanding of theory to practice. |  |  |  |
| Is dependable, punctual, honors time commitments |  |  |  |

**Strengths in this Area:**

**Items for Improvement in this Area:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Social Justice, Diversity, and Inclusion | | | |
| *Specific Expectation* | BE | ME | EE |
| Demonstrates a commitment in words and actions to creating an inclusive environment. |  |  |  |
| Considers the needs of all students when planning programs and services. |  |  |  |
| Takes proactive steps to educate both self and others on issues related to social justice and diversity. |  |  |  |
| Addresses language and behavior that is not inclusive in an educational and thoughtful manner. |  |  |  |
| Serves as a resource for all students. |  |  |  |

**Strengths in this Area:**

**Items for Improvement in this Area:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Instruction Duties (as assigned) | | | |
| *Specific Expectation* | BE | ME | EE |
| Clearly communicates and practices effective classroom management skills (if applicable). |  |  |  |
| Makes appropriate lesson recommendations and teaching plans based on the developmental needs of students (if applicable). |  |  |  |
| Perform all preparations needed to teach a class effectively (if applicable). |  |  |  |
| Grades assignments and provides appropriate feedback to students in a timely manner (if applicable). |  |  |  |
| Properly performs all University administrative functions related to instruction (if applicable). |  |  |  |

**Strengths in this Area:**

**Items for Improvement in this Area:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Administrative/Operational Responsibilities | | | |
| *Specific Expectation* | BE | ME | EE |
| Ability to work independently. |  |  |  |
| Demonstrates attention to detail. |  |  |  |
| Actively participate in weekly staff meetings. |  |  |  |
| Performs all responsibilities related to specific programmatic assignments. |  |  |  |
| Submits completed weekly reports to supervisor (if applicable). |  |  |  |
| Employs supervisory skills to effectively manage student employees (if applicable). |  |  |  |
| Ability to manage time and priorities efficiently and effectively. |  |  |  |
| Demonstrates effective event management and implementation skills. |  |  |  |
| Administer over student staff budget and payroll in an accurate and timely manner (if applicable). |  |  |  |
| Completes other required paperwork correctly and in a timely fashion. |  |  |  |

**Strengths in this Area:**

**Items for Improvement in this Area:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Staff Relations/Development | | | |
| *Specific Expectation* | BE | ME | EE |
| Actively and positively participate in ongoing staff training and development. |  |  |  |
| Facilitates effective team relationships with outside community members and groups. |  |  |  |
| Attends and participates in related professional development activities. |  |  |  |

**Strengths in this Area:**

**Items for Improvement in this Area:**

|  |
| --- |
| Overall Summary |

**Overall areas of strength:**

**Superior performance incidents or outstanding contributions:**

**Overall areas for development:**

**Other comments for GA:**