

APPENDIX 12

Economics Department Policy for Graduate Teaching/Research Assistantships

The following department policies cover: i) the initial awarding of graduate assistantships, ii) a summary of the terms and conditions of such awards, iii) criteria for satisfactory performance during the period of the award, and iv) criteria for renewal. Additional information can be found in the [Graduate School Student Manual](#) and the Terms and Conditions Statement received and signed by the student at the time the offer is made.

1. **CRITERIA FOR INITIAL AWARD**

- (a) Initial awards of graduate teaching and research assistantships are made on a competitive basis for either a single semester or an academic year (two semesters). The primary criterion for the initial award is academic merit and potential as judged by the previous academic records (undergraduate and graduate), standardized test scores, letters of recommendation, past experience or training, and interest in economics. Students entering the Ph.D. program are given funding preference over students entering the M.A. program.
- (b) Criteria for renewal of such awards are outlined below.

2. **ACADEMIC LOAD AND PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT:**

- (a) Students must carry a full-time academic load in order to qualify for financial aid. Depending upon one's status in the graduate program, this means that supported students must register for between 9 and 12 credit hours of graduate course work each semester. Courses taken on an audit basis may not be applied toward the full-time requirement.
- (b) In addition to the full-time course load requirement, research and teaching assistants are required to perform services for the University under the direction of a faculty or staff member. These assignments involve from 15 to 20 hours of work per week and are intended to be largely educational in nature. The assignments are meant to prepare students for an active professional career by acquainting them with research methodology and pedagogy.
- (c) Graduate fellows are not required to perform any service for the University, although they may volunteer to undertake a research or teaching assignment if they wish. University sponsored fellowships are usually awarded for only one year.
- (d) Assistantship and fellowship awards are normally made for a ten month period, approximately August 20 to May 20. A few awards are made for only one semester. The exact period of the appointment is specified in the award letter. Students are expected to report for their assistantship assignment on or before the first day of classes. Those who report later, or who do not meet their full responsibilities during the semester, may have their funding terminated.

3. **CRITERIA FOR SATISFACTORY PROGRAM PROGRESS:**

- (a) All students holding graduate assistantships must maintain a cumulative 3.0 (B) grade point average or better during each semester of the award. Failure to meet this condition may result in the termination of the award, although the department will not normally carry out this action until the end of the award period. All incompletes (I) must be completed by the following August 1.

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- (b) Ph.D. students are required to take the two theory comprehensive examinations - microeconomic theory and macroeconomic theory - at the end of the spring semester following the completion of the required course sequence – ECON 611 and 612 for microeconomic theory, and ECON 613 and 614 for macroeconomic theory. These exams are offered within several days of each other toward the end of May and prior to June 1. Students who do not pass one or both exams will be required to retake the exam(s) not passed within one month, i.e., no later than July 1 of the same year. If a student fails either theory exam the second time, that student is terminated from the economics PhD program; a third attempt is not allowed. Within two years of passing the theory comprehensive examinations, the student must also pass comprehensive examination in two elective fields. No comprehensive examination may be taken more than twice.

A graduate assistantship may be withdrawn from a student if the above conditions are not satisfied, although this action will normally be taken at the end of the award period, that is, the award will not be renewed.

4. CRITERIA FOR ASSISTANTSHIP RENEWAL

- (a) If no change in university funding occurs, renewal decisions are based primarily upon course grades and satisfactory program progress as defined above. For PhD students, the number of Ph.D. courses taken and grades achieved in these courses – especially the required core courses: ECON 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616 and 617 – are given special emphasis. Satisfactory performance of assigned assistantship duties is also considered.
- (b) If the department experiences a reduction in its graduate support budget, the criteria for renewal may have to be more stringent. In this situation, the graduate committee will place more emphasis upon:
- (1) Performance in required courses (all students),
 - (2) Performance on the microeconomic and macroeconomic theory comprehensive examinations (second year and above students),
 - (3) The dissertation prospectus status (third year and above students),
 - (4) Performance in assigned assistantship duties (all students).
- (c) Assistantships may be terminated or renewal offers withheld from graduate students who fail to meet any of the above criteria (4 (a) and (b)).
- (d) Graduate students requesting a leave of absence or resigning from the program will be considered on a strictly competitive basis if they later reapply for admission and financial aid.