



**WORK SCHEDULE FOR RAs, TAs, GAs
AND OTHER GRADUATE STUDENT POSITIONS**

Effective June 1, 2011

These rules apply only to graduate student assistants with the titles identified herein, not to research associates or other employees with non-student job titles.

This schedule is in effect for the summer of 2011 and the 2011-2012 academic year, after which it will be reviewed by the Office of the Provost and the Graduate Student Senate for possible improvement.

Research Assistants (RAs) at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth are entitled to at least as many vacation and personal days as are indicated in this document. Teaching Assistants (TAs) work on an academic schedule, as do faculty, and thus have work periods that coincide with the academic calendar as described below. Graduate Assistants (GAs) have either the same vacation and personal days as RAs or work an academic schedule like TAs depending on the nature of the position. A GA contract will indicate whether the position follows an academic schedule or entitles the GA to vacation and personal time. If the contract was issued before these procedures were in place, the GA should ask his/her supervisor whether his/her position follows an academic schedule or whether he/she will be awarded vacation and personal time.

The supervisor for TAs is the department chairperson. The supervisor for RAs is the research supervisor and the supervisor for GAs is the hiring authority.

It is expected and hoped that the Assistants and their supervisors will be able to keep track of the use of vacation and personal time and amicably negotiate the scheduling of vacation time. In the event of difficulty or dispute in the award or scheduling of vacation or personal time, student assistants may contact the office of the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies which will intervene as necessary. If assistants seek further redress they may appeal to the executive committee of the Graduate Student Senate to aid in mediation.

All times are measured in days based on the contractually determined hours of work and an assumed 5 day work week. A full time assistant works 20 hours per week, which is assumed to be 4 hours per day for 5 days a week. One week of vacation, for such a student, is 5 days of vacation and one personal day represents 4 hours. If a student is only under contract for ½ time, 10 hours per week, it is assumed that the student works 2 hours per day for five days. One week of vacation is still 5 days, and one personal day is

2 hours. In summer a full time student is assumed to work 20 hours a week, but may be contracted for 40 hours per week. If contracted for 40 hours per week, one week of vacation remains one week, whether it is taken in summer, Fall or Spring, and one personal day is 8 hours. Assistants may agree to work on a schedule that includes more or fewer than 5 days a week if they and their supervisors agree, in which case personal days and vacation should be applied so as to give them equal hours to someone working a 5 day schedule.

Holidays

All TAs, RAs and GAs are expected to get Legal Holidays off. In the event that a supervisor requests work on a Legal Holiday, the assistant has the right to refuse or to request another day off of his/her own choosing in compensation.

The list of Legal Holidays can be found at:

<http://www.umassd.edu/hr/employeeresources/timeattendance/legalholidaysinmassachusetts/>

If a Holiday falls on an assistant's regularly scheduled work day, the assistant gets that day off without being required to make up the time or a loss of wage. A TA whose academic assignment, class or lab, is rescheduled to a different day due to a Holiday – i.e. Monday classes are moved to Tuesday – is required to adjust his/her schedule to maintain coverage for the assignment, although the total number of hours worked by the TA during the week should be reduced by the number of hours he/she was scheduled to have worked on the Holiday.

Orientation

All students receiving assistantships are required to attend graduate student orientation prior to the beginning of the first semester in which they will work. The exact training sessions they are required to attend depend on the nature of their work, as described in the orientation schedule. Additional training/orientation may be required by the department or unit in which the assistant is employed. Students who are sick or have other hardships may request permission from the office of graduate studies to miss their first orientation and attend the next available scheduled orientation. Failure to attend required orientation within one calendar year of receiving an assistantship may make the student ineligible for assistantship support.

TA Work Schedule

TAs are expected to work on an academic schedule.

For TAs with Fall contracts, a TA must be available to work 72 hours before the first day of classes in the Fall semester and must work the required number of hours stated in the contract every week, subject to the Holiday policy above, until 72 hours after the last day of finals in the Fall semester.

In addition to the Legal Holidays, the Friday after Thanksgiving is considered as a Holiday for TAs.

For TAs with Spring contracts, a TA is must be available to work 72 hours before the first day of Spring classes and work the required hours stated in the contract every week, subject to the Holiday policy above, until 72 hours after the last day of finals in the Spring semester.

In addition to the legal Holidays, Spring Break is a vacation period for TAs.

For TAs with a contract for the entire academic year, the TAs are required to be available for work in the Fall and Spring semesters as described above; but they are not required to work during intersession unless hired with a specific contract for support of an intersession course. The period from 72 hours after the last Fall exam until 72 hours before the first Spring class is a vacation period for TAs on a full academic year contract.

For TAs hired to support intersession or summer classes, the work schedule extends from 72 hours before the first class meeting until 72 hours after the last scheduled final of the relevant academic period.

TA Sick and Personal Time

Like faculty, TAs are expected to use their flexible schedules to accommodate sick and personal time. A TA must be allowed to reschedule his/her regularly scheduled hours up to 3 times per semester for illness, family or personal reasons at his/her own discretion. Rescheduling for non-medical reasons should be requested with as much advance notice as possible. The total number of hours worked by the TA should not be altered by rescheduling.

If a TA requests more than 3 alterations of his/her regular schedule during a semester, the supervisor may request documentation substantiating the reason for the request. A request for a change in schedule will not be denied if illness, religious observance or illness of a spouse or child needing assistance is documented.

RA Work Schedule

RA Vacation

RAs get one week of vacation per semester (Fall and Spring).

RAs get two weeks of vacation over the summer.

Vacation is available for use as soon as the semester or summer commences.

An RA under a full year contract, therefore, gets 4 weeks of vacation per year. Vacation time for RAs under partial summer support will be pro-rated based on 2 weeks for the entire summer.

Unused vacation time does accumulate, but the total vacation allowed to an individual cannot exceed 4 weeks in total at any one time.

Assistants will not be compensated for unused vacation at the end of employment.

Vacation time for RAs must be scheduled at least two weeks in advance and the timing must be approved by the assistant's supervisor. Generally vacation may not exceed two weeks in duration at any one time; but a supervisor may allow a longer vacation at his/her discretion. In the event of denial of a vacation request, the denial must be justified based on the negative impact on the research activity that would result from granting vacation at that particular time. Alternative more suitable times for vacation should be suggested by the supervisor that are as close as possible in timing and duration to the requested time.

RA Personal Time

RAs get personal days as follows:

5 personal days per semester.

1 additional personal day for intersession (if they have work obligations in over the entire intersession)

4 personal days for summer (if they have a full summer contract, or pro-rated if not).

Personal days may not be accumulated except that assistants who work during intersession may use Fall semester or Spring semester personal days during intersession if they have them available.

Personal days may be taken for any reason at any time of the assistant's choosing. Assistants should provide as much notice as possible to their supervisors when using planned personal days; but personal time may be used without advanced notice, as in the case of illness.

GA Schedules

GA positions will follow either the TA or RA mode of scheduling. GA positions that are tied to student or classroom support are expected to follow TA academic schedules. GA positions that involve substantial intersession activity should follow RA rules. Supervisors should clearly indicate which mode of scheduling they will follow for their GA workers at the time of hire.

Distinguished Doctoral Fellows, Distinguished Art Fellows, Doctoral Fellows all follow the scheduling rules for RAs.

External Fellowships: Students on externally funded fellowships follow the rules for RA scheduling unless the terms of their external fellowship are in conflict with such scheduling.

Teaching Fellows follow the TA work schedule.

Instructional Assistants (graduate student employees who are instructors of record for lab or lecture sections while they are in thesis or dissertation continuation mode) follow the TA work schedule.

Studio Assistants follow the TA work schedule.

Graduate Researchers (graduate student employees who are being compensated for research being performed while they are in thesis or dissertation continuation mode) follow the scheduling rules for RAs.

Note on the Relation of RA Work to Degree Completion

The assigned work for many RA positions contributes toward completion of degree requirements: usually a thesis or dissertation. It is usually the case, however, that the amount of work required to successfully complete a thesis, project or dissertation will greatly exceed the number of hours for which an RA is paid. Working the hours for which one is paid and fulfilling one's duties as an RA in no way guarantees that a degree will be awarded. RA positions allow the university to help students financially as they work towards their degrees; but the actual amount of work one must do in order to complete a degree depends on many factors that are unrelated the number of hours assigned as an RA. Expectations for degree completion are based entirely on academic expectations and do not depend in any way on whether a student has an assistantship or on what type of assistantship a student might have.