

# Policy Manual

<b>Policy Title:</b>	<i>COPH PhD Degree Program Graduate Assistantship</i>		
<b>Responsible Office:</b>	<i>COPH Finance and Administration, COPH PhD Degree Programs, COPH Academic Affairs</i>		
<b>Responsible College Official:</b>	<i>Assistant/Associate Dean for Finance and Administration, COPH PhD Degree Program Directors, Assistant/Associate Dean for Academic Affairs</i>		
<b>Approval:</b>	<i>Dean’s Executive Committee and Dean</i>		
<b>Date Approved:</b>	09/18/2025	<b>Effective:</b>	10/29/2025
<b>Replaces Policy Dated:</b>	N/A		

**PURPOSE:**

To provide information regarding the administration of graduate assistantships in a UAMS Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health doctoral degree program that is administratively housed in the UAMS Graduate School.<sup>1</sup> A doctoral degree program administratively housed in the UAMS Graduate School is assumed to be a PhD degree program, but not to the exclusion of others.

**SCOPE:**

This policy applies to students in receipt of graduate assistantships while enrolled in a UAMS Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health doctoral degree program that is administratively housed in the UAMS Graduate School.

**DEFINITIONS:**

Graduate assistant: An administrative title used by UAMS Human Resources for students who are receiving a graduate assistantship.

Graduate assistantship: A form of financial assistance consisting of payment of tuition, fees, and a monthly stipend *or* solely of a monthly stipend.

**POLICY STATEMENT:**

The UAMS Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health (COPH) endeavors to promote the study of public health by offering financial assistance to qualified students in the form of graduate assistantships. It is the duty of the COPH to administer these graduate assistantships in a manner that: (1) ensures that students make satisfactory progress toward their degrees; (2) ensures that these students render appropriate service; (3) rewards the most diligent, dedicated, and qualified students; and (4) makes effective use of funds available to support graduate education.

<sup>1</sup> For COPH doctoral programs other than those administratively housed in the UAMS Graduate School see the COPH Doctoral Degree Program Graduate Policy.

# COPH PhD Degree Program Graduate Assistantship Policy

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Graduate assistantships shall be awarded subject to the availability of funds.

Graduate assistantships for doctoral programs administratively housed in the Graduate School shall be subject to the policies of both the UAMS Graduate School *and* the UAMS Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health.

## 1. Nature of Support

- a. Graduate assistantships may be provided by the COPH or by designated extramural sources. The awarding of graduate assistantships and the amounts to be paid are determined by the COPH.
- b. Upon acceptance to the program, students are offered graduate assistantships for up to four (4) academic years. The college shall pay for tuition, fees, and stipend, for up to two (2) academic years.
- c. Securing funding for graduate assistantships beyond the two (2) academic years funded by the college shall be the responsibility of the degree program.
- d. Graduate assistants are eligible to file for FICA tax exemption on an annual basis, with assistance from the COPH Administrative Services Manager
- e. Graduate assistants are not eligible for employment benefits and are responsible for their own health insurance, housing and other living expenses.

## 2. Obligations of a graduate assistantship recipient

- a. A graduate assistantship recipient is required to be a full time student each semester for which they are receiving funds. For this purpose full-time status is defined as registering for:
  - i. Nine (9) or more credit hours each in fall and spring semester;
  - ii. One (1) or more credit hour in the summer semester<sup>2</sup>; or
  - iii. One (1) hour each semester post-proposal defense<sup>3</sup>.
- b. A graduate assistantship recipient shall remain in good academic standing as defined in the COPH Student Handbook.
- c. A graduate assistantship recipient shall be a full-time student as described in 2.b. and fulfill graduate assistant duties up to twenty (20) hours per week. Graduate assistants are strongly discouraged from engaging in any part-time external employment (employment outside the university). Graduate assistants are prohibited from engaging in external full-time employment.
- d. A graduate assistant may request to engage in external employment by obtaining written authorization from their mentor, program director, and the dean of the COPH.<sup>4</sup>
- e. A graduate assistant engaging in external employment shall maintain good academic standing and fulfill the required duties of the assistantship. If, while engaging in external employment, the graduate assistant is unable to maintain good academic standing or

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<sup>2</sup> Registering for one (1) credit hour is not considered full-time for the purposes of financial aid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> This request shall be made by completing the Graduate Assistant Request to Engage in External Employment form.

# COPH PhD Degree Program Graduate Assistantship Policy

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fulfill the required duties of the graduate assistantship, the graduate assistantship shall immediately cease and the recipient may be liable for repayment of part or all of the tuition and fees paid received while engaging in external employment.

- f. A graduate assistant who obtains authorization to engage in external employment shall, upon acceptance of outside employment, immediately notify their mentor and doctoral program director. Upon notification, the doctoral program director shall immediately notify the COPH Assistant Dean for Finance and Administration.
- g. A graduate assistant recipient who resigns or is terminated from their graduate assistantship appointment, whether or not they withdraw from UAMS, may be required to reimburse UAMS for the tuition and fees paid on their behalf, proportionate to the length of time remaining during the current semester.
- h. Failure to comply with this policy will result in loss of the graduate assistantship.

## **RELATED POLICIES:**

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University of Arkansas Board of Trustees Policy 520.9

University of Arkansas Board of Trustees Policy 500.1

UAMS Academic Affairs Policy 3.3.9

UAMS Graduate School Handbook Degree Requirements: Doctor of Philosophy

UAMS Graduate School Handbook Degree Requirements: Graduate Stipends

UAMS Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health policy: Good Academic Standing

## **POLICY BACKGROUND:**

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Policy reviewed by COPH Office of Finance and Administration, COPH department chairs, COPH PhD degree program directors, and a committee of COPH faculty prior to review and approval by COPH Dean's Executive Committee and COPH Dean.

## **POLICY CONTACTS:**

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COPH Assistant Dean for Finance and Administration

COPH PhD Degree Program Directors

COPH Associate Dean for Academic Affairs