



Graduate Assistantship

HR RESOURCE GUIDE

HUMAN
RESOURCES



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Introduction

What Is A Graduate Assistantship?

Graduate Assistants are graduate students who are employed at the University. There are three types of roles (see below) graduate assistants perform while at the University.

Graduate assistants with a title of Graduate Assistant or Graduate Teaching Assistant who have a total FTE between 25% and 67% are covered by a collective bargaining agreement. Certain terms are covered by the Graduate Employees Organization (GEO) Labor Agreement.

Note: Graduate students can also be employed on an hourly basis or as a student employee.

Types of Assistantships

Graduate Assistant (GA)

Duties include, but are not limited to, duties primarily in support of administrative functions, such as: clerical support; technical/support services; webmaster/assisting faculty with web pages, network administration/end user support, equipment management, monitoring instructional and service labs; translation; routine support for publications such as writing copy for university or department newsletters or non-research publications, correspondence, etc.; advising/providing curricular and academic advice to students, providing support to advisors; and outreach duties such as publicizing programs and activities to campus and public constituencies, and working with/assisting with event management. This assistantship is part of the Graduate Employee Organization Union if the appointment FTE is between 25% and 67%.

Graduate Research Assistant (RA)

Research activities may include, but are not limited to, the following examples of applying and mastering research concepts, practices, or methods of scholarship: conducting experiments; organizing or analyzing data; presenting findings; collaborating with others in preparing publications; and conducting institutional research for an academic or administrative unit.

Graduate Teaching Assistant (TA)

Duties include, but are not limited to, duties primarily in support of instruction and educational services such as: leading discussion sections; leading class discussions; holding lectures; the design of course materials; exam preparation; proctoring and grading assignments or exams; holding office hours; note-taking; meeting special needs of students with disabilities; and/or any other educational activity or service provided. This assistantship is part of the Graduate Employee Organization Union as long as the appointment FTE is between 25% and 67%.

Eligibility for Graduate Assistantship

The student must be enrolled in a graduate degree program at the University of Illinois at Chicago. (Non-degree seeking students are not eligible.)

- Graduate students must be enrolled for at least 8 semester hours during the Fall/Spring term.
- Summer Term Eligibility—Although the Graduate College does not require summer registration to hold a summer assistantship, a minimum of 3 hours registration is required in order to receive a summer tuition waiver.

What assistantships are offered at UIC?

Colleges will announce job opportunities through their internal student email distribution lists, campus e-mail listservs or departmental postings.

In addition, the University of Illinois at Chicago Job Board will list open positions under the section Graduate Assistant.

<http://jobs.uic.edu/job-board>

Appointment Dates

Graduate Assistantships are typically appointed on a term by term basis or may be appointed for a full academic year.

Semester	Service falls in between dates
Fall Term	8/16 - 12/31
Spring Term	1/1 - 5/15
Summer	5/16 - 8/15

The appointment dates may fluctuate based on the service dates the student actually provides. In addition, international students may have additional restrictions set by the student/work authorizations.

** Appointment dates must be at least 91 calendar days during the semester in order for the tuition waiver to apply.*



Starting Your Assistantship

Offer Letter

The hiring unit/department/college will issue an offer letter explaining the terms of the assistantship:

- Percentage of appointment (FTE)
- Assistant type and if covered by GEO
- Whether the tuition waiver is being offered or not
- Rate of pay (wages)
- Appointment dates (start and end date)
- Supervisor in unit
- Duties of the position

The offer letter must be accepted either by signing the letter in person or forwarding acceptance via email to the hiring unit/department/college.

Orientation for Teaching Assistants

The Graduate College offers a campus-wide Teaching Assistant orientation every August prior to the start of the new fall semester.

If you are teaching for the first time, please work with your supervisor to ensure your name has been provided. Additional information can be found via the link below.

<http://grad.uic.edu/campus-wide-new-ta-orientation>

In addition to the orientation listed above, newly appointed international Teaching Assistants should attend the Campus-Wide New International Teaching Assistant Orientation form the International Teaching Assistant Program (Graduate College). Additional Information can be found via the link below.

<https://grad.uic.edu/campus-wide-new-international-teaching-assistant-orientation>

Additional GA/TA/RA Responsibilities

All University employees are required to complete education programs and sign acknowledgement form.

- **Ethics Training/Certification Requirement** (annual)
- **Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Training** (annual)
- **Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act [ANCRA]** (once)

Graduate assistants should pay careful attention to notices and deadlines that are communicated via email. Failure in any of the annual Training periods will lead to termination of the GA appointment.

NESSIE

Employees may access NESSIE for the following:

- Make address changes
- Update education information
- View earnings statement
- W-2 wage and tax statement
- Change direct deposit bank information

Access NESSIE at:

www.nessie.uihr.uillinois.edu

Employee Verification

Current UIC Employees

You will need to create a Vendor Access Number (VAN) for access by third-party, such as a mortgage company:

1. Go to the Employee Verification System on NESSIE.
2. Log on with your NetID and password.
3. Select the level of authorization you wish to display to the vendor.
4. Click Submit

Please Note: You will need to give the vendor your Social Security Number and the VAN you created. The vendor will also need the below web address to view your information.

<https://hrnet.uihr.uillinois.edu/evs>

Former or Inactive UIC Employee

Academic Professional, Civil Service, Faculty, Graduate Students, and Residents

Fax requests: (312) 996-1700

Must include employee's approval to release the information. The fax request is only available for former or terminated employees.

Former Student Employees should direct all inquiries to the Student Employment Office: (312) 996-3130

Leaving an Assistantship

Resignation

- Graduate Assistants are required to give written notice of resignation
- Written release from appointing unit if resignation is sought in order to accept a different unit's assistantship

Termination

Graduate Assistants who fail to enroll, maintain academic satisfactory progress or withdraw from the University will be terminated from the Graduate Assistant appointment.

Graduate Employee Organization "GEO"

Collective Bargaining Agreements

Certain assistantships are covered under a Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Graduate Assistant (GA)

and

Teaching Assistant (TA)*

** where TOTAL appointment FTE must be between 0.25 to 0.67*

The GEO Contract is negotiated. The current contract is available on UIC HR's website.

GEO Local 6297(IF-T-AFT)-Graduate Employees Organization Labor Contract

GEO Fair Share/Union Dues

Graduate Assistants will have either Union Dues or Fair Share deducted from their monthly stipends.

Union Dues

The money covers the cost of membership.

\$3.00 or 2.4% of gross pay
(the greater of the two)

Fair Share

As an employee of a unionized agency, current law requires the University to deduct fair share even though a graduate student may not elect to be in the GEO union.

2.4% of gross pay

The Union shall notify the University of any increase in dues at least 30 calendar days before the effective date of the increase on Union/Fair Share dues.

For more information please refer to the Dues Deduction and Fair Share section of the current GEO Local 6297 (IFT-AFT) Labor Agreement.

https://www.hr.uic.edu/labor_relations/labor_agreements/

Hours and Wages

Work Hours and FTE

FTE is calculated based on a 40 hour work/5 days. The number of hours a student is expected to work will be determined by the assigned FTE outlined in the offer letter.

Calculation: to calculate the expected hours of work per week, multiply 40 hours per week by the FTE

Example: 40 hrs/wk x 0.25 FTE = work hours of 10 hours/week

Graduate assistants appointed at different FTE levels would be expected to perform work for a proportionately greater or lesser average number of hours per week. The actual number of weekly hours of work are expected to vary over the course of the appointment term.

International Students cannot exceed 50% FTE

By Federal law, international students are limited to working 20 hours/week (from all jobs) when classes are in session. Failure to comply can lead to loss of student visa. International students may work additional hours when classes are not in session. For more information, please visit the Office of International Services website at:

<https://www.ois.uic.edu/cms/one.aspx?portalId=1581&pageId=189691>

Hourly Appointments

Students may hold Graduate Hourly or student appointments in conjunction with a Graduate Assistantship. This would be an hourly position based on temporary assignment and paid on the number of hours provided. Work hours are not typically known in advance and are variable.

Graduate students who hold an active Graduate Assistantship in any capacity (Teaching/Research/Administrative) and work on an hourly appointment should not exceed the equivalent of 67%. It will have an impact on the tuition waiver.

International students are still limited to the 50% maximum FTE as noted in previous slide.

Graduate Assistant/Hourly Overview

Graduate Assistantship combinations and their impact to various topics (see below):

1. *If not held in conjunction with a TA or GA that is between 25%-67%.*
2. *Total FTE on combined appointments must be between 25%-67%. In addition, the appointment must be a minimum of 91 days.*

Type of Assistantship	Part of Union	Taxation due to IRS, Section 127	Tuition Waiver eligibility	Mandatory Orientation
Graduate Teaching Assistant (TA)	Yes	Exempt	Yes	Yes
Graduate Research Assistant (RA)	No ¹	Exempt	Yes	No
Graduate Assistant (GA) (Administrative)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Graduate Hourly	No ²	No	No	No

Stipend

The minimum rates for stipends are set each year

- The GEO Contract determines TA/GA minima
- Campus administration sets RA minima

UIC HR monitors and ensures pay is at or above the minima however units/colleges may have internal pay structures which are higher than the campus and contract minima.

Graduate assistantship minima's can be found on the below website:

https://www.hr.uic.edu/classification_and_compensation/minima_for_graduate_appointments

Pay Schedule

The pay period for a graduate assistantship begins on the 16th of month and extends to the 15th of following month with the monthly pay date on the 16th of each month.

If the 16th falls on a Saturday or Sunday, wages are issued on Friday before the 16th.

If a graduate assistant works a partial month, then partial salary is calculated based on the number of work days during that pay period in that particular semester.

Payroll Schedule:

<https://www.obfs.uillinois.edu/payroll/schedules/>

Graduate assistants can arrange for their pay to be direct deposited to their bank account. This is separate from any arrangements made on the student side through Financial Aid or Student Accounts Receivable.

Graduate assistants who decide not to provide direct deposit information will receive their pay via a pay card. For additional information, please see the University Payroll & Benefits website regarding Direct Deposit Information.

You may view your Earnings Statements or modify Direct Deposit information via NESSIE (select the Compensation Tab).

<https://nessie.uihr.uillinois.edu>

FICA Exemption

Under the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA), 12.4% of income must be paid to OASDI (Social Security) and Medicare.

Graduate Assistants will be exempted from FICA deductions as long as they meet the below criteria:

Registered for at least half-time

- Six credit hours for fall and spring terms
- Three credit hours for summer term

Student will be taxed FICA if they register for below the required enrollment hours or work during school breaks of five weeks or greater.

For additional information, please see:

<https://www.obfs.uillinois.edu/payroll/tax-information/fica/>

View Earnings Statement

Earnings statements are available on line via NESSIE three days prior to payday and history up to 48 months is kept in NESSIE for viewing purposes.

Nessie – Compensation website

Are you off campus?

You must access your direct deposit, earnings statement, and tax statement from either a computer on a University network, OR by using 2 Factor Authentication (2FA) when you are off campus.

To set up 2FA go to:

<https://verify.uillinois.edu/>

If you have not done so yet, we encourage you to set up 2FA immediately.

Tuition Waivers

Assistantship Tuition Waiver

In order to be eligible for the Tuition Waiver benefits a student must be a degree-seeking student in good standing enrolled in an academic program

Registration is required for Fall and Spring Terms. If summer enrollment occurs, a GA must hold at least 3 credit hours in order to receive the waiver. Registration in any or all parts of Summer term are combined to achieve the total required hours.

Students who qualify for a Spring Assistantship waiver automatically receive a summer waiver unless they hold a summer Assistantship. However, students can be employed as Graduate Hourly and receive a Summer waiver based on the Spring GA appointment.

Total Assistantship FTE in the term must be between 0.25 and 0.67.

The appointment duration must meet minimum number of calendar days which is the week before the first day of classes until the last day of finals.

For examples, please view:

https://www.hr.uic.edu/hiring/hiring_GA/

Fall or Spring Term	Summer Term
91 consecutive calendar days	41 consecutive calendar days

Waivers are processed by the Office of Student Financial Aid (OSFA) after the Human Resource (HR) transaction has been applied. Waivers are processed on the following Tuesday or Thursday after the HR transaction has been applied.

What's included:

- Tuition (see Graduate College paid for which differentials are waived)
- Fees
 - Service fee
 - Health service fee
 - Academic Facilities Maintenance Fund Assessment (AFMFA) fee
 - Library/Technology Assessment
 - CampusCare Health Insurance fee (unless waived) (Fall/Spring only) \$275.00 or 40% whichever is higher

What is not included:

- General fee
- CTA Transportation fee
- Student-to-Student fee
- Sustainability fee
- The remainder of the cost of health insurance over the amount listed above
- International Student fees

For updated information, please refer to the Graduate College:

<http://grad.uic.edu/assistantships>

Graduate Tuition and Fees:

<https://registrar.uic.edu/tuition/grad/index.html>

Taxation of Tuition Waivers

In compliance with Internal Revenue Code Section 127, the first \$5,250 (per calendar year) of the tuition and service fee waivers associated with a Graduate Assistantship position is excluded from taxable income. Anything exceeding \$5,250 for earnings as a Graduate Assistant will be taxed. Earnings as a Graduate Teaching Assistant or Graduate Research Assistant are exempt from this tax.

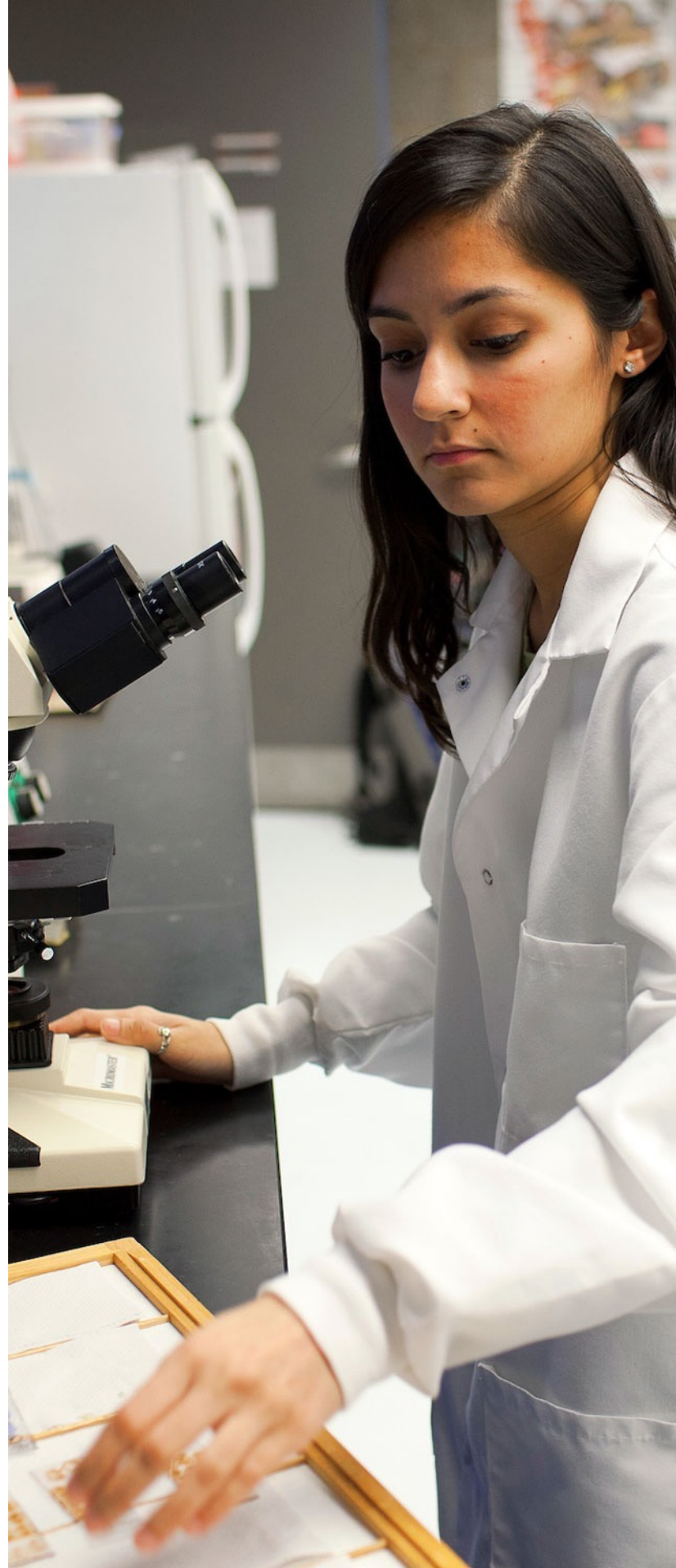
For more information regarding the process, along with an IRS Withholding Calculator and Overview Training Materials, please see the below websites for additional information:

Taxation of Graduate Assistant:

<http://grad.uic.edu/taxation-graduate-assistant-pre-professional-graduate-assistant-tuition-waivers-faqs>

Taxability of Certain Assistantship Tuition and Service Fee Waivers:

<http://www.obfs.uillinois.edu/payroll/tuition-fee-waivers/>



International Employees

International Graduate Assistants have additional steps that are required in order to hold their position.

Tax Treaties

Register with the University Payroll & Benefits Office for a Tax Status Review. This is an annual requirement.

<https://apps.obfs.uillinois.edu/Registration/index.cfm?campus=F>

Oral Certification

Profess for International Teaching Assistants

International Teaching Assistants will be required to undergo an oral certification process and attend Orientation for New International Teaching Assistants.

<http://grad.uic.edu/international-teaching-assistants-program-home-page>

Additional Restrictions

International employee appointment dates are set by their work authorizations and are limited to 50% (20 hours per week) during the term. The 20 hours per week is the maximum regardless of how many positions are held.

Example: 25% GA will allow for an additional 10 hours per week as a student employee

International students can exceed the 20 hours per week only during the break periods.

Work authorization is impacted by the graduation date.

Benefits

Health Care

Graduate Assistants are covered through *CampusCare* for health insurance. CampusCare is a self-funded student health benefit program which is automatically assessed along with other tuition and fees.

For more information, please visit the *CampusCare* website at the link below.

<http://campuscare.uic.edu/>

CampusCare	(312) 996-4915
<i>Referrals, Pre-authorization's and Admissions</i>	(Option 1)
<i>Claims Issues</i>	(Option 2)
<i>Administrative Issues</i>	(Option 3) or email cchealth@uic.edu

Contact the Department of Family Medicine for all appointments, medical issues or medical questions. Members and covered dependents can make an appointment with a *CampusCare* Health Center Physician at the below location.

<p>Family Medicine Center University Village</p> <p>722 W. Maxwell St. Ste 235 Chicago, IL 60607 Ph: 312-996-2901</p> <p>Monday 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM Tuesday 8:00 AM – 9:00 PM Wednesday 9:30 AM – 5:00 PM Thursday 8:00 AM – 9:00 PM Friday 7:00 AM – 5:00 PM Saturday 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM</p>

Referrals are required for authorized services provided outside a *CampusCare* Health Center.

<https://campuscare.uic.edu/campuscare-health-center-physicians/>

Dental

Graduate Assistants who meet the eligibility criteria for the dental program will be automatically enrolled in the Graduate Assistant Dental Plan (GADP).

Eligibility Must have at least a 25% - 67% FTE appointment

Dental appointments can be scheduled by calling the Faculty Dental Practice at (312) 355-1401. First time patients must register on the day of their appointment at Central Registration and identify themselves as having GADP coverage. Faculty Dental Practice staff will provide instructions regarding Central Registration when the first appointment is scheduled. All plan participants must present valid picture identification at the time of service.

See UIC HR's website for more information regarding dental benefits.

https://www.hr.uic.edu/labor_relations/labor_agreements/ga_dental_and_vision/

Additional questions can be directed to University Payroll and Benefits at (312) 996- 6471.

Vision

Graduate Assistants meeting the eligibility criteria are automatically enrolled in the UIC Graduate Assistant Vision Care Benefit (VSP) program.

Must have at least a 25% - 67% FTE appointment as a RA, GA or TA. BENEFITS: Examination once every 12 months by a VSP doctor

Select a VSP doctor or call 800-877-7195 to request a VSP doctor listing. You will be asked for your member number. Please provide your university identification number (UIN).

For additional requirements and information regarding: Graduate Assistant Dental and Vision Benefits at the following link: https://www.hr.uic.edu/labor_relations/labor_agreements/ga_dental_and_vision/

Additional questions can be directed to University Payroll and Benefits at (312) 996-6471.

403B/457 Plans

Graduate Assistants may contribute to the 403(b) and/or 457 Deferred Compensation plans using traditional pre-tax and/or Roth contributions. Contributions to the optional retirement plans may be started, changed, or stopped at any time during employment.

University Supplemental 403(b) Plan - Optional individual investment account with pre-tax and post-tax (Roth) options.

State of Illinois 457 Deferred Compensation Plan – Optional individual investment account with pre-tax and post-tax (Roth) options. Exempt from Illinois income tax (with certain restrictions).

For more information please go to Nessie: 403B and or 457 Deferred Compensation Plans



Leaves

Leaves - Sick

Absences

If a graduate assistant must be absent from work due to illness, it is the assistant's responsibility to inform his/her supervisor in advance.

Paid Sick leave is based on the percentage of appointment (FTE).

A maximum of 13 non-cumulative days and non-compensable work days of leave are accrued based on the percentage of the appointment for each appointment year. Sick time is accrued and earned based on FTE.

Six and one half days at percentage FTE for a semester appointment are accrued.

Days are equal to your "work day," not set at eight hours of sick leave at the percentage of their appointment.

FTE	Earned Sick Time per Pay Period (hours)
0.25	2.89
0.50	5.78

Leaves – Personal (unpaid)

Personal Leave of Absence

Graduate Assistants may be granted unpaid leave of absence during the term of their appointment, upon request to and at the discretion of the University and subject to such terms and conditions as the University may establish.

Written request should be made to the department head or supervisor as soon as need for leave is identified by the assistant. The request must include the start date and end date of the leave.

Leaves – Personal and Holiday

Personal Day

Graduate Assistants are eligible for one (1) paid noncumulative and non-compensable work day each semester to attend to personal business. Scheduling of personal day use requires prompt notification to and approval by the department head or supervisor and may include time taken during the semester breaks.

Holiday

Graduate Assistants whose normal work day falls on a University or designated holiday will be paid for the day. For a complete listing, view the HR Holiday Calendar on the UIC HR Homepage www.hr.uic.edu.

Leaves - Bereavement

Graduate Assistants are granted up to three days paid leave upon death of a family member outlined below:

- Immediate family member
- Registered same-sex domestic partner
- Household member
- In-laws
- Grandparents and/or grandchildren

For a relative outside of the ones listed above, one day of paid leave will be granted.

Leaves – Parental

Eligible Graduate Assistants are entitled to up to two weeks of parental leave without loss of pay immediately following the birth of a child, or upon either the initial placement or the legal adoption of a child under 18 years of age. Eligible assistants are those who hold an active appointment at the time the parental leave is taken. Parental leave will be counted as part of the twelve week entitlement accorded by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) for FMLA eligible individuals and may be used in conjunction with other paid or unpaid leaves for which the individual is eligible.

If needed, Graduate Assistants may request additional unpaid time under a Personal Leave of Absence. Approval would be at the discretion of the supervisor.

For additional information, please see the [GEO Contract](#).

https://www.hr.uic.edu/labor_relations/labor_agreements/

Leaves – Family Medical

Graduate Assistants would be granted a medical leave under Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) if all of the below conditions apply.

- Must have 12 months of University employment
- Must have at least 1250 hours of service in the last 12 months
- Serious medical condition of self or immediate family member

If eligible, FMLA provides 12 weeks of leave, leave not required to be paid

If not eligible for FMLA, a Graduate Assistant may consider requesting an unpaid Personal Leave of Absence.

Other Leaves

Jury Duty

Graduate Assistants are eligible for leave of absence without loss of pay for the duration of jury duty, on the day or days when the assistants would have otherwise been performing assistant duties.

- A Graduate Assistant may also retain funds paid in compensation for jury duty in keeping with University policy, which is subject to change.
- A Graduate Assistant summoned as a juror shall immediately inform their supervisor of the absence. Teaching assistants who are called for jury duty shall discuss with their supervisor whether jury service will conflict with their teaching obligation and if so, whether requesting a deferral from jury duty is appropriate. An assistant who reports for jury duty and is dismissed shall resume their normal duties as soon as possible.

Military Leave

Military leave is granted in accordance with the Illinois Military Leave of Absence Act and UI Policy. Any specific questions should be directed to the UIC HR Service Center at uichrservicecenter@uillinois.edu.

Worker's Compensation

Graduate Assistants are covered under the University's plan for on-the-job, accidental injuries. Students must report the accidental injury to your supervisor who will need to complete the Injury Report Form and go to UIC Emergency Room.

Professional and Conference Leave

Departments may allow and approve paid leave to Graduate Assistants to attend professional conferences. Approval shall not be denied in an arbitrary or capricious manner.

Finding Help and Resources

Emergency Preparedness

- Set up the complete number, (312) 355-5555, on speed-dial on your cell phone to summon Police and Fire.
- More than 1,300 emergency call boxes are on campus. A red button activates an alarm and flashing light and immediately connects you to UIC Police.
- Call the UIC Hotline at (312) 413-9696. In addition to emergency information, the hotline will alert you to building closures or class relocations.

More information:

<http://emergency.uic.edu/>

General Questions

Your employing unit is the best place to start with questions. Contact your supervisor or unit Human Resource Representative.

If you are still in need of assistance, the next level is the College Human Resource Representative.

Get Connected

UIC Graduate College

<https://www.facebook.com/UICGraduateCollege/>

University of Illinois at Chicago

<https://www.facebook.com/uic.edu/>

UIC Graduate Admissions

<https://www.facebook.com/UICGradAdmissions/>

UIC News

<https://www.facebook.com/uicnews>

Helpful Links

Graduate College

<http://grad.uic.edu/>

Graduate Handbook

<http://grad.uic.edu/assistantships>

University Payroll & Benefits Customer Service

Tax or pay questions:

(312) 996-7200 or payinq@uillinois.edu

Office of Student Financial Aid

Waiver questions:

(312) 996-3126 or money@uic.edu

GEO Labor Agreement/Contract

https://www.hr.uic.edu/labor_relations/labor_agreements/

UIC Human Resources Welcome Center

(312) 996-0840