

## **ASSISTANTSHIP & FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

### **Scholarships, Stipends, and Travel Money**

- The Department of English annually awards the Rooney Scholarship to a deserving graduate student. Academic achievement and perseverance in the pursuit of a degree are equal considerations.
- Graduate students are eligible for the annual Pamela O'Connor Memorial Scholarship for excellence in writing.
- The Department also awards the Madeline S. Giddings Scholarship of \$1,000 to an outstanding graduate student. The primary criterion for the scholarship is financial need and exemplary progress toward degree completion.
- The English department also presents two awards each year: a Graduate Student Teaching Award and a Graduate Student Paper Award. The College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences awards a Graduate Teaching and Graduate Research Award each year. An English department GTA has won the teaching award each of the first 5 years these awards have been offered.
- The Graduate School offers Presidential Doctoral Graduate Fellowships to new graduate students in doctoral programs. The awards are in the amount of \$16,000/year plus a waiver of tuition. The fellowship is awarded for a period of four years (subject to annual review). See the Graduate School Website for details.
- Grants, contingent on matching funds, are sometimes available for conference travel. Graduate students may request travel support from the Department by submitting a letter of request to the Department Head. Include a budget, a description of the conference or project, and an abstract for the research or presentation. Matching funds may be available from the college.
- Technology Transfer Stipends can be sought if students pursue a master's paper or doctoral dissertation topic relevant to technology transfer. Visit the Center for Advanced Technology Transfer and Traineeships website for more information.
- Graduate School Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship. The Graduate School at NDSU offers a number of fellowships to support graduate students working to finish their dissertations. The deadline is typically in February.
- Board of Higher Education Scholarship. This award is for tuition waiver and it counts for four semesters.

### **Teaching Assistant Appointment and Renewal Policy**

The Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA) can be an important part of graduate education at NDSU. Selection and renewal will be reviewed annually as part of GTA's professional development.

### **TA and TF Appointments**

Teaching assistantships are available for a maximum of three years (MA) or five years (PhD) and are awarded based on the applicant's scholastic record and letters of recommendation. However, the student must first make application to the Graduate School and be accepted for admission before she/he is eligible for an assistantship in the Department of English. **Note:** Letters of application for teaching assistantships should be submitted directly to the Department Head and should specify experience and qualifications.

Graduate students are awarded teaching assistantships for the academic year only—summer teaching is not typically available to M.A. students. As of the 2009-2010 academic year, the annual stipend is \$8,100 (M.A.) or \$14,000 (PhD) for a 2 course teaching load per semester. The University does not provide GTAs with health insurance, though graduate students have access to the university health center. University tuition is waived but some university fees will be charged based on a per-credit cost. Graduate Teaching Assistants are considered full time students if registered for four or more graduate credits. Typically, English GTAs take six credits of coursework per semester. New GTAs receive a full week of training before classes begin and attend a department workshop in the fall of their first semester; they are also required to enroll in English 764, Classroom Strategies for TAs. The Department will provide GTAs with a wireless laptop to support their teaching while at NDSU.

After completing their coursework and portfolio, if students have not completed their papers/theses, they may apply for a Graduate Teaching Fellowship (GTF). Teaching Fellows are responsible for three courses per semester and as of the 2007-2008 academic year, their pay is \$12,000. Teaching Fellows may be eligible to receive health insurance and benefits and must pay retirement costs. Teaching Fellowships are available for one year and are not renewable. Students should consult with their advisers and the Department Head if they are interested in becoming Teaching Fellows.

### **TA Renewals**

Renewal is contingent upon graduate students' holding good academic standing, making satisfactory progress toward their degree, and satisfactory execution of their duties as a teaching assistant. According to the Graduate School, to hold good academic standing, a student must have a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0. A student who fails to earn a 3.0 grade point average for two consecutive semesters will be placed on Academic Probation. Students on Academic Probation must petition the Department Head and the Dean of the Graduate School for a waiver to remain enrolled. A student on Academic Probation may not hold a Teaching Assistantship or Fellowship or a tuition waiver. Satisfactory progress for a GTA consists of completing twelve credits in an academic year, typically six credits per semester.

At the end of each academic year, students holding Graduate Assistantships and Graduate Fellowships will be asked to complete an end of the year progress report. This report will account for students' academic activity over the year and serve as one criterion for the renewal of a GTA or awarding of a GTF position. On this form will be space to indicate if a graduate student wishes to renew his or her GTA or apply for a GTF.

In addition to the above academic requirements, students wishing to renew a GTA or apply for GTF must demonstrate adequate performance in two categories:

**Classroom performance:** GTAs are expected to meet all scheduled class periods for the full scheduled time. Classes can be cancelled in order to conference with all students in the class one-on-one or in small groups. GTAs are expected to teach within the guidelines of the program and use program-required texts. A variety of teaching strategies should be applied effectively: minimal lecturing, large and small group discussion, peer review workshops, and other approaches covered in English 764 Classroom Strategies for Teaching Assistants. GTAs will be expected to grade and return student work in a timely manner and maintain reasonable grade distribution within their classes; 1/3 As, 1/3 Bs, and 1/3 C or lower is a reasonable distribution, although it is not a rigid formula nor does the department employ curved grading.

**Professional conduct:** GTAs are expected to attend the fall and spring workshops prior to the start of each semester. They are expected to attend departmental assessment readings of student work at the end of each semester. GTAs are expected to maintain at least two office hours per week (one hour per course), and should interact with students in a professionally appropriate manner. GTAs need to comply with all university policies on computer use, student-teacher relations, fair-use of intellectual property, etc. (See <http://its.ndsu.edu/security/au/> and <http://www.ndus.edu/policies/ndus-policies/subpolicy.asp?ref=2551> for the specific policies.) Evaluation of classroom performance and professional conduct will occur through classroom observations written up by faculty and shared with the student and the Writing Program Administrator (WPA), review of Student Rating of Instruction (SROI) scores by the WPA, monitoring of grade distribution by the WPA, and attendance records at departmental events such as workshops and readings. Any significant misconduct or violation of a university policy may result in immediate termination of a Graduate Teaching Assistantship or non-renewal of contract the following semester.

Graduate students should expect faculty members (especially the WPA and their advisors) to make classroom visits each semester, provide feedback, and offer suggestions for professional development. GTAs should also expect the WPA and advisor to write letters of recommendation when necessary and appropriate. GTAs may ask the department for support of professional development (to attend conferences or workshops) once per year.