

Department of Resource Economics Teaching and Research Assistantships

Because the M.S. and Ph.D. programs are rigorous, the Department strongly discourages students with assistantship support from working outside the University. The number of assistantships varies from year to year, depending on funding allocations made by the College and on the success of the Department in obtaining externally supported research grants. Continued support for individual students depends on satisfactory progress (described in detail in the Graduate Student Handbook available at http://www.umass.edu/resec/grad_book.html), satisfactory work on the assistantship, and length of time the student has been in the program. Normally, all graduate students in residence receive financial support, though non-thesis M.S. students are less likely to receive assistantships.

Performance as a teaching or research assistant will be evaluated by the faculty supervisor and the Graduate Studies Committee. Students should seek guidance from the supervisor as needed to perform their teaching or research responsibilities. If a student is concerned about the quantity or quality of a supervisor's guidance, he or she should consult with the Department Chair or Graduate Program Director. Students who do not perform their assistantship duties well may have their funding reduced or eliminated.

The duties of a teaching assistant or associate include but are not restricted to: grading problem sets and examinations, counseling individual students, leading discussion sections, and helping with administrative tasks associated with courses. The assistant may be required to give lectures for a course, but may not assign grades.

A research assistant in the first year will be assigned to a sponsored research project. Every attempt will be made to place assistants in projects that match their areas of interest, but this may not always be possible. In the first year, an assistant may be involved in activities such as data manipulation and literature search that are not related to the thesis or dissertation topic, within the constraints of the supported research activities of the Department.

The standard assistantship is a half-time position representing 20 hours of work per week during the academic year and 16 hours per week during the summer. Teaching assistantships are generally limited to nine months. Satisfactory performance during the academic year will place a teaching assistant in line for summer support as a research assistant. Research assistantships may be awarded for 12 months. By mid-April of the first year, each student who will be a research assistant over the summer will be asked to consult with the faculty advisor and then to submit summer vacation and work plans to the faculty advisor and Department Chair.

Should departmental research funds permit, students on assistantships might be offered an opportunity to work more than the standard contract during the summer months. (Note: international students with certain types of visas are not allowed to work more than 20 hours per week.) Alternatively, with approval of the Graduate Studies