Bowie State University
Graduate Assistantship Policy and Procedural Handbook

Center for Business and Graduate Studies
Suite 1312
14000 Jericho Park Road
Bowie, Maryland 20715
(301) 860-3406
(301) 860-3414 (fax)
graduatestudies@bowiestate.edu
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This Graduate Assistantship Policy and Procedural Handbook provides you with the policy and procedural information relevant to the graduate assistantship program. You can use these detailed information and policy guidelines while working in your various departments as a graduate assistant. The handbook is divided into three parts: Part 1 highlights the policy on graduate assistantship, Part 2 includes the accompanying procedure that guides the graduate assistantship application and working process in various departments, and Part 3 includes sample forms and award letters.

You will be able to use this policy and procedural handbook information to direct your request for assistance from the graduate school office, your department or fellow graduate assistants. This handbook is unique in its ability to shed lights to some pertinent information to which you are required to have access to.

Please, as you use the handbook, make note of any questions you have as to the clarity of the procedures and share them with us. We want to make sure that everyone understands both the policies and the procedures of graduate assistantship here at Bowie State University.

Best wishes in the advancement of your academic program through the Bowie State University Graduate Assistantship Program.

Sincerely,

Cosmas U. Nwokeafor, Ph.D.
Dean
FOREWORD

PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK:

This book provides the necessary guidelines for all Graduate Assistants (GA’s) awarded the graduate assistantship here at Bowie State University. The book provides Graduate Assistantship details ranging from the privileges, regulations, procedures and resources relevant to the role of graduate assistants in the fulfillment of their responsibilities and provides leadership in their various capacities as GA’s.

The book outlines the Graduate Assistantship policy in the first section; looking at the purpose and scope, appointments, grievance procedures, application process, professional development, financial assistance and the benefits shared governance participation. Section two details graduate assistantship guidelines which stipulate all the vital and integral roles a graduate assistant should play while working towards the completion of a graduate program here at Bowie State University.

WHO MAY USE THIS BOOK:

This book is for use by Graduate Assistants who are currently enrolled in our graduate programs. It may also be used by faculty and staff of Bowie State University who may be involved in the facilitation of the Graduate Assistantship Program.

GOALS OF THE GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP PROGRAM:

A Graduate Assistant (GA) at Bowie State University is directed by three main goals: (a) The primary goal is to guide a graduate student towards a successful and timely completion of a graduate degree program; (b) The secondary goal is to assist a graduate student in the acquisition of a meaningful work and professional experiences as he/she navigates the terrain of graduate education at Bowie State University under the direct supervision of a program coordinator who is also a faculty member; and (c) The tertiary goal is associated with employee satisfaction and relationships as Graduate Assistants work in collaboration with experts in their various fields. This assists them in developing skills necessary to work in the professional fields.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK:

This book is a guide only. Its use therefore requires that the reader follow the steps outlined in each of the sections (GA Policy or Guidelines). It is useful to always understand the context in which the steps are outlined. As the reader reads the main body of the text, certain policy statements and or guidelines require greater familiarity with the material in order to appropriately follow proper channels in either addressing a challenging issue or having clarity as to what and where to go in times of need. Thus, when the reader identifies a topic for guidance in the table of contents and reads that topic, equivalent appropriate material in the appendix should be accessed. This is done in order to apply and understand more clearly the intent and implementation of those instructions and policy. Where there is need for greater clarity, the reader should contact the Graduate School.
CONTACT INFORMATION

The Graduate School
Center for Business and Graduate Studies Building Suite 1312
14000 Jericho Park Rd Bowie, MD 20715-9465
Telephone: 301-860-3406 Fax Number: 301-860-3414

Dr. Cosmas U. Nwokeafor
Dean
301-860-3410
cnwokeafor@bowiestate.edu

Dr. Mathias Mbah
Assistant Dean
301-850-3407
mmbah@bowiestate.edu

Ms. Elaine Gunter
Graduate Record Coordinator
301-860-3409
egunter@bowiestate.edu

Ms. Nicole Stubbs
European Program Specialist
301-860-3738
nstubbs@bowiestate.edu

Ms. Talecia J. Frazier
Administrative Assistant
301-860-3406
tjfrazier@bowiestate.edu
GRADUATE PROGRAM CONTACTS
COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

Dr. George Acquaah
Dean
301-860-3610
gacquaah@bowiestate.edu

Ms. Tonita Douglas
Administrative Assistant
301-860-3603
tdouglas@bowiestate.edu

Master of Art in Applied Computational Mathematics

Dr. Nelson Petulante
Chair
301-860-3352
npetulante@bowiestate.edu

Dr. Roman Sznajder
Program Coordinator
301-860-3360
rsznajder@bowiestate.edu

Ms. Mary Royster
Administrative Assistant
301-860-3351
mroyster@bowiestate.edu

Doctor of Science/Master of Science in Computer Science

Dr. Lethia Jackson
Chair
301-860-3970
ljackson@bowiestate.edu

Dr. Joan Langdon
Program Coordinator (Masters)
301-860-4036
jlangdon@bowiestate.edu

Dr. Hoda El-Sayed
Program Coordinator (Doctoral)
301-860-3971
helsayed@bowiestate.edu

Ms. Carolyn Clark
Administrative Assistant
301-860-3960
ccClark@bowiestate.edu
Master of Arts in English

Dr. David Basena
Chair
(301)-860-3703
dbasena@bowiestate.edu

Dr. David Basena
Program Coordinator
(301)-860-3703
dbasena@bowiestate.edu

Ms. Dolores Caulley
Administrative Assistant
301-860-3671
dcaulley@bowiestate.edu

Master of Arts in Organizational Communications

Dr. Pamela O’Brien
Chair
301-860-3703
pobrien@bowiestate.edu

Dr. Kehbuma Langmia
Program Coordinator
(301)-860-3703
klangmia@bowiestate.edu

Ms. Donna Rice
Administrative Assistant
301-860-3716
drice@bowiestate.edu

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

Dr. Anthony Nelson
Dean
301-860-3590
anelson@bowiestate.edu

Ms. Deborah Adams
Administrative Assistant
301-860-3590
dadams@bowiestate.edu

Master of Business Administration

Professor Samuel Duah
Chair
(301)-860-3594
sduah@bowiestate.edu

Dr. Granville Sawyer
Coordinator
(301)-860-4231
gsawyer@bowiestate.edu

Ms. Gloria Bethea
Administrative Assistant
(301)-860-3621
gbethea@bowiestate.edu
Master of Science in Management Information Systems

Dr. David Anyiwo  
Chair  
301-860-3626  
danyiwo@bowiestate.edu

Dr. Bin Mai  
Program Coordinator  
301-860-3641  
bmia@bowiestate.edu

Ms. Frances Thorn  
Administrative Assistant  
301-860-4020  
fthorn@bowiestate.edu

Master of Public Administration

Dr. Granville Sawyer  
Interim Chair  
301-860-4231  
gsawyer@bowiestate.edu

Dr. Kevin Glasper  
Program Coordinator  
301-860-3637  
kglasper@bowiestate.edu

Ms. Jennifer Wyatt  
Administrative Assistant  
301-860-3623  
jwyatt@bowiestate.edu

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Dr. Traki Taylor-Webb  
Dean  
301-860-3230  
ttaylorwebb@bowiestate.edu

Ms. Joan Smallwood  
Administrative Assistant  
301-860-3230  
jsmallwood@bowiestate.edu
Department of Counseling

Dr. Kimberly Daniel  
Chair  
301-860-3169  
kdanield@bowiestate.edu

Ms. Maria Harris  
Administrative Assistant  
301-860-3233  
mharris@bowiestate.edu

Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology and Master of Education in Mental Health Counseling

Dr. Frank Norton  
Program Coordinator  
(Mental Health Counseling)  
301-860-3236  
fnnorton@bowiestate.edu

Dr. Cubie Bragg  
Program Coordinator  
(Counseling Psychology)  
301-860-3241  
cbragg@bowiestate.edu

Master of Education in School Counseling

Dr. Rosalyn Green  
Program Coordinator  
301-860-3234  
rgreen@bowiestate.edu

Master of Arts/Certificate of Advanced Study in School Psychology

Dr. Kimberly Daniel  
Program Coordinator  
301-860-3169  
kdanield@bowiestate.edu

Department of Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development

Dr. Josephine Wilson  
Chair  
301-860-3151  
jwilson@bowiestate.edu

Ms. Constance Deas  
Administrative Assistant  
301-860-3129  
cdeas@bowiestate.edu
Master of Education in Elementary Education

Dr. Marion Amory
Program Coordinator
301-860-3129
mamory@bowiestate.edu

Master of Arts in Reading Education

Dr. Lucille Strain
Program Coordinator
301-860-3139
lstrain@bowiestate.edu

Master of Education in Secondary Education

Dr. Brice Crim
Program Coordinator
301-860-3127
bcrim@bowiestate.edu

Master of Education in Special Education

Dr. Thelon Byrd
Program Coordinator
301-860-3137
tbyrd@bowiestate.edu

Master of Arts in Teaching

Dr. Constance Brooks
Program Coordinator
301-860-3133
cbrooks@bowiestate.edu

Master of Education in Educational Leadership

Dr. Barbara Talbert Jackson
Program Coordinator
301-860-3125
bjackson@bowiestate.edu
Department of Educational Studies

Dr. Winona Taylor  
Chair  
301-860-3232  
wttaylor@bowiestate.edu

Ms. Kelly Alexander  
Administrative Assistant  
301-860-3246  
kalexander@bowiestate.edu

Master of Education in School Administration and Supervision

Dr. Barbara Talbert Jackson  
Program Coordinator  
301-860-3125  
bjackson@bowiestate.edu

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

Dr. Joy Banks  
Director  
301-860-3134  
jbanks@bowiestate.edu

COLLEGE OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

Dr. Jerome Schiele  
Dean  
301-860-4700  
jschiele@bowiestate.edu

Ms. Tonya Taylor  
Administrative Assistant  
301-860-4700  
ttaylor@bowiestate.edu

Master of Arts in Human Resource Development

Dr. Elliot Parris  
Chair  
301-860-3100  
eparris@bowiestate.edu

Dr. Marsha Jackson  
Program Coordinator  
301-860-3108  
mejackson@bowiestate.edu

Ms. Jacqueline Fleming  
Administrative Assistant  
301-860-3100  
jfleming@bowiestate.edu
Master of Science in Nursing

Dr. Doris Clark  
Chair  
301-860-3203  
dclark@bowiestate.edu

Dr. Elaine Ridgeway  
Program Coordinator  
301-860-3208  
eridgeway@bowiestate.edu

Ms. Charlita McNair  
Administrative Assistant  
301-860-3201  
cmcnair@bowiestate.edu
Section I

Bowie State University Graduate Assistantship Guidelines

This section presents the Graduate Assistantship (GA) Guidelines as approved by both the Graduate Council and Academic Policy and Standard Committee 2011.
Graduate Assistantship Guidelines

The Graduate Assistantship Award (GA) was established to assist students pursuing a Masters or Doctoral degree program respectively in financing their graduate education career and also hone a plethora of professional experiences in their various academic disciplines. Graduate Assistants (GA’s) are not fully employed by Bowie State University.

Definition of a Graduate Assistant

A Graduate Assistant is a graduate student who has matriculated into a Bowie State University graduate program and has been provided with an opportunity to perform assigned duties relative to his/her academic discipline and to receive a full-time graduate tuition up to 9 credit hours. Any graduate assistant (GA) who registers for more than 9 credit hours will pay the difference. A Graduate Assistant award only covers for the fall and spring semester and does not extend through summer or mini-semester.

Graduate students are invited to apply for graduate or research assistantships through their various departments. Benefits include tuition remission and a stipend. Students may serve as graduate assistants in 30-42 credit programs for up to two academic years. Students who enroll in programs with more than 42 credits may serve as graduate assistants for up to three academic years. The level of commitment required: is 20 hours/week of service to the University, attendance at monthly Graduate Assistantship Program (GAP) meetings, and active membership in the Graduate Student Association (GSA).

Graduate Assistantship Application Process

Students who are interested in applying for the Graduate Assistantship Program should pick up an application from their respective department and follow the following process:

1. Fill out a graduate assistantship program application and return the completed application to the graduate program coordinator in their department.
2. Follow departmental directions and time-line including review and interview.
3. Applications for the Graduate Assistantship Program cannot be obtained in the Graduate School.
4. If recommended, student’s applications, each with a recommendation letter from their department will be forwarded to the Graduate School.
5. A Graduate School committee chaired by the Graduate School Assistant Dean will review all recommended students.
6. Note: A recommendation by one’s department does not guarantee an
award of the Assistantship. Award is strictly based on merit and availability of funds

Graduate Assistantship Categories

Bowie State University Graduate Assistantships (GA’s is categorized into two subtitles namely:
1. Teaching Assistants (TA’s)
2. Research Assistants (RA’s)
3. Administrative Assistant Assignments (AAA)

Teaching Assistant: A teaching assistant is a graduate student who has received the GA award and who may perform a variety of tasks or obligations that could relate to a teaching assistant. The duties and responsibilities of a Graduate Assistant may vary from one department to another, however, for the majority of Bowie State University Teaching Assistants, the duties and responsibilities fall into one or more of the following identified categories:
1. Assisting in their respective department support services as identified by their coordinator of graduate programs in consultation with the chair.
2. Assisting a faculty in the classroom in such duties as proctoring examinations, taking attendance, recording grades, and other functions found necessary by the instructor.
3. Teaching responsibility for a laboratory or discussion session in a classroom setting under close supervision of the faculty.
4. Representing a faculty in any assigned duties outside the classroom and coordinating students’ group assignments under the supervision of the faculty.

Note: All the identified assigned duties of a Graduate Teaching Assistant, particularly the aspects that deal with classroom teaching, will be determined by the student’s academic qualifications and merit. All Graduate Teaching Assistants should be under the supervision of a faculty member.

Research Assistant: A research assistant is a graduate student who received a Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) Award to perform the following duties under the supervision of a faculty:
1. Assist a faculty in managing grants and technical support necessary to advance a faculty grantsmanship.
2. Help faculty in facilitating an on-going research project by assisting in data collection, administration of surveys, provide the necessary technical support in a computer or mathematical laboratory setting.

Note: All the duties and responsibilities of a Graduate Assistant whether as a GTA or GRA should be under the direct supervision of a faculty member or either academic/administrative support staff.

Administrative Assistant Assignments: (1) Any office within Bowie State University may choose to employ a Graduate Student to assist with its unit administrative support services. The responsibilities of this category of GA, their duration of appointments, and supervision are provided by the unit administrator or staff. The remuneration of this category of GA should be
the same as their Teaching and research assistant counterparts ($10.00/hr). These units may choose to pay their Graduate Assistant more but not less as identified. This category of GA does not receive tuition remission but should have his or her paperwork filed in the Graduate School Office for record purposes. (2) A Graduate Assistant may also be assigned to Offices on campus to assist the unit with administrative support services. This category of GA receives both a tuition remission and stipend.

 Supervision and Evaluation of GA’s

Bowie State University Graduate Assistants are under the direct supervision of their respective assigned units. The units make decisions as well as determine their assignments, work supervision, evaluation of job performance, and recommendation for reappointment to the Graduate School Dean. The Graduate School Dean also supervises the GA’s assigned to respective units on campus.

GA’s should be evaluated by the respective units where they are assigned

Graduate Assistant Duties and Responsibilities

All students receiving the GA award must report to the Graduate School for detailed instructions and completing necessary paperwork. The duties and responsibilities of a Graduate Assistant (GA) include the following:

1. Working in his/her respective unit as assigned

2. Assisting faculty in class duties including: teaching fundamental classes (100 level courses) for those in the Master’s and Doctoral graduate programs as approved by their coordinators.

3. Assisting faculty who are conducting research in data abstraction, survey construction, and administration.

4. Assisting faculty in grantmanship management and duties relevant to obtaining a grant.

5. Placement in units such as the President’s Office, Provost’s Office, Dean’s Office, Student Affairs, Registrar’s Office, Human Resources, Administration and Finance and other related administrative units on campus for proficient professional skill acquisition.

6. Graduate Assistants must assist the Graduate School Administration during the graduate comprehensive examinations. Four students should be selected during each comprehensive examination to assist in technical support.

7. Attendance at the Open House and New Graduate Student Orientations as scheduled (Mandatory).
8. Following the rules and regulations of the department where they are assigned. *(Mandatory)*

10. Graduate Assistants must enter their time for approval on the Tuesday of time approval. Time must be entered by 12:00 noon on that day. Any time entered after 12:00 noon will result in a student missing his/her pay for that pay period and will result in approving the student for the next pay period. All time sheets must be approved and signed by the GA’s program coordinator and submitted to The Graduate School by 3:00pm on the due date.

11. Additionally, no Graduate Assistant is allowed to take a second job on campus and choosing to do so may result in releasing the student from his/her assistantship position.

12. All Graduate Assistants must participate actively in the Bowie State University Graduate Association and attend meetings regularly. Absence from Graduate Association meetings will result in a student being placed on probationary period and one more occurrence will result in the release a student (GA) from his/her position.

13. All Graduate Assistants must attend the GA meeting once a month. Absence from the GA meeting will result in releasing a student from his/her GA position.

**To be eligible for a GA position, a student must:**

1. Be a full time student enrolled in a minimum of nine (9) graduate credits each semester of the assistantship; or an incoming graduate student admitted to the graduate program. Any GA that registered for more than (9) graduate credit hours should pay for the difference;
2. Not be enrolled in more than 12 graduate credits per semester;
3. Maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 or higher. Incoming Graduate Students must have a 3.2 GPA or higher on the undergraduate level;
4. Not hold other employment that will interfere with their award as a Graduate Assistant or interfere with their responsibilities as a full-time graduate student;
5. Not hold other on-campus jobs while serving as a Graduate Assistant;
6. Work only 20 hours a week. Benefits include a tuition remission of nine credit hours (3 courses) per semester, and a stipend of a maximum rate of $10.00 per hour for the master’s student, and $11.00 per hour for the doctoral students.
7. Make sure that work hours and time are properly entered in the system for approval by the Graduate School Dean before 12:00 noon on Tuesday of the week prior to the paying week.
8. Send to the Graduate School Office a signed sheet of his/her time. The sheet must be signed by their supervisor.

Students who serve as graduate research, teaching, or administrative assistants must follow the regulations governing their position. Graduate Assistants who violate or fail to adhere to policies as stated in this handbook will be released from the Graduate Assistantship program.
**Graduate Assistantship Orientation**

There will be one Graduate Assistantship Orientation and training each semester to be held by the Graduate School. The fall semester orientation and training should be held by the Graduate School Administration a week before the beginning of the school year and the spring semester orientation and training should be held by the Graduate School Administration a week before the beginning of the new semester. All GA’s (both returning and new) awardees MUST attend this most important training and there will be no excuses accepted. Failure to attend the GA Orientation is considered a violation of a GA’s contractual obligation.

**Graduate School Open House**

Graduate School Open House is held once each semester. It is mandatory (see duties and responsibilities #7) that all GA’s attend all Open House events and participate in the assigned duties. GA’s MUST attend in professional attire and must assist in directing prospective students to the auditorium, helping them locate classrooms, and assisting with on campus tours as assigned. There is no excuse not to attend the Open House. Failure to attend the Open House is a violation of the GA’s contractual obligation.

**Graduate Student Status at BSU**

Full-time graduate student status at Bowie State University means a student is enrolled in nine (9) credit course hours per semester. For more details on full-time graduate student status and consideration of what determines nine credit hours per semester, see the current Graduate School Academic Catalog (Page 74). In making a decision regarding a full-load per semester, a GA should consider his/her Graduate Assistantship workload in planning the course registration per semester to avoid an overload which may be detrimental to one’s class performance.

**Standard Conduct/Conflict Resolution**

Bowie State University expects Graduate Assistants and all graduate students to maintain high standards of conduct and scholarship. GA’s are expected to conform to strict standards of academic honesty in all aspects of graduate studies. Students found guilty of academic misconduct are subject to dismissal from the Graduate Assistantship program as well as other more severe penalties from BSU. For more details see current Graduate School Academic Catalog (Page 70).

All Graduate Assistants at BSU must comply with the ethical principles and codes of the academic profession, which is clearly specified in the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). They should also abide by the regulations governing employees of the State of Maryland and the University System of Maryland Board of Regents policies governing employee conduct. Everything we do as a university will be directed towards enhancing our quality and value to students, alumni, and the university community. Graduate Assistants should incorporate the BSU Core Values:
**Excellence:** Promote a love for learning, discovery, and integration across a wide range of disciplines and interests.

**Civility:** Foster and environment in which each individual is valued, can live safely, and can express himself or herself without fear or reprisal.

**Integrity:** Promote a sense of justice, trust, consistency, and fair play.

**Diversity:** Promote an awareness of and sensitivity toward differences of race, gender, ethnicity, national origin, culture, sexual orientation, religion, age and disability.

**Accountability:** Provide effective and efficient service to all University constituents.

Bowie State University Graduate Assistants are expected to conduct themselves in their interactions with fellow students, faculty, staff and all the stakeholders in the University community with the same sensitivity and respect they expect to receive from others. BSU is in compliance with the EEO program and makes sure the age, ethnicity, gender, national origin, race, disability, religion, or sexual orientation of a GA may not be the subject of prejudicial actions, comments, or expressed attitudes.

**Conflict Resolution:** Graduate Assistants should resolve conflicts, problems or difficulties first at the departmental or unit level. When a Graduate Assistant is confronted with difficulties in his or her unit, resolve should be sought at the following levels:

1. Supervisor level: The difficulties should be addressed at the supervisor level first. If at this level, there is no resolution, then the issue may be referred to the second level;
2. Department Chair level: The department chair may consult with the faculty and GA on this issue in an attempt to bring resolve. If the matter is still not settled at the chair’s level, the GA has a right to refer the matter to the next level;
3. Graduate Dean’s level: The Graduate Dean will appoint a committee of three tenured faculty, one of which must come from a neutral department and a Graduate student to review the GA’s submission (which must be in writing with supporting documentation if necessary). The committee will be given a charge by the Graduate Dean. The committee, after its review, will make a recommendation on this issue to the Dean. The Dean will then review the recommendation and make the final decision. The Graduate Dean’s decision on this issue is final.

**Changing Supervisors:** BSU Graduate Assistants are neither portable nor transferable across units or departments on campus. GA’s funded by an external faculty grant or contract are within the supervision and purview of the faculty, staff, or respective unit. However, those GA’s funded by institutional funds are distributed to various academic departments with graduate programs and units or offices, on campus as needed. It is very important to note that a vacancy for a GA must arise, the funding must be available, and the graduate student must have the qualifications
to fill the GA vacancy, and/or unused GA funds to an academic department must be reassigned to another department in order for a GA to be assigned to another supervisor. If a move is possible, a change of supervisor involves adequate notice of resignation to the current supervisor. On a case by case basis, The Graduate School Dean will determine what further process may be necessary for the GA to be reassigned.

**Graduate Assistantship Application Form and Deadline**

Interested graduate students should download the Graduate Assistantship application form from the Bowie State website (www.bowiestate.edu) and click on “Graduate School”. To apply, a candidate should do the following:

1. Complete the graduate assistantship application.
2. Submit a copy of their resume
3. Submit a two page self-assessment and explanation of their academic career choice. It should describe his/her educational background, objectives, and work experience.
4. Submit two letters of recommendation one of which must be from a current or previous professor.
5. Be interviewed by their Department Selection Committee.

**Note:** Prospective candidates must submit completed applications and supporting documents to the coordinator of their programs.

Candidates selected by their Department Committees are not guaranteed a Graduate Assistantship Award. The Department Committee only recommends candidates to the Graduate School, of which the Standing Selection Committee selects and recommends final candidates for the award to the Graduate School Dean. Awards are based on merit and availability of funds.

(see attached GA’s application form in Section III)

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**Bowie State University**  
Graduate Assistantship Packet  
Dr. Cosmas U. Nwokeafor  
*Dean of Graduate School*  
The Graduate School  
Center for Business and Graduate Studies, Suite 1312  
14000 Jericho Park  
Bowie, MD 20715

**Application for Graduate Assistantship:**
1. Applications for the Graduate Assistantship program are available from the Program Coordinator of the applicants program of study.

2. The completed application is due on the last Friday in March for the Fall selection, and on the last Friday in October, for the Spring selection. NO APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE DUE DATE. In addition to the application, the following supporting documents must be submitted: a) a resume, b) two letters of recommendation, and c) a two-page assessment of their self and their academic career choice. Incomplete applications and/or applications without all of the supporting documents will not be considered. All fall applications for graduate assistantship must be turned in to the Dean of Graduate School on the last Friday in March and for spring applications, all forms and required packages must be turned in on the last Friday in October. Late applications will not be accepted.

3. All Graduate Assistantship awards are renewable for up to three years. Students who are in a 31 – 42 credit program may remain in the awarded program for two years. Students in programs requiring 40 or more credits may remain in the program for up to three years. Please note that the award is renewable each year and the criteria for renewal are clearly indicated on pages 23-24 (duties and responsibilities).

4. All selected applicants must complete an interview in their respective departments before a final notification of the award is made. An award letter (see attached) is sent to selected awardees which should be signed and returned by the student to the Graduate School.

4. Awardees of Graduate Assistantships will be required to sign a contract of employment each year. Students must also complete the University System of Maryland Tuition Remission form each semester.
Dereliction of Duty/Termination of Assistantship Award:

BSU Graduate Assistants will lose their assistantship benefits and compensation if they:

1. Fail to attend two consecutive Graduate Assistantship meetings in a semester and other mandatory professional development activities.

2. Fail to actively participate in the Graduate Student Association (GSA) programs and activities as clearly indicated in the GSA by-laws.

3. Fail to keep office hours and attend all necessary meetings and other relevant duties as stipulated by their supervisor or unit director.

4. Are reprimanded by their supervisor three times, whether in writing or by spoken word.

5. Have a documented unsatisfactory work performance. For an example, violation of BSU policy such as misconduct that is job related (e.g. incompetence, neglect of duty).

6. Have a recorded deficiency in academic work and in meeting academic requirements for their degree program.

7. Are consistently late or absent from their classes or assistantship position in their different units or are not enrolled in any graduate classes during the award period.

8. Experience financial difficulty or unexpected cuts in funding; or there is a discontinuance of the specific work in the unit where a GA is posted.

9. Have a visa status (immigrant students) in which a policy does not permit employment.

10. Have a voluntary mutual agreement with their department, in which a GA voluntarily resigns the position due to personal or health reasons.

In the case where a GA’s contract is terminated prior to the original date specified in the offer letter, the GA will be notified in writing by the Graduate School Dean. Cases of insubordination and behaviors very detrimental to the University community and its stakeholders as mentioned above on numbers 1 through 10 may result in immediate actions appropriate to BSU policy. Supervisors including department and University officials may initiate actions and consult the Graduate School Dean for details.

Voluntary resignation of a GA is initiated by the GA in writing. The letter of resignation should be addressed to the supervisor. This letter should be forwarded to the Graduate School Dean and must have an effective date of resignation. The Graduate School Dean will follow action on a GA’s resignation and document all paperwork regarding the resignation in the GA’s file.

The process of terminating a Graduate Assistant at BSU is as follows:
1. If a Graduate Assistant is found wanting based on the identified dereliction of duties item 1 through 10;

2. The student will be notified in writing after a termination meeting with the Graduate Dean;

3. The Graduate Assistant will turn in all BSU property including keys in his/her possession to the Dean of the Graduate School if the student works in the Graduate School and will do the same to any unit where the student was working prior to his/her termination.

**Graduate Assistant Compensation and Stipend**

The Graduate Assistantship award at BSU includes tuition remission for nine credit hours per semester and a stipend totaling $3,300 per semester for masters and $3,630 for doctoral students.

Graduate Assistants must be enrolled for a minimum of 9 credit hours, but not more than 12 credits. They must maintain good academic standing. No more than 9 credits will be waived through the Assistantship Program. Students are required to pay all fees associated with the Graduate School and for all credits in excess of 9 credit hours per semester. Assistantships do not cover tuition of the mini-semester or summer school.

Graduate Assistants must work 20 hours a week under the direction of the assigned supervisor. A contractual timesheet must be submitted bi-weekly to the Dean of Graduate School c/o the administrative assistant.

Graduate Assistants are responsible for the payment of any credit hour registered over 9 credit hours. Fees associated with course registration by a Graduate Assistant are paid by the student and does not add to the tuition remission.

**Graduate Assistant Tuition Remission Status**

BSU Graduate Assistant tuition remission is billed at the in-state tuition rate. All Graduate Assistants at BSU whether non-Maryland residents or non-immigrant visa holders such as the F-1 visa holders, are billed at the in-state tuition level. If a Graduate Assistant’s award is terminated, the Assistant’s tuition remission status will revert to the original out-of-state tuition rate. However, if the Assistant’s status changed within the period of his/her termination by petition to Resident Alien, the Board of Regents’ Policy on Student Residency Classification for Admission, Tuition and Charge-Differential will be strictly taken into consideration.

**Health Insurance**

Bowie State University Graduate Assistants (GA’s) are not enrolled in the university’s health care program within their period of award. However, any interested GA who wishes to enroll in
the university’s health care program on his/her own, should consult the Office of Human Resources Management (ext. 3450) for details on health insurance coverage.

**Retirement and Social Security Withholdings**

Retirement and Social Security withholdings are not withheld from the stipends of BSU Graduate Assistants. For more details on Retirement and Social Security withholdings, please consult the BSU Payroll Department (ext. 3483).

**Vacation and Sick Leave Hours**

BSU Graduate Assistants work hours do not qualify them nor guarantee them vacation or sick leave hours. For more details, please consult the Office of Human Resources (ext. 3450).

**Facilities and Working spaces**

BSU Graduate Assistants who are posted in various units on campus including their departments, should be provided with a working space such as a suitable work office or laboratory, desk space with computer and telephone access, and office accessories such as office supplies which are applicable to their respective roles and responsibilities as GA’s.

**On-Campus Housing**

Housing is available for Graduate Students at Bowie State University. For more details on Housing, please consult the University Affiliated Housing at 301-532-1600.

**Holiday and Break Periods**

All employees including Graduate Assistants (GA’s) at Bowie State University observe the legal holidays and break periods as indicated on the university calendar of the year. No GA is expected to work on a holiday or designated break period. All GA contracts end at the end of each fall or spring semester or in the case of completion of a GA’s program. Summer and winter sessions are not scheduled for any GA work nor is tuition remission granted during the summer and winter sessions. Any GA working during these sessions may be doing so due to a special arrangement with the unit he/she is working for and will not be paid by the Graduate Assistantship budget.

**Overtime**

Bowie State University Graduate Assistants (GA’s) work hours do not accumulate overtime. As stipulated GA working hours are 20 hours per week and should not exceed a total of forty hours/two weeks. GA payroll is on a bi-weekly basis and for more details on payroll issues please consult Mr. Duane Williams in the Controller’s Office (ext. 3483).
Section II

Bowie State University Policy on Graduate Assistantship

This section presents the Graduate Assistantship (GA) Policy as approved by both the Graduate Council and Academic Policy and Standard Committee 2011.
Bowie State University

III– 7.11 Policy on Graduate Assistantship
(Approved by the Graduate Council, September 6, 2011)

I. Purpose and Scope

A. Graduate Assistantships at Bowie State University (BSU): The purpose of the Graduate Assistantship program at Bowie State University is to support graduate students who are awarded the assistantships by:

1. Advancing the student’s graduate education through practicum-based experiences, including the development and application of teaching, research and other skills, while also advancing the mission of the institution.

2. Providing financial support, including stipends and tuition assistance, to aid degree-seeking students enrolled in master’s level or doctoral programs at the university and appointed as graduate assistants in the pursuit of their graduate degrees.

B. Policy Goal: This policy is intended to establish baseline standards for the administration of graduate assistantships, with a commitment to continuous improvement in the status of graduate assistants.

C. Institution Policies and Procedures: BSU will develop a graduate assistant handbook that will include policies and procedures, and graduate assistantship application processes, as well as duties and responsibilities of graduate assistants.

II. Appointments:

A. Length: Appointment of graduate assistants may last for two years for all master’s degree graduate assistants, except in the counseling program, where the length of the assistantship may extend to three years and four years for a doctoral student.

1. Full-time Assistantship: A graduate assistantship shall require a full-time commitment of 20 hours per work week. Exceptions must be submitted in writing by the graduate assistant’s supervisor; approved by the student’s
advisor and department chairperson, and submitted to the dean for approval before any additional time is allotted.

2. Graduate assistants on full-time assistantships at BSU are not allowed to work in any other capacity at the university.

C. Renewal of Appointments: An appointed graduate student shall be re-appointed after the end of each academic year based on the following criteria:

1. Satisfactory academic performance and progress toward a degree with a minimum 3.0 GPA;
2. Satisfactory performance of assigned assistantship responsibilities and duties as defined by the various departments;
3. Availability of funds;
4. Limitation of length of appointment has not expired;
5. Student’s adherence to the university code of conduct, observance of state or federal law, and compliance with general university regulations; and
6. Specific departmental needs, as identified by the program chair and graduate school coordinator.

D. Notice of Appointments: Except under justifiable circumstances, graduate assistants whose appointments are for more than one term will be notified of their appointments, and of decisions not to renew appointments, at least 60 days before the date upon which the appointment is to begin.

1. If a decision to renew an appointment cannot be made within that time line, the graduate assistant will be informed at least 60 days in advance of the assistantship’s start date of an estimated date for the renewal decision.
2. Circumstances which may justify fewer than 60 days notice include, but are not limited to, uncertainty in departmental funding and course enrollments.
3. Nothing in this section shall prevent the graduate school from making an appointment to a graduate assistant on short notice based on changed circumstances in class enrollments, the availability of resources, or other factors.

E. Appointment Letters: Upon appointment, each graduate assistant will receive an appointment letter that contains detailed information concerning the terms and expectations of the assistantship. The appointment letter shall include, at a minimum:

1. The length of the appointment;
2. The starting and ending dates of the appointment, including the dates during which the graduate assistant is expected to be on campus to perform the duties of the assistantship;

3. The average weekly time commitment of the assistantship;

4. The basic responsibilities of the assistantship;

5. The economic benefits of the assistantship, including stipend and tuition assistance amounts, and any access to health and other benefits;

6. The department or office to which the student will report, including the name of the faculty member or other individual who will supervise the assistantship, when feasible;

7. An affirmation that the provisions of the graduate assistant handbook apply to the assistantship;

8. Any special requirements of the assistantship related to summer and winter class scheduling, or other terms (e.g., coverage over breaks, summer/winter classes and weather emergencies) that may vary from the provisions of the university’s graduate assistant handbook; and

9. Contact information where the graduate assistant may obtain additional information and advice concerning the appointment, the provisions of the handbook, and graduate assistant grievance rights and processes.

F. Assignments: To the extent feasible, graduate assistants shall be given a written description of their teaching, research or other assignments, duties, and responsibilities at least two weeks before the beginning of the semester. However, departments retain the flexibility to adjust assignments as necessary due to loss of funding, course enrollment fluctuations, or other unanticipated events, even after the semester has begun.

G. Termination of Assistantships: An assistantship may be terminated within the term of the appointment under unusual and compelling conditions, for causes specified in the BSU graduate assistant handbook.
III. Grievance Procedures

A. Informal Resolution of Concerns: Graduate assistants are strongly encouraged to attempt to resolve grievances informally with their mentor(s) and/or supervisor(s). BSU shall establish a mediation process or an ombudsperson function to facilitate informal resolution of graduate assistant grievances.

B. Grievance Policy: To address concerns that cannot be resolved informally, BSU shall develop a formal, written graduate assistant grievance policy that provides the graduate assistant with the opportunity to present grievances to:

1. The student’s department chair/unit head or the specific graduate program coordinator will form a grievance panel:

   A. The panel will consist of a graduate student, as well as faculty members or administrators, who have no direct relationship with the department at issue or the individual parties to the grievance.
   B. Either party to the grievance may request that a panel member be substituted on the grounds that the panel member has a conflict of interest.

C. Content of Policy: BSU’s grievance policy shall include fundamental due process protections and other minimum elements, including:

1. The opportunity for graduate assistants to provide the facts and evidence that support their grievances and to explain their positions to the grievance decision makers;

2. Any minimum information requirements and formats for presenting grievances, which shall not require adherence to complex procedures or evidentiary standards;

3. A clear statement that reprisals against graduate assistants for filing a grievance are prohibited;

4. Specific timelines for the phases of the grievance process;

5. The right to appeal any departmental/unit head decision to the dean of the Graduate School.
Application:

1. The grievance policy will apply to disputes concerning:
   A. Workload volume and scheduling;
   B. Inappropriate work assignments;
   C. Termination of a graduate assistantship within the term of appointment; and
   D. Non-renewal of an assistantship for arbitrary or capricious reasons, including reprisal for filing a grievance.

2. If a graduate assistant believes that an assistantship was not renewed because of unlawful processes, the graduate assistant may pursue available institution processes, such as access to the campus Equal Employment Office (EEO).

3. Graduate assistants may raise concerns regarding suspected on-campus fraud or fiscal irregularities through the confidential University System of Maryland hotline mechanisms established in USM Policy VIII-7.10, “Policy on Reporting Suspected or Known Fiscal Irregularities,” the university’s fraud reporting policies, and any relevant state or federal “whistleblower” laws.

   E. Access to Policy: BSU’s graduate assistant grievance policy shall be published on the campus website and included in its graduate assistant handbook.

IV. Professional Development

A. Orientation and Information: BSU shall have a fall and spring orientation for graduate assistants each academic year. During the orientation, graduate assistants will be presented with various information regarding the assistantship program, which will include a description of their duties and responsibilities, eligibility requirements, durations of their assistantships and all relevant policies and procedures applicable to the graduate assistantship program.

B. Professional Development Opportunities: Graduate assistants at BSU shall be invited to participate in various on-campus and external professional development programs, including professional conferences, educational and discipline-related seminars, as well as departmental, institutional, and other faculty development events.

C. Information for Graduate Assistant Supervisors: Faculty and staff who supervise graduate assistants shall be required to know and understand the university’s policies and procedures for graduates.
1. Each department chair, and graduate program coordinator who supervises a graduate assistant shall have access to the Bowie State University graduate assistant handbook and shall receive a copy of the graduate assistant’s appointment letter.

2. The Graduate School Dean shall hold department and unit heads who supervise graduate assistants accountable for adherence to the terms of the student’s appointment letter and the requirements of the graduate assistant handbook.

D. Changes to Policies and Procedures: Graduate assistants shall be apprised of any changes to relevant policies and procedures on a timely and ongoing basis.

V. Financial Assistance and Benefits

A. BSU shall seek to pay stipends at levels that are competitive with peer institutions, to the extent allowed by available fiscal resources.

B. BSU shall have the discretion to use a variable scale for the rate of pay for master’s level and doctoral students.

C. Time Away from Duty: BSU shall provide paid “time away from duty” for graduate assistants as follows:

1. The minimum paid time away from duty for a full-time, 12 month graduate assistant is 20 hours per year. Such leave:

   A. Is in addition to institution holidays and other days that the institution is closed; and

   B. May be scheduled, with the permission of the graduate assistant’s supervisor, at times that do not conflict with the duties of the assistantship.

2. For graduate assistants with appointments of less than 12 months or 20 hours per week, the institution shall establish policies for time away from duty that may include breaks and holidays in the academic year, any specified total hour commitments in the graduate assistant’s appointment letter, and other campus-specific factors.

3. Requests for paid time away from duty must be approved by the graduate assistant’s supervisor and department chair or unit head, with consideration given to the personal needs of the graduate assistant for such leave.
D. Leave for Illness and Emergencies: BSU’s graduate assistant policies shall provide for collegial support for short-term illnesses and emergencies.

VI. Shared Governance Participation

A. Communication with Administration: BSU shall provide periodic, formal opportunities for graduate assistants to participate in shared governance through its Graduate Council which serves as policymaking and advisory body to the Graduate School Dean in consideration of all program matters and degree regulations and procedures at the graduate level.

B. Meetings with Administration: The graduate assistant representatives shall have the opportunity to meet with campus administration, including the university’s graduate dean and vice presidents for academic affairs and administration and finance, at least twice annually.

C. Role of Graduate Assistant Representatives: As part of their participation in shared governance, the graduate assistant representatives will be:

1. Consulted in the development and implementation of institution policies and procedures related to the administration of assistantships; and
2. Invited to participate in university-wide graduate assistant orientations.

VII. Implementation: The provisions of this policy as recommended by the Graduate Council and approved by the University Council at Bowie State University shall be implemented in the fall semester (AY 2011-2012).
Section III

Bowie State University Graduate Assistantship Sample Forms and Award Letter

This section presents the Graduate Assistantship (GA) Sample Forms and Award Letter as approved
Sample Form for Graduate Assistant Application

Office of the Graduate School
Center for Business and Graduate Studies, Suite 1312
Graduate Research/Teaching Assistantship Application Form

Name:_____________________________________________________________

Social Security Number: _____________________ Email Address: ________

Phone Number: _______________________ Cell Phone Number: __________

Address:__________________________________________________________________

Graduate Degree Program: ______________ Date of Admission: ______

Graduate Assistantship Type:
  Graduate Teaching Assistant ( )
  Graduate Research Assistant ( )

Graduate Advisor: __________________________ Graduate GPA: ______

Undergraduate Institution GPA: ______

Years of Attendance: __________ Undergraduate Major: ____________

References:
Name: Relationship: Phone Number:
1.___________________________________________

2. ______________________________________________

The following information will not be used in the selection process.
The information collected will only be used in aggregate form.

Country of Citizenship:___________________________________________

Gender: __________ Race: __________ Date of Birth:_________________
### USM REQUEST FOR TUITION REMISSION

Each USM Employee or Retiree seeking tuition remission for self, a spouse or child shall complete this application and accompanying certification to provide the information necessary to comply with both the USM-BOR Tuition Remission policies (VII-4.10; VII-4.20) and Internal Revenue Service regulations regarding the income tax law status of the tuition remission benefit requested by the employee. This page provides the information necessary to ascertain eligibility and process the request; additionally the employee/retiree is also required to complete and sign the Affidavit for tax status of the tuition remission recipient.

Upon obtaining departmental authorization, the employee/retiree must present this request to the employing Institution Human Resources Office for approval. A new request must be completed for each semester/session. If the student is registering at multiple Institutions, a separate request must be completed for each Institution.

1. **Calendar Year:** 20____
   - **Semester for which tuition remission is requested** (enrollment term)
     - [ ] Fall  [ ] Winter  [ ] Spring  [ ] Summer
     - [ ] Other ____________________
   - (include summer session # if institution has more than one Summer Session)

2. **Employee Name:** (Last Name, First Name)
3. **Employee SSN:**
4. **Employee Date of Hire:**
   - Month/Day/Year ___/___/___
   - Do you have prior USM Service/dates? Yes _____ No __
5. **Complete if employee is retired or deceased:**
   - [ ] Retired  ___/___/___
   - [ ] Deceased  ___/___/___
6. **Active Employee is Employed:**
   - [ ] Full time  [ ] Part time
   - Enter % employed if less than full time ____________%
7. **Employee Status:**
   - [ ] Nonexempt  [ ] Contingent Catg. II  [ ] Grad. Asst.
   - [ ] Exempt  [ ] Retiree  [ ] Grad. Research Asst.
   - [ ] Faculty  [ ] Fellow  [ ] Grad. Teaching Asst.
8. **Employee’s Home Institution:**
   - [ ] BCCC  [ ] BSU  [ ] CSU  [ ] FSU  [ ] MIANR-AES
   - [ ] MIANR-UME/CES  [ ] MSU  [ ] SU  [ ] SMCM
   - [ ] TU  [ ] UB  [ ] UMB  [ ] UMB-MIEMSS
   - [ ] UMBC  [ ] UMBI  [ ] UMCES  [ ] UMCP  [ ] UMES
   - [ ] UMUC  [ ] USMO
9. **Employee’s Institution Work Address:**
   - __________________________________________
   - **Employee’s Work Phone #:** ________________
   - **Employee’s Institution E-mail Address:**
     - __________________________________________

10. **Student Name (Spouse/Child):** (Last Name, First Name)
11. **Student SSN (Spouse/Child):**
12. **Student is Employee's:**
   - [ ] Opposite Sex Spouse  [ ] Child
   - [ ] Same Sex Spouse
13. **Student's Date of Birth:** (Required for a child - if employee or spouse of employee, leave blank)
   - Month/Day/Year ___/___/___
14. **Student Enrollment Status:**
   - [ ] Undergraduate  [ ] Freshman  [ ] Sophomore
   - [ ] Junior  [ ] Senior
   - [ ] Graduate
15. **Academic Program:** student - spouse/child of employee must complete this section if employee began USM employment on or after 1/1/1990)
   - [ ] BCCC  [ ] BSU  [ ] CSU  [ ] FSU  [ ] MSU
   - [ ] SU  [ ] SMCM  [ ] TU  [ ] UB  [ ] UMB
   - [ ] UMBC  [ ] UMCP  [ ] UMES  [ ] UMUC
   - [ ] For Grad Assistants: Check box if your course is held at a different institution from where you registered for the course (ie: an inter-institutional course).
   - [ ] Check if student applied, but was not admitted to, the Home Inst.

16. **Institution where employee/student is registered:**
   - [ ] BCCC  [ ] BSU  [ ] CSU  [ ] FSU  [ ] MSU
   - [ ] SU  [ ] SMCM  [ ] TU  [ ] UB  [ ] UMB
   - [ ] UMBC  [ ] UMCP  [ ] UMES  [ ] UMUC
   - [ ] For Grad Assistants: Check box if your course is held at a different institution from where you registered for the course (ie: an inter-institutional course).

17. **Number of credit hours to be remitted:**
18. **Institution transfer of funds:**
   - Yes_____  No_____
   - (To be completed by Institution HR Benefits Coordinator)

Please continue on to the TR Affidavit - complete and sign. This TR Request shall not be processed without the completed and signed TR Affidavit.
This affidavit must be completed by all employees and retirees requesting TUITION REMISSION (TR) to determine whether the Institution must treat the requested TR as taxable income to the employee or retiree under Federal Internal Revenue rules. In most cases, TR is not taxable for undergraduate courses taken by an employee, retiree, spouse or child who qualifies as the employee’s dependent under federal tax law standards. In addition, specific IRS rules govern the taxability of TR for graduate education, same sex spouses and their children, and children of divorced and separated parents. Those rules are summarized on a Tax Chart on the USM’s Website at: [http://www.usmd.edu/usm/adminfinance/tuitiontax.pdf](http://www.usmd.edu/usm/adminfinance/tuitiontax.pdf).

This affidavit is necessary to comply with federal tax law and to protect you and the USM Institution from potential tax liabilities and penalties. To complete the affidavit, read the statements below and initial any statement that applies to you.

1. UNDERGRADUATE TUITION REMISSION FOR A SPOUSE - If you are seeking TR for your spouse, initial ALL applicable statements:

   ___ I certify that the person for whom I am requesting TR: (a) is my spouse and that we have entered a legally effective marriage, and (b) that we are not estranged, and that he/she does not maintain a separate domicile.

   ___ I am seeking TR for my same sex spouse whom I do not intend to claim as my dependent on my federal tax return for the 20___ calendar year, and I understand that the value of the TR is taxable income to me.

   ___ I am seeking TR for my same sex spouse whom I intend to claim as my dependent on my federal income tax return for the 20___ calendar year. If I do not claim my spouse as a dependent for this tax year, I will notify my HR Office as soon as possible and no later than 15 days of filing my tax return, and I understand that the value of my spouse’s TR will be considered taxable income to me.

2. UNDERGRADUATE TUITION REMISSION FOR A CHILD -

   a. If you are seeking undergraduate TR for a child whom you will claim as a dependent on your income tax return for the year 20___, initial the following:

      ___ I certify that the person for whom I am requesting TR is my biological child, stepchild or legally adopted child and that I intend to claim the child as my dependent on my federal income tax return for the 20___ calendar year. If I do not claim my child as a dependent on my income tax return for the 20___ calendar year as indicated above, I will notify my HR Office as soon as possible and no later than 15 days of filing my tax return, and I understand that the value of my child’s TR will be considered taxable income to me.

   b. If you are seeking undergraduate TR for a child whom you will NOT claim as a dependent on your income tax return for the year 20___, initial ONE applicable statement:

      ___ (i) I certify that the person for whom I am requesting TR (a) is my biological child, stepchild or legally adopted child, and (b) I do not intend to declare my child as a dependent on my federal income tax return for the 20___ calendar year, and (c) I understand that the value of my child’s TR will be considered taxable income to me. OR

      ___ (ii) Although I do not intend to declare my biological child, stepchild or legally adopted child as a dependent on my federal income tax return for the 20___ calendar year, (a) I am currently divorced or separated from the child’s parent (b) the child’s other parent will claim the child as a dependent on his/her federal income tax return for the 20___ calendar year, and (c) my marriage to the other parent was one that is recognized under federal law, (i.e., not a same sex spouse). If the child’s other parent does not claim my child as a dependent for this tax year, I will notify my HR Office as soon as possible and no later than 15 days of the filing of the tax return of the child’s other parent, and I understand that the value of my child’s TR will be considered taxable income to me.
3. TUITION REMISSION FOR GRADUATE EDUCATION - If you are seeking TR for graduate education for yourself or a family member, initial ONE applicable statement:

____ I am applying for TR for my own education in courses at the graduate level, and the courses qualify as a “working condition fringe benefit,” which means: the courses are required by law or the Institution for me to keep my present job OR maintain or improve skills required for my current employment, AND the courses will not qualify for the minimum educational requirements for my current position, AND the courses will not qualify me for a new trade or business.

____ I am applying for TR for my own education in courses at the graduate level which do not qualify as a “working condition fringe benefit” as that term is used in the Internal Revenue Code, and I understand that I will be taxed for the value of the TR that may exceed $5,250.

____ I am applying for TR for the education of my spouse or child in courses at the graduate level, and I understand that I will be taxed for the full value of the TR.

4. GENERAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS - All applicants must INITIAL EACH of the following:

I understand that the following requirements are applicable to my application for and receipt of Tuition Remission:

____ a. I have read and I understand the relevant USM-BOR TR policies (VII-4.10 and VII-4.20), which appear at http://www.usmd.edu/regents/bylaws/SectionVII/ and the USM Tuition Remission–Deadlines And Restrictions Chart, which appears at: http://www.usmd.edu/usm/adminfinance/tuitionchart.pdf

____ b. To the extent that any TR is taxable income under IRS regulations, the value of the TR will be added to my salary for taxation over designated pay periods during the semester when TR is used, according to the schedule set by the State Central Payroll Bureau.

____ c. I understand that the Institution where student registers for courses has final approval authority for my TR request.

5. I HEREBY SOLEMNLY AFFIRM UNDER PENALTIES OF PERJURY THAT:

a. The information given above is true and accurate;

b. I understand that willful falsification of information in this Affidavit can result in referral for investigation and prosecution, full disciplinary action by the Institution, and civil action by the Institution to recover any costs that it may incur because of such a false statement; and

c. For compliance and audit purposes, I agree to provide to the Institution a copy of any documentation (including relevant tax returns) that the HR Office deems necessary to ascertain my eligibility or the tax status of my spouse or child. I understand that failure to timely provide all requested information will result in the Institution treating the value of the TR as taxable income to me.

d. I understand that I must notify the HR Office no later than 15 days of my first becoming aware of any change in the information that I have provided in this Affidavit and as a result, I understand that the value of the TR may be taxable income to me and applied retroactively to the appropriate taxable year. I further understand that failure to notify the Institution of any changes may be considered willful falsification, to be treated as described in item b. of this section.

Signature of Employee: _____________________________ Date: ____________

Signature of Department Head/Designee: _____________________________ Date: ____________

Signature of Human Resources Representative at Employing Institution: ______________ Date: ____________
Sample Award Letter for Graduate Assistants

Office of the Graduate School
Center for Business and Graduate Studies, Suite 1312
Graduate Research/Teaching Assistantship Award Letter

Date

Dear __________________:

I am happy to inform you that you have been accepted into the Graduate Assistantship program through the Graduate School for the _____ (Year) semester. The Graduate Assistantship award includes tuition remission for nine credit hours per semester and a stipend totaling $3,300 per semester for masters and $3,630 for doctoral students.

The following terms govern the Assistantship Program:

- Graduate Assistants must be enrolled for a minimum of 9 credit hours, but not more than 12 credits. They must maintain good academic standing. No more than 9 credits will be waived through the Assistantship Program. Students are required to pay all fees associated with the Graduate School and for all credits in excess of 9 credit hours per semester. Assistantships do not cover tuition of the Mini-Semester or Summer School.
- Assistants must work 20 hours a week under the direction of the assigned supervisor. A contractual timesheet must be submitted bi-weekly on-line.
- Graduate Assistants are expected to serve as representatives for their graduate programs in the Graduate Student Association (GSA).

If you would like to accept this position, please sign below and return this letter to our office immediately, so that we can submit the necessary paperwork to secure your contract.

If you have any questions about the Graduate Assistantship Program (GAP), please contact the Graduate School. On behalf of the faculty and staff of Bowie State University, congratulations and we look forward to a productive semester.

____________________
Cosmas U. Nwokeafor, Ph.D.
Dean

____________________
Graduate Assistant

Enclosure: Tuition Remission Form