

SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS

Policy Manual

SUBJECT: Graduate Assistants and Fellows

NUMBER: 5.22

A. PURPOSE

To provide the universities tools to compete effectively when recruiting highly qualified prospective graduate students. The primary purpose of a graduate assistantship is to provide students with professional experience and the necessary financial resources to attend a graduate program.

B. DEFINITIONS

- 1. Fellow:** A student awarded a grant that is treated as a scholarship and has no work requirement.
- 2. Graduate Assistant:** A student enrolled in a graduate program assigned responsibilities in administration, teaching, research, and/or laboratory supervision on a limited or part-time basis. Graduate assistants are often called Teaching Assistants, Research Assistants, or Laboratory Assistants.

C. POLICY

1. Special Tuition Rates for Graduate Assistants and Fellows

Resident graduate assistants and fellows shall be assessed the resident special tuition rate of fifty-three percent (53%) of the resident graduate tuition rate for all on-campus courses, in addition to 100% of the general activity fee and discipline fees. Nonresident graduate assistants and fellows shall be assessed the nonresident special tuition rate of sixty-three percent (63%) of the resident graduate tuition rate for all on-campus courses, in addition to 100% of the general activity fee and discipline fees. Any graduate assistant or fellow taking distance, off-campus, or Center courses will receive an off-campus special tuition rate for those courses equal to the reduction applied to the resident graduate on-campus tuition rate. The special tuition rates are part of the compensation for graduate assistant work.

- 1.1.** Eligibility for this special tuition rate is limited to graduate assistants and fellows who are unconditionally admitted to a graduate degree program and are registered at the university for the required minimum number of credit hours. Additionally, graduate assistants must be awarded an assistantship at or above the minimum stipend rate established annually by the Board.
- 1.2.** All graduate assistants and fellows not meeting these eligibility requirements shall be charged the appropriate regular tuition and fee rates established by the Board.

- 1.3. Students who have received a qualifying graduate assistantship or fellowship for the preceding fall and spring are automatically eligible for the special tuition rate for the following summer.
- 1.4. Graduate assistants and fellows who are eligible for this special tuition rate at their home institution will receive the same benefit for courses taken at other system institutions.

2. Incentive Tuition and Fee Rates for Graduate Assistants and Fellows

As part of the compensation for the required graduate assistant work and to enhance competitiveness for graduate assistants and fellows, universities may request the Board approve an incentive tuition rate of zero percent (0%) of the on-campus graduate tuition rate, zero percent (0%) of all program fees, and one-hundred percent (100%) of the General Activity Fee. If the incentive tuition rate is approved, the incentive tuition rate shall be also applied for all distance, off-campus, and Center courses taken.

- 2.1. Eligibility for the incentive tuition rate is limited to graduate assistants and fellows who are unconditionally admitted to a graduate degree program and are registered at the university for its required minimum number of credit hours. Additionally, graduate assistants must be awarded an assistantship at or above the minimum stipend rate established annually by the Board.
- 2.2. All graduate assistants and fellows not meeting these eligibility requirements shall be charged the appropriate tuition and fee rates established by the Board.
- 2.3. Students who have received a qualifying graduate assistantship or fellowship for the preceding fall and spring are automatically eligible for the incentive tuition rate the following summer.
- 2.4. Graduate assistants and fellows who are eligible for this incentive tuition rate at their home institution will receive the same benefit for courses taken other system institutions.
- 2.5. Once a university has received approval to assess the incentive tuition rate it shall reimburse other universities for the tuition and fee revenue loss resulting from the difference between the incentive tuition rate and the special tuition rate for courses taken by graduate assistants and fellows from other universities.
- 2.6. Universities are required to remit the appropriate HEFF amount to the system fund for all tuition credit hours billed the incentive tuition rate under this program.

3. Implementation

- 3.1. A university must select one of the above methods for all graduate assistants and fellows in any given academic year. If an institution decides to change its method, it must notify the Board office of the request by October 1 and the change will be acted upon during the next annual tuition and fee setting process and become effective the following summer.

4. Compensation

The Board annually establishes a minimum stipend to be paid to graduate assistants. Graduate assistants are expected to work a full semester to receive the full semester

compensation. Graduate assistants are expected to work the full four-week session to receive the full four-week session compensation. The minimum compensation may be prorated accordingly if the graduate student does not work the full semester or four-week session (as applicable).

The difference between the resident or non-resident special tuition rate and the incentive tuition rate for graduate assistants shall be part of the minimum stipends calculation.

5. Non-Faculty Exempt Classification

Graduate assistants are considered staff members, but they are not employed in a permanent classification. Any grievance arising from this employment shall be brought under the non-faculty exempt procedures (BOR Policy 4.3.1).

FORMS / APPENDICES:

None

SOURCE:

BOR March 1993; June 1994; December 1995; October 2002; October 2004; December 2010; December 2015; May 2016; October 2019; October 2023 (Clerical).