Chapter 3: Graduate Student Employment Eligibility

Basic Graduate Student Qualifications for Employment Eligibility

1. Be in good academic standing:
   a. Meet department standards including a satisfactory spring evaluation
   b. Maintain a GPA of 3.0 in upper-division and graduate course work, and not have more than eight units of F and/or U grades overall
2. Be within the time limits for graduate student support (employment, fellowship, etc.). You may view a complete time limit report on the Graduate Division Student Database.
   a. Ph.D./D.M.A. degree aim: Every doctoral student has two time limits and a TA/Associate limit affecting employment/support eligibility: The pre-candidacy time limit (PCTL), the support time limit (SUTL), and the 18 quarter limit. The “expiration date” is defined as the last day of the quarter
      i. PCTL: A student must advance to candidacy prior to the expiration of the precandidacy time limit. If a student does not meet this requirement, the Graduate Division Academic Affairs Unit puts a “hold” on the student’s record preventing further enrollment and registration. When a PCTL expires and the student has not advanced to doctoral candidacy, the student is not eligible for employment beyond the quarter break following the PCTL expiration date.
      ii. SUTL: The support time limit identifies the quarter through which a graduate student may receive any payment from university funds (on-campus employment, fellowship, etc.). When a SUTL expires, the student is not eligible for employment beyond the quarter break following the SUTL expiration date.
      iii. 18 Quarter Limit: No one student may be employed as a teaching assistant and/or associate for more than 18 quarters. Please note that this is a separate and distinct limit, and any extension granted to SUTLs does not apply to the 18 quarter TA/Associate limit
   b. M.A., M.Eng., and M.S. degree aim: Eligible for 7 quarters of employment or other support.
   c. M.F.A. and M.P.I.A. degree aim: Eligible for 10 quarters of employment or other support.
3. International graduate students who are non-native speakers of English must be certified as having requisite language skills before they can serve as teaching assistants. This English language policy does not apply to a student who serves as a TA which is conducted in his/her native language. For further information, contact the English Language Program for International Instructors (ELP-ii).

Fiscal Year Appointments

Graduate students employed on student academic titles may be appointed for a maximum of one fiscal year (07/01-06/30) at a time. During the month of May of each year, the funding source may extend the appointment for the following summer, quarter(s) or fiscal year if the student meets all of the eligibility criteria.

Enrollment and Registration

Graduate students must be registered full-time (a minimum of 12 units) to be employed above 25% time during the academic year. Students registered and in less than 12 units are eligible for 25% time appointments upon department approval.

Percent Time and Academic Department Support Policy

UC graduate student employment policy states that a full-time graduate student may be employed a maximum of 50% time (20 hours per week) during the academic year and up to 100% time (40 hours per week) during the summer months. The summer is defined as the day after the Spring quarter ends and the day before the Fall quarter begins.

Each graduate academic department at UC San Diego has established its own support policy for all graduate students registered in the department. This includes the establishment of a GSR step level(s) and appointment percentage of time allowed during the academic year and summer. A funding source must contact the student’s academic department to obtain pre-approval of employment and to adhere to the individual department’s support policy.
Spring Evaluations

Graduate Council policy requires that doctoral and MFA students be evaluated every spring. A satisfactory evaluation on file in the Graduate Division is necessary for future support. The following students are exempt from an annual spring evaluation:

1. A student advancing to doctoral or M.F.A. candidacy during winter or spring
2. A student on an approved leave of absence during spring. (A student on leave during the spring quarter must have an evaluation completed no later than the end of the first quarter of return).

The Graduate Division Dean strongly urges faculty to complete evaluations by the end of the spring quarter so that student registration for the future is not jeopardized. The Graduate Council advises that any requests for exceptions to policy for time limits or support will not be approved unless a current evaluation is on file.

New Admit – Incoming/Entering Graduate Student

A graduate student who has been officially admitted to graduate study (Graduate Division has issued the Certificate of Admission) may be employed as a GSR, Reader, or Tutor during the summer (summer being defined as the first day after spring quarter ends) or quarter-break before the first quarter of registration. For example, a fall quarter admit may be employed during the summer, before their first quarter of enrollment, as a GSR. In order to hire a new admit as a TA, the student must have already started their academic program.

Incoming International Students

International Center guidelines state that, in general, an international student in F-1 or J-1 status cannot enter the U.S. more than 30 days prior to the program start date listed on the I-20 or DS2019.

Summer and Quarter Break Employment

A U.S. Citizen or Permanent Resident who receives a terminal degree, and is eligible for support, can be employed, on certain titles, through the quarter-break after graduation provided the student continues to be actively engaged in graduate student research. The summer is considered to be the quarter-break after spring quarter.

An international student (F-1 or J-1 visa) can only be employed as a student employee through the date of program completion. Program completion is the last day of the quarter in which the student is registered AND defends their dissertation/thesis (if Ph.D. student) or takes a comprehensive exam (if Master’s student). If the student does not register for units, a filing fee is required, and the program completion date will be the actual dissertation/thesis defense date (if Ph.D. student) or date of comprehensive exam (if Master’s student). Contact Global Education for additional information.

Student on a Leave of Absence

A graduate student on an academic Leave of Absence may not receive any payment from the university (employment, fellowship, etc.) during the quarter(s) while on Leave and must be separated from PPS.

Readmit or Return From a Leave of Absence

A graduate student who has been readmitted or is returning from a Leave of Absence, and within the support time limit, is eligible for employment during the summer or quarter break preceding the quarter of readmission or return from a leave of absence.