



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER

Operating Policy and Procedure

HSC OP: 70.27, **Appointment of Student Employees**

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) Operating Policy and Procedure (OP) is to establish policies and procedures for the employment of student employees.

REVIEW: This HSC OP will be reviewed on May 1 of each odd-numbered year by the Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer, with recommendations for revisions forwarded to the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer by June 15.

POLICY/PROCEDURE:

1. Definition of Terms.

Graduate Assistant (Position Class Code U3907): A graduate student employed to perform work that utilizes knowledge beyond undergraduate academic studies. The position of Graduate Assistant is intended for graduate students in capacities other than teaching or research.

Research Assistant-Grad Student (Position Class Code U0627): A graduate student employed in support of the research mission of the department to perform laboratory, library, field, computer, or other such activities as may assist the department's research effort. The position of Research Assistant is intended for graduate students employed to perform research activities.

Teaching Assistant (Position Class Code U0325): A graduate student employed in support of the teaching mission is responsible for or in charge of a class or class section or a quiz, drill, or laboratory section. The Teaching Assistant position is intended for graduate students employed in teaching activities. The source of funds is ordinarily an academic account.

Student Assistant (Position Class Code U3912): An undergraduate or graduate student within the Texas Tech System employed to perform work that does not require academic training at the graduate level.

Student Assistant - External (Position Class Code U3914): A student in an institution of higher education other than Texas Tech employed to perform work as assigned by a supervisor.

High School Student Worker (Position Class Code U3915): A high school student employed to perform work that does not require academic training at the college level.

Applicant/Employee with a Disability: Any applicant or employee who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as walking, talking, caring for oneself, doing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, or learning. Also includes having a record of an impairment, being regarded as having an impairment, or being associated with a person with a disability.

2. General Policies.

a. Student Employment.

An individual enrolled as a student may be employed to perform part-time work that is incidental to their academic training. Such employment must fall within designated occupational categories that require student status as a condition of employment, as reported to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. These occupational categories are:

- 1) Graduate Assistant -- (U3907)
- 2) Research Assistant-Grad Student -- (U0627)
- 3) Teaching Assistant -- (U0325)
- 4) Student Assistant -- (U3912)
- 5) Student Assistant – External -- (U3914)
- 6) High School Student Worker -- (U3915)

b. Conditions of Employment.

- 1) To be eligible for student employment (except for a High School Student Worker and Student Assistant - External), individuals must be currently enrolled as a student within the Texas Tech System as a condition of employment and are expected to be in good academic standing and making satisfactory progress toward a degree.
- 2) Individuals who were enrolled during the spring semester or plan to enroll in the upcoming fall semester may be employed as student employees during the period between those semesters.
- 3) The employing department is responsible for verifying and maintaining each student employee's eligibility. Failure to meet the enrollment requirements will allow the department to terminate their employment status.
- 4) Employment as a Student Assistant, Student Assistant - External, High School Student Worker, or Graduate Assistant must be hourly and may only work up to a maximum of 19 hours per week at an FTE of 0.49 or less.
- 5) Employment as a Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant - Grad Student is considered exempt. If the FTE is 0.50 or greater, the position is eligible for insurance with a benefits category of GS.

c. Graduate Student Status.

Graduate students employed as Teaching Assistants, Research Assistants, or Graduate Assistants are expected to be enrolled in Graduate School full-time. Graduate students in a TTU college or school must receive approval from the TTU Graduate Dean by completing the Certification of Non-HSC Student or Medical Student (Attachment A) and presenting it to the employing department. An ePAF employing a TTUHSC graduate student must be initiated or routed through the TTUHSC Graduate School's Dean's office for approval.

d. Verification of Student Status.

Upon hiring an individual into a position requiring student status, the department must obtain documentation that the individual is enrolled in an institution of higher education. The department will maintain this documentation in a departmental file. These files will be subject to audit. The department is responsible for ensuring that its student employees inform the department if they withdraw from school during the semester.

At the beginning of each semester, the department must obtain and maintain new documentation that the student is continuing enrollment. At any time the employee ceases to be a student, the department may initiate the hiring process for a staff position with applicable benefits or initiate an ePAF to separate the person from employment.

e. College Work Study.

The Financial Aid Office handles all aspects of student employment involving recipients of College Work Study through Financial Aid programs. The Financial Aid Office will be responsible for the following:

- 1) Certifying eligibility of College Work Study recipients for on-campus employment;
- 2) Establishing the earnings limit for student employees who are receiving College Work Study or any other Financial Aid funds;
- 3) Developing policies for the College Work Study Program;
- 4) Ensuring compliance with federal and state laws for the College Work Study Program; and
- 5) Supervising solicitation of College Work Study positions on and off campus.

f. Non-Employment Student Relationships..

A student is not considered an employee when the student's activities meet all the criteria listed below. If these criteria are not met, the student is considered an employee and is entitled to compensation.

- 1) The activities are a part of the curriculum.
- 2) The activities are for the benefit of the student.
- 3) The student does not displace other employees and works under their close supervision.
- 4) The department providing the training derives no immediate advantage because of the student's activities; on occasion, the operations may be impeded.
- 5) The student is not entitled to a job at the conclusion of the training.
- 6) Both parties understand that the student is not entitled to wages for the time spent in training.

g. Non-Discrimination.

All appointments shall be made based on qualifications and suitability for the role, without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, or protected veteran status, in compliance with the laws and regulations of the State of Texas, Regents' Rules, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Texas Tech University System Regulation 10.03, and all other applicable federal laws.

The account administrator is required to ensure that reasonable accommodations are provided for an otherwise qualified individual with a disability by contacting Human Resources.

h. Salary Range.

A student is appointed to a position at a salary rate between the minimum and maximum of the salary range for the appropriate category identified in the current TTUHSC Pay Plan.

i. Benefits.

All student employee appointments are considered temporary and are **not** eligible for participation in the regular employee group insurance programs, leave accrual programs, retirement programs, holidays, or other benefits made available to regular employees.

The only exceptions are Teaching Assistants, Research Assistants, and Graduate Assistants who work at least 20 hours per week for at least four and one-half months per year and are eligible to participate in the Texas Employees Group - Benefit Program (GBP).

The premium sharing for an employee's group insurance is charged proportionately based on the funding for the salary payments made during each month.

j. Hiring Process.

Each student employee must go through the hiring process ([HSC OP 70.11](#)) and must complete all pre-employment paperwork before their first day of employment. A delay in completing the necessary paperwork will delay the student's start date.

k. Mandatory Training.

All newly appointed student employees are required to complete mandatory training, including, but not limited to, the New Team Member Orientation, Equal Employment Opportunity, Sexual Harassment training, and Institutional Compliance training.

3. Processing Appointments and Changes.

A student employee appointment, percentage of time or payroll account, separation, or other personnel action must be made on an ePAF. Any salary changes must be submitted through the PASS system.

The signature of the Graduate Dean certifies that the nominee is a graduate student in good standing with Texas Tech and that the salary level indicated complies with the salary ranges set for graduate students or that there is adequate justification for approving an exception to the normal salary range for the student employee and approval of the rank and salary to be offered.

4. Assignment of Home Departments (ORGN).

Student employees are assigned to a home department (ORGN). The home department is the department that first appoints the individual to a position. The home department is responsible for coordinating the student's employment if another department employs the student. Other types of home department changes need to be submitted to the Human Resources Office for updates.

5. Student Appointments.

Research Assistants and Teaching Assistants are employed on a monthly basis, are paid for the accomplishment of assigned tasks, and are considered to be exempt from accounting for hours worked.

An individual shall not be appointed concurrently to a position not requiring student status and to a position requiring student status as a condition of employment.

All hourly appointments are considered non-exempt, and accurate records of hours worked must be kept. An employee should not work in both an exempt and non-exempt (time sheets required) capacity during the same workweek. However, if an exception is approved, and an employee performs both exempt and non-exempt duties in a single workweek, the employee will be treated as non-exempt for that entire week. In this case, all hours worked, regardless of role, must be recorded and combined to determine any overtime eligibility.

6. Student Employment FICA Exemption

Effective with work performed after June 30, 2000, eligible TTUHSC student employees will be exempt from paying FICA taxes.

a. Eligibility Criteria

- 1) Employed at TTU or TTUHSC in job categories requiring student status as a condition of employment. Concurrent appointments in job categories requiring student status and job categories not requiring student status will cause the individual to lose the exemption from FICA taxes.

(a) Exclusions from Eligibility for Exemption

Faculty
Staff
Postdoctoral students
Postdoctoral fellows
Medical residents
Medical interns

- 2) Must be enrolled one-half time at TTU or TTUHSC. Enrollment at TTU and TTUHSC will be combined to determine the enrollment level. Students must be enrolled under their Texas Tech identification number (R#) so that the payroll system can determine enrollment levels and eligibility.

(a) Enrollment Requirements

Eligibility for the FICA exemption is determined based on the enrollment requirements for the appropriate semester(s) corresponding to the payroll's pay period and the student's enrollment in the appropriate semester(s) at the point in time the payroll is processed. Changes in enrollment during the semester will affect eligibility for payroll processed after the enrollment change and will not retroactively affect eligibility.

Eligibility for pay periods totally between terms of less than five weeks will be determined based on enrollment during the preceding term. Eligibility for pay periods encompassing time in a preceding term and a between-term period will be determined based on enrollment during the preceding term. Eligibility for pay periods encompassing time between terms of less than five weeks and the new semester will be determined based on enrollment in either the preceding or the new semester. Eligibility for pay periods encompassing time in two semesters will be based upon meeting the enrollment criteria in either semester. Eligibility for pay periods totally within a semester will be determined based on the enrollment level for that semester.

(b) Enrollment Levels to Meet Half-Time Status

Course Enrollment	Fall	Spring	Full Summer	SSI	SSII
HSC School of Health Professions – Undergraduate	6	6	6	3	N/A
HSC School of Health Professions – Graduate	5	5	3	3	N/A
HSC School of Nursing –	6	6	6	N/A	N/A

Course Enrollment	Fall	Spring	Full Summer	SSI	SSII
Undergraduate					
HSC School of Nursing – Graduate	5	5	3	N/A	N/A
HSC School of Pharmacy	5	5	3	N/A	N/A
HSC Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences	5	5	3	N/A	N/A

Note: The enrollment standards listed above are subject to change and do not represent a comprehensive list. Please refer to your college's current enrollment standards for official half-time criteria. The last day to register or withdraw without penalty is the day before classes begin.

7. **Right to Change Policy.**

TTUHSC reserves the right to interpret, change, modify, amend, or rescind this policy in whole or in part at any time without notice or consent of employees.