

30 June 2020

Dear graduate students, faculty and graduate coordinators:

The purpose of this memo is to provide you with information regarding WSU's plans for fall instruction as it relates to graduate student teaching assistants (TAs). Similar to the memo from the Graduate School on 15 June regarding return to on-site research, the general principles underlying this guidance document are to:

- Prioritize and protect the health and well-being of WSU students, faculty, and staff;
- Minimize the spread of COVID-19 while serving our communities responsibly;
- Protect the careers of graduate students.

Graduate students on an assistantship are required to perform a minimum of 20 hours per week effort on the duties assigned in order to be eligible for the associated stipend and tuition waivers. However, it is important that reasonable efforts are made to balance assistantship duties with a student's health, safety, and family care.

TAs who have been scheduled to assist in, or teach, a face-to-face course, recitations, or lab sections, or a hybrid course with periodic face-to-face meetings, may have concerns related to COVID-19. These may include personal vulnerability as part of a high-risk group or living with someone in a high-risk group. If a TA is concerned about their duty assignment, the following steps should be pursued:

1. The TA should have a conversation with the course coordinator responsible for oversight of the course to which the TA is assigned to determine the best course of action for the student to meet the 20 hours/week effort requirement.
2. If, from the student's point of view, the conversation is unsuccessful, the TA should seek to resolve the issue at the departmental level through either the director of the graduate program, the department chair, or the departmental ombudsman (if one has been appointed).
3. If resolution at the department level is not possible, there are university-wide points of contact. The University's [ombudsman](#) office is an independent, neutral entity charged with listening to and guiding students, faculty, and staff in resolving concerns. Other options include the relevant college associate dean or vice chancellor for academic affairs or graduate studies.
4. If the above avenues for resolution are unsuccessful, concerns may also be brought to the dean or associate deans of the Graduate School who will engage in conversations with the department, Human Resource Services, and/or the Access Center as necessary and appropriate.

As more information becomes available, I will endeavor to communicate further with graduate students and faculty. The Graduate School and your graduate programs are here to help you be successful in your graduate career as well as help you stay safe and healthy.

Best regards,



Lisa M. Gloss
Dean of the Graduate School

