

Graduate Assistantship Application Instructions

Graduate Assistantship Overview

The University of Arkansas School of Social Work offers seven graduate assistantships each academic year for the fall and spring semesters. Graduate assistants work 20 hours per week supporting one or more faculty members. Assignments may include class preparation, teaching, research, event coordination, or other School of Social Work projects.

Graduate assistants receive a nine-month stipend and paid tuition. Because graduate coursework, field internships, and assistantship responsibilities are demanding, students are discouraged from holding additional employment during the appointment.

Availability requirement: Students selected for an assistantship must be available beginning the week before Fall 2027 classes, August 16, 2027.

Application Materials

Submit the following materials with your graduate assistantship application:

- Cover letter
- Resume or Curriculum Vitae
- Completed application
- All undergraduate and graduate transcripts (unofficial)

Cover Letter Requirements

Only applicants who write a cover letter using the following requirements will be considered.

Your cover letter should address each of the following:

1. Professional goals and interests

Explain your professional goals in social work and how a graduate assistantship would support those goals. Highlight any areas of particular interest or expertise, such as child welfare, substance use, aging, clinical practice, policy advocacy, social justice, or other areas relevant to your background and goals and describe your experience and knowledge acquisition in these areas.

2. Qualifications

Describe the academic and practical experiences that prepare you for a graduate assistantship. Relevant experience may include coursework, internships, volunteer service, paid employment, research, and teaching. Be sure to identify all relevant research or teaching experience.

3. Self-rating scale

Copy and paste the rating definitions and self-rating table below into your cover letter. Enter one rating from 1 to 5 for each competency.

Most graduate students will not be highly skilled in every area. Honest ratings help us understand your current strengths and assist us in matching graduate assistants with faculty needs.

4. Time commitment

Conclude your letter with a statement confirming that you understand the assistantship requires 20 hours of work each week and that you can meet this commitment alongside your other responsibilities.

Self-Rating Scale

Use the same 1–5 scale for each competency.

Rating	General Definition
1 – Novice	Little or no experience; requires close guidance, structure, or instruction.
2 – Basic	Some experience; can complete basic tasks but needs guidance for less familiar or more complex work.
3 – Intermediate	Can complete routine tasks with minimal supervision and seeks guidance appropriately when needed.
4 – Proficient	Strong independent skill; can manage complex tasks, competing priorities, and deadlines effectively.
5 – Expert	Extensive skill and experience; can lead complex work, improve processes, and mentor or guide others.

Applicant Self-Rating Table

Enter one rating from 1 to 5 for each area.

Competency	What to Consider	Rating (1–5)
Written and verbal communication	Professional writing, clear verbal communication, presentations, and communicating effectively with different audiences.	_____
Word and Excel or similar programs	Document formatting, tables and charts, data management, formulas, advanced features, and automation tools when applicable.	_____
Working independently	Time management, meeting deadlines, initiative, problem solving, managing multiple tasks, and knowing when to seek guidance.	_____

Research and data analysis	Research methods, data collection, research design, and analysis using tools such as SPSS, Excel, or similar programs.	_____
Flexibility	Adapting to new tasks or situations, shifting priorities, managing unexpected changes, and handling multiple responsibilities.	_____

Note: The self-rating scale is not intended to suggest that applicants should rate themselves highly in every area. Its purpose is to identify current strengths and areas in which applicants may need support or development.