

**The Graduate School
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**

Academic Policy Regarding Maximum Hours of Work for Research or Teaching Assistants

The Graduate School recognizes that graduate students are first and foremost “students” and making continual significant progress toward their degree is paramount to the ethical training and education of graduate students. The Graduate School recommends that graduate students should not normally conduct service work (research or teaching assistantships) in excess of 15-20 hours per week on average. This policy enables them to work on their own studies and research for at least the remaining 20-25 hours per work week.

The Graduate School also appreciates the complexity inherent in the education and training of graduate students. Directors of graduate study, therefore, need to be thoughtful about the specifics involved in each particular student’s service. The University asks graduate students to perform work that is simultaneously both training and service. Their training may take various forms, including apprentice-type training under faculty mentors within the research lab, classroom or community, as well as more traditional coursework. This training often is the primary way in which graduate students learn the core skills, expectations, norms, ethics and content of aspects of their graduate disciplines/fields. However, when examining a particular student’s educational/training program, it may be seen that while initial training is requisite to acquiring appropriate knowledge and skills, additional similar training may add only incrementally to their development. In such cases, the standard of not exceeding 15-20 hours per week should apply.

Directors of graduate study in each graduate program are best informed to make these judgments on an individual basis and should be responsible for monitoring that service expectations do not impede any student’s significant progress toward their degree.