

# **Departmental Graduate Handbook**

**Department of Kinesiology  
Mississippi State University**

**2017-2018**

**A supplement to the  
MSU Graduate Catalog**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Department of Kinesiology Graduate Handbook contains policies and procedures pertinent to graduate study in the Department of Kinesiology. Students and faculty should be aware that this publication is a supplement to the information contained in the MSU Graduate Catalog. All students and faculty should be aware of the university's policies and procedures outlined in the MSU Graduate Catalog, which is available online: <http://catalog.msstate.edu/graduate/>

**The primary responsibility for being knowledgeable of and adhering to university and departmental policies, regulations, deadlines, and degree requirements rests with the student.**

## **SECTION 1: GRADUATE PROGRAM AREAS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF KINESIOLOGY**

### **Master of Science Degree Concentrations**

The Department of Kinesiology offers three master's degree concentrations: exercise physiology, sport administration, and sport pedagogy. The concentration in **exercise physiology** prepares students for careers in fitness and allied health care professions. The concentration in **sport administration** prepares students for careers in the sport industry, including positions with professional, collegiate, and recreational sport organizations. The concentration in **sport pedagogy** prepares students for leadership roles as coaches, physical educators, and K-12 athletic directors. These concentrations also prepare students for advanced study at the doctoral level.

### **Doctor of Philosophy Degree Concentrations**

The Department of Kinesiology offers two doctoral degree concentrations: exercise science and sport studies. The focus of the **exercise science** concentration is the scientific study of how biological systems function during physical activity, exercise, and sport, emphasizing applications to both clinical and healthy populations. The **sport studies** concentration involves studying sport from an interdisciplinary perspective, encompassing such specializations as sport management, sport pedagogy, sport sociology, and sporty philosophy, among others.

## SECTION 2: STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION OF THE DEPARTMENT

### Mission Statement

The mission of the Department of Kinesiology is to prepare aspiring professionals and emerging scholars, conduct and disseminate research, and provide service in the areas of physical activity, exercise, and sport.

### Organization

The Department is an administrative and programmatic unit within the College of Education at Mississippi State University. The Department is composed of two divisions: Exercise Science and Sport Studies. Together, these divisions house four master's degree concentrations and two doctoral degree concentrations:

- Disability Studies (M.S.) – Division of Exercise Science
- Exercise Physiology (M.S.) – Division of Exercise Science
- Sport Administration (M.S.) – Division of Sport Studies
- Sport Pedagogy (M.S.) – Division of Sport Studies
- Exercise Science (Ph.D.) – Division of Exercise Science
- Sport Studies (Ph.D.) – Division of Sport Studies

### Governance

- The **graduate faculty** of the Department administer the graduate programs within the Department. Appointment to the graduate faculty is administered by the Dean of the Graduate School. The necessary request forms for appointment to the graduate faculty can be found on the MSU Office of the Graduate School website (<http://grad.msstate.edu/forms/>).
- The **Departmental Graduate Committee** consists of a coordinator and four additional graduate faculty members.
- The **Graduate Coordinator** shall be appointed by the **Department Head** for an unspecified term of service.
- The term of service for graduate committee members shall be 3 years.
  - Should a graduate committee member depart the University or resign from the committee, the Department Head or the Graduate Coordinator shall appoint an interim member to complete the term of the vacated seat.

### Kinesiology Graduate Coordinator

The Chairperson of the Departmental Graduate Committee performs the following tasks:

1. Chairs the Department of Kinesiology Graduate Committee and graduate faculty meetings;
2. Maintains graduate student files with the assistance of the Academic Records Assistant;
3. Schedules and conducts at least two graduate faculty meetings per academic year (usually fall & spring semesters);

4. Conducts the daily business of the Department of Kinesiology graduate programs under the auspices of the Graduate Committee according to the Graduate Handbook of the Department of Kinesiology and the Graduate Catalog;
5. Conducts indoctrination sessions about policies and procedures related to the graduate degree programs for new faculty and students;
6. Acts as liaison between the Graduate Committee of the Department, the Executive Council of the Department of Kinesiology, and the Graduate School.

### **Departmental Graduate Committee**

The Departmental Graduate Committee is responsible for the conduct and administration of the Department's graduate concentrations. The committee formulates policies and procedures relevant to the Department's graduate programs within the guidelines established by the Graduate School and the graduate faculty of the Department of Kinesiology. In addition, the Department's Graduate Committee is responsible for the following:

- Maintaining records and monitoring matriculation of each graduate student through graduation insuring compliance with established policies and procedures;
- Assisting in recruitment of graduate students to graduate concentrations;
- Reviewing new course proposals;
- Evaluating old and new areas of specializations;
- Evaluating and monitoring seminar course offerings;
- Assisting graduate faculty to maintain credentials appropriate for their graduate appointment and involvement in the graduate program.

## **SECTION 3: ADMISSIONS PROCESS**

### **Admission to Doctoral Degree Programs**

Prior to formally applying to the doctoral program, students should familiarize themselves with the research interests of graduate faculty members in the Department of Kinesiology and identify a faculty member whose research agenda aligns with their interests. A prospective applicant should then contact that faculty member to discuss his/her “fit” with the faculty member’s research interests. If possible, prospective applicants are encouraged to visit the MSU campus. When an informal understanding is reached regarding the student’s suitability to enter the doctoral program under the guidance of the faculty member, the student may then formally apply to the Graduate School. This does not guarantee a student admission to the doctoral program, but it is a necessary step prior to the formal application.

The following items are required in applying to doctoral degree programs in the Department of Kinesiology:

1. A completed MSU Graduate School application form
2. Official transcripts from all institutions attended since high school; students must have completed a master’s degree prior to being admitted to the doctoral program.
3. Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test scores
4. Three professional letters of recommendation; at least two letters should be from university professors from whom the student has taken courses or worked with in a research capacity.
5. A written statement of purpose, which should clearly explain the applicant’s research interests and highlight how these interests align with faculty members in the department, particularly the faculty member who the applicant wishes to serve as his/her advisor.
6. An academic writing sample (e.g., a published research article, thesis, or other academic paper)
7. A curriculum vitae
8. TOEFL or IELTS scores (only required for international applicants whose native language is not English; refer to the MSU Graduate Catalog)

The admissions process is competitive. Applicants should be aware that faculty members only advise a small number of graduate students at a time, and more individuals apply to the program than the program can accept. Competitive applicants will generally have a GPA of 3.5 or better in their graduate coursework as well as scores around the 50th percentile on the verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, and analytical writing portions of the GRE exam. Because of the competitive nature of admissions, it is recommended that individuals apply as far in advance of a deadline as possible.

Application deadlines for graduate study at Mississippi State University are as follows:

<b>Applying for</b>	<b>Domestic Deadline</b>	<b>International Deadline</b>
Fall Semester	July 1	May 1
Spring Semester	November 1	October 1
1st Summer Term	April 1	March 1
2nd Summer Term	May 1	March 1

An international student applying for admission must score a minimum of 550 PBT (213 CBT or 79 iBT) on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or a minimum of 6.5 on the International English Language Testing Systems (IELTS) in addition to meeting all other admission criteria.

### **Admission to Master's Degree Programs**

The following items are required in applying to master's degree programs in the Department of Kinesiology:

1. A completed MSU Graduate School application form
2. Official transcripts from all institutions attended since high school
3. Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test scores
4. Three professional letters of recommendation; at least two individuals providing letters should be in a position to specifically comment about the applicant's academic ability (e.g., former professors)
5. A written statement of purpose, which should highlight the applicant's qualifications, abilities, and academic/professional background; the statement should reflect a strong sense of career direction relevant to the program the applicant is seeking to enter.
6. A resume/curriculum vitae

The admissions process is competitive. Positions within the programs are limited, and more individuals may apply than are able to be accepted. Competitive applicants will usually have a GPA of 3.0 or better in their final 60 undergraduate hours as well as scores of 145 or greater on the verbal and quantitative reasoning sections and 3.5 or greater on the analytical writing portion of the GRE exam. An applicant's statement of purpose, letters of recommendation, and professional experience are also considered in the admissions process.

Application deadlines for graduate study at Mississippi State University are as follows:

<b>Applying for</b>	<b>Domestic Deadline</b>	<b>International Deadline</b>
Fall Semester	July 1	May 1
Spring Semester	November 1	October 1
1st Summer Term	April 1	March 1
2nd Summer Term	May 1	March 1



Because of the competitive nature of admissions, it is recommended that individuals apply as far in advance of a deadline as possible. Students who wait until near the application deadline to apply may find there are no remaining spaces available in the program.

An international student applying for admission must score a minimum of 550 PBT (213 CBT or 79 iBT) on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or a minimum of 6.5 on the International English Language Testing Systems (IELTS) in addition to meeting all other admission criteria.

### **Changing Concentrations After Being Admitted to the Department**

If a student wishes to change concentrations after having been admitted to a master's degree program in the Department of Kinesiology, the student must write a new statement of purpose that provides a detailed rationale about why he/she wishes to change concentrations. The student must also obtain a letter of support from his/her current advisor and a prospective advisor in the new concentration the student wishes to enter. The new statement of purpose and letters of support should be submitted to the graduate coordinator via email. The student's request will be reviewed by the graduate committee at its next regularly-scheduled meeting.

### **Unclassified Admission**

Students may obtain unclassified admission status following the procedures outlined in the MSU Graduate Catalog (<http://catalog.msstate.edu/graduate/admissions-information/admission-procedure/status/>). Individuals admitted with unclassified status are able to take graduate courses, but they must obtain permission to receive an override from the instructor of any course they wish to take. Students should realize that faculty members are under no obligation to provide overrides to unclassified students. Further, students should realize that there is no guarantee that they will be officially admitted to a graduate program after spending one or more semesters as an unclassified student.

## **SECTION 4: SELECTING AN ADVISOR AND PROGRAM OF STUDY**

### **Selecting an Advisor and Committee – Master’s Students**

After being admitted to a master’s degree program, each student must contact a graduate faculty member to ask if he/she is willing to serve as his/her advisor (the advisor is also referred to as the “Major Professor”). Ideally, the student should select an advisor whose research aligns closely with the student’s interests. Students should meet with their advisors regularly each semester to ensure that they are adequately progressing toward degree completion. A student may change his/her advisor if there is agreement between all parties involved (i.e., the student, the former advisor, and the new advisor). In some cases, students may have “Co-Major Professors”.

Master’s degree students must have at least three committee members (i.e., a “Major Professor” plus two additional committee members, or two “Co-Major Professors” and one additional committee member). The student’s advisor (“Major Professor”) and committee members will be noted on the “Committee Request” form, which can be printed off from the Graduate School website (<http://grad.msstate.edu/forms/>). It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that the form is completed correctly and that all necessary signatures are obtained.

### **Selecting an Advisor and Committee – Doctoral Students**

As noted in the admissions process for doctoral degree programs (see section 3 in this handbook), students must obtain approval to enter the doctoral program under the direction of a particular faculty member prior to being formally admitted. Once a student is officially admitted to a doctoral program, this faculty member will serve as the student’s advisor (the advisor is also referred to as the “Major Professor”). In some cases, students may have “Co-Major Professors”.

Doctoral degree students must have at least four total committee members (i.e., a “Major Professor” plus three additional committee members, or two “Co-Major Professors” and two additional committee members). One of the committee members must be from outside the Department of Kinesiology. The student’s advisor (“Major Professor”) and committee members will be noted on the “Committee Request” form, which can be accessed on the Graduate School website (<http://grad.msstate.edu/forms/>). It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that the committee request form is completed correctly and that all necessary signatures are obtained.

### **Program of Study**

Each concentration at the master’s and doctoral level provides a curricular outline for a program of study. The student has the opportunity, in conjunction with his/her major professor (advisor) and committee, to make substitutions in the program of study. The student’s program of study will be noted on the “CAPP” form, which can be accessed on banner. Once the student’s plan of study is built in CAPP, with assistance from the student’s major professor, the student should

print out the form under the graduate print view selection. This will generate the necessary signature lines. The student will need to have their plan of study generated in CAPP signed by his/her committee and the graduate coordinator. If a change occurs to the original plan of study generated in CAPP, the student, with the guidance of his/her major professor, must submit a new CAPP form that is signed by the student's committee and the graduate coordinator. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all forms are completed correctly and that all necessary signatures are obtained. Students are highly encouraged not to wait until the last minute to complete the above forms and obtain the necessary signatures as this could potentially delay graduation.

## **SECTION 5: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

Students should be familiar with the academic performance guidelines outlined in the **MSU Graduate Catalog** (see the section entitled “Graduate School General Degree Completion Requirements” in the table of contents and, specifically, the subsection entitled “Grades and Degree Completion”), which is available online: <http://catalog.msstate.edu/graduate/>. Students who do not meet the requirements for degree completion outlined in the Graduate Catalog will be dismissed from the graduate program. Students who are dismissed may appeal their dismissal by following the appeal procedures outlined in the Graduate Catalog (see the subsection entitled “Academic Probation, Dismissal, and Appeal”).

## **SECTION 6: DEGREE COMPLETION – MASTER’S DEGREES**

Each of the master’s degree concentrations in the Department of Kinesiology offer three concluding options: (1) a thesis, (2) a directed individual study, **or** (3) an internship. Each student should pursue a concluding option (in consultation with his/her advisor and committee members) that coincides with their academic/professional goals and interests. Students who pursue the directed individual study option or the internship option must also successfully complete comprehensive exams prior to graduation.

### **Thesis Option**

A thesis is an original research project of substantial complexity and quality completed by the student as the culmination of his/her master’s program of study. Students should select a research topic and conduct the study in close consultation with their advisor and committee members. The steps involved in completing a thesis include: (1) obtaining approval from the advisor and committee members for a research proposal, (2) obtaining any necessary approval from the university Institutional Review Board, (3) collecting data, (4) analyzing data, (5) writing the thesis, (6) public presentation of the thesis and defense before the supervisory committee, and (7) final submission of the approved thesis to the MSU Library. At least one week prior to the defense, the student must provide the complete thesis manuscript to all committee members. The student must also complete the “declaration of examination/defense” form at least two weeks prior to the scheduled defense date (see <http://www.grad.msstate.edu/forms/>). The student’s committee members will evaluate the content and style of the completed thesis document. Two negative votes from committee members will constitute failure for a student on the thesis defense (a student may still “pass” the thesis defense with one negative vote). A student who fails to defend the thesis successfully on his/her initial attempt can schedule another defense after a period of four months has elapsed from the date of the original defense. A second failure to defend the thesis will result in the student being dismissed from the graduate program. After the student has successfully passed the thesis defense, the student’s advisor should submit the “report of examination results” form to the departmental graduate coordinator (see <http://www.grad.msstate.edu/forms/>). The student must also submit a final draft of the thesis manuscript to the MSU Library after it has been approved by the committee members (see the following link concerning the university’s thesis formatting guidelines: <http://guides.library.msstate.edu/td>).

### **Directed Individual Study (DIS) Option**

Like the thesis option, a DIS will also involve a student working with his/her advisor and committee members to conduct a research study. However, while still requiring a substantial level of rigor and quality, the DIS may be somewhat smaller in scale than a thesis. The steps involved in completing a DIS include: (1) obtaining approval from the advisor and committee members for a research topic prior to registering for DIS credits, (2) obtaining any necessary

approval from the university Institutional Review Board, (3) collecting data, (4) analyzing data, and (5) writing/presenting the research results to the satisfaction of the student's advisor and committee members. Because the DIS may only constitute three graduate credit hours in the student's program of study (as opposed to six for the thesis), students who pursue the DIS option must complete three additional graduate credit hours (these hours must be approved by the student's advisor and committee). In addition, students who pursue the DIS option must successfully complete comprehensive exams prior to graduation.

### **Internship Option**

The internship option will involve a student gaining practical work experience in an area related to his/her professional goals and interests. The internship will require a minimum of 300 hours of documented work over a minimum of 10 weeks, completed in a position in which the student has not worked previously (i.e., if the student is currently working as a graduate assistant (GA), the internship must be done in an area that is different than the student's GA position). The specific duties to be performed during the internship must be approved by the student's advisor and committee members. The student will register for three credit hours of KI 8710 while completing his/her internship. For students in the exercise physiology and sport pedagogy concentrations, the KI 8710 hours will be supervised by the student's advisor. For students in the sport administration concentration, the KI 8710 hours will be supervised by the faculty member that is supervising SS 4396 undergraduate interns in that particular semester.

### **Comprehensive Examination**

Students who pursue the DIS option or thesis option must successfully pass written comprehensive exams prior to graduation. Students will select five courses from their program of study from which to receive comprehensive exams. The comprehensive exam session, which takes place once per semester (including once during the summer), begins at 8:30 AM and concludes at 5:00 PM. In order to successfully pass comprehensive exams, students must receive a passing evaluation on their responses from the exams in all five courses. As noted in the MSU Graduate Catalog, students must be within six hours of graduation or in their final semester of coursework (absent DIS or internship hours) to participate in the comprehensive exams. The application form to take comprehensive exams can be found on the Kinesiology departmental website (<http://kinesiology.msstate.edu/comps/>). Students who fail the comprehensive examination must wait at least four months before retaking the examination. If a student fails the comprehensive examination twice, he/she will be dismissed from the graduate program.

## **SECTION 7: DEGREE COMPLETION – DOCTORAL DEGREES**

In addition to satisfactory completion of all coursework in the program of study, doctoral students must also satisfy the following requirements.

### **Academic Symposia Attendance**

Throughout their tenure in the Department of Kinesiology, doctoral students are required to attend and actively participate in departmental symposia. Academic symposia are designed to provide graduate students a vehicle whereby they can participate in the life of the department. These symposia: (1) provide graduate students an avenue in which to present their research, (2) provide a forum for graduate students to critique the research of others, (3) provide a forum for graduate students to interact with professionals from outside the university, and (4) enrich the academic culture of the department. Active participation may include: (1) evaluation of research presentations, (2) participating in symposia organization, and (3) presenting research proposals and the results of completed research. Students who do not attend these meetings in person or who do not participate fully will receive written notification so that attendance and participation can be documented in the review file. **Failure to meet these requirements may result in probation and possible expulsion from the program.** Students may request an excused absence in writing from the chair of the department's Academic Culture Committee and their faculty adviser for previously planned activities. Students must provide ample documentation to justify their absence at least four weeks in advance of the anticipated planned absence. Permission must be granted by both parties. Unplanned absences due to unavoidable circumstances such as medical and family emergencies will be reviewed on an individual basis by the Chair of the Academic Culture Committee and the faculty adviser. Students who receive an excused absence will be responsible for completing a written make-up assignment in advance of the absence to receive credit. Disputes will be reconciled by the student's supervisory committee. The decision of the supervisory committee will be final.

### **Directed Individual Study Requirement**

As noted in the PhD curriculum, students must complete at least three credit hours of directed individual study (DIS), the outcome of which should be a manuscript suitable for submission to a peer-reviewed journal. These DIS hours must be supervised by the student's advisor, who will judge the manuscript's suitability for submission. The student must have submitted the manuscript, as the first author, for review to a peer-reviewed journal prior to taking his/her comprehensive exams. Proof of this submission should be sent to the graduate coordinator. In order to improve their prospects of gaining employment, PhD students are encouraged to be active researchers and submit multiple manuscripts during their time in the doctoral program.

## **Preliminary/Comprehensive Examination**

Prior to beginning the comprehensive examination, a student should discuss his/her potential dissertation topic with all supervisory committee members. In addition to testing the student's knowledge of his/her program of study, an important purpose of the comprehensive examination is to assess the student's readiness to begin the dissertation. The comprehensive examination will consist of both a written and oral component. A student who fails either the written or oral comprehensive examination must wait at least four months before retaking the examination. If a student fails the comprehensive examination twice, he/she will be dismissed from the graduate program.

### *Written Examination*

After a student has successfully fulfilled the DIS requirement outlined above, he/she may schedule the written comprehensive examination with his/her supervisory committee. The student must be in his/her final semester of coursework (excluding dissertation) or within six hours of completing coursework (excluding dissertation) in order to take the comprehensive examination. The written examination may consist of either (1) a "closed-book" examination in which the student sits down in a computer lab to write answers to a question(s) in a set period of time, (2) an "open-book" examination in which the student reviews literature and writes an answer to a question(s) over the course of multiple days, or (3) some combination of "closed-book" and "open-book" examinations. The specific structure of a given student's written examinations will be determined by the student's supervisory committee. It is expected that each member of the supervisory committee will provide at least one question(s) to the student. Ideally, the comprehensive examination should serve an important role in helping prepare the student for the dissertation process.

### *Oral Examination*

After passing the written examination, the student will schedule an oral examination with his/her committee members. The oral examination provides the student an opportunity to address weaknesses from the written examination and orally communicate knowledge pertinent to his/her program of study. At this point, the student should be close to having a coherent outline of his/her dissertation proposal. Thus, the oral examination also provides the committee members an opportunity to ask background questions pertinent to the student's potential dissertation topic.

## **Dissertation Proposal**

After passing the written and oral examinations, the student will schedule a dissertation proposal meeting with his/her committee members. At least one week prior to the proposal meeting, the student must provide a written draft of his/her proposal to all committee members. The written proposal should typically include chapter 1 (introduction), chapter 2 (review of literature), and chapter 3 (method) of the dissertation. The dissertation proposal meeting provides the opportunity for the student to orally present the proposal to the committee and for the committee



to discuss the proposal with the student. Ideally, the proposal meeting should result in a consensus between the committee members and student regarding the direction of the student's dissertation.

### **Admission to Candidacy**

After the student has the dissertation proposal approved by his/her supervisory committee, the student and committee members should complete the "admission to candidacy" form available on the Graduate School website: <http://www.grad.msstate.edu/forms/>

### **Dissertation Defense**

Students must complete a public presentation of their dissertation research and a defense before their supervisory committee. At least one week prior to the defense, the student must provide the complete dissertation manuscript to all committee members. The student must also complete the "declaration of examination/defense" form at least two weeks prior to the scheduled defense date (see <http://www.grad.msstate.edu/forms/>). The student's committee members will evaluate the content and style of the completed dissertation document. Two negative votes from committee members will constitute failure for a student on the dissertation defense (a student may still "pass" the dissertation defense with one negative vote). A student who fails to defend the dissertation successfully on his/her initial attempt can schedule another defense after a period of four months has elapsed from the date of the original defense. A second failure to defend the dissertation will result in the student being dismissed from the graduate program. After the student has successfully passed the dissertation defense, the student's advisor should submit the "report of examination results" form to the departmental graduate coordinator (see <http://www.grad.msstate.edu/forms/>). The student must also submit a final draft of the dissertation manuscript to the MSU Library after it has been approved by the committee members (see the following link concerning the university's dissertation formatting guidelines: <http://guides.library.msstate.edu/td>).

## GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

Graduate research, teaching, and service assistantships are available on an annual or nine-month basis. **The Department of Kinesiology typically awards assistantships on a nine-month basis, and typically we award graduate teaching assistantships.** A graduate assistant's work schedule is a maximum of 20 hours per week. The minimum stipend rate is \$600.00 per month. **The Department of Kinesiology expects that students on graduate assistantships will gradually become effective teachers and achieve their academic goals under the direct supervision of a graduate faculty member.**

**Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA)** - Many of the University's academic, research, and administrative offices employ Graduate Research Assistants. This opportunity provides an excellent means for students to learn new techniques and methods as well as expand their knowledge by association with research-oriented responsibilities, whether employed by a unit within the student's academic discipline or in another department. Duties and stipends vary from program to program and are dependent upon the nature of assigned duties.

**Graduate Service Assistantship (GSA)** - Graduate Services Assistant is the title given to students employed to aid faculty and staff members with administrative functions within a unit. Many academic and non-academic unit service assistantships are available. Duties vary, depending on administrative needs of the unit making the award. Stipends vary according to the nature of assigned duties.

IRS Code states that graduate students who are hired in non-teaching/non-research assistantships can receive non-taxed tuition remission of \$5,250.00 per calendar year at MSU; these assistantships are titled Graduate Service Assistants. Amounts in excess of \$5,250.00 per calendar year are taxable.

**Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA)** – **This is the most common type of assistantship offered in the Department of Kinesiology.** Graduate Teaching Assistants normally serve in an instructional capacity and are selected on the basis of past teaching experience or academic promise as effective instructors in their field of study. **The workload of a graduate teaching assistant will not exceed 20 hours per week. In the Department of Kinesiology, GTA's will typically not be assigned to teach more than six credit hours per semester. In addition to primary teaching responsibilities, GTA's may also be assigned other duties related to instruction such as assisting in the preparation of lectures, leading discussion sections, conducting laboratory exercises, and keeping class records. Any GTA that is assigned to teach six credit hours will only be given additional duties under the guidance of their major professor, and their total workload will not exceed 20 hours per week. All GTA's in the Department of Kinesiology are expected to hold a minimum of 2 office hours each week. These 2 office hours will count towards the 20 hour work week.** Most academic units offer a graduate work budget for one or more teaching assistants each year. All prospective teaching assistants are required to participate in the appropriate Teaching Assistant Workshop(s) prior to beginning their first assignment as a teaching assistant. During the Teaching Assistant Workshops, students are certified at one of the following levels that correspond to the responsibilities and duties of the assistantship appointment:

- **Teaching Assistant 1 (TA1):** Graduate assistant will perform such tasks as preparing examinations, grading papers, preparing class lectures, maintaining records, and tutoring students outside formal classes. This position does not require classroom certification.
- **Teaching Assistant 2 (TA2):** Graduate assistant may have some of the same duties as TA1 in addition to making presentations in laboratories or classrooms, conducting lectures, and leading discussion groups but not as the teacher of record. These tasks involve direct contact with students. This position requires classroom certification.
- **Teaching Assistant 3 (TA3):** Graduate assistant will have the same duties as TA1 and TA2 and will teach classes for credit as the instructor of record and/or as the person primarily responsible for assigning grades. This position requires classroom certification.

**Graduate Teaching Assistants who have the primary responsibility of teaching a course/laboratory section for credit (TA2) and/or for assigning final grades (TA3) for such a course/laboratory section must have earned at least 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline, be under the direct supervision of a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, receive regular in-service training, and be regularly evaluated.**

**Teaching Assistant Workshops** - The Teaching Assistant Workshops are designed to introduce students to the techniques and skills necessary to be effective instructors in the University environment and promote excellence in undergraduate education at Mississippi State University. Additional information on the Teaching Assistant Workshops is available online at [www.grad.msstate.edu/workshop/](http://www.grad.msstate.edu/workshop/).

- **General Teaching Assistant Workshop** is offered in August and January prior to fall and spring semesters. All prospective GTAs, both domestic and international, are required to attend the General Teaching Assistant Workshop. Failure to complete the General Workshop will render a student ineligible for a teaching assistantship award. The General Workshop provides new teaching assistants with an introduction to effective teaching methods and tools and serves to educate GTAs about University policies and resources. The workshop emphasizes the importance of providing high-quality instruction at Mississippi State University.
- **Classroom Certification Workshop** is offered in August and January prior to fall and spring semesters immediately following the General TA Workshop. The evaluation for Classroom Certification is the tool used to ensure that GTAs are equipped with the skills needed to deliver high-quality instruction to undergraduate students at Mississippi State University. In a 10-minute micro-teaching presentation followed by a 5-minute question/discussion session, prospective Graduate Teaching Assistants for TA2/TA3 certification present to an evaluative panel of graduate faculty members an abbreviated lecture that would be presented to students as part of an assigned course. Classroom Certification is required for all teaching assistants whose responsibilities involve direct contact with students such as giving presentations in lectures or laboratories, conducting lectures, and leading discussion groups. A Teaching Assistant who initially received assignment to a TA1 level may later complete the evaluation for Classroom Certification in anticipation of a change in duties that require direct contact with students. A GTA who has already received assignment to a TA1 level is not required to attend the General Workshop again. Waivers to allow classroom teaching (TA2/TA3) without successful completion of

the International Workshop and/or General Workshop and Classroom Certification will not be issued.

- **International Teaching Assistant Workshop** is offered in August prior to fall semester only. The International Teaching Assistant Workshop, offered in collaboration with the Office of International Education, provides teaching assistants who are international students with the cultural education and communication skills necessary to achieve effective performance of their duties. The workshop also serves as a tool for evaluating international students' teaching and language skills. The training, evaluation, and certification of international GTAs are essential to ensure that undergraduate students receive a high quality of instruction. The International TA Workshop consists of the following three parts: classroom culture (60%), presentation and pronunciation skills (20%), and teaching evaluation and English certification (20%). International students with a bachelor's degree from an accredited US institution are not required to complete the International TA Workshop.
  - **International Students Beginning Assistantship Appointment in the Fall Semester:** Students who are not successful in meeting the required standards during the August evaluation for classroom English Certification cannot proceed to the evaluation for Classroom Certification for the fall semester. They must enroll in ESL 5313 (Classroom Communication and Presentations) during the fall semester. These students are still required to complete the General TA Workshop in August for TA1 certification. After successful completion of ESL 5313 and reevaluation of classroom English in December, the student can be evaluated for Classroom Certification in January prior to the beginning of the spring semester to be certified at the TA2/TA3 level. Participation in the spring General TA Workshop is not required.
  - **International Students Beginning Assistantship Appointment in the Spring Semester:** International TAs beginning their assistantship appointment in the spring semester are only allowed to hold a TA1 level assistantship and must complete the General TA Workshop in January. These students may enroll in ESL 5313 (Classroom Communication and Presentations) during the spring semester and be evaluated for classroom English Certification in May. If successful, these TA1s will be temporarily allowed to hold a TA2/TA3 level assistantship during summer terms and then must successfully complete the evaluation for Classroom Certification in August to continue at the TA2/TA3 level in the fall. International students beginning their assistantship appointment in the spring semester may opt to participate in the International TA Workshop the following August instead of enrolling in ESL 5313 during the spring semester. These students will only be allowed to hold a TA1 level appointment prior successfully completing the International TA Workshop and evaluation for Classroom Certification in August.

**Eligibility for an Assistantship** - To be eligible for an assistantship appointment, a student must have "regular" or "contingent" admission status to a specific graduate degree program. However, a student with "contingent" status must, within the first award enrollment period, satisfy "regular" admission requirements. A student with "provisional" or "unclassified" admission status is not eligible for an assistantship appointment. An assistantship award will be terminated when these requirements are not met. A student's admission status may be verified by calling The Graduate School at (662) 325.7400.

**Application for Graduate Assistantships - Application for an assistantship appointment must be submitted to directly to the Department of Kinesiology graduate coordinator. Please use the following form: <http://www.kinesiology.msstate.edu/admissions/>. The deadline for priority consideration for a graduate assistantship is February 15<sup>th</sup> each year. You must also be admitted as a graduate student in the Department of Kinesiology to be considered for a graduate assistantship.**

**Required Course Load for Fall and Spring Semesters** - Graduate assistants must be full-time students (registered in at least 9 graduate credit hours) and may not enroll in more than 13 graduate credit hours. The required full-time status must be maintained throughout the entire semester. **Therefore, no course may be dropped if the resulting course load would be fewer than the required 9 graduate credit hours, nor may any course in the 9-hour load consist of or be converted to audit status.** The 9-credit hour course load may not be composed of undergraduate courses unless the course is a program prerequisite. In such case, the minimum graduate load required will be 6 credit hours and only one undergraduate course will be permitted as part of the 9-credit hour load (per Graduate Council, March 2001). Some international students are required by the University to take ESL 5323 and/or ESL 5313. Both are considered prerequisites, and a graduate student may enroll in one of the courses and 6 credit hours of degree-program courses while holding an assistantship. ESL 5323 and ESL 5313 may not be taken concurrently.

**Required Course Load for Full-and Half-Summer Awards** - Full-summer awards require an enrollment in at least 6 graduate credit hours with a maximum allowed of 13 credit hours. Any combination may be used to make up the 13-credit hour maximum; however, enrollment in either 5-week term must be at least 3 graduate credit hours with a maximum allowed of 7 credit hours. Additionally, a student holding a half-summer graduate assistantship must be registered for courses scheduled during the term of the assistantship.

**Termination of Assistantship** - If the assistantship is terminated prior to the specified ending date, the assistant's duties, stipend, and tuition exemption will cease. The student will be required to pay a prorated portion of the previously applied tuition exemption.

**Distance Education Courses** - A student enrolled in a total of 9 credit hours: Six graduate credit hours and 3 Distance Education credits are treated as the student's required full-time load. Tuition will be assessed at the current University rate. The full-time tuition exemption credit will be applied to a student's account covering the basic tuition of the Distance Education course. Tuition exemption does not cover the Distance Fee.

A student enrolled in a total of 10 or more credit hours: Additional tuition will be charged at the current University credit rate for any graduate student's course schedule that includes Distance Education or ESL courses if the total credit hours exceed 9. Therefore, graduate assistants should note that the graduate assistant tuition waiver does not cover the cost of Distance Education or ESL courses when a student is enrolled in more than 9 credit hours.

**Course Overload** - Graduate assistants wishing to schedule more than a full-time course load may, with the approval of his/her major professor, department head, graduate coordinator and

dean, register for more than 13 hours. The student must submit an Overload Form to his/her major professor. The dean's office sends the approved form to the Registrar's Office. Such transmission will allow application of additional tuition exemption consistent with current policy.

**Satisfactory Progress** - To retain an assistantship, a student must demonstrate satisfactory progress in the academic program. Failure to do so may result in a termination of the assistantship.

**Unsatisfactory Progress** - Unsatisfactory progress may be defined as the failure to maintain a B average in graduate courses attempted after being admitted to a specific program, a grade of U, D, or F in any course, more than two grades below a B, failure of the comprehensive/preliminary examination, an unsatisfactory evaluation of a thesis or dissertation, failure of a research defense, or any other failure of a required component of one's program of study. Any of these, or a combination of these, may constitute the basis for the termination of a student's graduate study in a degree program. Individual programs have the right to establish their own criteria; however, the preceding definition should be considered the minimum standard for continuation in graduate programs of study and holding graduate assistantships. In the case of dismissal, a student's assistantship will be terminated.

**Stipends** - Stipends are paid semimonthly on the fifteenth and the last working day of each month. When employment begins during a pay period, stipends are calculated on a pay-period basis. The employing department must be contacted to obtain specific information regarding paycheck delivery or pickup.

**Matriculation Fees** - Assessment of tuition and required fees is made on an equal basis for all students classified at the graduate level. Graduate Teaching Assistants and Graduate Service Assistants receive an exemption equal to approximately 71% of assessed tuition. Graduate Research Assistants receive an exemption of 100% of assessed tuition. Graduate Assistants who are not Mississippi residents will receive a 100% exemption of the additional charges assessed for non-resident tuition. All students are personally responsible for paying any student account charges in excess of the tuition exemption.