

ALTERNATE WORKLOAD POLICY

Funded graduate students in the Department of Physics and Astronomy may, on occasion, require an alternate workload assignment for the birth/adoption of a child, a personal, serious health condition, or to care for an immediate family member with a serious health condition. In these rare circumstances, every effort should be made to protect the annualized lecturer's or funded graduate student's stipend and appointment.

I. Eligibility

Graduate Students: The alternate workload policy applies to full-time, enrolled graduate teaching assistants who are in good academic standing and making satisfactory progress toward completion of their degree.

II. Provisions

- An eligible funded graduate student granted an alternate workload assignment receives 100 percent of his/her stipend and other benefits associated with the appointment.
- For an eligible funded graduate student, the stipend will be maintained for up to six weeks or until the last day of the appointment, whichever comes first. The six-week alternate assignment start and end dates are coordinated among the department chair, the associate chair, and the graduate student's faculty advisor (where applicable).
- The same appointment status (with equivalent benefits, pay, and other terms) will be available after a medical/family leave of absence has been taken, provided the appointment or reappointment would normally have been available. Assigned duties, however, may be subject to change. While graduate students are expected to return to their teaching assignments at the conclusion of their alternate work assignment, the department administration will work with them during the semester in which the leave occurs to define roles and responsibilities that may provide additional flexibility (e.g., on line instruction, the teaching assignment may be structured to focus on grading support, preparing course materials, or other less-intensive duties).

III. Extension of Time Limits to Degree or Candidacy

Because the student remains enrolled as a full time student and continues to pay tuition, this is not a leave of absence. It is instead a modification of deadlines and academic expectations to accommodate the student's situation. The student will be able to postpone completion of course assignments, examinations, and other academic requirements. The advisor and student should consult in advance about how the student will meet academic goals and requirements. The student is responsible for ensuring that this consultation takes place. The accommodation period needs to be tailored to the student's individual circumstances, and the timing of the student's academic responsibilities, but it will typically be a one-semester extension. After the end of the alternate workload period, students are expected to return to graduate study and resume progress toward completing their degrees.

Special Notice to International Students: International students should discuss the intended leave period with the Office of International Students and Scholars at the beginning of the planning period in order to identify and address proactively any individual or unique visa issues and/or to consider the latest applicable regulations.

IV. Student and Lecturer Funding During the Alternate Workload

A. Graduate Teaching Assistants

With advance planning, many assignments can be adapted for modifications of schedule during an alternate workload assignment. Eligible graduate students with GTA appointments are encouraged to

work out the necessary adjustments as far in advance as practical. During the leave period, the students will continue to receive their salary or stipend, benefits, and associated tuition support.

B. Fellowship Recipients

Eligible students who are supported by WVU fellowships will experience no change in their funding arrangements during the Alternate Workload Assignment; they will continue to receive their fellowship support and benefits during the new assignment.

C. Graduate Students without Financial Support

Students who do not have an on-going commitment of financial support from the University are eligible for extension of time limits but are not entitled to funding.

D. Limitations

In the event that partners or spouses are both full-time graduate students in Physics and Astronomy at WVU, *only one* student may receive an Alternate Workload Assignment for any given event. (The other partner or spouse may, of course, still request an unpaid leave without tuition support.)

V. Approval

At least eight weeks prior to the anticipated beginning of an Alternate Workload (*and sooner if at all possible*), graduate teaching assistant students should submit a written request for the workload adjustment to the department chair. The department needs sufficient time to find an appropriate replacement for teaching responsibilities and to outline expected teaching and research activities before and following the adjustment period. However, the department understands that personal and family medical emergencies are often not anticipated. The department will do everything possible to work with graduate students during their time of need. Graduate students applying for a workload adjustment must make arrangements with the relevant faculty advisor for course completion and a timeline for meeting other academic requirements such as Ph.D. qualifying examinations or other academic milestones that will be affected by the adjustment and by the one semester extension of academic requirements. A copy of this agreement should be on file with the department.

VI. Student and Lecturer Course Coverage During the Alternate Workload

The department chair, associate chair, and, if relevant, the student's graduate program supervisor, will develop a plan to cover course sections for six weeks.