

University-Related Employment for Full Time Graduate Students

Full time graduate students should be in a position to devote their full time and energy to a coherent program of graduate study and research, and should make full time progress toward completion of the requirements of that program. Even though university-related employment (such as an assistantship for teaching, research or administrative tasks) may provide a significant portion of the financial support that enables a graduate student to pursue graduate study, and may provide experience that supplements the formal academic program in developing skills relevant to a future faculty position or other career; too much time spent on employment activities diverts time and energy from the program of study and research, and delays completion.

The common benchmark for the maximum acceptable time spent on university-related (or other) employment for full time graduate students is an average of ten hours per week. Versions of the ten-hour rule have been adopted by the federal granting councils and the Ontario Graduate Scholarships, as well as by the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies.

It is not possible or desirable for the university to monitor and enforce the employment activities of its graduate students outside the university. However it is both possible and desirable for the university to ensure that it does not itself create a structural situation that jeopardizes the ability of the graduate student to make full time progress toward the completion of graduate program requirements.

Accordingly the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies has long upheld the ten hour rule; i.e., that every member university is committed that full time graduate students should not be permitted to work more than an average of ten hours per week on campus, and should be encouraged to limit their time spent on employment either inside or outside the university to an average of no more than ten hours per week.

In August 1994, the government requested that OCGS publicly confirm its position on the ten hour rule (i.e. that the number of hours a full time graduate student may spend on employment paid on or through the university should not exceed an average of ten hours per week). OCGS did so on September 16, 1994, and subsequently reaffirmed that position on January 21, 2000, and again on January 21, 2005.