

## **Sociology Department Financial Aid: Graduate Teaching Assistantships and Achievement Scholarships**

The department is allotted a limited number of graduate teaching assistantships, as well as a small allocation of money for achievement scholarships (formerly known as tuition waivers), which it can allocate at its discretion to graduate students in its program. As in previous years, graduate students can apply for both kinds of financial aid through a competitive process. This competition takes place at least once a year, during the Spring semester, and possibly during the Fall as well if there are resources freed up between semesters.

More information on these awards follows below, along with a combined application form. **Read this material very carefully** before applying, and be aware of eligibility requirements, responsibilities, and materials needed for each type of application. It is possible to apply simultaneously for both kinds of positions, with the applicant being considered for an achievement scholarship in case we are unable to award a TA position. Applicants who do not receive a TA position remain under consideration, in the order they were originally ranked by the graduate committee, in case a position is vacated prior to the subsequent semester. All applications must be turned into the graduate secretary at the main office by the time mentioned in the announcement accompanying this application.

Because our resources are extremely limited, **graduate students should try to obtain financial aid from sources outside the department** before applying for a department TA position or Achievement Scholarship. Success at getting aid from outside sources will free up our internal aid for other students in the department. It is good to start with an initial consultation with International Student Services <<http://www.hawaii.edu/issmanoa/>> if you are an international student or Financial Aid Services <<http://www.hawaii.edu/fas/>> if you are a U.S. citizen or permanent resident. Sociology graduate students have been successful in gaining a large number of graduate assistant and other student employment positions outside the department. Current openings can be found through student employment <<http://www.hawaii.edu/sece/>>, while outside graduate assistant positions may also be listed at <<http://workatuh.hawaii.edu/Jobs/Search>>. The graduate student listserv will sometimes be used to send out other announcements of openings as well.

In addition, if you are not already a Hawai'i legal resident, whenever feasible you should attempt to obtain Hawai'i residency status, although the University is quite strict about allowing changes in residency for students who are already enrolled as non-residents. Resident status will allow you to pay a much lower level of tuition, so that any achievement scholarship you might receive will go a longer way. Information about criteria for legal residency can be found here: <<http://www.catalog.hawaii.edu/about-uh/campus-policies2.htm#requirements>>.

### **Graduate Teaching Assistantships**

Before you apply for a department TA position, you should have read and be familiar with the relevant eligibility requirements and duties of a graduate assistant. Among other things, there are GPA requirements, requirements on unit loads, and strict limits on outside employment. The full set of rules and requirements can be found at <<http://manoa.hawaii.edu/graduate/content/graduate-assistants>>. TAships typically offer a full tuition waiver, health benefits, and a salary.

The department awards 9-month per year, 0.50 FTE TAships for a duration of four semesters (except in circumstances when the TA allocation to the department does not permit us to guarantee an award for four semesters). MA students are limited to this single term of appointment. PhD students whose period of appointment expires may reapply for their positions. However, no TA may serve for more than three years total. TAs who interrupt their service before their period of appointment expires must reapply if they wish to resume at a later point. Moreover, maintaining a position is also contingent on

continuous satisfactory performance and adherence to all conditions listed in the Handbook.

Also, please note that TAs are expected to be present in Hawai'i and available for duty for the same range of dates as faculty: that is, every semester the TA is expected to be in " from the beginning of registration to the end of the exam and grading period. In addition, because TAships are Board of Regents appointments, TAs MUST complete University travel forms and obtain permission to be absent BEFORE they leave the state at any time during their 9 month period of service. Failure to comply with these regulations could jeopardize the continuation of a TAship award.

At the beginning of the Fall and Spring semesters, department TAs will be given teaching assignments. While we will attempt to take into consideration TA time constraints (particularly their own course schedule) and teaching preferences, assignments are ultimately made according to teaching needs, and it is the TA's *obligation to accept whatever courses they are assigned*. TAs are subject to evaluations by professors and are highly encouraged to make use of University-administered teaching evaluations as well in order to help develop their teaching portfolio. Experienced teaching assistants are sometimes offer the opportunity to teach a course independently in the department, as all or part of their TA duties.

### **Achievement Scholarships**

The department receives an allocation of Achievement Scholarships to be awarded to graduate students. The awards may be used to cover tuition (and will be posted directly to the student's Banner account), and for US nationals and permanent residents, they may also be used to cover fees and related expenses. The allocation is a total number of dollars, which the department allocates among selected students in amounts greater than \$500. Among other things, there are rules on minimum GPA (3.5 overall GPA) and minimum *degree-related* course units (6 credits per term). The department will consider only units that are relevant and necessary for meeting the requirements of your sociology degree. Students who are planning to be on one-unit registration status (e.g. SOC 700F or 800) should not apply for an achievement scholarship, as they are not eligible to receive it.

Achievement scholarships will be awarded by semester for a period of up to one year, and with the number and amount of awards, as well as the length of the award, determined by the graduate chair and graduate committee. Disbursement of a scholarship award to an awardee over the year depends on maintaining eligibility requirements. Amounts may be subject to adjustment in either direction over the year in case of changes in resources available. Current holders of the scholarship are allowed to apply for renewal as long as they continue to meet eligibility requirements, using the same application process as new applicants. There is no automatic renewal from year to year. Information on requirements for Achievement Scholarships can be found here:

<<http://manoa.hawaii.edu/graduate/content/achievement-scholarships>>.

If you have been given an achievement scholarship but are in a situation that you will no longer be eligible (e.g. due to change in registration status) or no longer need the same amount (because you are receiving a full or partial tuition waiver from other sources), **it is your responsibility to inform the department about this immediately**. Failure to do so promptly may cause the department to lose the money outright and render us unable to transfer it to another student or students.

**Sociology Department**  
**Graduate Teaching Assistantship and Achievement Scholarship Application**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ UH ID# \_\_\_\_\_

Applying for: TA Position \_\_\_\_\_ Achievement Scholarship \_\_\_\_\_

Check both of the above if you are applying for a TA position but are also interested in being considered for an achievement scholarship if we are unable to award you one.

Tuition Type: In-state      Out-of-state      Estimated Units Upcoming Semester \_\_\_\_\_  
*Count only Units needed for your Sociology Degree*

**Application Materials:** Applicants for a TA position or both kinds of financial aid should submit items 1-4 listed below. Those applying for only an Achievement Scholarship need attach only items 1-3.

1. current curriculum vitae
2. current UHM unofficial graduate transcript, which can be obtained online from the MyUH system (continuing students only)
3. all of the following that are applicable:

list of past and current sources of financial aid during period as a UHM graduate student, including any fellowships, assistantships, and Achievement Scholarships from all sources

brief description of efforts to obtain financial aid outside of the department, including consultations and applications (including status if pending)

optional statement describing your need for financial aid

4. one of the following, as designated below:

For applicants applying for a TAship in the department for the first time: two or more letters of recommendation from UHM faculty (at least one in sociology), using the attached form (optional for applicants applying for renewal)

For applicants applying for renewal: a statement describing your teaching approach and past record as a TA

You may attach, at your discretion, additional material of reasonable length that you believe reflects upon your qualifications, such as course materials and evaluations. Please ensure that you have read and are familiar with the University and Sociology Department requirements for the financial aid that you are applying for, and are willing and able to abide by them.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name  
Date

**Sociology Department  
Graduate Teaching Assistantship Evaluation Form**

Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Recommender: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ I hereby waive any and all rights of access to confidential letters pertaining to this application. I understand that the completed form will be held in confidence from me and the public by the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

\_\_\_\_ I DO NOT waive my right of access to this recommendation but I authorize the referee to provide a candid evaluation and all relevant information to the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

Applicant Signature

Date

To recommenders: We are interested in your estimate of the applicant's academic performance and promise, as well as the applicant's suitability to be a graduate teaching assistant in the Sociology Department. Feel free to attach a separate sheet of paper if desired.

Recommender Signature

Date