

# **UNDERGRADUATE ASSISTANT HANDBOOK**



**Southern**  
Illinois University  
**Carbondale**

**A guide for undergraduate assistants**

**August 2009**

Welcome to the Undergraduate Assistantship Program at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. The Undergraduate Assistantship program was established to provide you with a paraprofessional employment experience related to your career/academic discipline. These positions are supervised and/or mentored by a faculty and/or professional level staff member. Undergraduate Assistantships offer opportunities for you to make contacts with role models in your respective field and to secure employment references.

SIUC is known nationwide for its extensive student employment program. This program was implemented in 2002 and employs approximately 150 students each academic year. Beginning in 2004 the Undergraduate Research Award recipients were also employed in the Undergraduate Assistantship Program provided they meet the eligibility requirements. The Undergraduate Assistantship Program is overseen by the Undergraduate Assistantship Advisory Committee and is a cooperative effort between Enrollment Management, Human Resources, Payroll and the University hiring departments. Enrollment Management produces this handbook to serve as a helpful reference tool for undergraduate assistants and undergraduate research award recipients. We encourage you to keep this handbook in a place that is easily accessible and to use it when questions arise.

## **Eligibility Requirements**

Appointments are customarily given to students who have shown superior aptitude in their field of study and appear likely to render a high quality of service. An undergraduate assistant must be enrolled in an undergraduate degree program; unclassified students are not eligible for undergraduate assistant appointments.

Preference is given to junior and seniors.

You must maintain a SIUC cumulative grade point average of 2.25 or higher. If you are an incoming transfer student, you must have a 2.25 or higher grade point average from your previous school(s).

You must not have already held an undergraduate assistantship(s) for two years.

You must comply with the Selective Service Registration requirements.

You must not be in default (for the period of 6 months or more and in the amount of \$600 or more) on the repayment of an educational loan for the purpose of attendance at an institution of higher education.

You must comply with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 and have an Employment Eligibility Verification form (I-9) completed by the hiring department.

You must comply with the Drug-Free Workplace Guidelines, which are published in the Students, Faculty & Staff Important Information brochure. This brochure is mailed to all enrolled students.

If you are a NCAA athlete, you must comply with the NCAA regulations regarding the employment of a student-athlete. The Intercollegiate Athletics Financial Aid & Insurance Officer and Coordinator of Student-Athlete Employment determine eligibility and grants permission for employment.

If you apply for a security-sensitive position, you will be subject to a Pre-Employment Background Investigation before an offer for hire can be made.

If you are an international student, you must comply with the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Service regulations. The International Students and Scholars Office determine eligibility and grants permission for employment.

If you are an international student, you must meet with the Nonresident Alien Tax Compliance officer in the Accounts Payable office to complete the hiring process.

## **Enrollment Requirements**

Undergraduate assistants are required to be enrolled for a minimum of twelve (12) credit hours at SIUC to be employed in the Undergraduate Assistantship program. (Audit hours do not qualify as credit hours for undergraduate assistantship purposes). These enrollment requirements were established to comply with U.S. Department of Education, Immigration and Naturalization Service and Internal Revenue Service regulations. If you withdraw or drop below the minimum enrollment requirements, you will be terminated from your undergraduate assistantship position.

If you are graduating at the end of a given semester, you may apply for a one-time exception to the enrollment requirements, provided that you are enrolled for at least one credit hour. U.S. Citizens and permanent residents will need to provide documentation from your academic advisor in person to the Academic Scholarship Office in order for an exception to be granted. International Students will need to contact the International Students and Scholars office to obtain an exception form, which will need to be completed by their academic advisor.

## **Other Employment**

According to University policy, all undergraduate students are to be employed on a part-time basis and cannot result in the displacement of a Civil Service or other full-time Faculty/Staff position. The following restrictions were established to comply with University policy, Immigration and Naturalization Service and Internal Revenue Service regulations.

### ***U.S. Citizens and Permanent Residents***

If you hold a 25% (10 hours per week) undergraduate assistantship you may also be employed in the student employment program for a maximum of 16 hours per week when school is in session.

If you hold a 37.5% (15 hours per week) undergraduate assistantship you may also be employed in the student employment program for a maximum of 11 hours per week when school is in session.

If you hold a 50% (20 hours per week) undergraduate assistantship you may also be employed in the student employment program for a maximum of 6 hours per week when school is in session.

## ***International Students***

If you hold a 25% (10 hours per week) undergraduate assistantship you may also be employed in the student employment program for a maximum of 10 hours per week when school is in session.

If you hold a 37.5% (15 hours per week) undergraduate assistantship you may also be employed in the student employment program for a maximum of 5 hours per week when school is in session.

If you hold a 50% (20 hours per week) undergraduate assistantship you cannot be employed in the student employment program.

## **Payment of Undergraduate Assistants**

You will be paid on a monthly basis. Undergraduate Assistant payroll periods begin on the first day of each month and end on the last day of each month with the payday being the first day of the next month following the end of the payroll period. If the scheduled payday falls on a day in which the university is closed, the scheduled payday may be moved to an earlier day.

SIUC strongly encourages all undergraduate assistants to have their earnings directly deposited into their personal account at the financial institution of their choice. There are several advantages to having your earnings electronically deposited into a personal account:

- Electronic direct deposit (EDD) is convenient, there is no need to come to Accounts Payable to pick up a paycheck, and earnings can be received during breaks without returning to campus.
- EDD is safe, reducing the chance of a check being lost or stolen.

If you choose EDD, you will need to authorize SIUC to send earnings to your personal banking account. You will need to complete an Authorization for Deposit of Recurring Payments form. Whenever you sign up for EDD, the University will need to verify that the information provided is correct. This is called a pre-note process. Until the pre-note process has occurred, you will receive a paper check that will be mailed to your home. In most instances this will be the address that was provided on your W-4 card.

## **Responsibilities of Undergraduate Assistants**

You must abide by the policies and procedures of your employing department and be willing to perform tasks as assigned.

You must be consistently dependable, prompt and reliable in attendance and work the hours and times that have been assigned to you. You should always be courteous and display a professional image for your department and the University.

You must notify your supervisor prior to your assigned work time if you must be absent from work. You must make up any time that is missed for scheduled absences. If you are ill your supervisor may require documentation from a physician or other acceptable source. You will not be required to make up time for illness that has been documented.

You must notify your employer if you withdraw from school or are no longer enrolled for the appropriate number of credit hours to be employed and you must officially resign your position.

You must fulfill the employment contract that was agreed upon at the time you were hired. If for any reason you must resign your position during your period of appointment you must notify your supervisor and complete an official resignation form. The actual date of resignation should be the last day that was worked. You should give your employer as much notice as possible when resigning so that suitable arrangements may be made to find a replacement.

Undergraduate Assistantship contracts are written for fall semester, spring semester, or both fall and spring semester. Fall semester contracts normally begin the first day of classes for fall semester and will end the last day of final exams. Spring semester contracts normally begin the first day of classes for spring semester and will end the last day of final exams. During your contract period you will be expected to work your normally scheduled work hours when the University is officially open even though classes may not be in session. For example during the Thanksgiving break the university is open Monday-Wednesday. You are expected to work those days.

Undergraduate assistant positions are approved for funding each spring semester for the subsequent academic year. Funding in one academic year does not guarantee the position will be funded in subsequent academic years. If the position that you currently hold is approved for funding for the next academic year, your reappointment is not automatic. You will have to reapply and compete each academic year through the respective department.

The maximum period of employment as an undergraduate assistant is two academic years.

Appointment as an undergraduate assistant is contingent upon and subject to satisfactory performance of assigned duties, as determined by your supervisor. Your appointment may be terminated before the expiration of the contract under certain conditions:

1. Terminations of appointment for adequate cause:
  - a.) Failure to perform reasonable assignments due to incompetence, neglect of duties, or failure to report when scheduled
  - b.) Unethical conduct (e.g., job-related misconduct; moral turpitude)
  - c.) Failure to maintain eligibility for continuing enrollment and grade point average
2. Termination of appointment because of failure to provide verification of medical necessity in case of absences due to illness.
3. Voluntary mutual agreement between the undergraduate assistant and the supervisor.

Before terminating an undergraduate assistant for unsatisfactory performance of job duties, the immediate supervisor must give the undergraduate assistant written notice of the specific deficiencies in performance. The deficiencies, as well as suggestions for improvement, should be given to the undergraduate assistant. The undergraduate assistant should be given adequate opportunity to improve performance

## **Responsibilities of Employing Departments**

Your employer should provide you with written information regarding departmental policies and procedures and your work schedule. Your employer is required to comply with all policies and procedures required by the undergraduate assistant program.

Your employer may terminate your employment during your contract period for reasons related to unsatisfactory work performance or for failure to provide verification of medical necessity in case of absences due to illness.

Your department should not schedule you to work, nor should you volunteer to work during times when you are scheduled to be attending class.

Your employer should evaluate your work performance at the end of your contract period, whenever you exhibit poor attendance or unsatisfactory job performance, and when you terminate employment.

If you are working four or more consecutive hours, you are entitled to a paid 15-minute break during work hours. The break period is to be preceded and followed by a work period. It cannot be used to cover a late arrival or an early departure. If you work less than four consecutive hours, you are not entitled to a paid break.

## **Undergraduate Assistant Workers' Compensation**

The following policy has been established by the Illinois Department of Central Management Services as part of its Early Intervention Program for Workers' Compensation.

If you are injured on the job, you should:

- Report the injury to your supervisor.
- Call the Injury Reporting Hotline, 800/773-3221 to report your injury and provide information to initiate your claim.

## **Grievance Process**

Any conflict or misunderstanding of undergraduate assistant policies or regulations should be discussed first with your immediate supervisor. If you feel the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the grievance should be presented in writing to the head of your department. If the head of the department is unable to resolve the conflict, the grievance should be taken in writing to the Academic Scholarship Office. A complete copy of the grievance procedure is available from Student Employment Services, located in the Financial Aid Office.

## **Office Directory**

### **Academic Scholarship Office/ Undergraduate Assistantship Program Office**

Woody Hall  
A205  
453-5108 or 453-4628

### **Accounts Payable**

Miles Hall  
453-2253

### **Financial Aid Office**

Woody Hall  
Third Floor, B-Wing  
453-4334

### **Intercollegiate Athletics**

SIU Arena  
453-5311

### **International Students and Scholars Office**

Northwest Annex  
B-Wing  
453-5774

### **Non-Resident Alien Tax Compliance Office**

Miles Hall, 1st Floor  
453-2253

### **Payroll**

Miles Hall, 1st Floor  
453-3391