



## **RUFORUM GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP**

The RUFORUM Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA) Program is an initiative by the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) to enhance the quality of teaching and research in African universities. The program seeks to address critical academic staff shortages in higher education institutions while equipping graduate students with valuable teaching and professional development opportunities. The RUFORUM GTA program envisions a vibrant academic ecosystem where graduate students are actively engaged in teaching, research, and mentorship, contributing to developing sustainable solutions for Africa's agricultural and development challenges.

### **1. OBJECTIVES OF THE GTA PROGRAM**

- a) Increase the pool of PhD-level trained academic staff in African universities and improve the overall quality of higher education.
- b) Provide opportunities for doctoral research to contribute more directly to African development.
- c) Strengthen inter-university collaboration in the field of higher education in Africa.
- d) Promote staff mobility among RUFORUM member universities and across Africa.

### **2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

- a) Open to staff in RUFORUM member universities wishing to pursue a Master's or PhD degree.
- b) Be able to enrol into the GTA program on a full-time basis.
- c) Good academic standing
- d) Demonstrated interest or experience in teaching, research, or relevant disciplines.
- e) Ability to commit to assistantship duties as specified by the host university.
- f) Must be recommended by their university.
- g) Admissible into the program which they have applied for at a RUFORUM member university.

### **3. APPLICATION PROCESS (3 STAGES - CAN BE DONE CONCURRENTLY)**

#### **a. University Nomination:**

- a.1. Contact your university's department or office responsible for GTA nominations to write a nomination letter to the RUFORUM Secretariat.
- a.2. Ensure they understand your interest in applying and secure their official nomination.

#### **b. MSc. and PhD Program Admission:**

- b.1. The GTA identifies the PhD/MSc. program he/she would like to pursue at a RUFORUM member university.
- b.2. Contact the host university's program coordinator or department chair, expressing interest to join the university as a GTA.

- b.3. Request application materials and inquire about admission requirements and fees.
- b.4. Complete the admission application and submit it with the required documents and payment.
- b.5. Obtain admission letter
- c. **Registration into the RUFORUM Information Management System:**
  - c.1. Once admitted, the GTA is required to register in the RUFORUM Information Management System (RIMS) for records purposes and progress report submission (**6 monthly reports**).
  - c.2. RIMS can be accessed through <http://rims2.ruforum.org/>

#### 4. ROLE OF RUFORUM SECRETARIAT

- Announces MSc. and PhD opportunities under the GTA program when provided by member universities ([www.ruforum.org](http://www.ruforum.org)).
- Facilitates GTA placement and contract signing between universities and the selected GTA.
- Monitors the GTA program's progress.
- Facilitate funding for GTAs (*where applicable*).

#### 5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GTA

- Assisting faculty in teaching undergraduate or graduate courses.
- Preparing course materials, managing discussions, or conducting tutorials.
- Grading assignments, quizzes, and exams under faculty supervision.
- Holding office hours to provide academic support to students.
- Supporting research and administrative tasks related to the course, as required.
- Participating in departmental events or workshops (e.g., student outreach or academic fairs).

#### *Professional Conduct and Expectations*

- Uphold standards of professionalism, ethics, and academic integrity.
- Timely completion of all assigned tasks and responsibilities.
- Active participation in scheduled meetings and departmental events.
- Respect for diversity, equity, and inclusivity in all interactions.

#### 6. ROLES OF SENDING UNIVERSITY

- **Identify and Nominate:** Identify qualified staff members who meet the GTA eligibility criteria and nominate them for the program.
- **Grant Leave:** Provide the selected staff member with a paid leave of absence for a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 4 years.
- **Fund Training Expenses:** Allocate funds for training expenses in accordance with the university's policy on staff capacity development.
- **Ensure Timely Disbursement:** Guarantee the consistent and timely disbursement of funds to the GTA.

#### 7. ROLES OF RECEIVING/HOST UNIVERSITY

1. **Offer PhD/MSc. Programs:** Make available PhD/MSc. programs that align with the needs of RUFORUM member universities.
2. **Provide Tuition Waiver:** Offer a 100% tuition waiver for the duration of the GTA program and *research funds if available*
3. **Provide Facilities:** Allocate office space and accommodation to the GTA for a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 4 years.
4. **Facilitate Supervision and Training:** Assign a qualified supervisor to the GTA and provide necessary academic support and training.
5. Provide mentorship from faculty members for academic and career growth.

## 8. TRIPARTITE CONTRACT ENDORSEMENT PROCESS FOR GTA

The Tripartite Contract for RUFORUM GTAs establishes a formal agreement among the following parties:

- The Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA)
- The sending university
- The hosting University

The sending, hosting institution and the selected GTA review the contract draft to clarify roles, responsibilities, and expectations. Any necessary adjustments are communicated to RUFORUM for approval.

The contract includes details such as a) the GTA's responsibilities and b) the Obligations of the sending and hosting institution. RUFORUM reviews the signed contract to verify compliance with its policies. RUFORUM's representative formally endorses the agreement as a witness. The fully signed contract is submitted to all parties.

## 9. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

- a. The GTA is expected to submit progress reports to the hosting institution and RUFORUM per the agreed schedule.
- b. The hosting institution evaluates the GTA's performance periodically and provides feedback to RUFORUM, and RUFORUM provides feedback to the sending university
- c. Upon successful completion, the GTA submits a final report to RUFORUM and a storyline sharing the experiences of studying under the RUFORUM GTA arrangement.

## 10. EXTENSION AND TERMINATION

To allow for the successful completion of their studies, GTA students may request an extension of their contract for a maximum period of one year. This extension provides additional time for students to finalize their research, thesis writing, and other academic requirements.

Grounds for termination include violation of university policies, poor performance, or failure to meet academic requirements. In the event that the GTA would like to terminate the contract for various reasons, such as relocation due to personal reasons, withdrawal from the graduate program or transfer to another institution, or acceptance of a new funding opportunity.

### *Termination Procedure for GTAs*

- GTAs must provide written notice (4 weeks) before the intended termination date.
- Notify the supervising faculty, department head, and graduate school in writing.
- Include the reasons for termination and, if possible, offer assistance for a smooth transition.
- Complete pending tasks, return university property, and ensure continuity of teaching or administrative responsibilities.

## **11. CONTACT INFORMATION**

For more information regarding the GTA programme, visit <https://www.ruforum.org/gta>. For inquiries about the RUOFUM Graduate Teaching Assistantship, Please feel free to contact:

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