1. **Purpose:**

1.1. The Health Care Reform Act includes provisions which will directly affect elements of previous employment policies for all student employees. The Act contains new definitions of employees based on the number of total hours worked during a year and which impact whether or not student employees are classified as regular employees.

1.2. For graduate student employees, the Act places new limits on the number of hours they are allowed to work and these limits are lower than previously permitted at The University of Alabama.

1.3. This new policy is based on recommendations from Human Resources professionals and is consistent with policies now adopted by many other major national institutions impacted by these changes.

1.4. Section 3 of this document sets out those new work limits which the university has determined must be applied to all graduate student employees.

1.5. The Graduate Student Employment policy has been established to define the requirements and obligations for graduate students when they are employed at The University of Alabama. This policy does not apply to undergraduate student employees or to graduate students employed through the Federal Work-Study program.

1.6. These policies apply equally to all graduate student employee positions regardless of funding source and pay type. Thus, contract or grant funded positions or gifts or endowments are subject to these provisions in addition to any requirements set out in the contract, grant, gift, or endowment agreement. These provisions apply equally to hourly-paid or monthly-paid positions without differentiation.

1.7. The purpose of graduate student employment at the University of Alabama is to assist with meeting the business needs of the University, to provide University students with financial support in pursuit of their academic goals, and to provide opportunities for academic or administrative and business-related job experience.

1.8. The policies and guidelines contained here meet or exceed the requirements for compliance with all Federal employment regulations including but not limited to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), and Federal Financial Aid legislation.

1.9. Additionally, provisions included here ensure that the University of Alabama meets or exceeds the requirements for compliance with the regulations and guidelines of the university’s accreditation bodies which apply to graduate student employment – including the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE), Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), and Southern Regional Education Board (SREB).

2. **Qualifying Requirements:**

2.1. To be appointed as a graduate student employee, the graduate student must be

- Enrolled in at least 4.5 hours’ of on-campus graduate classes for the whole period of the student employment appointment (subject to the minimum registration requirements and dispensations listed below), and
- Admitted to and actively pursuing a graduate degree program, and
- Maintaining satisfactory academic progress, and
- Not graduated.
2. In addition, the graduate student must have signed a Memorandum of Appointment employment agreement.

2.2. Students in programs such as university honors, or any special program where a student is taking both undergraduate and graduate classes, may NOT be employed as graduate student employees unless and until they have completed their baccalaureate.

2.3. Due to federal tax considerations, graduate students cannot be employed simultaneously as both a faculty or staff member and a student employee.

2.4. If NOT employed as a graduate student employee they may be hired as a member of faculty or staff.

2.5. Graduate students may NOT be employed in undergraduate student positions.

2.6. Graduate student employees must be appointed to a graduate student Position Number with separate budget allocation at all times. For help with graduate student position numbers see the Guidelines on HR’s web site: http://hr.ua.edu/manager_resources/documents/GuidelinesforGraduateStudentPositionNumbers.pdf.

2.7. All graduate student employees prior to hiring must have completed an employee background check which yielded acceptable results. For help with requesting background checks see the Instructions on Graduate School web site at: http://www.graduate.ua.edu/admin/backgroundcheck_deptguide.pdf.

2.8. All graduate student employees must self-disclose to Human resources any post-employment criminal convictions, other than minor traffic violations. See HR web site for the relevant disclosure form.

3. Employment Limits:

3.1. All graduate student employees - domestic and international - are limited to working no more than 20 hours per week (or 0.50 FTE) during Fall and Spring semesters. They may work up to but no more than 40 hours per week during Summer terms and academic year break periods.

3.2. Where additional or multiple on-campus assignments are taken, this limit applies to the combined hours or aggregate FTE of all assignments.

4. Minimum Registration Requirements for Graduate Student Employees:

4.1. Generally, all graduate student employees must be full-time graduate students taking the equivalent of 12 semester hours.

4.2. However, the minimum registration requirement depends on the level of combined workload of all graduate student employee positions at any time. The varying levels of minimum registration are set out below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Combined FTE level</th>
<th>Combined workload (hours per week)</th>
<th>Minimum registered hours required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.500</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.250</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3. Dispensations for registration below the above minimum levels are permitted where:

4.3.1. It is the student’s graduating semester and all degree requirements have been met. A minimum registration of 1 hour thesis research (for master’s students) or 3 hours dissertation research (for doctoral students) may apply under this exception. This will not allowed for second or subsequent semesters.
4.3.2. Any semester where the graduate student is registering in thesis or dissertation research hours only and in accordance with the department or program policies. Excludes non-thesis/non-dissertation research. The minimum number of research hours must be commensurate with the progress a graduate student is expected to make on the thesis or dissertation as well as reflective of the extent to which university facilities and faculty time are invested.

4.3.3. Summer and interim terms, students may be employed without any minimum registration requirement. EXCEPT if they are using university facilities and faculty time then they must register for thesis or dissertation research hours commensurate with the level of utilization.

4.3.4. Any graduate student assignment where there are no benefits associated with the appointment – no tuition or health insurance scholarships – the minimum hours registration is 4.5 hours.

4.3.5. Note: enrollment at any time below 4.5 hours in the fall and spring semesters will disqualify any student from receiving activity, recreation, and athletic privileges (no access to Student Recreation Center) unless the student purchases the separate Activity/Recreation/Athletic privileges for a special fee (see Student Receivables – Cost of Attendance).

4.3.6. Note: enrollment at any time below 4.5 hours in the fall and spring semesters will also disqualify any student from access to the Student Health Center unless the student pays the separate Health Center Services fee (see Student Receivables-Cost of Attendance).

4.3.7. The dispensations listed above apply to domestic students only; see below for international graduate students.

5. Maximum Registration and Employment Limits:

5.1. Under this policy, no domestic graduate student may work more than 20 hours in combined appointments during Fall and Spring semesters, **no exceptions and no overloads are permitted**.

5.2. The table below includes the Graduate Council’s maximum recommended combinations of FTE plus course hours:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Combined FTE of all appointments</th>
<th>Recommended maximum Graduate Course hours student is taking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.250</td>
<td>9-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.500</td>
<td>6-12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For FTE levels in between the above, the range of course hours is pro-rated.

5.3. The Graduate School urges caution when considering large course and/or FTE loads and will monitor whether or not academic warnings and suspensions increase.

6. Rates of Pay and Benefits:

6.1. Graduate student employees as defined by this policy are considered non-exempt employees.

6.2. In order to qualify for any semester-related benefits the appointment must be made before the last day to register or drop classes as published in the Academic Calendar.

6.3. Graduate student employees are paid in accordance with the Federal minimum wage legislation – see Human Resources web pages for minimum wage rates, and the University of Alabama’s minimum graduate assistant
stipend rates as published each year by the Provost. Stipend rates are also available at the Graduate school’s web site, see: http://www.graduate.ua.edu/admin/policy/GASTipends.html.

6.4. As a general guide for determining hourly rates the Graduate School recommends a range of between $12 and $20 depending upon skills and experience required.

6.5. In order to qualify for graduate assistant benefits – tuition and health insurance scholarships – the appointment must be in accordance with the requirements set out in the Graduate School’s Graduate Assistant Tuition Policy in addition to the policies set out here.

7. Calculation of FTE:

7.1. The Full Time Equivalent value for each graduate student employee appointment is calculated by dividing the number of hours per week the appointment represents by the hours for a regular work week of 40 hours. So, a graduate student who works 20 hours per week, the FTE is 20/50 = 0.50.

7.2. As a guide for graduate teaching assistantships, the FTE is based on the number of hours’ worth of teaching assignment. Teaching one 3-hour class equates to 0.25 FTE; two 3-hour classes or one 6-hour class equates to 0.50 FTE.

8. Position Titles, Position Class, and Employee Class:

8.1. There are specific Graduate Position Titles and related Position Classes that must be used for all graduate student employees.

8.2. Do not use Student Assistant, 60000, for any graduate student appointment.

8.3. The appropriate Position Title is based on the actual tasks and responsibilities of the appointment. For detailed listing of the general duties for each Title see the Graduate School web site: http://graduate.ua.edu/publications/dept/guide3.html.

8.4. Here is the list of the primary Position Titles and Classes to use:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position Title</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
<th>Position Class</th>
<th>EEO Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Teaching Asst-Grading</td>
<td>Primary Teacher/Assigner of Class Grades</td>
<td>40050</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Research Assistant</td>
<td>Research projects</td>
<td>42030</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Teaching Assistant</td>
<td>Assisting a Primary Teacher</td>
<td>44010</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Administrative Assistant</td>
<td>General Administrative</td>
<td>60030</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Student Assistant</td>
<td>Student Employee – Other Duties</td>
<td>60040</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer School GTA</td>
<td>Summer only GTA</td>
<td>SG001</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.5. Where a Position Number is selected for the graduate student employee appointment, the Position Title and Position Class must match with the master record in Banner, please check before submitting the PA form for any graduate student appointment.

8.6. Only Employee Class K4 (Monthly) or K5 (Bi-weekly) can be used with any graduate student employee appointment. Either one can be used with any of the above Position Titles and Position Classes.

8.7. There are special “pooled” Position Titles and Numbers which may be used only where the graduate student appointment is funded on a contract or grant which is administered through the Contract & Grant Accounting Office. Do not use these for any other appointment; the above Position Titles may be used for such grant-funded
positions but you will need to have a different and unique Position Number. Only these Position Titles can be used with the linked Position Numbers and class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position Number</th>
<th>Position Title</th>
<th>Position Class</th>
<th>Employee Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CGM999</td>
<td>Graduate Student – Monthly</td>
<td>60050</td>
<td>K4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGH999</td>
<td>Graduate student – Biweekly</td>
<td>60060</td>
<td>K5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.8. Other “pooled” positions are available but only for departments approved by Academic Affairs. Contact Academic Affairs for information on pooled positions.

9. **International Graduate Students:**

9.1. All graduate international students who are attending college on F1 and J1 student visas must be enrolled in a minimum of 9 hours.

9.2. Where a graduate international student is employed on campus he or she may combine the equivalent hours of the assignment (IDGR hours as calculated by the Graduate School) with registered class hours to meet the minimum 9 hour requirement. The IDGR hours must be posted on the student’s transcript.

9.3. A graduate international student is not required to register for classes in the summer unless he or she is using University facilities.

9.4. However, where a graduate student has an F1 I-20 or J1 DS-2019 which indicates that he or she is starting their program in the summer semester then that student must be enrolled full-time in the summer semester.

9.5. Graduate students with provisional language admission status may only hold externally funded graduate student employee positions.

9.6. In all cases, international graduate students must check with the Capstone International Student office on campus before accepting any kind of employment.

10. **Other Exceptions and Dispensations:**

10.1. Requirements to maintain a 3.00 grade point average will only apply to graduate students after earning 12 graduate semester hours. In effect, they have a 12-hour probationary period.

John Chambers – Director of Administration
Graduate School, The University of Alabama
July 1st, 2013