



Guidance on Hiring Research Assistants and Teaching Assistants

Overview

Faculty may choose to hire a research assistant (RA) to help with a range of research-related tasks for a defined project or period of time. Some faculty teaching large classes may also choose to hire a teaching assistant (TA). This document provides guidance on eligibility, budget allocation, solicitation of applications, and the hiring process for RAs and TAs.

Who May Serve

Columbia Law School students and students from other Columbia University divisions. Students are permitted to work a maximum of 20 hours per week during the school year. This limit is lifted during break periods (e.g., summer, spring recess). *Non-Columbia students are not permitted to serve as TAs.*

Individuals who are no longer in student status and non-affiliates must be hired as part-time staff associates which is a formal academic appointment. The hiring process is complex and costs are significantly higher. Law School Human Resources should be notified as soon as possible to provide additional guidance

Budget & Wage Rate

Full-time faculty are entitled to 400 hours of research assistance each fiscal year. Unused allocations are not eligible to be rolled over into a new fiscal year. Full-time faculty that are in-residence for only part of the year will receive a pro-rated allocation. (Please note that TA hours are not deducted from this yearly allocation.)

For the 2025-2026 academic year, all student workers will be paid at a rate of \$23.00 per hour.

In the event that a student wishes to work for course credit, please ask them to contact the Office of Registration Services at registrar@law.columbia.edu for further information.

Selecting a Research/Teaching Assistant

Selection of RAs/TAs is at the discretion of each faculty member. Some faculty choose to hire based on past experience (e.g., an exceptional student from a class in a previous semester) or on the referral of a colleague. Others prefer to solicit applications via an open and competitive process.

Faculty who wish to solicit applications may do so via Symplicity—the centralized career portal utilized by both the offices of Private Sector Careers and Public Interest/Public Service Law and Careers.

Faculty or their assistants should complete the [Research and Teaching Assistant Job Posting Request Form](#) to initiate the process of posting a job description. For questions regarding this process, please contact Nancy Merriman in the Office of Private Sector Careers at (212) 854-3275 or nm3025@columbia.edu.

Hiring a Research/Teaching Assistant

Once selected, **and prior to beginning work**, students should work with the faculty member's assistant and Law School Human Resources in order to coordinate and complete the hiring process. Hiring paperwork will be sent via DocuSign. Students should follow instructions on the [HR Webpage](#).