



Guidance on Hiring Research Assistants and Teaching Assistants

Overview

Full-time 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 are eligible to serve. Students are permitted to work a maximum of 20 hours per week during the school year. This limit is lifted during break periods, such as summer and spring recess. Non-Columbia students are not permitted to serve as RAs or 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 for these individuals is complex and costs are significantly higher. CLS Human Resources should be notified as soon as possible to provide additional guidance regarding these appointments.

Budget and 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 who are in-residence for only part of the year will receive a pro-rated allocation. It should be noted that TA hours are not deducted from this yearly allocation.

Adjunct faculty are only permitted to hire RAs and TAs for course credit. Exceptions to this policy must be reviewed and approved by CLS Human Resources.

For the 2026-2027 academic year, all student workers will be paid at a rate of \$23.00 per hour.

Students working for course credit should contact the Office of Registration Services at registrar@law.columbia.edu for further information.

Selecting a Research/Teaching Assistant

Selection of RAs and TAs is at the discretion of each faculty member. Some faculty choose to hire based on past experience, such as 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 coordinator and CLS Human Resources in order to coordinate and complete the hiring process. Hiring paperwork will be sent via DocuSign, and students should follow the specific instructions located on the [CLS Human Resources Webpage](#).