**Project/Research Assistant & Faculty Supervisor Discussion Topics**

PA/RA Salary, Schedule, and Setting

* Clarify salary and ensure payroll needs are met (e.g., paperwork, understanding of payment intervals)
* Clarify number of hours per week (or % appointment).
  + Is it a set schedule?
  + Is flex time allowed?
* Clarify length of appointment (e.g., number of years, 9 vs. 12 month annual appointment).
  + If student has a 9-month appointment, when should student start looking for a summer position?
  + How should student negotiate summer support?
* How time away is treated, such as vacations or weeks with heavy course demands.
  + Can time be made up before and after these absences/reduced work periods?
  + How should these requests be made?
* Physical location of work (may be obvious in some cases), such as when it is acceptable to work from home or outside of SSW/other university office.
* Computer and printer access.

Job Tasks and Opportunities

* Tasks PA/RA can expect to perform in this role.
  + What skill sets can PA/RA expect to learn?
  + What skills does faculty member expect PA/RA to learn?
  + If more than one student works on the same project, how are tasks assigned? Negotiated by PA/RAs themselves or assigned by the faculty supervisor?
* Any additional training needed (e.g., software classes); Note—such training should be considered part of PA/RA-ship hours if it is required, and can be considered part of work hours if voluntary, if negotiated with faculty supervisor.
* Opportunities available for presenting or co-presenting at conferences.
  + At what point in the PA/RA-ship should this be expected?
  + Does faculty member have $ for supporting travel expenses of students?
  + How should travel expense requests be made? Note—if faculty supervisor does not have $ to support student travel, ask PhD Program staff about possible funds.
* Opportunities available for working on papers for publication
  + At what point in the PA/RA-ship?
  + How is authorship handled?
  + When do research contributions rise to the level of co-authorship?
  + How is author order decided?
  + Is time spent on paper development considered part of the job, or an additional opportunity?

Faculty Supervisor Support and Communication

* Expectations around meetings (frequency, schedule, mode).
* Nature and frequency of supervision and feedback.
* What types of communication/ frequency of communication should students expect from faculty supervisor?
* What is preferred mode of communication if student needs something relatively quickly? (phone, email, in-person, etc.).
* What kinds of things do faculty do to help promote student PA/RA professionally?
* What types of professional development opportunities are encouraged or supported by faculty supervisor?
* How does faculty supervisor wish to handle requests for letters of reference?
* How should PA/RA position be reflected on the student’s CV? On student’s signature line?

\*This document was developed with extensive input from doctoral students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Social Work.