Department of Social Work
Research Assistant Program

external posting for graduates:

The Research Assistant (RA) Program facilitates opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to participate in faculty/administration research, scholarly, and creative endeavors. Work may include preparation of research materials, analysis of data, literature review, conference preparation, or other similar tasks associated with academic scholarship.

The RA must be able to function in a fast-paced, demanding educational environment. The ideal candidate is someone who pays attention to detail, is thorough, organized, a quick-learner, works independently with little supervision, can make sound decisions, and is committed to supporting the mission and values of the Department of Social Work and MSU Denver.

Students must apply to the position to be added to the RA Pool (see application link above). When openings become available, qualified students will be matched with faculty/administration needing support.

Responsibilities:

- Work under the direction of one or more faculty/administrative members assisting them with current research, scholarly or creative projects.
- Identify and analyze literature relevant to the projects undertaken.
- Prepare materials for research studies.
- Assist in the gathering of data related to projects assigned, which may include but is not limited to conducting interviews, and pulling, organizing, and/or entering data.
- Assist in the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data.
- Assist in the preparation of drafts of reports of projects.

Required Qualifications:

- Current Master of Social Work Student or senior Bachelor of Science in Social Work Student in good standing.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Previous research experience
- Proficiency with APA, MS Word, MS Excel
- Familiarity with SPSS or equivalent quantitative analysis software
- Familiarity with QSR or equivalent qualitative analysis software
- Strong written and verbal communication skills

For More Information, contact:
Bridget Douglas | Accounting Assistant, brdouglas@msudenver.edu

Research Assistant (RA) Process and Procedures (Internal Use Only)

Funding an RA

In most cases, an RA is funded by faculty scholarly funds and/or grant funds. Any use of scholarly funds must be documented in the Scholarly Funds proposal and approved by the Department Chair prior to beginning the process to hire an RA. In some cases, departmental funds may be utilized for an RA. Departmental funding of an RA is limited to projects that advance the departmental goals and strategic plan of the Department and must be pre-approved by the Department Chair prior to beginning the process to hire an RA. Finally, on a case by case basis, project leads may request a small amount of supplemental funding from department funds when their scholarly fund is depleted and the project has a small amount of work still to be completed.

Project Lead Responsibilities

The Project Lead is the faculty member or administrator who leads the research project. When a project lead identifies the need for an RA, the project lead must first secure funding (approved scholarly fund proposal, approved use of department funds, grant funds) before submitting a request to the Accounting Assistant for an RA.

Grant-funded projects are typically managed through a collaboration between the Operations and Finance team and the grant PIs. The Grant PI and other grant staff will understand the scope of all grants projects and the funding sources prior to requesting RAapplicants from the Accounting Assistant.

It is the responsibility of the project leads to create clear expectations for the RA to include project scope and goals, timeline, workload, etc. The project lead will provide supervision of the RA on the completion of the project and report any concerns or changes to the Operations and Finance Specialist.

Supervisor Responsibilities

The Accounting Assistant is the supervisor of record for all RAs. The supervisor will facilitate onboarding and provide a general orientation to the Department of Social Work. The supervisor will work to create a supportive environment that enhances a positive learning experience for student employment, to include regular check-ins and evaluations of the RAs. The supervisor will provide oversight of the RA Program and will provide RA program status and progression to the Chair and Director team.

On a periodic basis, the Operations and Finance team sends surveys to the faculty mentor and the student employees to assess if the program is meeting it's goals. At any time during the semester, students or faculty may contact the Operations and Finance team with concerns about employment.

Selection and Hiring Process

Faculty or administrators interested in utilizing an RA should notify the Operations and Finance team of their request, including the project parameters and any special expertise needed from the RA. Requests must also include funding source and estimated hours for the project in 25 block hour increments (25 hours, 50 hours, 75hours, etc.)

Students interested in applying to the RA Program must complete the RA Application. The Operations and Finance team facilitates matching applicants with faculty mentors.

If the faculty or administrator has recruited a particular student to be an RA for their project, they are to inform the Operations and Finance team of that and let the student know they need to apply.

The requests are reviewed by the Accounting Assistant and the Associate Director of Operations and Finance and then applications can be shared with the requesting Faculty member for consideration. The Operations and Finance team will assist with advancing candidates through the workday system and onboarding new hires.