

Availability of part-time work for MS-HCI students.

The short version

In fall semester of 2013, for full-time students seeking part-time work while in school, 10 of 18 first-year students are working part-time, and 15 of 17 second-year students are working part-time.

The long version

MS-HCI students were asked to take a job survey during late November 2013, if they met all of the following four conditions:

1. Full-time student, *and*
2. Do not have a fellowship (several students have fellowships from non-GT sponsors; GT does not offer fellowships to MS students), *and*
3. Are not continuing in a job held prior to starting your MS-HCI degree (several students work remotely, typically for the company at which they were employed before coming to GT, *and*
4. Have (or have had) a job while in school, or have been looking for a job but don't yet have one

Of our 64 full-time students, 35 met these four conditions – 18 first-year students and 17 second-year students.

Of these 35 full-time students who want part time work, 25 (71%) have a job this semester; of the 25, 16 are GRAs or GTAs while 9 have other types of jobs, either on or off campus. GRAs and GTAs receive tuition (but not fees) and monthly stipends that range from \$800 to \$1600 a month, averaging around \$1100.

The other types of jobs are:

- UX designer/developer intern at company
- UX Designer - off campus
- Business Analyst at company
- Graphic Designer/Communications Specialist in GT Ivan Allen College
- Designer for GT Ivan Allen College
- Web developer - on campus
- Babysitting for a family
- GVU Center Lab Assistant
- GVU Brown Bag video recording, various support tasks, interviewing researchers for videos

We have 36 first-year students, of which 18 want to work. Of these 18, 10 (56%) have jobs. Five are as a GRA or GTA; the other 5 work on or off campus, with pay ranging from \$400 a month up to \$3000 a month.

We have 28 second-year students, of which 17 want to work. Of these 15 (88%) have jobs. Of these 15, 11 are as a GRA or GTA; the other 4 work on or off campus, with pay ranging from \$800 to \$2500 a month.

How to find a part-time job

As part of the survey, we also asked students for their advice on finding part-time work. Their responses follow – we have lightly edited but have not removed duplicative advice in order to emphasize highly-recommended strategies.

- Subscribe to several mailing lists. Tell friends in other schools that you're interested in such positions should they come across pertinent information.
- Consider every opportunity that comes across you - you may not even realize its a GRA/GTA position - this was my case!
- Pay attention to speakers in seminar serieses, and talk to the people if you find their topics interesting. Network a lot - that's how jobs will find you.
- I have been asking around and searching the job boards as well as looking through the emails sent by Jessica.
- Keep looking. Make sure that Jessica knows you're looking for one. Your interest matters most. If you want a job, you'll find one.
- Look in the start-up community. So many UX/UI opportunities are available there. They all pay much better than a server job at McDonalds. They are also much more flexible with location and work hours. They may ask for more than just 10 hours per week because they are trying to build a successful business, fast.
- Before I started the program, there is a GRA opportunity working on mobile application development, including iOS, Android and Web. I learned iOS before, so I applied and got accepted.
- To work with professors in labs, and expect a GRA, professors often want to know whom they are hiring and investing in. MS-HCI provides an avenue of special problems - which allows you to work in a lab, for 3 credits.
- A lot of students have had success finding a lab they would be interested in, in the first semester - do a special problems in that lab - and if its a good click between the student and the lab, the professor may hire you as a GRA for you to continue work in the lab.
- Looking for a GRA or GTA -- speaking with professors.
- Searches on CareerBuzz.
- Start working with a lab early (even before you start at GT). That way, you are more likely to get funding/paid research opportunities.
- For my Job, I applied via email after reading the opportunities email sent out by Jessica. Then I had a Skype interview, I had to showcase my previous work and talk about my skills as a designer and web developer. For me the work is to do all sorts of design – graphic, multimedia and web. Lately, I have been doing web-development (completed 2 websites in the 2 semesters and currently working on an app).

- Some kind of rudimentary programming knowledge OR design skills ARE necessary for people trying to find GRA's.
- My suggestion is to always respond quickly to emails sent out from Dr. Foley, Ms. Celestine, MS-HCI, and other departments and campus directors. That is how I found my position.
- For anyone looking to get into a lab, get to know your professors and the studies they are conducting. Professors know everyone wants/needs more money and everyone is willing to jump through hoops, so set yourself apart from the rest by showing genuine interest in a subject. Don't let skills be the primary driver for applying or not: Skills can be taught, motivation cannot.
- Good portfolio, good communication skills, clear career goal.
- Get involved with a lab. Volunteer or do a special projects class, and you might get an offer to continue with the lab as a GRA.
- I review the buzzport emails. I attend some Meetups - attendees are often interested in hiring.
- An email came through on one of the HCI or DM lists describing some open positions. I applied and followed up a couple times. My advice is to just to pay attention and apply for anything you are qualified for, even if it's not perfect. My job evolved into an even better fit for me than the initial description indicated.
- Look for mails that are usually sent out in the beginning of the semesters informing about availabilities. Get in touch with research assistants in the lab. Go to the lab that you have worked on for a special problem or volunteered to work, and look for opportunities.
- Look for the opportunities in the lab that matches your skill, rather than choosing a lab based on opportunity and then trying to align your interests to it.
- Asked for students who were graduating to refer me to their labs and inform me about any opportunities they were aware of. Mailed professors who I knew were looking to fill student GRA/GTA positions and had projects that they wanted students to contribute to.
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- Keep looking. You'll definitely get an hourly part-time job.
- If looking for lab works, approach professors/ labs (attend their classes, email them about potential opportunities). Start small, it's fine to work for credit or as a hourly pay lab staff. You can prove your ability along the road.
- Use LinkedIn to contact people in the industry you want to work in.
- Don't expect to find employment immediately. Work toward academic goals (courses for credit), or volunteer your time in a lab that you find interesting. This will help you make connections and may implicitly demonstrate your value as an employee to some professor or lab.

- I work as a GRA and am affiliated with two labs on campus. I learned about one lab during my first semester and got heavily involved with activities there, people at the lab really liked my work and offered to hire me the following semester, next spring will be my 3rd semester working there.