

DR. STEVEN GENTILE
Executive Director



BILL LEE
Governor

STATE OF TENNESSEE
HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION
312 ROSA L. PARKS AVENUE, 9TH FLOOR
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243
(615) 741-3605

THEC Graduate Assistant – Academic Affairs

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) invites applications for a **project-based, part-time, summer graduate assistant** to support Academic Affairs operations. The graduate assistant will contribute to pursuing THEC’s vision to cultivate a cohesive higher education enterprise which fosters innovative solutions to ensure student success, build strong communities, and improve the lives of Tennesseans.

THEC’s Academic Affairs Division oversees academic program evaluation and approval for public postsecondary institutions across Tennessee, maintains the Academic Program Inventory, and administers the Quality Assurance Funding (QAF) program. Graduate assistants in the Academic Affairs division will:

- Collaborate with experts in postsecondary education policy and academic program development;
- Review relevant literature and policy on issues related to academic program quality and accreditation;
- Analyze and organize quantitative and qualitative data related to academic programs and funding; and
- Assist with administrative work to support agency operations as necessary.

The Graduate Assistant will **select one project**, as outlined below, based on their interest and skillset. The graduate assistantship for summer 2026 lasts **up to 15 weeks (maximum of 29.5 hours per week)**. Tennessee residency is required, but work may be completed on a **remote or hybrid** schedule. The hourly rate for this position is \$22.00. Graduate assistants may earn academic credit in accordance with their institution’s academic policies.

THEC will supply the appropriate equipment to complete the selected project.

- A general knowledge of postsecondary education policy issues from a state and/or national level;
- Familiarity with accreditation standards and academic program review processes, preferred;
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office (Word, PowerPoint, Excel, etc.);

- Effective skills communicating data and evidence; and
- Excellent written and oral communication skills.

Project-specific qualifications are listed beneath each project summary.

Shared Responsibilities:

The graduate assistant in this role will contribute to the following activities throughout the summer term:

- **Academic Program Inventory Maintenance:** Assist with routine updates, data validation, and documentation to ensure the Academic Program Inventory remains accurate, current, and aligned with approved program actions across all public postsecondary institutions in the state.
- **Policy and Checklist Alignment:** Support the review and alignment of THEC academic program policies with corresponding academic program checklists and the academic program submission portal (Formstack), helping to ensure that institutional guidance materials accurately reflect current policy requirements.
- **General Academic Affairs Support:** Assist with administrative and operational tasks as needed to support the division during the summer term.

Graduate Assistant Project Options, Summer 2026:

Project 1: Delegated Programs Process – Resource Development and Rollout Support

Project Description: Support the Academic Affairs Division in the rollout of resources associated with THEC’s new delegated programs approval process. As a newly implemented process with limited prior submissions, the delegated programs framework requires dedicated effort to build the foundational support infrastructure that will guide institutions through participation. The graduate assistant will help develop supplemental guidance documents, training materials, and labor market data resources to support institutions navigating this process for the first time.

Deliverable(s): A suite of supplemental support documents for institutions participating in the delegated programs process; at least one training resource (such as a tutorial or structured training guide) to assist institutions in understanding process requirements; a summary of relevant labor market data drawn from the JobsEQ platform to inform program alignment; and a brief presentation of completed materials to Academic Affairs staff.

Preferred Qualifications: Strong written communication skills and experience with instructional or technical writing; familiarity with academic program development and approval processes; interest in higher education policy and workforce alignment; experience with data platforms or labor market tools a plus.

Project 2: Quality Assurance Funding (QAF) – Resource Development and Implementation Support

Project Description: Support the Academic Affairs Division in the development of training materials, institutional resources, and operational tools associated with THEC's administration of the QAF program. As the division works to build out the new QAF infrastructure, the graduate assistant will play a hands-on role in creating and testing the materials and systems that institutions will use to engage with the process. Responsibilities will include developing training content, piloting submission platforms and rubrics, and monitoring and responding to QAF-related inquiries from institutions.

Deliverable(s): At least one training resource (such as a structured training guide) for institutional use; a written summary of platform and rubric testing findings with recommendations; a log and analysis of institutional QAF inquiries received during the summer term with recommended responses or FAQ documentation; and a brief presentation of completed materials to Academic Affairs staff.

Preferred Qualifications: Strong written and oral communication skills; experience with instructional design, technical writing, or training development; comfort with piloting and evaluating digital platforms or tools; interest in higher education finance, policy, and accountability; attention to detail in tracking and responding to stakeholder inquiries.

To Apply

Interested applicants should submit a cover letter, writing sample, and resume by May 3, 2026. Applicants should specify their preferred project in their cover letter.

For the writing sample, applicants should respond to the following prompt in 500 words or fewer: Describe how you would organize, manage, and complete a complex project in Academic Affairs that requires reviewing policy, analyzing data, and producing guidance materials. Include how you would prioritize tasks and manage your time.

All materials should be submitted to David Heathcock, Human Resources Director at thec.hr@tn.gov