



GRADUATE ASSISTANT

HANDBOOK - 2026

UNI

University of Northern Iowa.
Graduate Studies

Table of Contents

Graduate Assistantship Position Information	3
What is a Graduate Assistantship?	3
Types of Graduate Assistantship Positions	5
Graduate Assistantships' Research Activities	7
Graduate Assistantships' Position Description	7
Employment Restrictions for Graduate Assistants	8
Eligibility for Assistantship	9
Maximum Support Rule	12
Assistantship Compensation	13
Benefits	14
Work Hours per Week	16
Remote Work	17
Summer Graduate Assistantship Appointments	18
Academic Integrity	20
Satisfactory Academic Progress	20
Parental Support and Relief for Graduate Assistants	21
GA Orientation – GA Success	23
Resignation of a Graduate Assistantship before the start date	24
Resignation of a Graduate Assistantship after the start date	24
Rescinding a Graduate Tuition Scholarship	26
Rescinding Graduate Studies Funds due to Admission Deferral	26
Termination of a Graduate Assistantship (General)	27
Termination of Graduate Assistantships due to specific causes	28
Grievance Procedures and Appeals for Graduate Assistants	29
Graduate Assistantship Performance Appraisal - for students	30
Information for Faculty and Staff	31
Graduate Assistantship Job Descriptions	31
Guidelines to create Graduate Assistant positions for Academic and Non-Academic departments	31
Graduate Assistantship Appointment Process – Academic Department	33
Graduate Assistantship Appointment Process – Non-Academic Units	35
Graduate Assistantship Offer Process	37
Graduate Assistantship Offer Acceptance Process	40
Process for Assistantships after Offer is Accepted	41
Absences	44
Remote Work	44
Graduate Assistantship Supervisor Responsibilities	45
Graduate Assistantship Performance Appraisal - for supervisors	46

Procedure to terminate Graduate Assistantships due to neglect of duties and failure to comply with obligations	48
Relevant UNI Policies and Procedures	50
Compliance Statement	50
UNI Mission Statement	50
Graduate Assistantship Grievance	50
Employee Drug & Alcohol Testing Policy	51
Alcohol and Drugs Policy	51
Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct Policy	52
Equal Opportunity	52
Campus Accessibility & Accommodations of Disabilities	52
Freedom of Speech and Expression / First Amendment	52
Data Security	53
Student Academic Ethics	53
Student Conduct Code	54

Graduate Assistantship Position Information

What is a Graduate Assistantship?

Graduate Assistantships (GA) are temporary on-campus, salaried positions working on assignments that meet the guidelines approved by the current policies. Graduate Assistant compensation components are determined based on the nature of the appointment, required duties, level of responsibility, and applicable regulations.

- Graduate Assistants are compensated because they perform valuable work and labor that meets defined expectations set by the nature of the position and fulfills the department's, Center, Office, College's, University and the broader Community's needs.
- Graduate Assistantship obligations are set forth by department/program rules/sponsored research agreements.
- Assistantships are offered on a half-time (10 hours per week, $\frac{1}{4}$ FTE) or a full-time basis (20 hours per week, $\frac{1}{2}$ FTE) for a limited period of full-time coursework at the University of Northern Iowa.
- This employment appointment period follows academic calendar dates.
- Graduate Assistants are provisionally appointed for their positions each academic semester.
- Graduate Assistants cannot work more than 4 semesters under the same appointment type, according to the [Maximum Support Rule](#).
- Graduate Assistantships are employment positions that are not eligible for merit or PS staff employment at the University, per UNI's employment policies.

- A Graduate Assistant (GA) receives biweekly compensation for services rendered to the University. By definition, Graduate Assistantships are based on 16 weeks of work, paid at a fixed rate.
- For prorating and/or adjusting the GA pay, Graduate Studies will calculate the amount of weeks of work (worked) and determine the amount to pay based on that period.
- Academic credit is not provided for work or services performed as part of the assigned duties for a Graduate Assistantship.
- Graduate Assistantships are available to qualified, full-time students who are working towards an on-campus graduate degree at the University of Northern Iowa and who are in residence during the time of their appointment. Students enrolled in hybrid or online programs are eligible for assistantships, as long as the duties and tasks are performed on campus.

Graduate Assistantships are essential to University graduate programs and their students. They serve the following purposes:

- Recruitment of excellent, promising students.
- Providing graduate students with paid work experiences that are complementary to their field of study while working with faculty and/or staff mentors. These experiences allow students to develop and apply their discipline knowledge and skills.
- Assisting UNI faculty and/or university staff in implementing projects or other assignments that require advanced, unique skills.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Types of Graduate Assistantship Positions

Graduate Assistantships are on-campus employment positions and they are available in both academic and non-academic departments at UNI. In this handbook, the term Graduate Assistant (or GA) is used to refer to either or both positions. While GA duties have academic and professional value and are directly related to the funding source's scope of work, they can perform tasks based on but are not limited to the following types:

Research Graduate Assistant

A research assistant provides direct support for faculty research and scholarly research by reviewing the literature, data collection, analysis, and writing of professional papers and presentations (Approved by Graduate Council 4/13/2023).

Teaching Graduate Assistant

A teaching assistant takes full responsibility for an entry-level course in the student's area of study. TAs are trained and supervised by department faculty (Approved by Graduate Council 4/13/2023).

Instructional Aide

An instructional aide helps instructors by performing a variety of tasks to help with the delivery of courses. Tasks may include but are not limited to the following: tutoring students, leading review sessions, grading assignments or exams, and reviewing/proofreading assignments (Approved by Graduate Council 4/13/2023).

Support Specialist or Program/Project Assistant

A support specialist or program assistant will conduct training, provide academic support, assist with projects or programs, manage websites, recruit students, and assist with accreditation efforts in academic and/or non-academic units (Approved by Graduate Council 4/13/2023). Graduate Assistants appointed in support

specialist or program/project assistant roles must perform duties that are programmatically and substantively related to the academic, research, or scholarly objectives of the hiring unit or sponsored project supporting the appointment. When funded by a sponsored agreement, Graduate Assistant duties must be directly allocable to the scope of work of the project and may not involve general administrative or clerical activities unless such activities are explicitly allowable under the sponsor's regulations and approved as part of the project.

Pre-professional Graduate Assistants

A pre-professional graduate assistant provides services directly related to their fields of study and in which they gain experience, practice, or guidance directly related to their career preparation. Eligible students are (1) enrolled in any School of Health program and (2) are assigned to the UNI Counseling Center or other in consultation with the program coordinator of the appropriate department (Approved by Graduate Council 4/13/2023).

Resident Graduate Assistants

The Graduate Assistant Residence Life Coordinator (ARLC) is supervised by a Residence Life Coordinator (RLC). They are responsible for student staff supervision and assisting with administrative hall operations alongside the RLC. In conjunction with the Residence Life Staff, they develop and support the objectives of Residence Life, help maintain residence hall and university policies and procedures, and assist with the implementation of the Hall Engagement model. They participate fully in an on-call emergency rotation. Due to the nature of this position, these graduate assistants might receive paid training outside of the assistantship 6 weeks before the start of the semester.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Graduate Assistantships' Research Activities

Graduate Assistant appointments may include field-based and/or off-campus research activities when such activities are integral to the academic or sponsored research objectives of the appointment and are conducted in accordance with University policies, sponsor requirements, and applicable safety and insurance protocols.

Field-based Graduate Assistant activities funded by sponsored agreements require appropriate approvals and documentation to ensure compliance with sponsor terms and institutional risk management requirements.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Graduate Assistantships' Position Description

- GA descriptions and exact duties can be found on departmental, non-academic websites and should be handed to students during their first day of work. These descriptions follow specific language and format and will outline preferred qualifications, eligibility, duties and tasks.
- GA position descriptions must be revised yearly and must reflect reasonable workload limitations.
- GA duties and goals must align with requirements and needs set forth by funding sources used to fund the position.
- GA openings are announced to all eligible students through email and are posted on the University's online job board or similar (currently, the online job portal is [Handshake](#)).

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Employment Restrictions for Graduate Assistants

- Graduate Assistants and student employees are not eligible for additional UNI employment as an adjunct, faculty, P&S, or merit employee.
- Full-time Graduate Assistantships are twenty (20) hours per week and half-time Graduate Assistantships are ten (10) hours per week for the entire semester.
- Graduate students cannot work more than 20 hours per week of University employment in the combination of assistantship and hourly student employment. Should students go over this limit, the Graduate Studies office will alert the students and potentially terminate their assistantship appointment.
- International Students: Federal law mandates that international students who are employed by the University are strictly limited to on-campus employment up to a maximum of 20 hours per week (40 hours during summer vacations). There are no exceptions to this rule. See the University Student Employment Policy (<http://www.uni.edu/policies/319>). Additionally, international students are restricted by immigration regulations from working off-campus without proper authorization.

The following actions will be taken in response to violations of these employment restrictions:

- Graduate Studies will monitor University employment, hours worked to find any violations.
- Graduate Studies will communicate in writing to the student with directions that no further violation occurs.
- Students who violate the maximum hours after their initial violation notification may be terminated from their student employee hourly position or assistantship.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Eligibility for Assistantship

When making awarding decisions, hiring units must review the student's merit and pre-eligibility for the assistantship. While some of the criteria below may not be fulfilled when the GA is offered (e.g., official final transcript), students who receive funding from the University are expected to meet these criteria before the start of each semester, otherwise their work assignments cannot start.

- The Div. of Graduate Studies will make sure awarded students are eligible before processing any UNI Works Employment and Hire tasks and will notify students in a timely manner if they do not meet the criteria before the semester begins.
- Both the GA and supervisor are responsible that the following requirements are met by the deadlines stated in the offer letters.
- Failure to fulfill eligibility requirements by these suggested dates will result in changing the GA start date, the stipend amount being reduced (prorated) based on a new start date, a delayed paycheck, and/or a potential loss of the GA position.
- Students must have an official final transcript on file in the Office of Admissions showing that, at least, a bachelor's degree has been conferred. Students will not be formally declared in their major until their official final transcripts are on file.
 - U.S. students must possess a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution before the start of the assistantship appointment.
 - International students must have graduated from an accredited undergraduate academic program. This means that official and final transcripts should be on the student's file timely before starting the assistantship appointment.
 - For students who have any post baccalaureate or graduate education, the bachelor's degree is still needed as part of their eligibility for the GA.

- The student must have been admitted unconditionally to graduate study in an eligible graduate program at the University of Northern Iowa on a degree-track basis.
 - Students who are admitted with provisions due to a low GPA are not eligible for a Graduate Assistantship. Departments or hiring units could request to make an exception to the GPA rule, but a formal request needs to be made explaining the situation and it will be approved at the discretion of a GROE representative.
 - Students who are admitted with provisions due to the English language requirement are not eligible for a Graduate Assistantship.
 - Once provisions are lifted (usually after the first semester for full-time students), these students will be eligible if they meet the remaining criteria.
- A newly admitted graduate student must have at least a 2.75 GPA for undergraduate or previous graduate work of at least 8 graded graduate-level credit hours to qualify for funding.
- The student must maintain a minimum UNI cumulative GPA of 3.00 to be eligible for continued or further appointment.
- Applicants whose first language is not English must meet the TOEFL/IELTS/Duolingo score requirements or similar.
- The student must be enrolled full-time (at least 9 qualifying graduate-level credit hours) for each semester during the award. Enrollment is vital and required to maintain access to UNI facilities, buildings, equipment, and systems and therefore enable completion of work activities. The following can't be used as part of the qualifying graduate-level credit hours:
 - Workshops, off-campus courses, audit, courses taken as credit/no-credit (except courses required by accrediting agencies), undergraduate and CIEP.
 - Repeated courses from previous semesters with financial support

- It is expected that all courses applying to the degree meet the minimum hour requirements for program completion. A student request should be submitted for any courses that do not automatically plot to the degree. Courses taken for the completion of certificates must be complementary to the degree program.
- Students in their final semester need a minimum of three (3) qualifying credit hours of required coursework to complete their degree to be eligible for funding from the University. The remaining six (6) credits can be electives or courses offered by other academic departments. Students requiring only a few credits to graduate in their last semester should consider the financial implications of taking additional courses.
- Students must meet UNI's HRS employment eligibility and complete sections I and II of the I-9 paperwork and the remaining UNI Works Onboarding tasks before starting their GA assignment. New employees are required to provide documentation to verify identity and eligibility to work in the United States on or before the first day of employment. If these steps are not completed, the assignment can be terminated, per Federal law.
- Previously awarded and returning students, or students entering a second master's degree program at the University, should visit the [Maximum Support Rule](#) stated below to make sure they're still eligible.

Note: GAs are not allowed to start working their hours until these criteria are met and these steps are fully completed.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Maximum Support Rule

Master/Specialist students are allowed a maximum of four (4) semesters of support per degree.

Master students who enroll in a second Master's degree can receive an additional four (4) semesters of support as long as the first degree is completed. If a student is declared in two Master's degrees simultaneously, then progress needs to be made in both majors to receive the additional four (4) semesters of support.

Doctoral students are allowed a maximum of six (6) semesters of support (students on doctoral support must have received their master's degree before starting doctoral support).

- Either Graduate Assistantships or Graduate Tuition Scholarships count as a semester of support, even if only one of these is awarded.
- Students who must resign their Graduate Assistantship before the end of the eighth week of classes due to a documented FMLA-type circumstance will not be counted as receiving a semester of support.
- Students whose program requires additional coursework and therefore, enrolling in extra semesters while being in need of financial support or are continued to be classified as non-resident, may request an exemption from this rule, at the discretion of a Graduate Studies representative.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Assistantship Compensation

Graduate Assistant compensation consists of wages paid through payroll for services rendered to the University. Compensation reflects required work, defined duties, and supervisory oversight and is subject to applicable federal and state taxation. In certain circumstances, Graduate

Assistant compensation packages may also include tuition remission or other education-related support. This compensation is:

- Offered in accordance with an established University policy
- Applied consistently to Graduate Assistantship positions regardless of funding source
- Directly related to the Graduate Assistant's required service, training, or research activities.
- Note: Tuition remission or education-related support included as part of a Graduate Assistant appointment does not constitute general student financial aid and is not awarded independently of required service obligations.

When Graduate Assistant compensation is funded by an external sponsor, all compensation elements—including tuition remission—must comply with the specific terms and conditions of the sponsored agreement.

- Graduate Assistants are compensated because they perform valuable work and labor that meets defined expectations set by the nature of the position and fulfills the department's, Center, Office, College's, University and the broader Community's needs.
- Graduate Assistantship compensation amounts might change from year to year, upon availability of funds.
- The official GA offer letter will contain appointment dates, the terms of the employment, supervisor details, stipend amounts, rules and eligibility requirements.
- GA compensation is based on 16 work weeks during the semester, excluding Thanksgiving (in the fall) and Spring (in the spring) breaks.
- The GA compensation will be dispersed through payroll in biweekly installments during the appointment (August-January for fall and January-June for spring). These payments will follow processing and pay dates and schedules set by the UNI's Payroll office. You

can visit the [Graduate Assistants Pay Schedule](#) resource (CatID protected) to see pay dates and biweekly payment amounts.

- Any reduction or adjustment in compensation due to late start, resignation, leave of absence, uncompleted work, termination, or other similar situation will consider the total number of weeks worked to calculate reductions in pay.
- Assistantship compensation is classified as income earnings which is subject to federal and state taxation, even foreign taxation (if applicable).
- GAs are paid through payroll directly to the student's bank account or by check (upon request). Payment does not get credited to a student's U-Bill. Therefore, students are responsible for ensuring their compensation is properly used to pay for tuition, fees, and other U-Bill expenses.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Benefits

Graduate Assistants must work the entire semester to qualify for benefits. All Graduate Assistants with at least a 10-hour per week appointment (0.25 FTE) for an entire semester receive the following benefits:

- Ability to purchase an "A" parking permit ("A" permit rates will apply).
- Worker's Compensation coverage (more details at <https://hrs.uni.edu/mybenefits/workerscomp>).
- Non-Resident students receive tuition billed at Resident (in-state student) rates for the semester holding the GA appointment.
- Non-Resident spouse (partner) receives tuition billed at Resident rates for the semester the spouse holds the GA appointment.

- The residency benefit can be extended for students who decide to enroll during the summer term if they received it during the preceding Spring semester.
 - Students who wish to discuss their residency classification or students who are seeking information regarding how to change their residency, should review the following information <https://registrar.uni.edu/students/current-students/residency-determination>.
-

Important:

- Graduate Assistants are NOT eligible for University-sponsored insurance benefits, sick leave, or vacation days.
 - Graduate Studies will review student's eligibility timely and up to 1 week before the U-bill is due. If students aren't eligible by then, they could be moved to a late start and also their residency benefit won't be reported by then. This can cause a disruption in the processing of the bill and therefore, late fees or similar adjustments can appear on students' Fall/Spring bills.
-

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Work Hours per Week

- Graduate Assistants with a half-time assistantship should work 10 hours per week and those with a full-time assistantship should work 20 hours per week, with no exceptions.
- GA pay is based on 16 work weeks across the semester. Excluding Thanksgiving and Spring breaks.

- Students who have a combination of a 10-hour assistantship with student employment cannot exceed 20 hours a week, per UNI employment policies. Students incurring work beyond the 20-hour limit will be notified and may also be terminated.

Graduate Assistants:

- Do not submit time cards but should keep track of hours worked.
- Will work from the first week of classes (unless there is a late start) through final exam week (exact dates are specified in the offer letter).
- The GA pay will be prorated as needed for any late starts, resignations, etc.
- Do not work Thanksgiving week in the fall semester, nor during Spring Break week in the spring semester.
- Cannot work under a GA appointment over the Winter break.
- For certain cases and depending on the funding source, Summer GAs might be allowed.
- GAs do not receive sick leave or vacation days.
- Are not eligible for overtime compensation.
- Are not eligible for Merit, P&S, Faculty and/or another UNI employment.
- Accidents or unanticipated extenuating circumstances may prevent students from performing assistantship duties. If this is a short-term situation, the GA may arrange an alternative schedule with their supervisor and not have a reduction in pay. Making up for future or missed work time is allowed, at the discretion of the GA supervisor and the Division of Graduate Studies.
- If this is a long-term situation or habitual situation or the GA is not in regular communication with their supervisor, a different procedure for withdrawal will occur.

- Students and supervisors are both in charge of documenting and reporting communication, performance, discipline, biases, and/or treatment issues to the Div. of Graduate Studies properly and in a timely fashion.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Remote Work

Graduate Assistantships are on-campus positions. State and local employment laws prohibit remote work outside of the state of Iowa for Graduate Assistants. For positions where the employee has an extraordinary reason for requesting remote work under the circumstances described previously, the student should seek approval from both the Div. of Graduate Studies and the Human Resources Services office.

For situations where research needs to be conducted (i.e. samples need to be extracted from the field) off-campus, such activities aren't considered as remote work and they may be part of the assignment when they are integral to the academic or sponsored research objectives of the appointment and are conducted in accordance with University policies, sponsor requirements, and applicable safety and insurance protocols.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Summer Graduate Assistantship Appointments

It is possible for a graduate student to work on a summer GA assignment as long as the following occurs:

- Graduate Assistants appointed during the summer term are required to enroll in a minimum of six (6) eligible graduate-level credit hours during the appointment period when such enrollment is integral to the research training, scholarly development, or project-based learning objectives of the appointment. Waivers for this requirement may

occur for extenuating circumstances at the recommendation of the program and the approval of a GRO representative.

- Online students are eligible for Summer GA appointments but students must commute to the UNI campus to perform the work in person.
- The Div. of Graduate Studies can provide temporary and limited funding support for GA appointments during the Summer term, upon timely request and only if leftover support is available.
- Summer GA position descriptions should be written by the department and approved by the Division of Graduate Studies. This description should follow the same template and language used for regular GAs. This description and duties should be cognizant of the duration of employment.
- There must be a manual offer process because the current EOFS GC10 system does not allow for summer GAs to be processed. To initiate this process, the department should nominate students to Graduate Studies, and Graduate Studies will send and process any offer letters.
- The Division of Graduate Studies will review and approve the nomination and send the summer appointment offer letter to the selected student. Students must accept in written format.
- The official GA offer letter will contain appointment dates, the terms of the employment, supervisor details, stipend amounts, rules and eligibility requirements.
- Upon verification of eligibility and after acceptance, the GS will process the student's hire and PAP on UNIWorks before the appointment starts.
- Upon enrollment, the Division of Graduate Studies will report Non-Resident Summer GAs to the Office of the Registrar, so they might determine whether their summer tuition needs to be discounted or adjusted to the Resident rate.
- If the nature of the GA appointment is research-oriented, the program/department should require the student to turn in laboratory/research reports and finish/complete certain research objectives during the appointment.
- If the GA requires deliverable products or culminating projects, this product must adhere to UNI project format guidelines. Dissertation/defense components may also be required, depending upon how far the student is with their research.

- For situations where the research needs to be conducted (i.e. samples need to be extracted from the field) off-campus, such activities may be part of the assignment when they are integral to the academic or sponsored research objectives of the appointment and are conducted in accordance with University policies, sponsor requirements, and applicable safety and insurance protocols.
- International summer GAs will need to adhere to any immigration and employment regulations in accordance with guidance from the Office of International Engagement . International students should be made aware of the extra costs of housing, transportation, taxation, and added insurance (extra for summer terms) should they choose to attend and work at UNI during the summer term.
- If GS-funded, the Summer GA stipend will be based on 10 or 20 hours per week.
- Example: For a 10-hour Summer GA from May 18-June 26, the stipend amount is \$1,125 for 10-hours per week for 6 weeks of work. For a 20-hour Summer GA, stipend amount is \$2,250 for 20-hours per week for 6 weeks of work. Each year the amount might be adjusted +3%-3.5% according to the tuition increase. For any student or staff employment, effective and end appointment dates must not overlap with Spring and Fall semester dates, otherwise the regular GA will be moved to a late start and proration must occur.
- Depending on the nature and availability of funds, incentives or merit based scholarships for the summer term as part of the Summer GA Compensation Package are allowed.
- In regards to termination, supervisor duties, sick leaves, and others, policies will remain the same as regular GA appointments which will be stated on the offer letters and the GA Handbook.
- Neither overtime nor employee benefits will be offered for summer appointments.
- Conducting a summer performance review (employee appraisal/evaluation) will be encouraged to make sure the work is successfully completed, upon discretion of the supervisor.

Important: Start and end dates for summer appointments should not overlap with regular Fall GA start & end dates.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Academic Integrity

Whether working in a laboratory, classroom, office, or other setting, Graduate Assistants must maintain standards of academic honesty and integrity and report any violations of these to their supervisor. It is the responsibility of the GA to follow departmental, college, and University policies and it is the responsibility of the supervisor to discuss and set these standards.

Supervisors should document and report any related issues to the Div. of Graduate Studies.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Satisfactory Academic Progress

If a Graduate Assistant's UNI cumulative GPA goes below 3.00, their assistantship may be discontinued and other/further accepted offers could be rescinded. If the student's cumulative GPA returns to 3.00 or higher at a later date, they regain eligibility for an assistantship.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Parental Support and Relief for Graduate Assistants

- Graduate Assistants who wish to suspend their academic responsibilities because of pregnancy or the birth or adoption of a child may request parental support or relief during the semester in which the pregnancy, birth, or adoption occurs. This policy applies to graduate students who are current Graduate Assistants and who are/will be related to the child as mother or father, including domestic partners. If both parents are Graduate Assistants, this policy applies to both. This policy is not mandatory – if the Graduate

Assistant chooses not to suspend academic responsibilities during the semester of the pregnancy, birth, or adoption of a child, no action is warranted.

- The Graduate Assistant must be currently enrolled in an academic program in good academic standing.
- The Graduate Assistant shall provide the employer with written notice not less than thirty (30) days prior to the date of the requested leave, if practicable. In the case of unforeseen/emergency circumstances only, to the extent reasonably possible the Graduate Assistant must give a verbal notice to the employer at least twenty four (24) hours prior to taking leave.
- The GA must provide medical or legal documentation of the birth or adoption to the supervisor.
- Prior to taking the leave, to the extent reasonably possible, the Graduate Assistant must make all arrangements with course instructors regarding making up coursework during the time of the leave.
- Students who take a leave from their assistantship due to Parental Support leave will have their stipend prorated based on the number of weeks they are on leave.
- Students who must resign their Graduate Assistantship before the end of the eighth week of classes due to Parental Support leave will not be counted as receiving a semester of support for the purposes of determining the number of semesters of support.
- If a student is receiving a tuition scholarship, the scholarship will be retained by the student. If the student withdraws from courses, the student may be required to repay the scholarship amount, as described in current policies.
- The graduate student who remains enrolled shall retain full access to UNI library services, computing services including email and MyUniverse, health center, sports and performing

arts activities, and on-campus housing during the semester of leave, provided the necessary financial obligations are satisfied. If the student withdraws from all courses, the student will lose access to some of these services.

- Students may request one extension for a total of up to 24 months during their studies. Time limits may be extended for active military service or other extenuating circumstances at the recommendation of the program and the approval of a GRO representative.
- All graduate students are responsible for determining the implications for eligibility of student loans and loan deferment privileges.
- All GAs are responsible for discussing with their research advisor how a leave would affect time-sensitive research projects and reporting, and the feasibility of resuming the same research project on return from leave. A graduate student may not necessarily be able to resume the same research project after a leave, but will have the opportunity to engage in similar research projects on return.
- International graduate students are responsible for determining the implications of a leave for fulfilling visa requirements.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

GA Orientation – GA Success

New hires are required to complete certain training modules before they start their GA duties, during their first week as part of their assignments. UNI's training modules are mandatory and these will be available only after the first day of employment and after their Onboarding tasks are fully completed/approved. Completing this training is part of the GA assignment and cannot be

started beforehand. For more details on getting acquainted with the GA role, students should visit the [GA Success portal](#).

The training modules are as follows:

- Clery Act & Title IX
- FERPA Basics
- Security Awareness
- Free Speech
- Preventing Harassment and Discrimination - Non Supervisor
- RespectEdu for Graduate Students

Upon completion, GAs should provide proof of completion. Students not completing the mandatory training might be put into conditional status due to non-compliance with policies and regulations and further GA appointments might be rescinded and canceled at the discretion of the GROE Dean or representative.

Note: Student athletes are also required to complete additional modules.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Resignation of a Graduate Assistantship before the start date

To decline an assistantship before the start of a semester, the student should find their original offer letter received via email. Use the link within the offer letter to access the electronic system.

Accessing the electronic system will require the student to log in securely with their UNI credentials. The student should click on “decline” for the semester(s) they want to decline.

Note: Once a semester begins, the “decline” button on the GC10 system is disabled for that semester and the student will need to read the following instructions on how to resign after the semester begins.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Resignation of a Graduate Assistantship after the start date

A graduate student may elect to resign from their Graduate Assistantship. To resign from an assistantship after the semester begins:

- The student must inform their supervisor and email the Div. of Graduate Studies (gradcollege@uni.edu). Copy the department secretary and supervisor on the email. The email should state that they are resigning from the position and provide the effective date of the resignation and the total number of weeks worked (or will work).
 - The Div of Graduate Studies will initiate the End Job business process in UNI Works and provide guidance for next steps to both the employee and supervisor. Employees are also allowed to initiate a Resignation business process through UNI Works but resignation from Assistantships need to be submitted by the Supervisor on behalf of the student.
 - Revised GC10's Offer forms will be needed to adjust and reflect up-to-date salary amounts.
 - The GA's stipend will be prorated accordingly. Payments will continue to follow the regular schedule.
 - Payroll will work directly with the student if any overpayment has been made to the student, in order to work out repayment of these funds.
-

Important: If the student is a non-resident and resigns from their Graduate Assistantship early, they might be charged the non-resident tuition rate.

Full-time students in good academic standing are not required to rescind their Graduate Tuition Scholarship, even if their Graduate Assistantship is terminated because of their failure to perform the work assignments required of their assistantship. However, scholarships awarded under an externally funded grant or are funded through other sources may be prorated or terminated, if required under the terms of the grant and assignment.

Important: If a Graduate Assistant with a scholarship resigns from their GA position due to their course load dropping below full time, the scholarship will be revoked and the student might be required to pay the full tuition charge for that semester, or the scholarship will be honored following the tuition and fees refund policy (see below).

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Rescinding a Graduate Tuition Scholarship

To rescind a Graduate Tuition Scholarship, students need to decline the offer electronically. Graduate Studies will process the scholarship removal and the student will owe the scholarship amount on their U-Bill. Refer to the following rule based upon the time of the semester that this withdrawal occurs: If the student withdraws from the semester or from the university due to a personal, family, or medical emergency, the tuition scholarship will be honored and applied to the U-Bill, based on the schedule below. This follows the percentages of [tuition and fees refund policy](#). The percentages are the amount of scholarship that is removed (i.e.: withdrawal during week 1, removes 90% of the value of the scholarship):

- Week 1 – 90% of the scholarship is removed, student keeps 10%
- Week 2 – 75% of the scholarship is removed
- Week 3 – 50% of the scholarship is removed
- Week 4 – 25% of the scholarship is removed
- Week 5 and beyond – the student gets to keep the entire award.”

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Rescinding Graduate Studies Funds due to Admission Deferral

- Regardless of their type, funds should be reserved and available for the student immediately after they accept their offers.
- If a student needs to defer their Fall admission to the Spring semester, they get to keep their originally accepted funds for Spring only; funds cannot be carried over, transferred, or added up to supplement their previously offered funds for another semester.
- Due to budgetary constraints, funds cannot be transferred to a subsequent academic year, should students defer their admission to another academic year.
- Students who decide to keep and hold their funding while not being fully committed to UNI (and therefore not being eligible) and are not in contact with the program, Graduate Studies and any other support unit from campus, will get their funding automatically rescinded due to failure to meet eligibility requirements on time and by the deadlines indicated in their offers.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Termination of a Graduate Assistantship (General)

A Graduate Assistantship appointment may be terminated for causes including, but not limited to:

- Budget adjustments and financial constraints might cause previously accepted offers to be pulled back by the awarding unit.
- Failure to complete I-9 form on time, per federal regulations.
- Failure to provide an official final bachelor's transcript.
- Failure to be enrolled in the minimum qualifying hours each semester.
- Failure to maintain academic standing (UNI cumulative GPA 3.0 or above).
- Neglect of duties or incompetence.
- Constant refusal to follow supervisor's advice/counsel.
- Failure to comply with assistantship obligations and terms as set forth by department/program rules/sponsored research agreements.
- Conduct that violates the UNI student conduct code policy (<https://policies.uni.edu/302>), departmental policies, state, or federal law.
- Suspension or dismissal of a graduate student from the University due to disciplinary reasons.
- Failure to complete the GA Academy (Mandatory Employee Training) on time can lead to the cancellation or prevent any further assignments from being renewed.
- Poor and/or unsatisfactory performance. Performance that does not meet set expectations may:
 - Lead to termination,
 - Impact the renewal of the GA appointment for further semesters,
 - Lead to the cancellation of any already accepted GA offers and other future funding.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Termination of Graduate Assistantships due to specific causes

The Graduate Assistantship might be terminated due to neglect of duties, refusal to follow supervisor's advice, and/or failure to comply with obligations, but this requires following appropriate procedures. Departments and supervisors can recommend termination to the Div. of Graduate Studies after following the procedure stated in section "[Procedure to terminate Graduate Assistantships due to neglect of duties and failure to comply with obligations.](#)" A terminated student may elect to file a grievance under the [Graduate Assistant Grievance Procedure](#).

Important: If the student is a non-resident and is terminated from their Graduate Assistantship early, stipend will be prorated and they will be charged tuition at the non-resident rate.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Grievance Procedures and Appeals for Graduate Assistants

Any graduate assistant who holds or has held a graduate assistantship and who has a complaint or disagreement concerning the assistantship has the right to try to resolve it using this grievance procedure.

They must seek initially to resolve the complaint or disagreement by informal means, resolutions of complaints and disagreements at the informal level are strongly encouraged.

To help the graduate assistant through the entire grievance procedure, two means of support are available: (a) the Associate Dean of the Graduate Studies or their Representative are available for consultation, or (b) the graduate assistant may be accompanied by one representative of choice.

If resolution by informal means fails, the graduate assistant may then initiate the formal grievance procedure. This policy applies to issues such as workload, treatment, and reasonable expectations related to the Graduate Assistant assignment. It does not cover issues related to coursework. The grievance procedure does not apply to tuition remission and stipend adjustments.

To view the complete process and policy, review Policy 12.05 - Graduate Assistantship Grievance:

<http://www.uni.edu/policies/1205>.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Graduate Assistantship Performance Appraisal - for students

Evaluation is a crucial part of the Graduate Assistantship experience. It should be a supportive, constructive, and on-going process that helps identify strengths as well as weaknesses and develops a plan for improvement. All GAs must receive a formal performance appraisal by their supervisor each semester or whatever date the nature of the assignment suggests. Both the student and the supervisor share responsibility for ensuring that the evaluation process is carried out.

GAs may choose to complete self-appraisals. A self-appraisal can give supervisors insight into their leadership and can help better guide their graduate assistants. Conducting self appraisals can give the opportunity to students to improve and work towards the position goals before their formal evaluation is carried out.

The formal performance appraisal process involves the student and the supervisor discussing a written evaluation. This process is intended to be constructive and to serve as an aid to the Graduate Assistant in correcting any cited performance problems. Following the review, the performance appraisal form will be signed by the Graduate Assistant and Supervisor, with the addition of the Graduate Program Coordinator or Department Head (if needed). More information can be found on the “[Graduate Assistantship Performance Appraisal - for supervisors](#)” section.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

[Information for Faculty and Staff](#)

Graduate Assistantship Job Descriptions

The basic elements of a position description are set by the Div. of Graduate Studies, and each year the GS sets and distributes a [set of guidelines](#) to follow.

- Each assistantship position must have a job description reviewed and approved by the Div. of Graduate Studies before its advertising, recruitment, and selection.
- Each type of assistantship must be posted on the hiring unit's/department's website before accepting applications.
- Students should be able to access their GA job descriptions at all times both for recruitment or informational purposes.
- The Div. of Graduate Studies will link and display all departmental and non-academic GA position descriptions on their website (<https://grad.uni.edu/graduate-assistantship-position-inventory>).
- Non-academic GAs should publish openings on the [UNI's online job board](#) or similar, to find new applicants, as needed.
- The department must provide each student with their specific job description immediately upon starting the Graduate Assistantship position, if not earlier. A copy of the job description should be kept in the student's departmental personnel file.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Guidelines to create Graduate Assistant positions for Academic and Non-Academic departments

Refer to the [following template](#) to create or update any GA position before its publication and advertising; overall, any GA experience must:

- Enhance students' graduate education through:

- A. exposure to the professional activities and concerns of their discipline;
 - B. involvement in university activities related to their academic and professional interests; and
 - C. opportunities to work closely with the community and/or faculty and staff.
- Enhance our campus community through supporting:
 - A. undergraduate instruction, such as teaching under careful supervision, providing teaching or research support for faculty, serving as laboratory assistants, and serving in other academically appropriate ways;
 - B. activities linked to scholarship, creative, and community-engagement; and/or
 - C. additional activities such as promoting the University and its graduate programs with stakeholders.
- Have academic and professional value while allowing students to fulfill their educational goals.

Additionally, GA position descriptions and postings:

- Must indicate whether or not the position needs commitment for the academic year or for the semester only.
- Must clearly outline preferred qualifications.
- Should indicate the primary responsibilities of the position. The graduate college, for listing GA responsibilities, recommends:
- Outline the core responsibilities by drafting a comprehensive but concise list, do not forget unique and day-to-day duties tied to your office and projects.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Graduate Assistantship Appointment Process – Academic Department

Graduate Assistantships, regardless of funding source, are awarded by the Div. of Graduate Studies and are made under the Council of Graduate School guidelines and any other current UNI policy. For appointments held on academic departments:

- In collaboration with the academic colleges, the Div. of Graduate Studies will notify each graduate program/department of the minimum number of Graduate Assistantships committed to the graduate program/department from Div. of Graduate Studies funds. Programs/departments requesting additional funding should first consult with their college's Dean and Associate Dean(s).
- If the graduate program/department determines at any time they will not use any portion of the Div. of Graduate Studies allocations, they should notify the Div. of Graduate Studies so that funding can be reallocated and made available to other eligible graduate programs/departments.
- Academic departments should always consider and may use and allocate their own funds to attract students to support undergraduate instruction, run grants and projects, etc.
- Graduate Assistantship and Graduate Tuition Scholarship selection/awarding decisions reside in the graduate program/department.
- Graduate programs/departments must review all Graduate Assistantship applications received.
- Students must apply for funding separately (graduate assistantships and scholarships or Financial Aid) and students should be encouraged to do so in advance of the admission and application deadlines, whenever possible.
- The department must consider all qualified students; however, eligible, previously-hired students who have performed well should have priority for continued support.

- The graduate program/department will determine who will be offered an assistantship and at half-time or full-time status. The department will also determine if the offer is for fall semester or spring semester or both.
- By recommending a student to the Div. of Graduate Studies for a Graduate Assistantship, the department certifies that the student meets (will meet) the qualifications stated in the preceding sections.
- An offer of admission does not include an offer of funding, nor is it implied. Students will be notified separately by the GS of any funding they might receive.
- The responsibility for recommending students for Graduate Assistantships and Graduate Tuition Scholarships resides in the department. Once an offer is accepted, the department cannot rescind it, unless there is a special circumstance such as budgetary reasons and must be approved by the GROE Dean or representative.
- Since Graduate Assistantships are employment positions, any unselected applicant should be also given a timely rejection or waitlist notice.
- All Graduate Assistantship and Graduate Tuition Scholarship offer letters to students must come from the Div. of Graduate Studies. Departments should not inform a student verbally or in writing that they will be receiving an award. Use this language (or similar) when reaching out to students in regards to their recommendation for funding: *“We received your funding application, and the department is recommending you as a potential recipient of funding to the Div. of Graduate Studies. They will verify your eligibility and will send the offer letters to your email, if you meet the criteria. Should you not receive an offer during the upcoming days, feel free to reach out to us.”*

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Graduate Assistantship Appointment Process – Non-Academic Units

Graduate Assistantships, regardless of funding source, are awarded by the Div. of Graduate Studies and are made under the Council of Graduate School guidelines and any other current UNI policy.

- Hiring decisions reside in the Non-Academic Unit.
- Non-Academic Units must review all applications received.
- If applications received do not have the required attachments required on the job posting (i.e. cover letters, class schedule, writing sample, etc.), then these individuals should be contacted letting them know their submissions are still incomplete and they need to provide remaining attachments timely in order to be considered in the pool.
- Interviews are recommended to select the best and alternate candidates. These should be conducted equally among qualified applicants. Hiring units and supervisors can visit the UNI's [HRS supervisor portal](#) to make sure they're in compliance in regards to UNI's hiring practices.
- The Non-Academic Unit must consider all qualified students; however, eligible, previously-hired students who have performed well should have priority for continued support.
- The Non-Academic Unit will determine who will be offered an assistantship and at half-time or full-time status. The unit will also determine if the offer is for fall semester or spring semester or both.
- Since Graduate Assistantships are employment positions, any unselected applicant should be also given a timely rejection, waitlist and/or follow up notice.
- By recommending a student for a Graduate Assistantship, the Non-Academic Unit certifies that the student meets (or will meet) the qualifications stated in the preceding section.

Since Non-Academic Units might not have access to check a student's eligibility, they might contact program coordinators or program secretaries to verify, under the compliance of FERPA regulations.

- Non-Academic Units hiring recently admitted international students might seek advice from the International Admissions office in regards to their eligibility and credentials at the discretion of the director, under the compliance of FERPA and immigration regulations.
- The responsibility for recommending students for Graduate Assistantships resides in the Non-Academic Unit. Once an offer is made, the unit cannot rescind it, unless there is a special circumstance approved by a GROE representative. When these situations occur, awarded students should be contacted in a timely manner to verify that they are able to secure alternate funding.
- While it's necessary to ensure and sustain effective communications with applicants and selected students, all Graduate Assistantship offer letters must come from the Div. of Graduate Studies. Non-Academic Units should not inform a student verbally or in writing that they will be hired for a Graduate Assistantship. Use this language (or similar) when reaching out to students in regards to their recommendation: *"We received your GA application, and the department/office is recommending you as a potential recipient of the graduate assistantship position of XX (use the GA name used to advertise the position) to the Div. of Graduate Studies. The Div. of Graduate Studies will verify your eligibility and will send the offer letters to your email, if you meet the criteria. Should you not receive an offer during the upcoming days, feel free to reach out to us."*

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Graduate Assistantship Offer Process

The steps required to offer any Graduate Assistantship are as follows:

- Semi-structured interviews are highly encouraged before making hiring decisions. The interview process must be done without bias, and selections should be based upon merit and eligibility for the assistantship. GA positions are employment opportunities and therefore, all the current federal and state laws apply to ensure equitable hiring practices.
- The hiring department will complete and submit an electronic offer in the [EOFS GC10 system](#) for each awarded student. Offer Forms follow a workflow approval process, requiring approval from the unit (usually the department head or departmental budget approver) and the Div. of Graduate Studies funding coordinator. Funding from a Foundation account will include UNI Foundation in the approval process. It's important to consider these flows of approval when schedules and timelines are narrow before the start of the appointment, otherwise the GA may be moved to a late start.
- If applicable, Non-Academic units should be sure to track remaining funds. Declined funds should be offered to other students using the allocation deadlines assigned by the GS.
- All GS allocations must be offered to qualifying students in a timely manner. Students should accept/decline their GA offer before the deadline stated in their offer. Leftover, unused allocations after the deadline will return back to the Div. of Graduate Studies.
- Any declined Extra Awards designated for a specific student will automatically return to the Div. of Graduate Studies. Academic Departments and Non-Academic Units cannot offer their Extra Allocation funds to another student without approval.
- Specific dates for the offer process during an academic year will be provided and posted by the Div. of Graduate Studies (see the Div. of Graduate Studies website and Original/Extra Allocation letters for specific dates).

- It's important to follow the Div. of Graduate Studies deadlines in order to efficiently process and submit paperwork to other offices such as the Financial Aid, the Office of the Registrar, HRS Office and Payroll.
- Non-Graduate Studies funded Offer Forms (using departmental, grant or Foundation funds) are highly recommended to be submitted before March 1. Special consideration should be given for offers funded by departments, grants, or Foundation allocated to international students, since any delay would impact on their visa paperwork and therefore the likelihood of arriving to campus before the start of the semester.
- Department-funded scholarships (using departmental, grant or Foundation funds) should not be reported to the GS through the Electronic Offer Forms system. Any unit needs to report these types of awards independently and directly to the Financial Aid Office through a scholarship roster (currently a [FW90 form](#)). Any unit planning to offer a graduate student a scholarship needs to send the student an official offer. This offer letter should include information on the requirements of receiving and keeping the scholarship. You can also use the Office of Financial Aid's [sample letter](#) or reuse [this language](#). For any scholarship offered to international students: (1) attach the tax notice document and (2) copy international.admissions@uni.edu and edyta.cichon-barche@uni.edu on the email offer. It is necessary for the Office of International Admissions to be made aware, in a timely manner, of each student's funding offers so the information can be included on the student's visa paperwork.
- Once the Div. of Graduate Studies reviews an Offer Form and determines that a student meets eligibility requirements (or is at least pre-eligible), a formal offer letter will come directly via email with a copy to the contacts listed on the form.

- The University of Northern Iowa has supported a resolution by the [Council of Graduate Schools](#) that suggests acceptance of an offer of financial support (such as a graduate scholarship, fellowship, traineeship, or assistantship) by a prospective or enrolled graduate student also include an agreement that both the student and the graduate school expect to honor. In that context, the conditions affecting such offers and their acceptance must be defined carefully and understood by all parties. More specifically, students are under no obligation to respond to offers of financial support prior to April 15; earlier deadlines for acceptance of such offers violate the intent of this Resolution.
- It is the responsibility of the hiring unit to notify students who have not been recommended for an award in a timely manner. Since Graduate Assistantships are employment opportunities, each applicant must receive some type of follow-up or waitlist notification.
- If a student declines the Graduate Assistantship offer, the department can make an offer to another qualified student and an Offer Form should be initiated for the next selected individual. Any Div. of Graduate Studies funded offers declined after the specified date will automatically return to the Div. of Graduate Studies (see our [website](#) or your Original/Extra Allocation letters for specific dates).
- International students are highly encouraged to apply and receive offers for assistantships but additional items must be considered:
 - Offers to International students should be made as soon as possible to allow time for the student to apply for documents necessary to attend UNI.
 - International students should remain in contact with the International Admissions office and their academic programs during their admission process.

- If an international student will be on an assistantship that involves teaching or tutoring undergraduate students, the hiring unit must also verify the applicant's English language proficiency, under the compliance of FERPA regulations.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Graduate Assistantship Offer Acceptance Process

The steps for students to accept or decline their offer(s) are as follows:

- Students must use the [electronic link](#) within their offer letter to accept or decline the Graduate Assistantship offer by the due date listed in the offer letter. When the offer is accepted or declined, an automatic email will be sent to the Div. of Graduate Studies and those listed on the Offer Form.
- After reading and accepting their offers, students are responsible for making sure they are eligible and taking the necessary steps to start their assignments on time.
- Hiring units (academic and non-academic departments) are responsible for sustaining communication with the GAs and for making sure the UNI Works hire and onboarding steps are processed and completed timely before the start of the GA.
- If a student accepts an offer and later wants to decline before the start of the semester, the student must go to the original offer letter and click on the [link provided](#) and then select “decline.”
- If a student accepts an offer and later wants to decline after the start of the semester, then the directions in the [Resignation of a Graduate Assistantship](#) section should be followed.
- If a student needs to defer their Fall admission to the Spring semester, they get to keep their originally accepted funds for Spring only: funds cannot be carried over, transferred,

or added up to supplement their previously offered funds for an upcoming semester unless approved by a GRO Representative.

- Due to budgetary constraints, Graduate Studies' funds cannot be transferred to a subsequent academic year, should students defer their admission to another academic year.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Process for Assistantships after Offer is Accepted

A fall/spring Hire Student business process on UNI Works will be initiated by the supervisory organization and/or the Graduate Studies for any student that has accepted their assistantship offers before the deadlines the GS will set and after reviewing each student's eligibility.

Important: Employment must not begin before the first day of classes of each semester. If the GA position requires specific training before the semester starts, then a student or temporary employee appointment needs to be processed so the student can be trained and prepare for their assignment through a short-term paid assignment. The start and end dates of this temporary assignment should not overlap with the GA start dates.

Note: The Div. of Graduate Studies should be notified of any changes made in the supervisor prior to submitting the business process through a Revised Offer Form. If the Hire Student task indicates a different supervisor, then the GS will withhold its processing until the revision of the GC10 Offer Form has been completed. This will hold its processing, which could cause delays on completing Onboarding tasks, start of duties and issuing paychecks.

The Hire Student/Job Change business process should start once the student meets the following requirements:

- The student must maintain a UNI cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher for the entire semester. All grades must be posted in order for a GPA to be verified. Newly admitted graduate students must have at least a 2.75 GPA for undergraduate or previous graduate work of at least 8 graded graduate-level credit hours.
- If a student has a missing grade, it is their responsibility to contact their instructor to make sure the grade is posted promptly and alert the Graduate Studies.
- Students missing a grade or with a grade of “I” (Incomplete) will not be able to start their assistantship until a grade is posted for that course, at which point their GPA will be verified.
- Students with an Incomplete grade who have extenuating circumstances can request an exception. The request needs to include details of the extenuating circumstances as well as the timeline to make up the incomplete grade. The student will be contacted after a decision is made.
- The student must be enrolled in at least 9 qualifying on-campus graduate-level credit hours for each semester during the award.

The following cannot be used as part of the qualifying on-campus graduate level credit hours:

- Workshops, audit, undergraduate or CIEP courses.
- Repeated courses taken in a prior semester with financial support.
- It is expected that all courses applying to the degree meet the minimum hour requirements for program completion established by the GS. A student request, Substitution or Declaring courses, should be done for any of these courses that do not

automatically plot to the degree. Courses taken for the completion of certificates must be complementary to the degree program.

- Students in their final semester need a minimum of 3 qualifying credit hours of required coursework to complete their degree. The remaining credit hours (6 or less) of coursework do not need to apply to the student's degree program. Students requiring only a few credits to graduate their last semester should consider the financial implications of the decision in taking additional courses.
- The student must have official transcripts on file in the Office of Admissions showing that a bachelor's (or any other required) degree has been conferred.
- The student must be regularly admitted without provisions to degree status in a graduate degree program. Students may be eligible for an assistantship when the provisions are not linked to the GPA or English language requirement
- New GAs must complete Section II of the I-9 paperwork in person and all UNI Works Onboarding tasks timely.

Important: Students need to have all requirements met before the deadline for the fall semester in order to start to work and to be guaranteed a first paycheck. If Onboarding tasks are not completed and received within three days of the effective employment date, per Federal regulations, steps will be taken to terminate the appointment.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Absences

GAs are not awarded sick leave or vacation days. Accidents or unanticipated extenuating circumstances may prevent a student from performing assistantship duties:

- If this is a short-term situation, the GA may create a mitigation plan with their supervisor and not have a reduction in pay.
- If this is a long-term situation or habitual situation, or the GA is not in communication with their supervisor, a different procedure for withdrawal will occur. Departments and supervisors should always contact the Div. of Graduate Studies when students are not showing up to work and failing to communicate effectively.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Remote Work

- Graduate Assistantships are on-campus positions. Remote work outside of the state of Iowa is prohibited for Graduate Assistants because of state and local employment laws.
- For positions where the employee has an extraordinary reason for requesting remote work, the student should seek approval from the Div. of Graduate Studies and the Human Resources Services office.
- For situations where research needs to be conducted (i.e. samples need to be extracted from the field) off-campus, such activities aren't considered as remote work and they may be part of the assignment when they are integral to the academic or sponsored research objectives of the appointment and are conducted in accordance with University policies, sponsor requirements, and applicable safety and insurance protocols.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Graduate Assistantship Supervisor Responsibilities

The Graduate Assistant's supervisor(s) are required to perform many responsibilities, some of which are outlined below. Please note, there may be other supervisor responsibilities or duties not included in this listing. GA supervisors are required to:

- Meet with the GA on the first day of work to review:
 - (a) the student's job description in detail, and
 - (b) discuss the expectations of both the student and the supervisor.
- Verify all hire paperwork and UNI Works Onboarding tasks have been completed.
- Review University and departmental guidelines and policies.
- Discuss safety and emergency protocols, as needed.
- Sustain performance development and work closely with the GA during the entire semester to ensure they are carrying out assigned duties and goals. The performance development process is an active partnership between supervisors and employees that enhances engagement and performance to ensure employee success. This collaborative effort is supported by setting clear and aligned expectations, creating a culture of accountability, and providing continual coaching and feedback.
- Work with the GA to set up a work schedule to ensure they will meet the required weekly hours of work. Prepare and discuss to-dos and approaches for any what-ifs.
- Make sure new GAs complete the required training modules. These modules will be available for completion the first day of employment and can be accessed on UNI Blackboard or listed on the [GA Success](#) page.

- Per the [Iowa Code section 261H.6](#), the [Freedom of Speech employee training](#) must be completed each and every year for employees and students at UNI. Therefore, returning GAs should revisit this mandatory training once a year.
- Have regular weekly contact with your GA.
- Be aware of the hours the GA is working and the GA's performance.
- If a student is not showing up for work, not putting in required work hours, or not performing duties at a satisfactory level, the supervisor should document this in detail. Conversations, emails or feedback the supervisor provides to the GA regarding these issues should also be documented. Detailed documentation is essential for unsatisfactory performance/work if a change needs to be made.
- Always contact the Div. of Graduate Studies for direction on how to proceed with problems related to unsatisfactory performance and/or insufficient work hours.
- Conduct the performance appraisal process (see [next section](#) for details).

Note: HRS has put together the [supervisor portal](#), available on their website, for UNI supervisors to help support them in fulfilling the requirements of their roles.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Graduate Assistantship Performance Appraisal - for supervisors

Evaluation is a crucial part of the Graduate Assistantship experience. It should be a supportive, constructive, and on-going process that helps identify strengths as well as weaknesses and develops a plan for improvement. All GAs must receive a formal performance appraisal by their supervisor each semester as follows:

- The student must be provided a job description and be given clear information by the supervisor about job expectations at the beginning of the employment period.
- The student must be informed of the ways in which progress will be measured.
- An informal performance appraisal may be conducted 3 weeks after the student's start date (optional).
- A formal performance appraisal needs to be conducted at the end of the appointment or semester.
- At any point during the semester, additional appraisals may be conducted at the request of the GA or their supervisor.
- The supervisor must use the following [Graduate Assistant Performance Appraisal form](#).
- Performance evaluations are a great time to determine if the position has gone through significant changes that may require updating job descriptions.

Note: While it is not required, supervisors and/or departments may choose to require their GAs to complete self-appraisals. A self-appraisal can give supervisors insight into their leadership and can help better guide their graduate assistants. Conducting self appraisals can give the opportunity to students to improve and work towards the position goals before their formal evaluation is carried out.

The formal performance appraisal process involves the student and the supervisor discussing a written evaluation. This process is intended to be constructive and to serve as an aid to the Graduate Assistant in correcting any cited performance problems. Following the review, the performance appraisal form will be acknowledged by the Graduate Assistant. Both the student and supervisor share responsibility for ensuring that the evaluation process is carried out.

The performance evaluation should be kept in the Graduate Assistant's personnel file in the department. Any evaluations that are not satisfactory or indicate discipline issues, along with all related documentation, need to be sent to the Div. of Graduate Studies immediately. A copy of these should also be kept in the GA's personnel file for at least 3 years once the student is no longer a Graduate Assistant in the department.

Note: HRS offers online and in-person supervisor performance appraisal training. HRS has helpful resources available on their [website](#).

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Procedure to terminate Graduate Assistantships due to neglect of duties and failure to comply with obligations

Although it is undesired and considered the last resource, a Graduate Assistantship may be terminated due to neglect of duties, refusal to follow supervisor's advice, and failure to comply with obligations. This cannot be done without appropriate procedures.

Before a supervisor recommends termination due to neglect of duties, refusal to follow supervisor's advice, and failure to comply with obligations, they must:

- notify the student of the specific nature of the problem or problems, with documentation of non-performance or poor performance of duties,
- allow the student a reasonable opportunity to be heard, whether the student wishes to respond orally or in writing,
- if possible, attempt an informal resolution to avoid termination (e.g., develop a performance improvement plan that establishes goals and a timeline), and

- give the student written notification of the department's reasons for recommending termination if an informal resolution cannot be achieved.

After the above steps have been followed, the department shall forward its written recommendation, including the reasons leading to the recommendation, to the Div. of Graduate Studies for review and approval. Graduate Studies and the department to which the graduate student is assigned have a joint responsibility to ensure that appropriate procedures are followed before the termination.

A department cannot terminate an award without the review and approval of a GROE representative, even if the funding is not provided by the Div. of Graduate Studies.

If a student elects to file a grievance under the [Graduate Assistant Grievance Procedure](#), then the procedures therein take precedence over all of the above.

Important: If the student is a non-resident and is terminated from their Graduate Assistantship early, stipend will be prorated and they might be charged tuition at the non-resident rate.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Relevant UNI Policies and Procedures

Compliance Statement

The University of Northern Iowa administers Graduate Assistantship appointments in accordance with applicable federal regulations, including the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR Part 200). Graduate Assistant compensation, tuition remission, and related costs charged to sponsored projects are subject to sponsor terms and institutional controls to ensure costs are reasonable, allocable, consistently applied, and necessary to achieve project objectives.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

UNI Mission Statement

Statement of university mission. The University of Northern Iowa is a comprehensive public university with the mission to provide the state and region with the highest quality undergraduate education, as well as professional, graduate, and continuing education programs. Along with being a distinguished arts and sciences university, it maintains outstanding professional programs in areas such as education and business. It provides leadership in the preservice and in-service preparation of teachers, administrators and other educational personnel for schools, colleges, and universities. It offers programs and conducts research and community outreach programs to strengthen the educational, social, cultural, and economic development of Iowa and the larger community. For more information visit <https://policies.uni.edu/102>.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Graduate Assistantship Grievance

Its purpose is to provide a process by which grievances by graduate assistants relative to University employment will be considered and resolved. For more information visit <https://policies.uni.edu/1205>.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Employee Drug & Alcohol Testing Policy

Purpose: The University of Northern Iowa (UNI) is committed to providing a drug-free workplace and learning environment. Alcohol and drug abuse pose a threat to the health and safety of university faculty, staff, students, and visitors. This policy is intended to comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act Amendments of 1989 and the Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991. This policy is also intended to serve in maintaining the health and safety of the University's faculty, staff, students, and visitors, in addition to providing the practice and procedure for managing issues regarding drug and alcohol abuse in the workplace and on campus. For more information, visit <http://www.uni.edu/policies/413>

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Alcohol and Drugs Policy

Purpose: The University of Northern Iowa (UNI) adheres to the laws of the state of Iowa, and strives to create an environment that supports healthy decisions and lifestyles. While the use of illegal drugs is prohibited, the University acknowledges and respects the rights of individuals to use alcohol in a legal and responsible manner, just as it acknowledges and respects the rights of individuals who choose not to use alcohol. Although the moderate consumption of alcohol may be an acceptable part of certain social activities, alcohol and drug abuse interferes with the ability of the University to achieve its mission and can adversely affect individuals, the university, and the larger community. This policy is intended to help maintain the health and safety of the University's faculty, staff, students, and visitors, and to ensure that alcohol and drug use do not interfere with the effective functioning of the University. It further delineates the parameters relative to the use of alcoholic beverages on University property, at University-sponsored events,

or in conjunction with University activities. For more information, visit

<http://www.uni.edu/policies/1318>.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct Policy

Purpose: The University (referred to as “University” or “UNI”) is committed to providing a workplace and educational environment, as well as other benefits, programs, and activities, that are free from discrimination and harassment based on a protected class, as well as retaliation.

For more information, visit <http://www.uni.edu/policies/1302>.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Equal Opportunity

Purpose: To provide guidelines regarding equal opportunity and non-discrimination at the university in compliance with applicable federal and state non-discrimination and affirmative action laws and regulations. For more information, visit <http://www.uni.edu/policies/1303>.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Campus Accessibility & Accommodations of Disabilities

Purpose: To provide guidelines regarding the University’s compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), the Fair Housing Act (FHA), and other applicable federal and state laws and regulations. For more information, please visit <http://www.uni.edu/policies/1315>.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Freedom of Speech and Expression / First Amendment

The purpose of the University of Northern Iowa Freedom of Speech and Expression/First Amendment policy is to provide principles relating to the First Amendment and the freedom of speech and expression, including non-commercial activities that are conducted on the university

campus and at other covered activities of the university. For more information, please visit

<http://www.uni.edu/policies/1310>.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Data Security

Purpose: The University of Northern Iowa acknowledges its obligation to ensure appropriate security for data, business systems, and Information Security (IT) resources in its domain of ownership and control. Furthermore, the University recognizes its responsibility to promote security awareness among the members of the University community. The University of Northern Iowa develops, publishes, and enforces policies, procedures, and standards in order to achieve and maintain appropriate protection of university data and business systems. This document along with related security policies, procedures, and standards identifies key security issues for which individuals, colleges, departments, and units are responsible. For more information, visit <http://www.uni.edu/policies/1403>.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Student Academic Ethics

The culture of The University of Northern Iowa is characterized by a long-standing commitment to student learning and to excellence in teaching. This commitment has been established through the development of an open, ethical and caring community that promotes intellectual diversity, honesty, integrity, respect, fairness, trust and civility among its members. This community has created a culture based on core values that include intellectual vitality, intellectual and academic freedom, the well-being of its members and service to others. In order to realize its commitments and values, all members of the UNI community must demonstrate academic integrity and ethical behavior and foster academic integrity and ethical behavior in others. Those who violate UNI's standards of academic ethics must be held responsible for their misconduct. Those who observe violations of academic ethics have a responsibility to address it. It is the purpose of this document to describe the responsibilities, provide definitions and examples of conduct

which violates academic ethics and recommend appropriate sanctions in the case of misconduct. For more information, visit <https://policies.uni.edu/301>.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Student Conduct Code

This policy outlines university standards for student behavior and delineates the processes by which allegations of misconduct will be addressed in order to safeguard the rights, property, and safety of the University community and individuals in it; to ensure that student behavior complies with applicable law and policy; and to permit the orderly operation of the University. In this context, the University seeks to foster an environment conducive to achieving its academic mission and that is supportive of the rights of individuals to live, work, learn, and assemble safely and equitably; to express views and opinions; and to associate freely with others. Students and student organizations are expected to adhere to the standards of conduct described herein. Allegations of misconduct will be addressed through procedures that ensure due process and contribute to the education of all involved. Students are informed of the Student Conduct Code during orientation, are annually provided notification of it via email, and have access to the Student Conduct Code via the University website. The Dean of Students will develop procedures for the administration of the Student Conduct Code. Any question of interpretation of the Student Conduct Code will be referred to the Dean of Students, whose interpretation is final. For more information, visit <https://policies.uni.edu/302>.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)