



# GRADUATE ASSISTANT HANDBOOK

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## Graduate Assistantship Position Information

### What is a Graduate Assistantship?

Graduate Assistantships (GA) are on-campus, salaried positions working on assignments that meet the guidelines approved by the Council of Graduate Schools and current UNI policy.

- 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 appointment period usually follows the academic calendar dates.
- Graduate Assistants are appointed for their positions each academic semester.
- Graduate Assistants cannot work more than 4 semesters under the same assistantship appointment, 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 a biweekly stipend for services rendered to the University. By definition, Graduate Assistantships are based on 16 weeks of work, paid at a fixed rate. For discounting 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. Students with the need of having internships tied to their assistantships, these must be treated separately, a different academic procedure needs to occur and have different duties, schedule, supervisor, etc.
- 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 programs are eligible for assistantships even if part of their academic load is online, 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.

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### 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. Graduate Assistants can perform tasks based on the following types:

#### Research Assistant

A research assistant provides direct support for faculty 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).

### 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 receive paid training outside of the assistantship 6 weeks before the start of the semester.

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### 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 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](#)).

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### 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 working a maximum of 20 hours per week. 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 could be terminated from their student employee hourly position or assistantship.

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## Eligibility for Assistantship

When making awarding decisions, hiring units must make sure they review student's pre-eligibility for the assistantship. While some of the criteria below won't be fulfilled by the time the GA is offered, 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 timely if they are not meeting the criteria before the semester.
- 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 and 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 final, official 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 on-campus or hybrid 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 GRO 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. 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.

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

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### 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.

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### Assistantship Stipend

- Graduate Assistantship stipend amounts might change from year to year, upon availability of funds.
- The official GA offer letter sent to the student provides the stipend amount for their GA assignment, the terms of employment and all the required steps needed to successfully process the appointment.
- Stipends are based on 16 work weeks during the semester, excluding Thanksgiving (in the fall) and Spring (in the spring) breaks.
- The GA stipend will be dispersed through payroll in biweekly installments during the appointment (August-December for fall and January-May 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 stipend due to late start, resignation, leave of absence, uncompleted work, or other similar situation will consider the total number of weeks of work to calculate reductions in pay.
- Assistantship compensation is classified as income which is subject to federal and state taxation.
- The GA stipend is paid through payroll directly to the student's bank account or by check (upon request) and does not get credited to a student's U-Bill.

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## Benefits

Graduate Assistants must work the entire semester to qualify for benefits. All Graduate Assistants with at least a half-time appointment 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.
- Non-Resident spouse (partner) receives tuition billed at Resident rates.

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**Important:** Graduate Assistants are NOT eligible for University-sponsored insurance benefits, sick leave, or vacation days.

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## Residency Benefit Information

- Graduate assistants with at least a 10-hour-per-week appointment ( $\frac{1}{4}$  FTE) are assessed resident tuition should they be initially classified as non-resident students by the UNI’s Office of the Registrar upon admission.
- Spouses of such students also might qualify for this benefit during the assistantship period.
- This 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>.

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**Important:** Graduate Studies will review student’s eligibility timely and up to 1 week before the Ubill is due. If students aren’t eligible by then, they can 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' August/Spring bills.

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### Work Hours

- Graduate Assistants with a half-time assistantship should work ten hours per week and those with a full-time assistantship should work twenty hours per week, with no exceptions.
- Stipends are based on 16 work weeks across the semester.
- 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 stipend 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.
- 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.

- 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. On average, the graduate student should work 10 (half-time) or 20 (full-time) hours per week.
- Students and supervisors are both in charge of documenting and reporting any issues to the Div. of Graduate Studies properly and in a timely fashion.

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### Remote Work

Graduate Assistantships are on-campus positions. Supervisors, under specific circumstances, may determine that some, not all, of the work might be completed remotely within the state of Iowa only. 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, the student should seek approval from both the Div. of Graduate Studies and the Human Resources Services office.

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### Summer Graduate Assistantship Appointments

The Div. of Graduate Studies can provide funding for GA appointments during the Summer term, upon request. If a graduate student has the chance of working on a summer GA assignment, this could be possible as long as the following occurs:

- 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 will last only 6 weeks of work.
- The program/department should require, since the GA will be research-based, the student to turn in laboratory/research reports and finish/complete certain research objectives during the appointment. If requiring any sort of deliverable or culminating project, this product must adhere to

UNI project format guidelines. Dissertation/defense components may also be required depending on how far the student is with their research.

- Summer GA appointments can be offered to online students only if the duties are performed 100% on campus in a laboratory-research support/project setting.
- For situations where the research needs to be conducted (i.e. samples need to be extracted from the field) off-campus, GA time and pay won't be possible. Faculty will need to navigate required approvals, insurance, procedures, and costs of taking students on a field trip/experience while also making sure it's not taken as a part of the duties of the GA.
- Students must enroll as FT during summer term, this equals to eligible graduate 6 credits.
- There must be a formal offer, since the current EOFS GC10 system does not allow for summer GAs to be processed, this will become a manual process. The department should nominate students through a letter signed by the proposed supervisor, department head, and dean, if needed.
- 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 offer will contain appointment dates, 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 timely and before the appointment starts.
- International summer GAs will need to adhere to any immigration and employment regulations the International Engagement Office suggests. 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 the summer 1 term session is not enough time for the student to finish their project, the department must find a form to continue the assignment to complete the research while funding it properly through foundation, grant or department monies. This appointment can be extended only if funding is available and costing information should be provided timely so it can be added on

UNIWorks. In other words, any July and August sessions will not be sponsored by the Division of Graduate Studies and should be funded by other or alternative sources.

- Potential Summer GA appointments can begin on May 19 and end on June 27, 2025 per the academic calendar. From May session till Summer first 6th week session. This way, the student will receive a biweekly stipend between May and June. Total weeks of work will be 6.
- The Summer GA stipend and workload will be based on 10 or 20 hours per week, discounted weekly.
- For a 10-hour Summer GA, stipend amount is \$1,125 for 10-hours per week for 6 weeks of work. Reach out to the Div. of rad Studies for up-to-date dates and amounts.
- For a 20-hour Summer GA, stipend amount is \$2,250 for 20-hours per week for 6 weeks of work. Reach out to the Div. of rad Studies for up-to-date dates and amounts.
- If allowed by the UNI Financial Aid office, the Division of Graduate Studies and or Hiring Unit might pay incentive and merit based scholarship for the summer term. The department might also do so if funds and scholarship types are available. This cannot be considered as part of or as a supplement to the stipend of the assignment but as an aid to the student to reduce the overall cost of study of the summer term.
- Exceptions might be granted to summer GAs to work under a 40-hour appointment. The appointment can be processed by the program as a summer student employment position paid at the GA rate or a Temp Hire.
- 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 this Handbook.
- Neither overtime nor employee benefits will be offered for this type of appointment.
- Conducting a summer performance review (employee appraisal/evaluation) will be encouraged to make sure the research project is successfully completed and carried away.

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



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### 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.

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### Satisfactory Academic Progress

If a Graduate Assistant's UNI cumulative GPA goes below 3.00, their assistantship might be discontinued and other accepted offers could be rescinded. If their UNI cumulative GPA returns to 3.00 or higher at a later date, the student would qualify again for an assistantship but might need to reapply for the position.

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### 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, who will complete all course requirements as determined in item #4 above. 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, but 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.

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### 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:

- [Title IX Training](#)
- [FERPA Basics](#)
- [Harassment and Discrimination Prevention](#)
- [UNI 1st Amendment](#)
- [Data Security](#)

Upon completion, GAs should provide the certificates to the supervisor and keep them for their own records.

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**Note:** Student athletes are also required to complete the [Voices for Change: Student Athletes](#) training.

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### 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.

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

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### 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](mailto: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 on 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.

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

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The student may retain their Graduate Tuition Scholarship, if applicable, even if the student elects to resign a Graduate Assistantship by maintaining a full-time course load in the program of study and a 3.00 or higher cumulative GPA. Full-time students in good academic standing are not required to rescind their Tuition Scholarship, even if their Graduate Assistantship is terminated because of their failure to perform the work assignments required of their assistantship. However, Tuition Scholarships awarded under an externally funded grant or are funded through other sources may be terminated, if required under the terms of the grant and assignment.

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**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).

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### Rescinding a Tuition Scholarship

To rescind a 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.”

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#### Rescinding Graduate Studies Funds due to Admission Deferral

- Regardless of their type, funds should be reserved, saved, 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.

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#### Termination of a Graduate Assistantship (General)

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

- Failure to complete I-9 form on time, per federal regulations.
- 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 as set forth by department/program rules/sponsored research agreements.
- Personal conduct that violates UNI student conduct code policy 3.02 (See: <https://policies.uni.edu/302>) or state and federal law.
- Suspension or dismissal of a graduate student from the University due to disciplinary reasons.
- Poor performance. Performance that does not meet set expectations may impact the renewal of the appointment and, in certain circumstances, it may lead to the cancellation of any already accepted GA offers and other future/upcoming funding.

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#### 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.](#)

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**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.

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#### 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 Representative are available for consultation, and (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>.

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### 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.

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## [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.

### 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.
- Must include UNI's Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action statement.

### 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:

- The GS 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.
- 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 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 made, the department cannot rescind it, unless there is a special circumstance approved by a GRO representative.
- Since Graduate Assistantships are employment positions, any unselected applicant should be also given a timely rejection, waitlist notice.
- All Graduate Assistantship and 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.”*

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### 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 (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 GRO 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.”*

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### Graduate Assistantship Offer Process

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

- Interviews can be conducted and are highly encouraged to make hiring decisions. The interview process must be done without biases. GA positions are employment opportunities and therefore, all the current federal and state laws apply to ensure inclusive and 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 can 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 before 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 stick to the deadlines given since the Div. of Graduate Studies must process and submit paperwork to other offices such as the Financial Aid and Registrar's (to report the residency benefit) as well as 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 offers to international students: (1) attach or link the following [tax notice](#) and (2) copy [international.admissions@uni.edu](mailto:international.admissions@uni.edu) and [edyta.cichon-barche@uni.edu](mailto: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 at least are 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, in a timely fashion, who have not been recommended for an award. Since Graduate Assistantships are employment opportunities, each applicant must receive some type of follow-up, 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.

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## 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're 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.

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## 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 assignment should not overlap with the GA start dates.

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**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.

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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.

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**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.

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### 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.

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### Remote Work

- Graduate Assistantships are on-campus positions. Supervisors may determine that some, not all, of the work may be completed remotely within the state of Iowa only.
- 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.

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### 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 new hire training modules required by the UNI: [Title IX](#), [Harassment Prevention for Staff](#), [FERPA Basics](#), [Data Security](#) and [First Amendment](#). 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).

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**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.

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### 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.

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**Note:** While it's 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.

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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, including the Program Coordinator or Department Head, if needed. 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.

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

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

Although it's undesired and the last resource, the Graduate Assistantship might 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, 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 GRO 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.

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**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.

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## Relevant UNI Policies and Procedures

### **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>.

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### **Graduate Assistantship Grievance**

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>.

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### **Employee Drug & Alcohol Testing Policy**

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>

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## **Alcohol and Drugs Policy**

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>.

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## **Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct Policy**

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>.

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## **Equal Opportunity & Non-Discrimination Statement**

No person shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in employment, any educational program, or any activity of the University, on the basis of age, color, creed, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, political affiliation, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran or military status, or on any other basis protected by federal and/or state law. The University of Northern Iowa prohibits discrimination and promotes affirmative action in its educational and employment policies and practices as required by

Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other applicable laws and University policies. The University of Northern Iowa prohibits sexual harassment, including sexual violence. For more information, visit <http://www.uni.edu/policies/1303>.

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### **Affirmative Action**

The University of Northern Iowa has adopted a policy of affirmative action and nondiscrimination in accordance with federal and state public policy and law as currently in effect. The University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity in employment, retention, and advancement of employees without regard to age, color, creed, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, political affiliation, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran or military status, or any other basis protected by federal and/or state law, except in rare instances where sex may be a bona fide occupational requirement, and to a policy of affirmative action for protected classes. Affirmative action entails special efforts by the University community to recruit, hire, and retain protected class members throughout the University, proportionate to their availability in the relative labor market. These policies apply to all positions in the University. For more information, visit <http://www.uni.edu/policies/1301>.

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### **Campus Accessibility & Accommodations of Disabilities**

No qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of the University, or be subjected to unlawful discrimination by the University. This policy applies to all aspects of campus activities including employment, education, student programming, and services provided to the community at-large. For more information, please visit <http://www.uni.edu/policies/1315>.

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## **Freedom of Speech and Expression / First Amendment**

As a university and part of the State of Iowa, the University of Northern Iowa – including its students, faculty and staff members, administrators, and volunteers – have a responsibility to ensure freedom of speech and expression is lawfully supported and protected. Providing a forum for free speech or expression of ideas is a cherished and time-honored feature of university life. Persons must be able to express their ideas in a lawful manner without suppressing the right of freedom of expression of others. Freedom of speech and expression are required by, and legally supported and explained in the U.S. and State of Iowa constitutions, federal and State law, federal and state court decisions, and Board of Regents, State of Iowa (BOR) and university policies. For more information, please visit <http://www.uni.edu/policies/1310>.

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## **Data Security**

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. Every member of the University community is responsible for protecting the security of university data and business systems by adhering to the objectives and requirements stated within published university policies. In addition, individuals are required to comply with the additional security policies, procedures, and practices established by colleges, departments, or other units. If multiple policy statements or security standards are relevant for a specific situation, the most restrictive security standards will apply. For more information, visit <http://www.uni.edu/policies/1403>.

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