



Policies Concerning the Graduate Assistant

Purpose/Overview - The purpose of this document is to outline rules, regulations, and guidelines associated with Graduate Assistantships. It is the responsibility of the entire campus community to uphold the standards of Graduate Assistants and ensure equitable treatment.

- Graduate students **must** be **fully** admitted to a degree program prior to the awarding of an assistantship. Graduate Assistantships are awarded on a competitive basis to qualified, degree-seeking students and are intended to provide support to students pursuing a graduate degree.
- Graduate Assistants employed full-time will earn tuition remission equal to one-fourth of their remaining program hours each semester they serve as a Graduate Assistant. Generally, a full-time assistantship will provide tuition remission up to one-half of the graduate degree program hours each year. Tuition remissions for Graduate Assistant appointments less than full-time will be pro-rated accordingly. The graduate student is responsible for fees. Remissions will apply only to coursework applicable to the approved program listed in the graduate catalog. *The Graduate Assistant will pay all tuition and fees for courses that do not meet the above criterion or that you drop/withdraw from.*
- The University considers twenty (20) hours per week as full-time student employment. Assistantships assigned on a full-time basis carry a workload of twenty (20) hours per week and a half-time assistantship carries a workload of ten (10) hours per week. Graduate Assistants do not work during normal holidays and during campus breaks. Since assistantships are salaried positions, Graduate Assistants may not be employed in hourly-wage positions on campus while on assistantship appointments. Of chief importance is a Graduate Assistant's successful progress in graduate study.
- Graduate Assistants may be assigned teaching, research or administrative duties. The department will clearly identify these duties. Periodic meetings may be held between the Graduate Assistant and the supervisor in order to provide any help the assistant may need.
- Graduate students are generally awarded an assistantship for no more than two (2) years per program, unless approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies & Academic Outreach.
- The Graduate Assistant is directly responsible to the department head/chair. The department head/chair has the prerogative of assigning the Graduate Assistant to a faculty member who supervises and evaluates the work of the GA.
- Individuals receiving an assistantship are expected to complete a **minimum** of six graduate hours each semester. An exemption waiver for taking less than six (6) credit hours may be granted if it is the last semester of study and the assistant will graduate at the end of that semester. Graduate Assistants are required to maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0. Although the minimum enrollment for a GA is six (6) credit hours, full-time graduate status is nine (9) hours. Full-time status is needed for student loan deferral and to receive full-time financial aid. Contact the Financial Aid Office for clarification on all loan eligibility and loan deferral requirements.
- Any clarification of the responsibilities or privileges of the Graduate Assistant may be directed to the Graduate Dean.
- Three graduate students are asked to serve as representatives to the UNK Graduate Council who will attend the Graduate Council meetings, share concerns and ideas of graduate students, and serve as voting members on the Council. Please contact the Graduate Office if interested.
- Temporary leave from assistantship duties due to brief illness, family emergency, etc., are administered by the department and reported to the Office of Graduate Studies & Academic Outreach.

Graduate Assistant - Teaching

- A Graduate Teaching Assistant is generally asked to teach the equivalent of six (6) credit hours of courses or labs. Limited office hours and class preparation for a Teaching Assistant should be included in the assignment.
- In their role as teachers, Graduate Assistants are responsible to the students with whom they work, and for their departmental duties.
- The Graduate Assistant appointment is not classified as a regular faculty member. Consequently, the normal benefits, i.e. leaves of absence, retirement plan, sick leave, etc., assigned to a regular faculty member, do not apply to Graduate Assistants. However, the Graduate Assistant is offered insurance at a reduced rate.

Graduate Assistant - Research

- The Graduate Assistant is generally asked to work under the supervision of a single faculty member or amongst a team of faculty members.
- The department head/chair is responsible for determining what faculty member will serve as the Graduate Assistant's primary supervisor as it relates to research.

Graduate Assistant – Administrative (Other) Duties

- Duties beyond Teaching and Research vary across campus; however, students should be engaged with their graduate academic department and program.
- Department head/chair will actively integrate students holding assistantships outside the constraints of their department/program.

All Graduate Assistants are Encouraged to:

- Submit an article, give an oral presentation, or present a poster at the University Graduate Student Research Day held in the spring semester (April 18, 2024). Students who graduate in the fall are eligible to present their completed projects at the spring event (after graduation). Note: an online option to present is available for research day.
- Participate in the 3-minute thesis (3MT) university competition or submit an article to the Graduate Review. This is optional for 1-year GA appointments.
- Sign up and complete at least 3 professional development workshops from the Professional Development Academy.

Note: Reappointment as a Graduate Assistant is contingent upon successful completion of the above requirements. Questions should be directed to the Office of Graduate Studies & Academic Outreach at unkgradoffice@unk.edu.

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