

# GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

## Academic Standards

A graduate assistantship is intended to award students who have demonstrated high academic performance and potential either at the graduate or undergraduate level. As a graduate assistant you will be considered a UNO employee with a tuition waiver, monthly salary, and subsidized health insurance.

- Graduate assistants must be students in good standing in a degree or certificate program in the UNO Graduate College.
- Dismissal from a graduate program for any reason shall result in simultaneous dismissal from any graduate assistantship position. The student will not be eligible for an assistantship thereafter until fully reinstated in a graduate degree or certificate program.

## Apply, Recruitment, Selection, and Renewal of Graduate Assistants

- Each graduate department/school or other unit, as appropriate, shall establish its own procedure for graduate assistantship recruitment and selection in accordance with university policy on affirmative action/equal opportunity. Graduate Assistantship positions are subject to a background check.
- Assistantships are not automatically renewable and are dependent upon assessment of work and classroom performance. The student is reminded that, whether or not outside work commitments are involved, graduate assistantships may not be renewed if either graduate class work or assistantship duties are not carried out in a satisfactory manner.

## Workload

- The workload for a graduate assistant should average 20 hours per week for the duration of the appointment and shall be construed to be the equivalent of .33 FTE.
- The department/school or unit in which the graduate assistant is employed should make arrangements with its assistants regarding vacation periods.
- The graduate faculty considers a student who is pursuing graduate study and holding a graduate assistantship to be carrying the equivalent of a full-time workload (see course load below) and, therefore, discourages the practice of holding additional jobs which may interfere with satisfactory performance of assigned duties.

## Course Load

- Graduate assistants are expected to carry a minimum of six graduate hours in each of the fall and spring semesters; graduate assistants working in the summer semester are not required to be concurrently enrolled.
- Graduate assistants may not register for more than 12 semester hours without the approval of both their supervisor and the dean for Graduate Studies. The graduate assistantship will not pay for more than 12 semester hours in a semester.
- The six-hour minimum may be waived if the student is in the last semester of graduate work and needs less than six hours of graduate credit in order to complete requirements for graduation. For doctoral candidates, the six-hour minimum enrollment also may be waived with the approval of their supervisor and dean for Graduate Studies, if all required course hours except the dissertation have been completed. In either case, students still must register for one course.

## Duties

Duties assigned to graduate assistants should be directly related to and in support of graduate studies in their chosen field of study. Typical examples would be one or more of the following:

1. Teaching courses or discussion sections at the undergraduate level.
2. Instructing and supervising undergraduate-level laboratories or tutorial sections.
3. Grading or otherwise evaluating performance of undergraduate students.
4. Collecting and/or processing research data for faculty members.
5. Preparing materials for laboratories or classroom presentations.

In general, other duties which involve direct knowledge and application of knowledge related to the student's field of study would be acceptable. Graduate assistants should not be utilized solely for clerical duties.

It shall be the responsibility of each graduate program committee, in consultation with the cognizant department chairperson or program director, to draw up an agreement with each graduate assistant at the time of the appointment which shall specify the stipend, duration and method of payment, the assistant's duties, and the general conditions of employment. The agreement shall be reviewed by the graduate assistant before it is signed by him/her and the chairperson of the graduate program committee. The graduate program committee, upon the recommendation of the graduate assistant's faculty supervisor and/or the department chairperson/school director or unit director, shall have the responsibility to review the assistant's performance and to terminate the appointment for failure to discharge satisfactorily the duties specified in the agreement.

## Lengths of Appointments

Assistantships may be awarded on an academic, calendar-year or semester-by-semester basis.

## Graduate Assistantship Frequently Asked Questions

### What is a graduate assistantship?

A graduate assistantship is based on academic and/or professional excellence. Recipients receive tuition remission, a monthly salary, and subsidized health insurance to work approximately 20 hours per week on assigned professional responsibilities. Graduate assistants are assigned responsibilities that provide supervised educational experiences at the graduate level.

### How do I apply for an assistantship?

Contact the department/school/office you are interested in for any available positions and their application procedures. Also, check with Maverick Student Employment (<https://www.unomaha.edu/maverick-student-employment/>), they may have a list of the current open assistantships. One must be admitted to a graduate degree or certificate program to be a graduate assistant; non-degree & unclassified students are ineligible. Graduate Assistants must be in good standing in a degree or certificate program to receive or continue with an assistantship.

### What do I receive monetary compensation for and when do I get paid?

Graduate Assistants typically work 20 hours per week. On the last working day of the month, your paycheck will be electronically deposited directly into your bank.

### How many graduate hours do I need to take during the fall and spring semesters?

Graduate Assistants are required to carry a minimum of six (6) graduate hours in the fall and spring semesters (**please note that undergraduate deficiencies do not count toward this minimum requirement**). You

must be aware that nine (9) graduate hours is a full-time course load for graduate students.

The minimum of six (6) graduate credit hours may be waived if you are in your last semester & need less than six (6) graduate credit hours to complete the requirements for graduation. The Office of Graduate Studies will review your plan of study and contact you to complete the "Student Social Security Tax Exemption State-Last Semester."

The minimum of six (6) graduate credit hours also may be waived for doctoral candidates, with the approval of their adviser & the Graduate Dean, if all required courses except dissertation have been completed and the student will not be employed for more than 20 hours per week. The Office of Graduate Studies will review your plan of study and contact you to complete the "Student Social Security Tax Exemption Statement-Certification of Full-Time Graduate Status."

### **What is the maximum number of graduate hours I can take each semester?**

Your Assistantship will pay for a maximum of twelve (12) graduate credit hours a semester.

### **Can I register for an undergraduate course and have the tuition paid?**

Yes, if the undergraduate course is required to fulfill a deficiency that is listed on your original plan of study. This can be accessed in MavLINK (<https://mavlink.nebraska.edu/psp/mavlink/NBO/HRMS/?cmd=login>) under the DegreeWorks link AND you are also enrolled in a minimum of **six graduate credit hours**.

If the undergraduate course is not listed as a deficiency on your original plan of study, your assistantship will not pay for the tuition.

### **How many graduate hours does a graduate assistant have to take in the summer?**

None. \* You are allowed to take a maximum of twelve (12) graduate hours.

### **Will my assistantship pay the tuition for graduate courses in the summer?**

Yes, if you were a Graduate Assistant for the preceding fall and spring semesters or are working as a graduate assistant during the summer.

If you were a Graduate Assistant for the spring semester only and will be one in the upcoming fall, you will be eligible for reimbursement for your summer graduate courses. Please consult with the Office of Graduate Studies.

### **How do I pay for classes?**

Once the necessary paperwork has been submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies by your department/school/office, Cashiering/Student Accounts will be notified of your assistantship. Your account will then be credited for the classes which are covered by your assistantship. **Please be sure you pay the fees and any other charges not covered by your assistantship.**

### **Will my assistantship pay for graduate courses taken at the other three University of Nebraska campuses (UNL, UNK and UNMC)?**

Yes, if the courses are required in your plan of study, a tuition voucher will be completed by the Office of Graduate Studies at the time of verifying enrollment. You will need to complete the online Intercampus Registration Form ([https://csprdn.nebraska.edu/psc/csprdn/NBX/SA/s/WEBLIB\\_PTBR.ISCRIP1.FieldFormula.IScript\\_StartPage?ghcmd=saml](https://csprdn.nebraska.edu/psc/csprdn/NBX/SA/s/WEBLIB_PTBR.ISCRIP1.FieldFormula.IScript_StartPage?ghcmd=saml)).

### **What happens if I resign my assistantship?**

The Office of Graduate Studies will send you a prorated bill for both tuition and subsidized health insurance (if applicable) from the date you resigned

your assistantship. You will be placed on stop enrollment until the bill is paid.

### **What happens if I don't start my assistantship at the beginning of the semester?**

Assistantships may be awarded on an academic-year basis, a calendar-year basis, or semester-by-semester basis. Normally these appointments start at the beginning of a semester. The department/school/office should contact the Office of Graduate Studies for prior approval if the assistantship is not starting at the beginning of a semester. If the late hiring is approved, the Office of Graduate Studies will send you a prorated bill for the graduate courses you are enrolled in; beginning with the date you started your assistantship.

### **May I hold another job (additional employment) in addition to my assistantship?**

The Graduate Faculty considers a student who is pursuing graduate study and holding a Graduate Assistantship to be carrying the equivalent of a full-time workload and therefore, discourages the practice of holding additional jobs which may interfere with satisfactory performance of assigned duties. With the approval of your graduate program committee and the Office of Graduate Studies, an additional assignment may be accepted if professionally relevant and if your total FTE does not exceed .49.

### **What if I become sick and miss work or take a vacation?**

Graduate Assistants do not earn sick or vacation hours, please consult with your department/school/office concerning their policies.

### **Do graduate assistants work when offices are open, but the university is closed for classes?**

As a graduate assistant averages 20 hours per week, they are treated like faculty depending on their assignment you may be expected to work, and this must specifically be stated in their workload agreement (GA contract letter) and discussed well in advance. You should check with your GA supervisor regarding their policy.

### **How long may I hold a graduate assistantship?**

Assistantships may be awarded on an academic-year basis, a calendar-year basis, or semester by semester basis.

Students working towards a master's degree may not hold an assistantship for more than four (4) semesters: Educational Specialist students are limited to four (4) semesters beyond their master's degree; doctoral students are limited to six (6) semesters beyond their master's degree. These appointments exclude summer sessions. An assistantship may be extended on an individual basis upon the recommendation of the Graduate Program Committee of the department and the approval of the Dean for Graduate Studies.