

# Graduate Student Employment Standards

(UPDATED March 9, 2026)

## Introduction

### *Introduction*

These standards govern the employment relationship between the University of Iowa and all graduate teaching and research assistants in all matters not explicitly covered by an existing collective bargaining agreement or the conditions of an applicable federal grant.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of these standards is to ensure consistent application of university policy, practices, and procedures to graduate assistants across all collegiate units.

**General questions** regarding the application or interpretation of these standards should be directed to the Graduate College's human resources unit.

**Specific questions** regarding individual circumstances should first be directed to applicable departmental human resources representatives.

### **Scope of Coverage**

These standards cover all currently enrolled graduate and professional students with a twenty-five percent (25%) or more appointment (i.e., teaching at least one course and/or providing service for at least 10 hours a week) employed as: Teaching Assistants (FT19), Research Assistants (FR19) or Law Research Assistants (FL19), who provide services to the University in exchange for salary compensation.

### **Exclusions**

These standards do not cover:

1. Research Assistants (FR19 or FL19) whose appointments are
  1. primarily a means of financial aid which do not require the individuals to provide services to the University, or
  2. primarily intended as learning experiences which contribute to the students' progress toward their graduate or professional program of study or
  3. for which the students receive academic credit.
2. Graduate students appointed as Fellows, (FT52), if they are not providing services as Teaching Assistants (FT19), Research Assistants (FR19 or FL19) except as provided in the Scope of Coverage paragraph above.

3. Other graduate students holding any University appointments not specified in the "inclusions" above.
4. Employees included in any other bargaining unit.
5. Confidential or supervisory employees and all others excluded by Chapter 20 of the Iowa Public Employment Relations Act

## **Wages**

### ***Criteria for Appointment as Graduate Assistant***

#### Section 1. Academic Criteria

- Graduate assistants must be degree-seeking, in good academic standing, and enrolled full-time (at least 9 credit hours). The following circumstances qualify as exceptions to this minimum enrollment requirement:
  - Conducting research in fulfillment of a degree requirement,
  - Preparing a dissertation or thesis,
  - Preparing a prospectus,
  - Gaining competence in English based on ESL proficiency test results,
  - Preparing for a comprehensive/final examination,
  - Completing a required internship,
  - Having fewer than 9 credit hours remaining to complete a graduate degree within the applicable semester, or
  - Having an approved accommodation through Student Disability Services (SDS) for short hours.
- Exception requests for reasons other than those provided above, must be submitted to the Associate Dean for Graduate Education (AD4GE) for approval in the college in which the employment is based. The AD4GE will notify the Associate Dean for Administrative Affairs in the Graduate College of any such approvals.

#### Section 2. Work Proximity Requirement

- All graduate assistants (including all teaching and research assistants) covered under these standards are required to be on-campus during the academic year, unless specifically approved in writing by the Associate Dean for Graduate Education in the employing college. This includes graduate teaching assistants regardless of teaching modality.
- Graduate assistants are not eligible for remote employment (where the work does not require presence at the remote location). In addition, UI may restrict some or all of an individual's ability to work or access university systems while working outside of Iowa.
- Graduate assistants who must conduct work remotely for a university business

reason (i.e., the work itself requires it to be performed remotely) must receive approval from UI officials before traveling to the remote site. UI reserves the right to prohibit university business travel, deny its funding, and/or restrict access to university electronic resources and/or systems.

#### Any Work from International Locations

- Work that is not required to be performed internationally is not permitted. Even when conducting approved university business, UI may restrict access to its systems from international locations, particularly in (but not limited to) countries that present cybersecurity or research security risks.
- International travel to perform *any* paid University of Iowa work a graduate assistant (including research assistant and teaching assistant) performs outside the United States and Puerto Rico must receive pre-approvals. That process should start at least four weeks prior to expected departure. University of Iowa work includes accessing any electronic campus resources such as email or ICON, even for short periods of time. Attending a conference or conducting research as an employment responsibility also is university business.
- The University requires that your academic needs and physical location be reviewed, approved, and registered relevant UI offices. Not all destinations will be approved depending on cybersecurity, research security, and U.S. State Travel risk levels. Please allow at least four weeks for approval considerations to occur.
- Review and complete the steps on [International Programs' webpage](#).

#### Section 3. Required Trainings

- The University of Iowa typically requires graduate assistants to complete mandatory trainings for position eligibility. Examples include sexual harassment prevention, [Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#), [human subjects research](#), [animal use](#), and/or environmental health and safety related-trainings.

### ***Graduate Assistants and Collective Bargaining***

The terms of a collective bargaining agreement between the Board of Regents, State of Iowa and [UE Local 896/COGS](#), the union representing specified graduate teaching and research assistants at the University of Iowa, establish minimum wage rates for all employees covered under these standards.

### ***Wages***

#### Section 1. Minimum Salaries

The minimum salary rates for all graduate assistants covered by these standards are established through collective bargaining between COGS and the Iowa Board of Regents. Current minimum salaries may be accessed using the following link: [COGS Collective Bargaining Agreement](#) (July 1, 2023-June 30, 2025 and July 1, 2025-June 30, 2027).

1. 2024-2025. The minimum salary rate for bargaining unit employees during the term of this Agreement will be \$21,969 for a fifty percent (50%) academic year appointment and \$26,841 for a fifty percent (50%) fiscal year appointment. 2025-

2026. The minimum salary rate for bargaining unit employees during the term of this Agreement will be \$22,628 for a fifty percent (50%) academic year appointment and \$27,646 for a fifty percent (50%) fiscal year appointment.

2. Appointments at a different percent time will receive no less than the prorated minimum salary rate for the term of their appointment.
3. Summer Session Teaching Assistant Appointments. The minimum salary rate for academic year bargaining unit employees during the term of this Agreement will be calculated as a percentage of the salary of an academic year appointment, as stated here: 3-week session (1 course): 2/9 of fifty percent (50%) academic year appointment salary; 6-week and 8-week sessions (1 course): 2/9 of fifty percent (50%) academic year appointment salary; 6-week and 8-week sessions (2 courses): 4/9 of a fifty percent (50%) academic year appointment salary.
4. Summer Session Teaching Assistant Appointments. Summer session teaching assistants will be paid no less than the minimum salary rate for the previous academic year. Returning bargaining unit employees with academic year appointments who are on a summer appointment will have their base summer salaries calculated on their previous academic year salaries.

## Section 2. 2024-2025 Academic and Fiscal Year (Returning Employees)

1. Eligible Graduate Teaching and Research Assistants (i.e., job classes FT19 and FR19) will receive a minimum salary increase of three percent (3.0%).
2. Returning bargaining unit employees who are continuing at a different percent time will receive no less than the prorated value of the salary increase for the term of their appointment.

## Section 3. Salary Distribution

The total salary of full semester, full academic year, full fiscal year, full 8-week and full 6-week summer appointments shall be paid in equal monthly installments. The total salary of other appointments shall be paid in monthly installments proportional to the percentage of appointment worked per month.

## Section 4. Other Forms of Monetary Compensation

Coming Later Fall 2024. Please contact the [Associate Dean of Administrative Affairs](#) in the Graduate College for more information.

# Appointments

## Appointments

### Section 1. Letters of Appointment

1. All newly appointed employees shall receive a letter of appointment that specifies the appointment title and the appointment percentage.

2. *Reappointed* employees shall receive a letter of appointment no later than April 15 for the summer session and fall semester, or prior to November 1 preceding the spring semester, which specifies the appointment percentage. Such letters may be provided earlier if the terms of the appointment are known. For appointments which become available after April 15 or November 1, the employee will be notified in writing as soon as is feasible. If the department has previously committed to provide financial support over a period of time, the commitment shall be honored consistent with any appointment renewal guidelines in effect in the department.
3. Teaching assistants will be informed of their specific course assignments and course supervisor as soon as determined by the appointing department.
4. The appointment letters referenced in Section 1 and 2 above shall also include the effective dates, salary, teaching or work schedule, name and contact information of a tentative supervisor, and notification that health insurance is available and has deadlines for enrollment. The letter will also indicate that the University Benefits Office may be contacted for additional information regarding benefits associated with the appointment.

## Section 2. Appointment Postings

Departments and programs seeking to employ graduate assistants will post opportunities on the website maintained by the Employer:

<https://jobs.uiowa.edu/content/temp/grad-assistant.php>

No posting is required for appointments of less than twenty-five percent (25%) time, or if the position is intended for a returning graduate assistant or part of a recruitment package, consistent with any departmental guidelines that may exist for reappointment. For appointments required to be posted, each department or program shall post the appointments no later than March 1 for fall semester and summer session appointments, and no later than October 1 for spring semester appointments. Appointments that become available at different times shall be posted as they become known. Appointment postings will remain on the website until the position is filled. Each posting shall include:

1. The process by which graduate students may apply for teaching and research assistant appointments in the specific department or program.
2. A brief description of the anticipated duties, probable number of teaching or research appointments, course titles for teaching assignments, percentage of appointment, and qualifications required by the employer for appointment.
3. The application deadline and the name or location of an office where inquiries or applications may be made.

## **Hours of Work**

### Section 1. Hours of Work/Percentage of Appointment as Employees

1. Employees' hours of work are reflected in their percentage of appointment. Such

hours of work are separate and distinct from the academic requirements imposed by academic programs in which employees are enrolled as students.

2. It is understood that graduate assistant employees are engaged in professional activities of such a nature that the output produced, or the result accomplished, cannot be precisely standardized or measured in relation to a given period of time and that the time necessary to accomplish an assignment will vary.
3. The appointment level shall be based on the appointing department's determination of the amount of time it should normally take to perform the assigned duties including orientation and training. Satisfactory performance of these duties shall not ordinarily require an effort exceeding the amounts listed below for standard appointments. However, the average number of hours per week over the course of a full appointment period as described herein, is an estimate rather than an exact time specification as illustrated below:

<b>STANDARD APPOINTMENT PERCENTAGES</b>	<b>WEEKLY HOURS AVERAGED OVER PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT</b>
Half (50%)	20
Three-eighths (37.5%)	15
One-third (33%)	<13
Quarter (25%)	10

## Section 2. Off-Standard Appointments

The Employer may designate additional "off-standard" percentage appointments in which the hours of effort are proportionately consistent with the percentages listed in Section 1(c) above.

## Section 3. Departmental Review of Appointments

Department chairs shall review each graduate assistant assignment to assure consistency and that appointment percentages accurately reflect the weekly hours of work averaged over the period of appointment described in this Article. Departments shall identify the task areas of the appointment and the approximate time expected to be dedicated to each of the task areas assigned over the term of the appointment, as either a weekly average or as a cumulative amount over the term of the appointment. This information will then be provided in writing to the employee at the beginning of their appointment.

If at any time over the course of an appointment, a graduate employee reasonably believes that the duties routinely require hours which will cumulatively exceed the hours of effort required by the appointment percentage over its full term, the employee may raise the matter with the Departmental Executive Officer (DEO), the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), and/or their local human resources representative. If no satisfactory resolution is achieved, the matter may be raised at Level 2 of the grievance procedure. In the event that an employee's claim is sustained informally or at any step

of the grievance procedure, the Employer shall increase such employee's salary proportionately to the extra hours of effort required, or at the Employer's option if there is enough remaining time in the appointment, shall make an adjustment for the remainder of the appointment so that hours of effort are decreased proportionally.

#### Section 4. Graduate Assistant Overload Appointments

Overload graduate assistantship appointments (those more than 20 hours/week) will be granted only when there is a clear case to be made beyond the student's monetary gain or the benefit to the department. Before making an appointment of any type (e.g., additional assistantship or hourly) that brings a student's total appointment at the University of Iowa beyond 50%, the DEO or DGS of the program in which the student is enrolled (in consultation with the student's advisor) must receive permission from the Associate Dean for Administrative Affairs of the Graduate College. The associate dean for administrative affairs will consult with the student's program (e.g., advisor, DGS) and the associate dean for graduate education in the student's college. All overload requests must address:

- the potential *academic benefit* to the student from the additional appointment;
- the student's *current progress* towards degree completion;
- the effect of the additional appointment on the student's *future progress*.

A total appointment of more than 62.5% and up to a maximum of 75% should be seen as an exceptional situation and will be granted only for one semester during the entire time of a student's graduate studies. *Upon approval, international students must contact the [Office of International Students and Scholars](#) to gain permission for [Curricular Practical Training \(CPT\)](#).* Colleges and/or particular graduate programs may have overload policies that are stricter than the Graduate College's policy. It is always advisable to consult with the Associate Dean Graduate Education if there is any uncertainty regarding additional hours/appointments.

## **Grievance Procedure**

### ***Grievance Procedure***

#### Section 1. Grievance Definition

A grievance shall be a complaint alleging a violation in the application and/or interpretation of provisions of the graduate assistant terms of employment.

#### Section 2. Representation

An aggrieved employee may be accompanied at all stages of the grievance procedure by a witness observer or support person. The employee may be accompanied by legal counsel of their choosing in lieu of a witness observer or support person in all proceedings of the procedure after Level 2.

#### Section 3. Time Limits

Failure to appeal a grievance from one level to another within the time periods hereafter provided shall constitute a waiver of the grievance. By mutual agreement, the parties may extend any and all time limits.

The failure by the University or any of its representatives to give a decision within the prescribed time limits set forth in these standards shall permit the employee to proceed with the appeal to the next level. Notwithstanding this provision, the University fully accepts its good faith obligation to process grievances, confer with grievant(s), and issue written decisions in accordance with the procedure set forth in these standards.

Calendar days will be used in computing any period of time prescribed or allowed by these standards, and the day of the act or event from which the designated period of time begins to run shall not be included in the computation. For example, the day a grievant receives a response from an administrator will not be counted as part of the time period. The last day of the period so computed shall be included, unless University administrative offices are not open on that day, in which event the period runs until the end of the next day on which University administrative offices are open.

#### Section 4. Adjustment of Grievances

An effort shall first be made to resolve an alleged grievance informally between the employee and the immediate supervisor. Such informal efforts to resolve the grievance must be initiated within thirty (30) days following the time at which the aggrieved party could reasonably have been aware of the grievance. However, under no circumstance shall a grievance be considered timely after twelve (12) calendar months from the date of the occurrence.

**Level 1:** If the grievance is not resolved through informal discussions, the grievant shall, within forty-five (45) days following the time at which the aggrieved party could reasonably have been aware of the grievance, commit the [grievance to writing](#) and describe the nature of the dispute and the remedy sought. The Departmental Executive Officer, or designee from within the department, shall meet with the grievant and shall provide to the parties a written decision on the grievance within fourteen (14) days after receipt of the written grievance.

**Level 2:** In the event the grievance is not resolved in Level 1, the decision rendered may be appealed to the Dean of the College or Vice President of the division, provided such appeal is made in writing within fourteen (14) days after receipt of the decision in Level 1. If a grievance has been appealed in Level 2 as described above, the Dean/Vice President or designee shall set a mutually satisfactory time to meet regarding the grievance, to be held within ten (10) days after receipt of the appeal. Within ten (10) days after the meeting, the Dean/Vice President or designee shall issue a written decision to grievant(s).

**Level 3:** In the event the grievance is not resolved in Level 2, the decision may be appealed to the Associate Vice President for Human Resources and the Dean of the Graduate College, provided such appeal is made in writing within fourteen (14) days after receipt of the decision in Level 2. If a grievance has been appealed to Level 3, as described above, the Associate Vice President, Dean or their designee(s) shall set a mutually satisfactory time to hear the grievance within ten (10) days after receipt of the

appeal. Within ten (10) days after the meeting, the Associate Vice President or designee shall issue a written decision to the parties involved.

#### Section 5. Emergency Grievances or Group Grievances

Grievances of an emergency nature or grievances affecting a class or group of employees may be initiated at Level 3. Emergency grievances shall be defined as matters regarding which progression through the grievance steps specified herein would subject the grievant to a substantial deprivation relative to their terms and conditions of employment such as termination, suspension, or demotion.

#### Section 6. Arbitration Procedure

1. **Request:** The grievant may submit a grievance to arbitration, provided written notice of intent to arbitrate is delivered to the office of the Associate Vice President for Human Resources within twenty-one (21) days following receipt of the decision in Level 3 of the grievance procedure
2. **Selection of Arbitrator:** Upon submission of a request for arbitration, the parties may within ten (10) days after the request to arbitrate, attempt to agree upon the selection of an arbitrator. If no agreement on an arbitrator is reached, either party may request the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) to submit a panel of seven arbitrators. Within ten (10) days after receipt of the panel, the parties shall alternately strike names and the remaining name shall be the arbitrator to hear the grievance. The parties shall promptly notify the arbitrator of her/his selection.
3. **Hearing:** The grievance shall be heard by a single arbitrator and both parties may be represented by such person or persons as they may choose and designate, and the parties shall have the right to a hearing at which time both parties will have the opportunity to submit evidence, offer testimony, and make oral or written arguments relating to the issues before the arbitrator.
4. **Decision:** The arbitrator so selected shall confer with the University and employee representatives and hold hearings within six (6) months of their selection and shall issue their decision not later than thirty (30) days from the date of the close of the hearings or, if written briefs have not been waived, then from the date the final statements and proofs on the issues are submitted to them. The arbitrator's decision shall be in writing and shall set forth their findings of fact, reasoning and conclusions on the issues submitted. The arbitrator shall not have power to alter, add or detract from the specific provisions for graduate assistant employment. The decision of the arbitrator shall be submitted to the parties and shall be final and binding on the parties.
5. **Expenses:** The cost for the services of the arbitrator, including per diem expenses, if any, and actual and necessary travel and subsistence expenses shall be borne

by the employing department. Any other expenses incurred shall be paid by the party incurring the same.

## Benefits

### *Tuition Scholarship*

- All graduate assistant employees appointed for a total of twenty-five percent (25%) or more for the entire semester, academic year or fiscal year will be assured a minimum tuition scholarship for the fall or spring semester during which the appointment occurs. The tuition scholarship does not cover the cost of audited classes for graduate assistants registered for fewer than 9 hours. Summer and winter tuition scholarships are not guaranteed. Graduate assistants should check with the Associate Dean for Graduate Education in the appointing college regarding the availability of summer tuition scholarships.
- The minimum tuition scholarship will be defined in relation to a full-time load of nine (9) semester hours and shall be prorated for a lesser number of credit hours enrolled.
- All graduate assistant employees appointed at twenty-five percent (25%) or more will receive one hundred percent (100%) tuition scholarship each fall or spring semester based upon the Iowa Board of Regents resident graduate student tuition rate for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS).
- All graduate assistant employees appointed at twenty-five percent (25%) or more and assessed the College of Education Tuition Supplement will also receive a tuition scholarship for one hundred percent (100%) of the College of Education tuition supplement for fall and spring semesters.
- All graduate assistant employees appointed at twenty-five percent (25%) or more will receive a fee scholarship for fifty percent (50%) of the [designated mandatory fees](#) assessed for fall and spring semesters. [Designated mandatory fees](#) are those fees assessed as a condition of *academic* enrollment in each semester to all students and are listed in the university's tuition and fees tables published by the Registrar's Office. This information on *designated mandatory fees* may be accessed using the following link: <https://registrar.uiowa.edu/mandatory-fees>
- Employing units may, at their discretion, exceed the minimum level of tuition or fees scholarship provided above.

### Note

Graduate assistants may be responsible for repaying tuition if course credits are dropped after the beginning of the semester or the graduate assistantship is terminated before the end of the semester. If graduate assistants have questions about repayment

of tuition, they should contact the college in which their graduate assistant appointment/award resides.

## ***Health Insurance and Other Benefits***

### Section 1. Health Insurance

1. **Plan Choices:** Graduate assistants may choose between UI GRADCare or the Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP). Specific information regarding these plan options is available through the [Benefits Office](#) in University Human Resources. Each year all eligible employees shall automatically continue coverage under the same insurance plan as long as they remain eligible for coverage, unless they indicate a desire to change their coverage. Any changes in plan choices or dependent coverage after the annual enrollment period must be made within thirty (30) calendar days of any qualifying event impacting their employment or family status, such as marriage, divorce, birth, adoption, death or loss of eligibility for coverage by a spouse/domestic partner or dependent.
2. **Individual Coverage:** The University will contribute, for graduate assistants with academic or fiscal year appointments who elect the single UI GRADCare Plan or single Student Health Insurance Plan, ninety percent (90%) of the premium cost per month.
3. **Dependent Coverage:** When dependent coverage is elected by the graduate assistant, the University will contribute seventy percent (70%) of the premium cost per month for dependent coverage (Employee/Spouse, Employee/Family) toward the UI GRADCare Plan or the Student Health Insurance Plan (Student/Spouse, Student/Children, Student/Family).
4. **Coverage:** The provisions of UI GRADCare can be found in Appendix A.
5. **Domestic Partners:** Same-sex and opposite-sex domestic partners will be eligible for coverage and for university contributions toward Employee/Spouse or Employee/Family insurance programs, provided they meet the University's standards of eligibility for domestic partner coverage. No contribution will be made if dependents, spouses or domestic partners are eligible for coverage under any other substantially equivalent employer-sponsored plan.

### Section 2. Dental Insurance

1. **Employer Contribution:** The University will provide, for graduate assistants with academic year or fiscal year appointments of twenty-five percent (25%) or more, who elect single coverage, eighty-five percent (85%) of the premium cost for dental insurance each month. When graduate assistants elect dependent coverage, the University will contribute seventy percent (70%) of the premium cost per month for

dependent dental coverage (Employee/Spouse, Employee/Children, Employee/Family).

2. **Coverage:** Provisions of the dental insurance plan are outlined in Appendix A of this agreement.

### Section 3. Period of Coverage

Graduate assistants appointed for a semester will receive the monthly insurance contribution for the semester appointed. Spring semester appointments will receive two (2) additional monthly contributions for summer coverage. An employee commencing an appointment of more than a semester after the beginning of the academic year shall receive the monthly insurance contribution for the duration of the appointment, including coverage for the summer. Summer coverage may be waived by a graduate assistant upon written request to the University, submitted to the Benefits Office. Insurance contributions for graduate assistants terminating during the term of their appointment will cease the month in which such termination occurs. Insurance contributions for fiscal year appointments will cease the month in which the appointment concludes. Notwithstanding the foregoing, insurance contributions for graduate assistants graduating from the University will cease the month in which such graduation occurs.

### Section 4. Employee Contributions

The cost of any health or dental insurance plan elected by the employee in excess of the University's contribution shall be paid by the employee through monthly payroll deduction.

### Section 5. Double Spouse Credit

The University will provide the full cost of the health and dental plans selected, if and only if, both members of an employee-spouse/domestic partnership are graduate assistant employees with appointments of twenty-five percent (25%) or more. This double spouse credit only applies to the GRADCare or SHIP.

### Section 6. Insurance Increases

Any changes in premium and resulting contribution rates will be effective on September 1 of each year.

### Section 7. Eligibility

To be eligible for University contribution as provided above, a graduate assistant must have an appointment of at least one semester and at least a twenty-five percent (25%) appointment. Graduate assistants with an appointment of less than a semester shall not be eligible for University contribution but may participate in an insurance plan at their own expense through payroll deduction.

## ***Healthcare & Dependent Care Spending Accounts***

Graduate assistants may enroll in pre-tax spending accounts through payroll deduction, to provide reimbursement for qualified healthcare and dependent care expenses, on the same terms and conditions as other University staff. The University retains the right to make changes in the administration of these accounts, consistent with Internal Revenue Service regulations.

## ***Paid Leaves and Holiday***

### Section 1. Paid Leaves

1. All graduate assistants with an academic year or semester appointment shall be allowed five (5) working days of absence per semester, without pay deduction.
2. All graduate assistants with a fiscal year appointment shall be allowed fifteen (15) working days of absence without pay deduction.
3. For purposes of this Section, a working day is a day an employee is scheduled to work.
4. All paid leave must be scheduled with the approval of the employee's supervisor, to assure the maintenance of university operations. Such approval will not be unreasonably denied.
5. In the event that the department specifically requires the graduate assistant to remain at work during previously approved leave time, the department shall give such employee thirty (30) days' notice except in case of emergency. At such time, the employee and the department shall reschedule the leave time.

### Section 2. Sick Leave

1. Employees may be absent due to illness without loss of pay not to exceed 13.5 days during an academic year appointment, and eighteen (18) days during a twelve (12) month appointment. Different appointment periods will receive sick leave on a proportionally equivalent basis.
2. For purposes of this provision, a day of sick leave means a day an employee is scheduled to work and is absent due to illness.
3. If an employee has exhausted paid sick leave due to illness, they may request an unpaid leave of absence which will be granted at the sole discretion of the department consistent with any applicable State or Federal regulations, or alternatively may request additional paid sick leave in accordance with Section 5 below.

### Section 3. Family Illness Leave

Employees may use available sick leave for care of and necessary attention to ill or injured members of the immediate family (as defined in Section 4 below) or for parental leave including birth and adoption. Use of sick leave for this purpose is limited to five (5) workdays per year.

#### Section 4. Bereavement Leave

1. Employees may use available sick leave for three (3) workdays when a death occurs in the employee's immediate family.
2. For purposes of this section, the term "immediate family" shall mean spouse, domestic partner, child, step- child, foster child, parent, step-parent, foster parent, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, or parent-in-law, and corresponding relatives of the employee's spouse/partner.

#### Section 5. Additional Paid Leave

Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 1-Paid Leave, Section 2-Sick Leave, Section 3-Family Illness Leave, and Section 4-Bereavement Leave, departments may grant additional paid leave. Such leaves may be granted provided the department determines the employee is able to meet the time and effort obligation reflected in the percentage of appointment over the full term of their appointment as defined in "Appointments" above.

#### Section 6. Jury Duty

1. Employees on jury duty will not incur a loss of pay for time spent on jury duty. Upon return from jury duty the employee shall remit any amount of pay received for jury service to the University, less any amount paid for travel or personal expenses.
2. An employee summoned as a juror shall immediately inform their supervisor of the absence. An employee who reports for jury duty and is dismissed shall be expected to resume their normal duties following dismissal from service.

#### Section 7. Coverage Responsibility

In the event of the absence of a teaching assistant pursuant to this Article, it is the responsibility of the teaching assistant to make a good-faith effort to find a replacement. However, the department is responsible to assure the coverage of classes.

#### Section 8. Holidays

1. Employees shall receive the following paid holidays which occur during the term of their appointment: New Year's Day, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Friday after Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, a day before or after Christmas Day.
2. Monday will be recognized as a holiday for all holidays occurring on a Sunday and Friday for all holidays occurring on a Saturday.
3. Employees may be absent for the above holidays unless the department specifically requires the employee to be on duty. At such time, the department and the employee shall schedule alternate paid time off. Departments will make an effort to minimize holiday work for employees and if it requires work on a holiday,

shall provide such employee(s) with no less than thirty (30) days written notice, whenever feasible.

4. Employees taking paid leave contiguous with a holiday shall not have the holiday counted against their paid leave.

### ***Unpaid Leave of Absence***

#### Personal Leave of Absence

1. An employee may be granted an unpaid leave of absence during the term of the individual's appointment, upon request to and at the sole discretion of the employing unit.
2. If a graduate assistant meets the eligibility requirements (e.g., worked at the university for at least 12 months and served at least 1250 hours within the 12 months prior to the commencement of the requested leave), the Employer shall authorize leave requests in accordance with the provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 for qualifying events.

Graduate assistants may initiate a leave request by contacting their collegiate or departmental HR representative.

### ***Health Accommodations***

The Graduate College and Departments will collaborate with University Human Resources Faculty and Staff Disability Services Office (FSDS) and Student Disability Services (SDS) to administer all workplace accommodation needs (including new or ongoing health conditions) for graduate assistants. Workplace accommodation needs are those associated with a health condition that results in a need for time away from work -or- accommodations while at work. The process for seeking workplace accommodations is provided below.

#### Accommodation Process:

1. When a graduate assistant reports that their health is impacting the ability to perform job duties, the student may need a workplace accommodation. If so, the student should contact their departmental HR representative, or an HR representative in the Graduate College. If a faculty member becomes aware of a potential need for a workplace accommodation, they should contact the applicable department HR representative immediately. Once the graduate assistant has notified any of the above referenced individuals, the recipient of the report will be responsible for submitting a consult form to Student Disability Services (SDS) or Faculty and Staff Disability Services (FSDS). Once submitted, the intake will assist SDS and/or FSDS to determine the appropriate accommodation.

2. If a graduate assistant would prefer to have a confidential conversation with a member of the SDS or FSDS staff office to discuss their health needs, they may schedule an appointment by contacting:  
SDS at (319) 335-1462 or via email at [sds-info@uiowa.edu](mailto:sds-info@uiowa.edu)  
FSDS at (319) 335-2660 or via email [FSDS@uiowa.edu](mailto:FSDS@uiowa.edu)
3. Students needing academic accommodations should apply through Student Disability Services (SDS) in addition to FSDS for workplace accommodations.

The centralization of leave and disability and the involvement of SDS and FSDS will ensure that graduate assistants will be appropriately accommodated.

### ***Travel and Lodging***

When graduate assistant employees are required to travel related to their employment, they will be reimbursed for their travel and lodging expenses consistent with university policy as applied to other University faculty and staff.

### ***Health and Safety***

The University agrees to provide a safe work environment for graduate assistant employees, consistent with applicable State and Federal regulations.

## **Personnel**

### ***Issues of General Application***

#### Standards of Conduct

1. Graduate assistants covered under these standards are expected to maintain satisfactory performance within the context of their position responsibilities and to comply with standards of conduct promulgated by the university, their college, and department. When operating within the context of their university employment, graduate assistants covered under these standards are expected to conform to the same ethical and conduct standards as university staff. The applicable ethics and conduct policies include but are not limited to:
  - [Division II, Chapter 3 - Human Rights](#)
  - [Division II, Chapter 4 - Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct](#)
  - [Division II, Chapter 10 - Violence](#)
  - [Division II, Chapter 11 - Anti-Retaliation](#)
  - [Division II, Chapter 12 - A Drug Free Environment](#)

- [Division II, Chapter 14 - Anti-Harassment](#)
  - [Division III, Chapter 16 - Ethics and Responsibilities for University of Iowa Staff](#)
  - [Division II, Chapter 19 - Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources](#)
  - [Division II, Chapter 27.6 - Ethics in Research](#)
  - [University of Iowa - Work Rules](#)
2. At the beginning of each appointment, the department shall review any work rules or departmental policies relevant to the appointment, including but not limited to departmental standards of conduct, the access and use of office supplies and equipment, including computers, printers and copiers related to employment as determined by the employer, and any health safety and security policies that may be relevant to their employment. Any questions regarding these rules and policies during the term of the appointment should be addressed to the individual supervisor or their designee.

### ***Personnel Files***

#### Personnel Files

- The University will maintain personnel files for each graduate assistant employee. Only documents which pertain to the individual's employment and/or job performance will be included in such files. Documents which pertain only to an employee's academic progress will not be included in a personnel file.
- Employees will have the right to inspect their personnel files at a reasonable time and place as scheduled by the Employer. Access to personnel files will be limited to authorized representatives of the University, the employee, and a representative if so designated in writing by the employee.
- An employee shall have the right to respond to all materials contained in their personnel file. Such responses shall be attached to the related report and become part of the personnel file.
- An employee may request in writing removal of any item in their personnel file. Such request for removal must be received no later than ninety (90) days after placement of the item in the file. The written request shall also contain a rationale for the requested removal. If the dean of the employing college and the dean of the graduate college agree, the item shall be removed from the personnel file. If the dean of the employing college and the dean of the graduate college deny the request for removal, they will notify the employee in writing within thirty (30) days from the date of written request including the reason for denial.
- Any complaints directed toward an employee which are placed in their personnel file shall be promptly called to the employee's attention in writing and identified as being added to the file.

- The employee shall have the right to copies of contents of the file at their expense pursuant to 91.B1 of the Iowa Code.

### ***Performance Evaluations.***

#### Section 1. Performance Expectations

At the beginning of each appointment, the supervisor shall provide the employee with their expectations for performance in the position. This shall include any expectations for effort allocation, teaching or research methods, communication requirements, and include the criteria on which any job performance evaluation will be made, as well as when such evaluation will be provided.

#### Section 2. Performance Evaluation

1. The employee shall be evaluated based upon criteria related to their job performance, skills and professional development. Forms and criteria used for performance evaluations may vary by department. Each department may develop its own standard scale for evaluating employees. The evaluation form shall include an overall assessment of the employee's performance.
2. Any evaluation shall be reviewed by the evaluator with the employee upon its completion. The employee shall sign the evaluation form to indicate that the evaluation has been discussed with the employee and that the employee has received a copy of the evaluation. Signature of the employee does not necessarily mean that the employee agrees with the evaluation. Employees shall have five (5) working days to provide a written response to or comments on their evaluations. Such response and/or comments shall be attached to the evaluation.
3. An employee shall have the right to grieve an evaluation only if the overall assessment is less than satisfactory and such evaluation results in an adverse action by the University.

### ***Training***

The University will provide training for teaching and research assistants consistent with the Iowa Code, Iowa Board of Regents, and University policies or when otherwise warranted. Such training shall also be consistent with the expectations for the individual employee's performance. This may include assistance in the areas of teaching methods, evaluation of student performance, oral and written communication, subject matter, research methods, laboratory procedures, and/or administrative procedures. Employees may be required to attend such training and may request additional training to be provided at the discretion of the University

### **Appendices**

## **Appendix A: Offer Letter Templates and Related Resources**

Please use the links below for offer letter templates and other resources:

- [CGS Resolution Regarding Graduate Scholars, Fellows, Trainees, and Assistants](#)
- [Sample Fiscal Year Graduate Appointment Letter 2024-25 \(RA\)](#)
- [Sample Academic Year Graduate Appointment Letter 2024-25 \(TA\)](#)
- [Sample Academic Year Graduate Appointment Letter 2024-25 \(RA\)](#)
- [Sample Academic Year Graduate Appointment Letter 2024-25 \(TA\) \(CLAS\)](#)
- [Sample Academic Year Graduate Appointment Letter 2024-25 \(RA\) \(CLAS\)](#)
- [Sample Fiscal Year Graduate Appointment Letter 2025-26 \(RA\) \(Updated 04/04/2025\)](#)
- [Sample Academic Year Graduate Appointment Letter 2025-26 \(TA\) \(Updated 04/04/2025\)](#)
- [Sample Academic Year Graduate Appointment Letter 2025-26 \(RA\) \(Updated 04/04/2025\)](#)
- [Sample Academic Year Graduate Appointment Letter 2025-26 \(TA\) \(CLAS\) \(Updated 04/10/2025\)](#)
- [Sample Academic Year Graduate Appointment Letter 2025-26 \(RA\) \(CLAS\) \(Updated 04/10/2025\)](#)
- [Sample Summer Graduate Appointment Letter 2025 \(TA-RA\) \(CLAS\) \(Updated 04/04/2025\)](#)

## **Appendix B: Benefits**

Graduate Assistant Benefit Information

Information regarding benefits for graduate assistants covered under these standards may be accessed on the [HR website](#):

## **Appendix C: Campus Resources**

Campus Resources

A partial list of employment-related campus resources for graduate assistants is provided below.

- [Faculty and Staff Disability Services](#). Workplace accommodations and health-related leave inquiries.
- [Student Care and Assistance](#). Student Care & Assistance provides assistance to University of Iowa students experiencing crisis and emergency situations.
- [Student Disability Services](#). Health-related academic accommodations.
- [Office of Institutional Equity](#). Reporting of bias, harassment, discrimination, equity, free speech, and sexual misconduct concerns.
- [Office of the Ombudsperson](#). Informal conflict resolution, mediation services, and advocacy for fair treatment and fair process.

- [UI Employee Assistance Program](#). Confidential, short-term counseling to faculty, staff, and their families.
- [University Counseling Service](#). Supporting mental well-being and helping students succeed at Iowa.
- [University Employee and Labor Relations](#). Workplace dispute resolution through ensuring reasonable, fair, and consistent application of university policies and procedures.