

*Info file  
Teaching Assistants*



handbook for

---

GRADUATE

---

ASSISTANTS

---

university of  
minnesota

MARCH, 1975

Prepared by Academic Affairs Staff  
following consultation with the Council of Academic Officers  
and other consultative groups within the University.

MARCH, 1975

## Equal Opportunity Statement

The Board of Regents has committed itself and the University of Minnesota to the policy that there shall be no discrimination in the treatment of persons because of race, creed, color, sex, or national origin. This policy is particularly applicable in the recruitment and hiring of members of the faculty and staff and in promoting the academic pursuits of all students at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Individual faculty members are expected to support the development of affirmative action programs to ensure a proper ethnic and sex balance among the students and staff of their department.

handbook for

---

GRADUATE

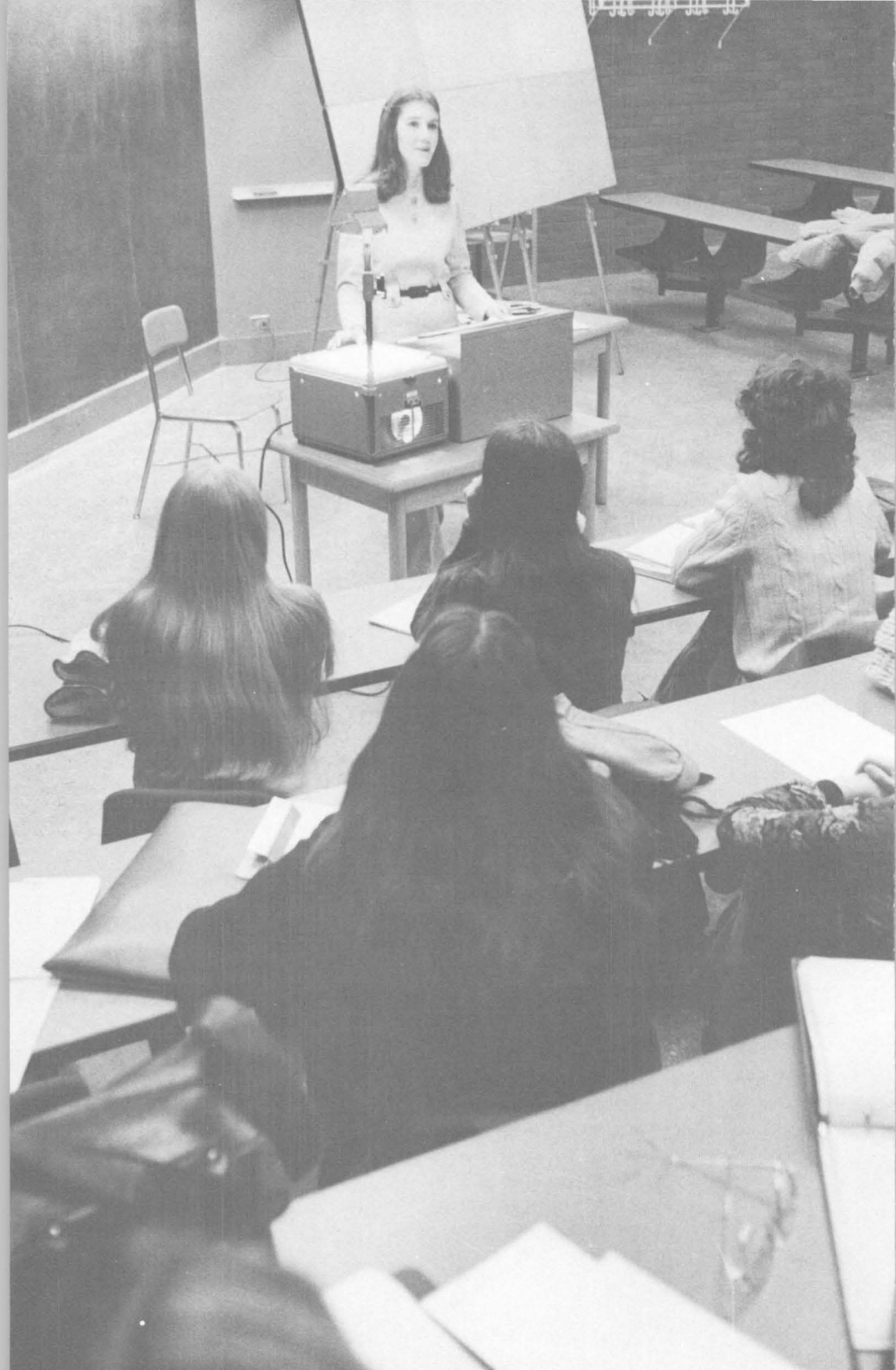
---

ASSISTANTS

---

university of  
minnesota

This Handbook is a description of current University policies and procedures concerning graduate assistantships. It discusses only graduate assistantships which require service. For information concerning fellowships, scholarships, and traineeships, contact the Graduate Fellowship Office. Each college, department, or support unit is encouraged to adopt more specific guidelines which meet their particular needs. Graduate students should, therefore, consult the unit for more information.



# handbook for GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

## I. THE ROLE OF THE GRADUATE ASSISTANT

As a University of Minnesota graduate assistant it is expected that you will be called upon to play an active role in the instructional, research, and service mission of your department or college and in the mission of the University. Your appointment should involve you in interaction with the students, faculty, and administrators of your department and college, and in the advancement of educational programs of your unit.

The graduate assistantship performs a dual function. On the one hand, it is a means of providing financial assistance to graduate students. On the other hand, it provides the various units of the University with the instructional and research staff they need to accomplish their educational missions.

If you have an interest in developing skills as a college teacher, you will find that a teaching assistant appointment will provide you with an opportunity to gain fundamental knowledge and experience in classroom instruction. A research assistantship is a means of acquiring the fundamental research skills and techniques that can be used throughout a career in higher education and which supplement the teaching role. As you will see in Section II of this handbook, there are opportunities open to graduate assistants in a variety of types of employment in the classroom, the laboratory, and in administrative offices.

This Handbook is intended to be a collation of current policies affecting University of Minnesota graduate assistants. A Task Force on Graduate Assistants, established in January, 1975, together with members of the central administration staff, continues to review and improve the policy statements, guidelines, and procedures for graduate assistant appointments. Through annual review and updating, this Handbook will provide graduate assistants with information on policies affecting them.

## II. TYPES OF GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

Depending upon your interests, experience, and progress toward a degree, you may apply for an appointment to one of the following positions: *Teaching Assistant*, *Teaching Associate I or II*, *Research Assistant*, or *Administrative Fellow I or II*.

### A. *Teaching Assistant and Teaching Associate I or II.*

Varying levels of responsibility are implied by these job classifications. Appointments to these ranks involve assistance in the actual teaching of students under the general, although not necessarily detailed, direction of the academic staff. Duties, which may vary to some extent between departments, are as follows: To grade examinations, quiz papers, laboratory reports, etc.; to supervise and instruct laboratory classes, recitation sections, or intern groups; to assist in lectures or give lectures; and to prepare examinations and class materials.

### B. *Research Assistant.*

A research assistant performs duties of a specialized nature connected with research studies, assigned by the supporting department or principal research investigator. These duties may or may not be related to the assistant's own thesis research. Such duties, which vary to some extent between departments, include the following: To collect research material, perform experiments, do taxonomic work, take field notes, record data, perform statistical analyses, prepare bibliographies, do abstracting work, and do editorial work.

### C. *Administrative Fellow I or II.*

An administrative fellow performs duties of a specialized nature confined to administrative studies. This work is performed under direction of designated members of the academic or civil service staff. Duties, which may vary between departments, are as follows: To do applied studies and research related to internship experiences; to conduct institutional and inter-institutional policy and planning reviews; to collect or to analyze data; to do abstracting; to provide resource support for committee meetings and other planning meetings; to meet with administrative staff to assist in the development, interpretation and implementation of policies, guidelines, and procedures; to keep various kinds of records; to prepare reports.

### III. APPOINTMENT TO GRADUATE ASSISTANT POSITIONS

#### A. *Eligibility.*

Upon admission to the Graduate School, you may apply for appointment as a research assistant, teaching assistant or associate, or administrative fellow. Since assistantships are one of the means by which departments provide financial assistance to their graduate students, departments usually restrict appointments or give priority in appointments to graduate students in their own fields. You must be registered during each quarter of employment (not including the summer session) and make satisfactory progress toward an advanced degree.

As a university of national prominence, the University of Minnesota is in a favorable position to make an impact on minority and female academic employment by following affirmative action principles in the employment of graduate students. Departments are expected to adhere to these principles in fulfilling the University's obligations as an equal opportunity employer.

#### B. *General Limitations on Appointment.*

Graduate students at the University of Minnesota may not hold combined appointments totalling more than 75% time without written permission from the Dean of the Graduate School. Under no circumstances may a graduate assistant hold appointments totalling more than 100% time at the University of Minnesota. Graduate students may not hold appointments for which there is no monetary compensation, nor are they allowed to hold appointments for which they receive only course credit or in-state tuition rates.

#### C. *In-State Tuition Privileges.*

Graduate assistants holding salaried appointments at 25% time or more pay in-state tuition rates. This same tuition privilege applies to members of their immediate families. These tuition privileges are extended beyond the term of qualifying appointment if an assistant has held an appointment for a minimum of 3 academic quarters at 25% time or more after Fall Quarter, 1969. (Two summer terms count as one academic quarter.) After completion of the qualifying 3 quarters, the extension is granted on a quarter-by-quarter basis to a maximum of 6 quarters. For example, appointment for 3 quarters allows the

minimum extension of in-state tuition privileges for an additional 3 quarters; appointment for 5 quarters allows 5 quarters of extension; 8 quarters of appointment give 6 quarters of extended privilege. The appointee and members of her or his immediate family are entitled to the extension of this tuition privilege over a period of 3 years from the termination of the last qualifying appointment.

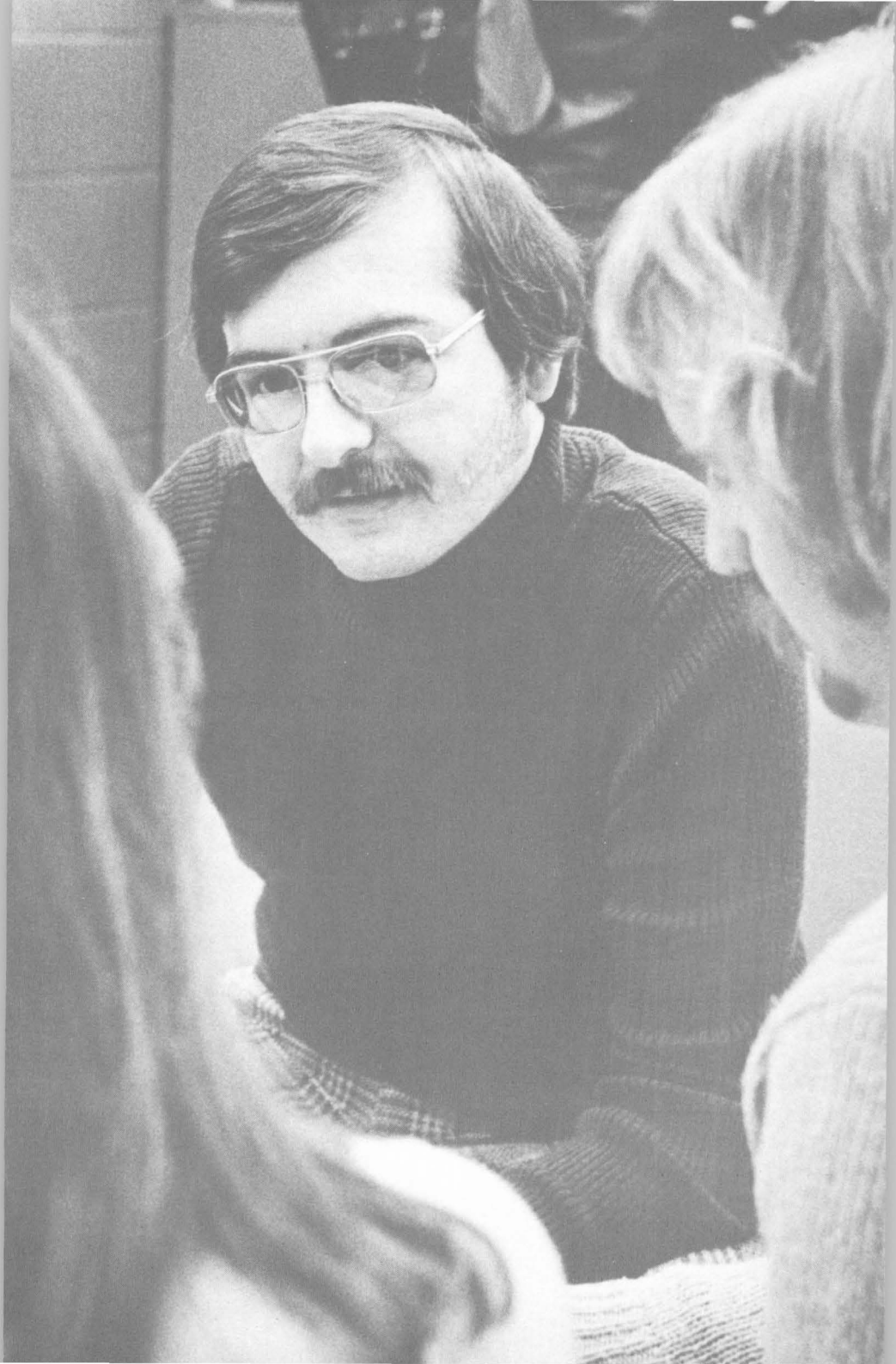
#### *D. Conditions of Employment.*

Before you enter into an employment agreement, you are entitled to know the job description and expectations connected with the position, including:

- the title, rate of pay, term of appointment, and pay periods;
- the total hours of work required per week and flexibility in scheduling this work (e.g., a half-time appointment implies an average of twenty hours per week);
- the faculty supervisor;
- orientation, pre-service or in-service training aids;
- educational resources available (e.g., University Measurement Services Center);
- accessibility to departmental clerical staff, supplies, equipment, and office space;
- whether a minimum number of course credits must be earned each quarter to hold the appointment;
- departmental guidelines or policy which may set a maximum number of quarters of employment;
- criteria for continuation of appointment from quarter to quarter and year to year, and procedure and timing for reappointment;
- whether a structured system of performance evaluation exists, and, if so, the faculty member responsible for evaluating performance;
- promotion possibilities (within graduate assistant ranks);
- source of funding;
- opportunities to participate in departmental and collegiate committee work centered around educational planning and policy-making.

The above information must be made available by the faculty member responsible for hiring or the departmental administrator at the time the offer of appointment or reappointment is made.





#### *E. Acceptance or Continuation of Appointment.*

Acceptance of an offer of a graduate assistantship by either a current or prospective graduate student, regardless of the term of appointment, completes an agreement which both the student and the student's college are expected to honor. Should the student subsequently desire to change plans, the student should submit a written resignation from the appointment at any time through April 15. However, an acceptance given or left in force after April 15 commits the student to the appointment. Formal release from this appointment must be obtained if the student wishes to change plans.

A person may be terminated without notice at any time if he or she fails to comply with the condition of being registered in the Graduate School. Students who have accepted pay for graduate assistantship work and are not registered will have a hold placed on their records and will not be allowed to register in future quarters until they comply with this requirement. Normally the problem is resolved by completing the required registration.

#### *F. Assignment and Reassignment of Duties.*

Your unit is expected to provide a minimum notice of four weeks for particular lecturing assignments and two weeks for other duties with the opportunity for you to express preferences for assignments in advance of these notice dates whenever possible. (It is expected that the same notices of courtesy as are extended to all faculty in the determination of teaching assignments and responsibilities should apply to graduate assistants.) Problems may arise during rush periods at the beginning and end of academic quarters. It is expected that your unit will make every effort to keep you informed with respect to these types of instructional contingencies.

#### *G. Non-Reappointment.*

A department or unit may elect not to reappoint a graduate assistant for the next term of appointment on the basis of its evaluation of performance of the assistantship duties, progress toward the degree, or budgetary constraints. Adequate performance of duties and progress toward the degree do not guarantee reappointment. Under circumstances where external funding of the position is lost, the position may have to be terminated. *To the extent that budget and other essential information permit,* actions on appointments and non-appointments should be completed and written notification given preferably by April 1 and no

later than April 14. However, in years in which the legislature is considering the University's biennial budget, or in cases in which grant decisions are late, it is recognized that such early notice will not always be possible.

#### *H. Dismissal.*

Early termination of a graduate assistantship for cause shall be presented to the graduate assistant in writing, along with a description of appeal procedures (see Section V). The faculty supervisor must provide the graduate assistant with the opportunity to be heard before suspending or terminating employment.

### IV. GRADUATE ASSISTANT COMPENSATION AND WORKLOADS

#### *A. Compensation.*

A schedule of fixed rates applicable to graduate assistant appointments, differentiated by rank, is developed each year by central administration officers on the basis of studies of comparable rates paid in similar institutions. This schedule is given final approval by the Board of Regents. A copy of this schedule of rates is provided to departmental offices by central administration. The rate schedule in Table I on page 10 applies for the 1974-75 academic year. Updated schedules will be made available each July from departmental offices.

#### *B. Fringe Benefits.*

Table II on page 11 shows the extent of eligibility for fringe benefits for graduate assistants.

#### *C. Workloads.*

A graduate assistant with a half-time appointment works an average of twenty hours per week. All duties related to the appointment are included in determining the number of hours worked per week. The work schedule should be flexible so that a graduate assistant can work less than the average number of hour per week when other responsibilities, such as examinations, arise and more than the average number of hours per week when the duties of the appointment require it. In no instance may a graduate assistant be required to perform duties that are not related to the instructional, research, or service mission of the department or college that employs the assistant.

**TABLE I**  
**University of Minnesota**  
**FIXED RATES FOR GRADUATE ASSISTANTS**  
**1974-75**

Fixed Rates	Monthly	B(100)	BH75	BH66(2)	BH50	BH33(1)	BH25	A(100)	AH75	AH66(2)	AH50	AH33(1)	AH25
Teaching Associate I and Administrative Fellow II	\$ 958	\$8,622	\$6,467	\$5,748	\$4,311	\$2,874	\$2,156	\$11,496	\$8,622	\$7,664	\$5,748	\$3,832	\$2,874
Teaching Associate II	\$1,054	\$9,486	\$7,115	\$6,324	\$4,743	\$3,162	\$2,372	\$12,648	\$9,486	\$8,432	\$6,324	\$4,216	\$3,162
Teaching Assistant and Administrative Fellow I	\$ 852	\$7,668	\$5,751	\$5,112	\$3,834	\$2,556	\$1,917	\$10,224	\$7,668	\$6,816	\$5,112	\$3,408	\$2,556
Research Assistant	\$ 828	\$7,452	\$5,589	\$4,968	\$3,726	\$2,484	\$1,863	\$ 9,936	\$7,452	\$6,624	\$4,968	\$3,312	\$2,484

B = Academic year (September 16—June 15)  
A = 12 months  
H = appointment is *less* than 100 percent time  
(1) = one-third time  
(2) = two-thirds time

**TABLE II  
FRINGE BENEFITS FOR GRADUATE ASSISTANTS**

% of Appointment	Social Security	Minnesota State Retirement	\$5,000 Group Life Insurance	Workman's Compensation	Unemployment Compensation*	Employee Group Health Insurance	Vacation	Sick Leave
75% time and over	none	none	Yes, no cost to G.A.	yes	none	Yes, no cost to G.A.	none	none
50% to 74% time	none	none	Eligible for group rates, but must pay	yes	none	Eligible for group rates, but must pay	none	none
Under 50% time	none	none	none	yes	none	none	none	none

\*Under Minnesota State Law, a registered student is not qualified for unemployment compensation.

NOTE: — Travel-accident insurance is provided to graduate assistants on University of Minnesota business. To apply, Business Administration Form 9, Travel Authorization or Advance Request, must be submitted in advance of travel.

- Identification cards may be obtained *by request only* at Window 4, Morrill Hall, when you register and turn in the "Certificate of Appointment." This yellow, wallet-size I.D. card is your proof of employment.
- Teaching associates are entitled to faculty privileges in using the University Libraries when the I.D. card is presented at the circulation desk.
- Graduate assistants on regular payroll (but not miscellaneous payroll) may have tuition payments deducted from the last four paychecks of each quarter. A Payroll form is available in department offices.
- Student Health Service Extended Coverage Plan (available to all fee-paying students) is available on an individual basis or under the family plan *for a fee*. If you leave school for a quarter or if you will not be paying the student services fee during the summer months, you may continue receiving regular outpatient benefits at the Health Service. Additional information is available at Room W224 Health Service or by calling 373-3768.
- Graduate assistants on regular payroll may join the Credit Union and are eligible for 9-month loans. Repayment may be deducted from payroll checks, during the length of appointment.



## V. GRIEVANCES

Every graduate assistant shall have the right to be heard regarding complaints arising from his or her employment without prejudice to other rights and privileges.

### *Procedures*

Informal resolution of grievances arising from assignment of duties, workload, promotion, and termination or suspension before the end of the term, should first be attempted. The graduate assistant should discuss the complaint with the faculty supervisor and, if unresolved, the department or unit head.

Grievances which have not been resolved through informal means may be brought for hearing before an *ad hoc* committee consisting of faculty members and graduate assistants not involved in the grievance. The graduate assistant initiates the procedure by filing a written complaint and request for hearing. The statement should specify the nature of the complaint and include a description of the informal means employed to resolve the grievance. The complaint should be submitted to the department head (or equivalent administrator) and the collegiate grievance review officer. The hearing will ordinarily be held at the departmental level, but a request may be made to the collegiate grievance review officer to hold the hearing at the collegiate level. The collegiate grievance review officer's decision on whether the hearing will be held at the departmental or collegiate level shall be final. The faculty and graduate assistant representatives of an existing grievance committee, such as one established by the Senate Policy on Academic Freedom and Responsibility, may serve as the hearing body. The graduate assistant may be assisted by faculty, student, or legal advisor serving as counsel. The graduate assistant must be informed of and shall be given the opportunity to rebut allegations by others that might reflect adversely on the complaint. He or she should be afforded the opportunity to be present when witnesses are testifying and to ask questions of the witnesses concerning the matter. The graduate assistant shall be afforded reasonable opportunities to submit his or her testimony and testimony by others and documentary evidence in support of the complaint and in rebuttal. Reasonable requests for the production of documents or the inspection of files that are not privileged should be honored.

In the interest of resolving the complaint as quickly as possible, and with attention to fundamental fairness, the proceedings should be conducted simply and informally. A formal grievance should be filed within 30 days after the occurrence of the alleged grievance; a response should be filed by the designated respondent within 10 days of receipt of the formal grievance.

At the conclusion of the proceedings, the committee shall write a report which shall include: the names of committee members; a detailed and complete statement of each matter of fact relevant to the proceedings and, in the case of disputed facts, the committee's conclusions of facts and reasons for its conclusions; a statement evaluating the merits of the complaint in light of the facts found to be true; and a statement of recommendations to the appropriate administrator on the actions, if any, to be taken. The disposition and recommendations should be submitted promptly to the parties, the department head, the grievance review officer, and the dean of the collegiate unit.

If the hearing was held at the departmental level and the department head does not fully implement the recommendation of the hearing committee, he or she shall state the reasons in writing, with copies to the parties, the chairman of the hearing committee, the collegiate grievance review officer, and the appropriate dean.

If the hearing was held at the collegiate level and the appropriate dean does not fully implement the recommendation of the hearing committee, he or she shall state the reasons in writing, with copies to the parties, the chairman of the hearing committee, the collegiate grievance review officer, and the academic vice president.

### *Appeals*

Any party to a grievance may, within 10 days, appeal from the action of the department head, or dean disposing of the grievance.

If the hearing was at the departmental level, the appeal shall be made in writing to the dean, with copies to all parties to the departmental committee hearing, the department head, the chairman of the departmental hearing committee, and the collegiate grievance review officer. The dean shall constitute an appropriate *ad hoc* appeals committee consisting of faculty members and graduate assistants not involved in the grievance



to advise him or her concerning the disposition of the grievance. The faculty and graduate assistant members of an existing grievance committee, such as the collegiate level committee established by the Senate Policy on Academic Freedom and Responsibility, may serve as the appeals committee. The appeals committee should not ordinarily re-hear the case, but should make its recommendations on the basis of the record made before the original *ad hoc* committee and the department head. The appeals committee should make its report in writing to the appropriate dean, with copies to the parties, the department head, the chairman of the hearing committee, and the collegiate grievance review officer.

The decision of the dean shall be final. If the dean does not fully implement the recommendation of the appeals committee, he or she shall state the reasons in writing, with copies to the parties, the chairman of the hearing committee, the collegiate grievance review officer, and the academic vice president.

If the hearing was at the collegiate level, the appeal shall be made in writing to the academic vice president, with copies to all parties to the collegiate committee hearing, the chairman of the collegiate hearing committee, the collegiate grievance review officer, and the dean. The academic vice president shall constitute an appropriate *ad hoc* appeals committee consisting of faculty members and graduate assistants not involved in the grievance to advise him or her concerning the disposition of the grievance. The appeals committee should not ordinarily re-hear the case, but should make its recommendations on the basis of the record made before the original *ad hoc* committee and the dean. The appeals committee should make its report in writing to the academic vice president, with copies to the parties, the dean, the chairman of the hearing committee, and the collegiate grievance review officer.

The decision of the academic vice president shall be final. If the academic vice president does not fully implement the recommendation of the appeals committee, he or she shall state the reasons in writing, with copies to the parties, the chairman of the hearing committee, the collegiate grievance review officer, and the dean.

