

Handbook for

Graduate Assistants

1996-97

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Attention: University Job Applicants

Federal law requires all employees hired by the University to provide documents showing they are U.S. citizens or aliens authorized to work. The University of Minnesota cannot employ you without the required documents, even if you are a U.S. citizen.

U.S. citizens who do not have a U.S. passport or a certificate of citizenship or naturalization issued by Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) must produce two documents: 1) a document to show identity, such as a driver's license, school identification card photo, or voter's registration card; and 2) a document to show eligibility to work in the U.S., such as a social security card or a birth certificate.

Permanent resident aliens can prove their eligibility to work by showing a resident alien card (I-551 or I-151) containing their photo or an unexpired foreign passport with an unexpired I-551 stamp. Other aliens must show form I-94 attached to their passport which indicates they are authorized to work, or show proper identification and other documentation from the INS proving work authorization.

If you are hired, you must provide the required documentation within three business days of your first date of employment. Because the University cannot employ you without the required documents, it is essential that you plan ahead. If you do not have the necessary documents, apply for them now.

Alternative Formats of this Handbook

This publication is available in alternative formats upon request from the Graduate Assistant Office, 200 Donhowe Building, 319-15th Avenue SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455. Phone: (612) 624-7070, Fax: (612) 625-9801.

Equal Opportunity Statement

The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation.

Inquiries regarding compliance may be directed to Stephanie Lieberman, Director, Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 419 Morrill Hall, 100 Church Street S.E., University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455, (612) 624-9547.

Table of Contents

The Graduate Assistant Office	3
The Role of the Graduate Assistant	3
Types of Graduate Assistantships	3
Teaching Assistant	4
Research Assistant	4
Administrative Fellow	4
Appointments to Graduate Assistantships	4
Opportunities for Assistantships	4
Eligibility for a Graduate Assistant Appointment	5
Registration Requirements	5
Summer Session	5
Continuing Education and Extension Registration	5
Terms and Conditions of Graduate Assistantships	6
Assistantships Combined With A Fellowship or Traineeship	7
Acceptance of Appointment	7
Reappointment/Nonreappointment	7
Conditional Annual Appointment Contracts	7
Standard Employment Contracts	7
Teaching Assistants in CEE Extension Classes	8
Assignment and Reassignment of Duties	8
Termination for Cause; Student Conduct Code	8
Faculty and TA Enrichment Program	9
TA English Program	10
Preparing Future Faculty	11
Workloads and Compensation	12
Workloads	12
Compensation	12
Official Pay Periods (Quarter/Semester dates)	13
Pay Cycles and Pay Types	13
FICA (Social Security and Medicare) Tax Withholding	14
Federal and State Income Taxes	14
Payroll Deduction	15
Direct Deposit	15
Benefits	15
Tuition Benefit Based on Graduate Assistant Appointment	15
12 Credit Cap on Tuition Benefits	15
Prorated and Rebilling of Tuition Benefits	15
Tuition Benefit Processing	16
Academic Year	16
Continuing Education and Extension	17
Summer Session	18

Medical School Students	18
Resident Tuition Privilege	18
Extended Resident Tuition Privilege	18
Resident Rate vs. Reciprocity	19
Medical Coverage Benefit: Graduate Assistant Health Care Plan	19
Paid and Unpaid Leaves	20
Official University Holidays	20
Quarter Breaks	21
Daily Breaks	21
Vacation	21
Sick Leave	21
Parental Leave	22
Family and Medical Leave Act	22
Military Duty	23
Jury Duty	23
Worker's Compensation	23
Unemployment Compensation	23
Travel Insurance	23
Grievances	23
Americans With Disabilities Act	23
International Graduate Assistants	24
Employment Limitations: F-1 and J-1 Visa Holders	24
Federal and State Income Tax Withholding	24
FICA (Social Security and Medicare) Tax Withholding	25
Institute of International Studies and Programs	25
Proficiency in Spoken English	25

The Graduate Assistant Office

Area 1-41 for walk-in assistance

Mailing address: 200 Donhowe Building, 319-15th Avenue SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455

Phone: (612) 624-7070 Fax: (612) 625-9801.

Email: gaoinfo@gold.tc.umn.edu

WWW: <http://www.umn.edu/ohr/gao/>

The Graduate Assistant Office (GAO) is responsible for checking eligibility to hold a graduate assistantship and auditing appointments. The GAO administers the graduate assistant tuition benefit program, resident tuition rate privilege, and extended resident tuition rate privilege for students and members of students' immediate families. Available graduate assistant position descriptions are maintained in notebooks in the Central Application Center, 1st Floor Donhowe, and electronically on the World Wide Web at (<http://www.umn.edu/ohr/gao/>). A quarterly newsletter for graduate assistants, *The Grapevine*, and this *Handbook for Graduate Assistants*, are distributed through graduate assistants' work departments, and are also available directly from the GAO and on the web site. The GAO explains graduate assistant policies and procedures to departments and students.

For graduate assistants on the **Duluth Campus**, questions regarding eligibility, appointment procedures, and tuition benefits should be directed to the academic department handling the appointment. Further information about these matters may also be obtained from the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Administration, 420 Darland Administration Building (218) 726-8836.

The Role of the Graduate Assistant

As University of Minnesota graduate assistants, you play active roles in the instructional, research, and service missions of the University. Your appointments involve you in interaction with students, faculty, and staff, and in the advancement of the educational programs of your departments and colleges.

As a graduate assistant, you benefit from both the financial assistance to pursue your education and the opportunity to gain professionally-related experience. Similarly, you have a responsibility to pursue the course of study required by your degree program and to perform satisfactorily the teaching, research, or administrative duties attached to your appointment.

The two-fold nature of the graduate assistantship, along with the great diversity of requirements among different programs, makes establishing a single set of criteria for all assistants very difficult. In any case, as a graduate assistant, you fulfill an important function as a member of the instructional, research, or administrative staff while you pursue your graduate studies and broaden your professional experience.

Types of Graduate Assistantships

Graduate students may be appointed to any of three positions: Teaching Assistant, Research Assistant, or Administrative Fellow. Each department may supplement the general descriptions provided below with specific descriptions of the duties required of the graduate assistants it employs.

Teaching Assistant, class 9511

Teaching Assistants work under the supervision of the academic staff, providing assistance to the faculty in the teaching or advising of students registered in specific courses. Teaching Assistants may be responsible for a range of duties. You may work directly under the supervision of a faculty member who is primarily responsible for the course. In this case, your duties may be limited to such tasks as grading examinations and reports; supervising or instructing laboratory classes, recitation sections, or intern groups; or preparing examination or class materials. Teaching Assistants may also be assigned primary responsibility for an entire course including lectures, course organization, advising students, academic administrative duties, grading, etc. Teaching Assistants may do general advising and counseling not connected with specific coursework and may serve as tutors.

Research Assistant, class 9521

Research Assistants perform duties of a specialized nature connected with research assigned by the supporting department or principal research investigator. Such duties include collecting research material, performing experiments, doing taxonomic work, taking field notes, recording data, performing statistical analyses, preparing bibliographies, abstracting, editing, etc.

For some students, the research assistantship may provide the basis for part or all of your own thesis; for others, it may provide the technical skills specifically required of all students within a given degree program. For still other students, even though the duties of the research assistantship fall within your field of study, the assistantship may not provide an educational experience that constitutes part of the degree requirements for your own degree program.

Administrative Fellow, class 9531

An Administrative Fellow performs duties of a specialized nature connected with academic administration. Your work is performed under the direction of designated members of the faculty or administrative staff. Duties may include assisting administrative staff in the development, interpretation, and implementation of policies, guidelines, and procedures; conducting institutional and inter-institutional policy and planning reviews; providing resource support for committees or administration, such as collecting and analyzing data, keeping records, preparing reports, and abstracting.

Appointments to Graduate Assistantships

Opportunities for Assistantships

Assistantships are one of the means by which departments provide financial assistance to their graduate students. Departments may restrict appointments or give priority in appointments to graduate students in their own degree programs. Descriptions of graduate assistant positions available to students outside of their degree unit are in notebooks in the Central Application Center, Donhowe Building, and on the World Wide Web at (<http://www.umn.edu/ohr/gao/>). These positions are posted for a minimum of five work days.

Eligibility for a Graduate Assistant Appointment

Students admitted to Graduate School degree programs and post-baccalaureate professional degree programs are eligible to hold graduate assistantships. The eligible professional degree programs are: J.D., M.D., M.P.H., M.H.A., M.Ag., and M.Ed. "Course Work Only", "Adult Special" and "Professional Development" admission statuses do not qualify. Appointment to a graduate assistantship may not begin before the quarter of admission, except that students admitted for fall quarter may hold graduate assistantships during the preceding summer. For specific dates, see Official Pay Periods in the Workloads and Compensation section, page 13.

Registration Requirements

Registration for a minimum of one graded, pre-thesis or thesis credit, is required during each quarter or semester of the academic year in order to hold the graduate assistantship job title. If you are an International Student visa holder or recipient of certain financial aid, you will have higher minimum credit requirements. Some degree programs also set higher credit requirements. If you are uncertain about credit minimums, check with the International Student and Scholar Services, Office of Student Financial Aid, or your degree program, as appropriate. For additional registration requirements to maintain student exclusion from FICA tax withholding, see the FICA section on page 14. Note: International Students filing for "Exemption from Full Time Status" with the International Student and Scholar Services Office are not exempt from the requirement to register for the minimum one credit during quarters in which they are holding an assistantship.

Registration deadlines are printed in the *Class Schedule*. Failure to register during a quarter or semester, or subsequent cancellation of all credits, will result in termination of your graduate assistantship without further notice or process. If you have withdrawn from classes, you will be billed for tuition for the entire quarter or semester. If you are a nonresident student, you may be billed at nonresident rates.

Registration must be for credit, with A-F or S-N grading, or for thesis or pre-thesis credit. Audit only and Continuing Education and Extension Department of Independent Study courses do not fulfill the registration requirement.

Summer Session registration is not required to hold a graduate assistantship if you were adequately registered the previous spring quarter or semester or you are admitted for the next fall quarter.

Continuing Education and Extension registration has additional requirements. CEE courses must be:

1. 5xxx or 8xxx level;
2. taken for credit (A-F or S-N);
3. taught by an approved instructor in your degree program; and
4. transferred to your graduate or post-baccalaureate professional degree program.

Information about obtaining a tuition benefit for extension classes is found in the Tuition Benefit Processing section on page 17.

All graduate assistants must make satisfactory progress toward the degree as defined by your degree program.

Terms and Conditions of Graduate Assistantships

You are entitled to know the terms and conditions of your graduate assistantship. The faculty member or departmental administrator responsible for your hiring must provide you with the following information:

- title, rate of pay, pay cycle, percentage of time or hours to be worked, and length of appointment
- description of general duties attached to the position
- hours of work required per week and flexibility in the work schedule (Students who are F-1 and J-1 visa holders should see section on International Graduate Assistants for work hour restrictions, page 24.)
- type of payroll on which you are paid and how this may affect your appointment
- source of funding

This information should be summarized in an appointment letter prior to the beginning date of your employment.

The following information should be a part of every graduate assistant's initial orientation to the position:

- description of specific duties, explanation of when and how those duties will be assigned; you should not be asked to perform duties unrelated to the instructional, research, or service missions of the unit that appointed you
- name of supervisor
- educational resources available, including orientation and inservice training
- TA training available through the department or University
- access to departmental clerical services, supplies, equipment, office space
- standards for evaluation of job performance and person responsible for the evaluation
- procedure and timing of reappointment decisions

The additional information described above should be made available to you at the outset of your appointment. If complete information is not provided to you when you begin working, you should ask questions to make certain you understand your contract and responsibilities. Direct your inquiries to your immediate supervisor or the department head.

You may request a photocopy of your appointment, called a PAF or Personnel Action Form. If you are uncertain of your rights and responsibilities under your particular appointment, you may contact the GAO for assistance.

Other terms of which you should be aware:

- In general, the title, rate of pay, percentage time, and length of appointment may not be changed within the current contract period.
- Graduate assistant appointments require monetary compensation.
- Course credit cannot be substituted for graduate assistant pay.
- Resident tuition rate cannot be provided to nonresident graduate assistants in lieu of paid work time.

Graduate Assistantships Combined With A Fellowship or Traineeship

When a graduate assistantship is combined with a Graduate or Professional School Fellow or Trainee appointment, the combined dollar value of the graduate assistantship and the fellowship or traineeship may not exceed the dollar value of the ceiling for a 75% graduate assistantship (see Compensation, page 13) during any academic quarter. If the dollar value exceeds this limit, either the assistantship or the fellowship/traineeship must be reduced.

Acceptance of Appointment

Your acceptance of an offer of a graduate assistantship should be made in writing. This forms an agreement that both you and your hiring department are expected to honor. If you find it necessary to resign from an appointment, you should contact your department in writing as early as possible to facilitate the hiring of another student.

Reappointment/Nonreappointment

To the extent that the budget and other essential information permit, actions on appointments and nonreappointments for the following year should be completed and confirmed by April 15. In odd-numbered years when the University's biennial budget is before the state legislature, or in cases in which non-state grant funding or renewal has not been determined, such early notice may not be possible.

Conditional Annual Appointment Contracts

If you hold a **CONDITIONAL ANNUAL APPOINTMENT (CAA)**, it is conditioned on continued available funding. A CAA contract is made for the academic year or two quarters and the standard written CAA employment contract is absolutely essential at the outset of the appointment. If the department determines there are insufficient funds to continue the appointment in the following quarter(s), you must be notified in writing according to the established Non-reappointment Notification schedule as outlined in the CAA employment letter you signed prior to the beginning of your appointment. The established schedule of Non-reappointment Notification deadlines has been centrally defined as;

November 15 for winter quarter nonreappointment, Twin Cities campus

February 15 for spring quarter nonreappointment, Twin Cities campus

November 1 for winter quarter nonreappointment, Duluth campus

February 1 for spring quarter nonreappointment, Duluth campus

November 15 for spring semester non reappointment, Law School

The Non-reappointment function of the CAA contract is to be used only in the case when insufficient funds to continue the appointment has been determined.

Standard Employment Contracts

Other standard contract types are widely used at the University;

Flexible Hourly Appointments are generally explained as having intermittent hours or by-piece type of work assignments such as paper grading. (Some types of funding such as Federal Work Study require the production of time cards and are required to be Flexible Hourly Appointments.)

Single-Quarter Appointments generally run according to the "Official" quarter dates as listed on page 13. These appointments may be extended based on the needs of the hiring department, performance and availability of funds.

Annual Appointments generally run for the 9-month academic year or 12-month fiscal year.

A department may decide not to reappoint you on the basis of your performance, your lack of progress toward your degree, budgetary constraints, or lack of need for the position. Under circumstances where external funding of the position is lost, the position may be terminated at the end of the current appointment, but not earlier. A department may not terminate you prior to the end date of your current appointment for any reason other than non-registration, just cause (described on page 8), or in accordance with the nonreappointment terms of your Conditional Annual Appointment.

Note: Some departments may set a limit on the total percentage or hours worked in a payroll period. Departments may also set a limit on the number of quarters for support of students. Check with your department.

Teaching Assistants in CEE Extension Classes

Appointments as Teaching Assistants in Extension Classes may be dependent upon minimum class enrollment and may be canceled if minimum enrollment is not met. Ask your department if there is a minimum class enrollment requirement if you are assigned to teach or assist for a CEE Extension Class course.

Assignment and Reassignment of Duties

Departments are expected to provide a minimum notice of four weeks for particular teaching assignments and two weeks for other duties, with the opportunity for assistants to express preferences for assignments in advance of these notice dates whenever possible. It is expected that the same notices of courtesy that are extended to faculty in the determination of teaching assignments and responsibilities should apply to teaching assistants. You may be assigned or reassigned to any teaching or other duties that are appropriate for your class title as the needs of the department dictate.

Termination for Cause; Student Conduct Code

Your appointment may be terminated prior to its end date for cause, which includes, but is not limited to: substandard performance, theft, involuntary termination from your degree program, violation of University policy, including the University's policy on equal opportunity, and violation of the **Student Conduct Code**. Any other serious misconduct or breach of your responsibilities may also be cause for termination. Loss of funding is not cause for termination during the term of your appointment. You are entitled to due process, including an opportunity to respond to any allegations prior to termination for cause.

Violation of the University's Student Conduct Code, including an act of scholastic dishonesty, may be cause for termination of your appointment. You are held responsible for knowing the violations described in the standards of student conduct, ranging from falsification of documents to disorderly conduct.

The Student Conduct Code is published in the *Minnesota Daily* when classes begin in fall, winter, and spring quarters. It is also available in the Office of Student Judicial Affairs, room 16 Morrill Hall, and may be accessed on Gopher.

Students on the **Duluth Campus** may obtain a copy of the Student Conduct Code from the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Support and Student Life, 297 Darland Administration Building.

An exception to termination for cause is immediate termination without notice or process for failure to register during a quarter or semester, or subsequent cancellation of all credits. (See Registration Requirement, page 5)

Faculty and TA Enrichment Program

Office of Human Resources, Suite 209, 1313 Fifth Street S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55414 Phone: (612) 627-1892 e-mail: (t-enrich@gold.tc.umn.edu) (<http://www.umn.edu./ohr/ftae/ftae.html>)

This program works to enhance the culture of teaching and learning on the Twin Cities campus of the University of Minnesota. The program is housed in the Office of Human Resources and supports departmental, college, and individual initiatives to increase the effectiveness of faculty and teaching assistants at the University and actively shares the responsibility for teaching and learning improvement. The Faculty and TA Enrichment Program seeks to build partnerships with other units to collaborate on issues surrounding teaching and learning.

- Services available to departments, programs, and colleges include workshops on teaching issues customized to departmental disciplines, informal discussions to orient faculty and TAs to trends and techniques in classroom instruction, and small group consultations on such topics as assessing and meeting the needs of faculty and TAs, creating writing intensive courses, and developing a system of peer review.
- Services available to individual TAs

Campus-wide workshops are offered each quarter on instructional techniques and strategies. These workshops are two hours long and bring together interested individuals from a variety of disciplines.

Short Courses are three-session sequences that focus on an aspect of university-level teaching. Each of the sessions is two hours long and is held once a week for three weeks. Participants are expected to attend all three sessions. These courses are open to all University faculty and teaching assistants and are offered free of charge. Short courses for 1996-97 are: "Involving Students" (Fall), "Documenting Your Teaching" and "Putting Your Course on the World Wide Web" (both in Winter), and "Testing, Grading and Alternative Assessment Strategies" and "Accommodating Student Needs" (both in Spring).

Confidential consultations with an education specialist on staff are available on such topics as classroom techniques, using student evaluations to improve teaching and developing courses. The consultation process may consist of one meeting or a series of classroom observations and feedback sessions.

Teaching Talk Electronic Mail Discussion Line provides a multi-disciplinary forum for faculty and TAs to address their experiences and

concerns. To subscribe, send an e-mail message to LISTSERV@VM1.SPCS.UMN.EDU with the message "subscribe TEACH-TK [your name]."

Publications available from the Faculty and TA Enrichment Program include *Using Student Evaluations to Increase Classroom Effectiveness*, *Handbook for Teaching Assistants at the University of Minnesota*, *Teaching with TAs: A Handbook for TA Supervisors*, and *Teaching & Learning*, a quarterly newsletter for classroom instructors.

Teaching Resource Collection includes books, articles, videotapes, and newsletters on many aspects of teaching and learning located in the Reserve Room of Walter Library (room 4) as well as in a special reading area of our offices. This collection adds new volumes frequently, and materials at Walter Library may be borrowed by university staff, faculty, and students. Materials in the Faculty and TA Enrichment Program office may be examined during office hours.

TA English Program

University of Minnesota, Office of Human Resources, 1313 Fifth Street S.E., Suite 209, Minneapolis, MN 55414; 612-627-1892; taengl@gold.tc.umn.edu; <http://www.umn.edu/ohr/taep/taep.html>

This program is housed with the Faculty and TA Enrichment Program in the Office of Human Resources and helps prepare TAs who are not native speakers of English.

The objectives of the TA English Program are to

- guide ITAs' improvement of their communication and language skills
- provide ITAs with opportunities to practice using effective teaching and communication techniques appropriate for U.S. university classrooms
- inform ITAs about the culture of the U.S. classroom (especially student preparation and expectations of TAs)

Program Components

In accordance with University policy, the TA English Program assesses spoken language proficiency using the Educational Testing Service's SPEAK test. The program also offers several different quarter-long courses designed to improve non-native English-speaking TAs' language skills, inform them about the expectations of U.S. undergraduates, and give them practice utilizing effective techniques appropriate to U.S. university classrooms. All courses include weekly one-to-one tutorials with the instructor.

The fee for enrollment in a TAEP course is \$450. The Office of Human Resources pays \$225 of the cost of the course for graduate students who are TAs or prospective TAs. The other \$225 is paid by the department who will be hiring the TA or by the student. Graduate Assistant Tuition Benefits and other scholarships do not apply. Faculty members, postdoctorates, visiting scholars, and other University employees may enroll on a space-available basis for a fee of \$450.

TA orientation workshops are conducted on the **Duluth Campus** at the beginning of fall quarter under the auspices of the UMD Graduate Office and the UMD Instructional Development Service (218) 726-7515.

Preparing Future Faculty (PFF)

Preparing Future Faculty (PFF), formerly the Teaching Opportunity Program for Doctoral Students, welcomes graduate and postdoctoral participants from all disciplines. PFF assists in the development of teaching skills and the exploration of the faculty role on a college or university campus. PFF helps participants:

- Acquire information about the teaching and learning process and faculty role at a variety of institutions of higher education.
- Gain a realistic perspective on the skills required for success as a faculty member.
- Examine their fit with a teaching career in higher education.
- Work with a faculty mentor in a teaching opportunity at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities or on a regional college or university campus.
- Demonstrate, document, and reflect upon their teaching skills.
- Market themselves in competition for faculty or other professional positions.

PFF offers three graduate-level courses. To receive a letter of recognition and certificate of program participation from the Graduate School, participants must complete GRAD 8100 and GRAD 8150. GRAD 8200 is an optional program course. Some graduate programs may have different requirements for doctoral students participating in PFF. Other credit-bearing courses in teaching in higher education may be recognized by PFF as substitutes for GRAD 8100 or GRAD 8150. Completion of an enrollment interview before the beginning of the term is required for admittance to the program.

GRAD 8100: Teaching in Higher Education, 3 credits, A/F or S/N
This course provides a overview of the methods and techniques used in higher education through experiential learning, readings, discussion, microteaching, e-mail dialogue, and reflective writing. Participants will experience active learning, develop their critical thinking skills about teaching, prepare a teaching portfolio documenting and reflecting upon their experience as teachers, and practice teaching techniques in cooperative learning groups.

GRAD 8150: Practicum for Instructors in Higher Education, 3 credits, S/N only. This course, which has a prerequisite of GRAD 8100, offers collegial support for practice in classroom teaching, a mentorship on the U of M-Twin Cities campus or the campus of a regional college or university, information and discussion on the faculty role, classroom observation and feedback, and assistance in preparing for the academic job search. Nonnative speaker participants in this course are required to have passed TA English Program requirements for classroom teaching.

GRAD 8200: Presentation and Verbal Interaction Skills for the Future Professoriate, 3 credits, S/N only This course is particularly appropriate for those who wish to further develop their skills in classroom lecture and conference presentation and for those who do not want to teach but wish to improve their professional communication skills. The course is designed to develop communication skills needed for successful classroom, small group, and one-on-one interaction with students and colleagues.

Preparing Future Faculty is a program of the Graduate School and the Office of Human Resources, funded by the Bush Foundation and administered through the Teaching Enrichment Programs of the Office of Human Resources.

Programs of the Office of Human Resources. The PFF office is located in Suite 228, University Technology Center, 1313-5th St. S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55414. For information on program enrollment, contact the PFF program assistant at 627-4040 or pff@tc.umn.edu, or consult the PFF web page at <http://www.umn.edu/ohr/pff/pff.html>.

Workloads and Compensation

Workloads

Appointments may be for a fixed percentage time or hourly. A fixed percentage is based on a full-time position. For example, a 50% time appointment implies an average of 20 hours of work per week at one-half the rate of pay for a full-time position. An hourly appointment may have a fixed or variable work schedule and will usually require preparation of a time card. Departments are to accommodate your student requirements, including class and examination schedule, oral and written preliminary examinations, etc.

During fall, winter, and spring quarters, graduate assistants may not hold appointments or any combination of appointments totaling more than 75% during the scheduled class periods and finals week. The combination of appointments includes all University employment categories and Continuing Education and Extension activities. (See also section on combining a graduate assistantship with scholarships or traineeships, page 7.) Exceptions to the 75% work limitation for restricted time periods may be requested from the Dean of the Graduate School or dean of the relevant professional school. Such permission must be requested in writing from your department and graduate advisor and approved in advance. In no instance will appointments totaling in excess of 100% time be paid. Note: Immigration and Naturalization Service regulations restrict international students in F-1 and J-1 visa status to 20 hours per seven day work week during the academic year class periods and examination weeks. See the section Employment Limitations: F-1 and J-1 Visa Holders on page 24.

Graduate assistants (including F-1 and J-1 Visa holders) may hold up to a 100% time appointment during the summer and winter and spring quarter class breaks without special permission from the Graduate School or dean of the professional school.

Compensation

Graduate assistants are compensated according to a pay range established each fiscal year by the University's central administration and approved by the Board of Regents. Graduate assistants may be appointed to a rate of pay within this range. In determining the rate for an individual graduate assistant, a department may consider such criteria as the nature of the duties assigned, your experience in terms of both the assigned duties and your progress toward the degree, and the quality of your performance in terms of the assigned duties and your overall academic excellence. Compensation paid to graduate assistants employed in the same or different departments may vary according to departmental criteria.

The University's fiscal year is July 1, 1996 through June 30, 1997 for semi-monthly payroll and June 24, 1996 through June 22, 1997 for biweekly

payroll. The academic year is nine months and includes three quarters or two semesters. The specific dates for an academic year may vary by campus, college or pay cycle; see Official Pay periods listed below.

For the 1996-97 fiscal year, the hourly graduate assistant rate ranges from a minimum of \$10.77 to a maximum of \$15.03 per hour. There is no time-and-one-half rate of pay for time of day or holiday work. The salary range for a fixed-percentage time appointment is based on a percentage of full-time salaries: for a nine-month appointment, the minimum is \$16,875.00 and the maximum is \$23,535.00; for a twelve-month appointment, the minimum is \$22,500.00 and the maximum is \$31,380.00.

Gross income for a 50% appointment would be:

Time Period	Minimum	Maximum
Bi-weekly	\$ 432.69	\$ 603.46
Semi-monthly	\$ 468.75	\$ 653.75
Per Quarter	\$ 2812.50	\$ 3,922.50
Per 9 months	\$ 8,437.50	\$11,767.50
Per 12 months	\$11,250.00	\$15,690.00

Official Pay Periods for Twin Cities and Duluth Campuses and Law School for 96/97:

	Semi-monthly Payroll	Bi-weekly Payroll
Twin Cities campus:		
Fall quarter	09/16/96 - 12/15/96	09/16/96 - 12/15/96
Winter quarter	12/16/96 - 03/15/97	12/16/96 - 03/16/97
Spring quarter	03/16/97 - 06/15/97	03/17/97 - 06/16/97
Duluth campus:		
Fall quarter	09/01/96 - 11/30/96	09/02/96 - 12/01/96
Winter quarter	12/01/96 - 02/28/97	12/02/97 - 03/02/97
Spring quarter	03/01/97 - 05/31/97	03/03/97 - 06/01/97
Law School:		
Fall semester	08/16/96 - 12/31/96	08/19/96 - 12/31/96
Spring semester	01/01/97 - 05/15/97	01/01/97 - 05/16/97

Continuing Education and Extension:

Classes may be on either a quarter or semester basis. Pay periods vary by collegiate unit.

Pay Cycles and Pay Types

There are two pay cycles and three basic types of payroll:

1. **Semi-monthly payroll.** Fixed percentage time for the begin/end dates shown. These appointments, if processed in advance of a quarter, are programmed to transmit your tuition benefit to Student Accounts Receivable. If processing is delayed, the GAO will enter your tuition benefit from the document after it is received. Semi-monthly payroll may also be referred to as Regular Payroll.

2. **Bi-weekly payroll.** There are three payroll types on Bi-weekly Payroll:

Fixed Pay Period - Percentages are for a fixed percentage of time based on a 40 hour work week. For example a 50% appointment implies an average of 20 hours of work per week. Pay is indicated as the gross salary for that period of time.

Fixed hourly - Percentages are for a fixed percentage of time based on a 40 hour work week, same as in the Fixed Pay Period pay type above. Pay is indicated at an hourly rate.

Individuals on Fixed Pay Period and Fixed Hourly appointments who have appointments processed in advance of the quarter are programmed to have tuition benefits transmitted to Student Accounts Receivable automatically, as are the semi-monthly payroll appointments.

Flexible hourly - These appointments usually require time cards and tuition benefits are provisional. The department must confirm actual worked time after the quarter is completed. Tuition benefits will be adjusted if necessary. Pay is indicated at an hourly rate.

Graduate assistants on semi-monthly (regular) payroll are paid on the 15th and last day of the month; bi-weekly payroll checks are issued every other Wednesday. If the pay date falls on an official holiday, Saturday, or Sunday, the payroll check will be issued on the preceding work day. If you have not received a paycheck on the pay date expected, see your department payroll person immediately.

FICA (Social Security and Medicare Taxes) Withholding

FICA (Federal Insurance Contributions Act) includes Social Security and Medicare taxes. Graduate assistants qualify for the student exclusion from FICA tax if both of the following tests are satisfied:

- (1) enrolled for a minimum of six credits for the quarter or semester: **or** enrolled for a minimum of one credit for doctoral candidates (those who have passed the preliminary oral examination for the Ph.D. degree); **and**
- (2) employed for no more than 50% time or twenty hours per week.

Graduate assistants paid more than 50% on regular payroll or more than 40 hours in a bi-weekly pay period or a combination of payrolls and appointments which exceed half-time and/or who have not met the registration requirement, will have FICA withheld at the rate of 6.2% for Social Security and 1.45% for Medicare on total gross salary. An equal FICA charge must be paid by the employing department. It is important that you complete and return promptly any materials relating to appointment documents and time cards because retroactive pay will be added to current pay and may result in your losing the student exclusion for the pay period.

Graduate assistants should be advised that future revisions to the University's student FICA exemption policy may occur. Any such revisions will be communicated through your department when determined.

Federal and State Income Taxes

Graduate assistant salaries are subject to federal and state income taxes. You must complete a W-4 Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate, available from your department. Employer-paid tuition benefit and medical coverage are non-taxed benefits.

International students should refer to the section on page 24.

Payroll Deduction

To be eligible to have your tuition and student services fees deducted from your payroll check, tuition and student services fees must total at least \$150 and you must have a graduate assistantship of at least 25% time. Complete information on payroll deduction is printed in the Class Schedule each quarter. You must request payroll deduction when you register. Graduate assistants holding hourly appointments on bi-weekly payroll are not eligible for payroll deduction.

Direct Deposit

Graduate assistants may have their paychecks directly deposited into their savings or checking account. Enrollment forms for the Direct Deposit Payroll Service are available in your department office.

Benefits

Tuition Benefit Based on Graduate Assistant Appointment

Graduate assistants who work a minimum of a 25% time appointment (or 130 hours during a quarter or 195 hours during a semester) are eligible for a tuition benefit equal to twice the percentage of appointment. A graduate assistant must work 260 hours in a quarter or 390 hours in a semester to be eligible for a 100% tuition benefit. For the purpose of administering benefits, the Official Pay Periods described on page 13 apply, and vary slightly by Payroll cycle (semi-monthly and bi-weekly). Time worked during a quarter or semester may not be applied toward tuition benefit in a different quarter or semester.

12 Credit Cap on Tuition Benefits

Effective Fall '96 tuition benefits will be capped at a maximum 12 credits per quarter during the academic year and 6 credits per term during the summer for graduate students holding assistantships. Professional Degree Programs that set their own tuition schedule, will have tuition benefit remission capped at the top of their full-time range. Students exceeding the cap will be responsible for any resident rate tuition costs taken above the cap if they hold an eligible assistantship. Both Extension and Day classes will count towards the cap.

Prorated and Rebilling of Tuition Benefits

Appointments that begin after the official start date or end before the official end date of the quarter are prorated to find the appointment average for the quarter. Graduating mid-quarter and ending your assistantship prior to a quarter end date will result in a bill to you reflecting the unworked portion of the quarter. If an appointment ends early because of graduation, the billing will be on resident tuition rates if you are not a Minnesota Resident. Appointments ending prior to a quarter end date for any reason other than graduation in which the prorated appointment average falls below the 25% time minimum requirement would be billed back at non-resident rates, if applicable. If you do not work the minimum time required, or work less than the hours estimated on a flexible hourly appointment for which you receive provisional tuition benefits, you will be billed for the amount of the tuition benefit that was credited but not earned. Billings for provisional tuition

benefits will be on non-resident rates if applicable if you work less than 130 hours in the quarter or 195 hours in the semester. Similarly, if you worked more than the hours estimated, you will receive a credit.

The tuition benefit covers tuition only, including the \$60 base registration assessment. Course fees, student service fees, computer fee, late registration and payment charge, etc., are not covered by the graduate assistant tuition benefit. The maximum tuition benefit allowable is 100% of tuition costs.

Tuition Benefit Processing

Academic Year

During the academic year, the amount of the tuition benefit will be entered into the Student Registration Data Base when your appointment is processed by the Graduate Assistant Office; this may occur after you have registered. The self-registration system available for use by students who would normally register in Fraser or Coffey Halls allows graduate assistants to check to see if their tuition benefits have been added to the registration system and then cause those benefits to be applied to their student accounts by producing a new fee statement.

Following are brief instructions. Refer to the Class Schedule or to the Office of the Registrar Home Page on the World Wide Web (<http://www.umn.edu/registrar/>) for further, detailed instructions on self-registration.

1. Log into the Student Access System by choosing option 13 on the Administrative Information Services Public Access Menu. (This is the same menu that lists LUMINA, the library system.)
2. Follow the instructions for logging into your record and when you reach the Primary Menu, choose option 5 (Registration). This will return the Demographic Data screen. Press F4 (or key F4 in the Command field at the bottom of the screen and press RETURN) to go to the Registration Eligibility screen.

If your appointment is on the registration system, there will be a notation in the upper right corner of the screen. "GA NR WVR" indicates that the waiver of the nonresident portion of tuition is present; "GRAD ASST TUIT BEN" indicates that a graduate assistant tuition benefit is on the system. Follow step 3 to insure its accuracy.

If your graduate assistant benefits do NOT appear on the screen, your appointment has not been entered into the system. You should check your e-mail regularly for fee statements generated by GAO staff or check the self-registration system to see if a benefit has subsequently been added. You may also check with your department to see that the appointment has been processed, or call the GAO at 624-7070.

3. From the Registration Eligibility screen, press RETURN to get to the Course Enrollment screen. If you have already registered for the term, press F4 (or key F4 in the Command field at the bottom of the screen and press RETURN) to continue to the Tuition and Fees screen. If there is an amount in the "Change from Previous" field, activate the change by pressing F4 (or keying

F4 in the Command field at the bottom of the screen and pressing RETURN) to create a new fee statement. If the amount in the "Change from Previous" field is 0.00, press F6 (or key F6 in the Command field at the bottom of the screen and press RETURN) to return to the Course Enrollment screen and F6 twice to exit registration.

Students should contact the GAO immediately if the billing received from Student Accounts Receivable does not reflect the tuition benefit. **Accounts must be accurate by the statement due date or late payment fees will be assessed.** Graduate assistants who have student loans should contact the GAO or Student Accounts Receivable one week prior to the scheduled loan payment to make certain the tuition benefit has been credited. Instructions will be given to you if your tuition benefit is not reflected.

For graduate assistants on flexible hourly appointments the tuition benefit is based on estimated hours reported by the hiring department. When the quarter is completed, the hours actually worked will be checked against the estimated hours and any increase or decrease from the estimate will be credited or billed by Student Accounts Receivable. Students falling below 130 hours a quarter or 195 hours a semester will be billed back as non-resident tuition rates if applicable.

Tuition benefits may be applied retroactively. To claim a tuition benefit retroactively, you must have accrued at least 130 hours during the quarterly payroll dates or 195 hours during the semester dates. You need to provide the Graduate Assistant Office with a copy of your appointment document (PAF), payroll abstracts, and copies of signed time cards (if applicable), and, if you have taken a qualifying Extension class, an Application for Extension Classes Tuition Benefit. Late registration and payment fee(s) cannot be waived by the Graduate Assistant Office.

Continuing Education and Extension

You must complete the Application for Extension Classes Tuition Benefit to receive a tuition benefit for Continuing Education and Extension classes. The application is available from your department or the GAO. The application and a copy of your appointment document (called a PAF) must be mailed or taken to the Graduate Assistant Office for approval; faxed applications are not acceptable. You must have the GAO approved form with original signatures when you register.

- Registration through Extension: Your authorized application form must be submitted to Extension Classes in Wesbrook Hall with your registration in order for you to receive proper credit.
- Dual registration for both day and extension classes done concurrently through registration centers in Wesbrook, Fraser or Coffey Halls. An approved application form must be submitted to the registration center, at the time you register for an extension course.

To receive tuition benefit in Continuing Education and Extension, extension classes, courses must be:

1. 5xxx or 8xxx level;
2. taken for credit (A/F or S/N);
3. taught by an approved instructor in your degree program; and
4. transferred to your graduate or post-baccalaureate professional degree program.

Continuing Education and Extension Department of Independent Study courses are not eligible for tuition benefit.

Students who hold only extension registration will have an ON hold placed on their records by the GAO. This hold prohibits the release of transcripts, and will prevent graduation. To remove the hold, students must petition the Graduate School for placement of the extension course on your degree program. When the Graduate School approves the course transfer, contact the GAO to remove the hold.

Summer Session

Information about tuition benefit processing for summer session 1997 will be provided in a memorandum distributed spring quarter. Graduate assistants must complete a summer session tuition benefit form to receive credit. The tuition benefit is not available to graduate assistants admitted for the following fall quarter or semester.

Graduate assistants on the **Duluth campus** should complete the University of Minnesota - Duluth Tuition Benefit Information Form.

Medical School Students

Graduate assistants who are registered in the Medical School must adhere to the policies and procedures specified in this handbook. To receive tuition benefit, you must work a minimum of 130 hours or 25% time within the Official Pay Period dates shown for the specific quarters on page 13 and you must be registered for a minimum of one graded credit. The tuition benefit will be based on information on your appointment document (PAF); the Medical School Tuition Benefit form is no longer used.

Resident Tuition Privilege

Nonresident graduate assistants who work a minimum of 25% time during the 13-week quarter (or 130 hours) are eligible to pay resident tuition rate for the quarter. Semester appointments require 195 work hours. Eligibility for resident tuition rate is entered into the Student Registration data base by the Graduate Assistant Office when your tuition benefit is processed. The resident rate tuition privilege appears on your fee statement as "GA NR waiver."

Concurrent resident rate privilege applies to the eligible graduate assistant's immediate family as well, including a registered domestic partner. To register a domestic partner, you must complete a registration form in the Graduate Assistant Insurance Office, N323 Boynton Health Service, 410 Church Street SE, 625-6936. Spousal benefit requires proof of marriage, either a marriage certificate or both names on a visa; dependent proof requires birth certificate or both names on a visa. Parents or legal guardian or ward living in the same household are also eligible. Once proof has been provided to the GAO, subsequent requests for resident tuition privilege from family members of the graduate assistant may be made by phone call to the GAO.

Resident tuition rate privilege for the graduate assistant's immediate family may be taxable. Consult your tax advisor.

Extended Resident Tuition Privilege

Minimum eligibility for a former graduate assistant for this privilege requires completion of three quarters of a graduate assistantship at 25% time

or 130 hours worked each quarter or 195 hours worked each semester. Maximum extended resident tuition privilege is six quarters. Three quarters' employment will provide three quarters of extended resident tuition privilege; four, five, and six quarters' employment provide four, five, and six quarters, respectively, of extended resident tuition rate. Extended resident tuition privilege must be used within three years of the date of the qualifying quarter or semester.

Extended resident tuition also applies to the former graduate assistant's immediate family, including a registered domestic partner. Proof for domestic partners requires completing a registration form in the Graduate Assistant Insurance Office, N323 Boynton Health Service, 410 Church Street SE, 625-6936. Spousal benefit requires proof of marriage, either a marriage certificate or both names on a visa; dependent proof requires a birth certificate or both names on a visa. Parents or legal guardian or ward living in the same household are also eligible. Once proof has been provided to the GAO, subsequent requests from family members of the former graduate assistant may be made by phone call to the GAO.

Extended resident tuition rate may be applied to day school classes, extension classes through Continuing Education and Extension, and Summer Session classes which have nonresident rates. One five-week summer session will be credited as one-half of a quarter; two five-week summer sessions or one ten-week summer session will be credited as one quarter.

Extended resident tuition rate privilege for the graduate assistant's immediate family may be taxable. Consult your tax advisor.

Resident Rate vs. Reciprocity

Graduate assistants who have reciprocity agreements with the University of Minnesota are automatically assessed tuition at the reciprocity rate rather than the Minnesota resident rate. If as a qualified graduate assistant you wish to pay Minnesota resident rates, you may submit a written request to the Office of Admissions at 240 Williamson to request removal of the reciprocity code from your record. You must reapply to your home state to reinstate the reciprocity privilege. If you remove your reciprocity code and subsequently no longer hold a qualifying graduate assistant appointment, nonresident tuition rate will be assessed unless you have reapplied and been granted reciprocity. Call (612) 625-6330 if you require additional information.

Medical Coverage Benefit

Graduate Assistant Health Care Plan

The University of Minnesota provides subsidized medical insurance coverage to graduate assistants with appointments of at least 25% time (130 hours per quarter/195 hours per semester). The University pays a portion of the premium equal to twice the appointment percentage.

The medical insurance plan is called Medica Choice Classic and is provided through Medica Health Plans. It offers comprehensive medical benefits available through a broad network of providers including Boynton Health Service and University providers, pharmacies and hospitals. Medica is known for its service and care quality.

If you are an eligible graduate assistant, you must apply by the enrollment deadline during the first quarter of your appointment; you will not need to re-enroll each quarter. To apply, you must complete an enrollment form available from your department or from the Graduate Assistant Insurance Office, room N323 Boynton Health Service, 410 Church Street SE, (612) 625-6936. If you lose eligibility for coverage, you must cancel your participation in the group plan by completing a cancellation form, also available in the Graduate Assistant Insurance Office in Boynton Health Service.

Dependent coverage is available from Medical Health Plans, but you must pay the full cost of the coverage. For more information on dependent coverage, contact Medica Customer Service at (612) 945-8000 or 1-800-952-3455.

For more information on enrollment or plan benefits, contact the Graduate Assistant Insurance Office at (612) 625-6936.

Graduate assistants on the **Duluth campus** should direct questions to either the UMD Graduate Office (218) 726-7523 or to Ms. Cathryn DeBruyne at Boynton Health Service (612) 624-6618. Graduate assistants on the **Duluth campus** are covered by First Plan HMO. The UMD Health Services is the Primary Care Clinic. You must enroll at First Plan HMO, 1601 London Road, Duluth, within 30 days of the starting date of your appointment. For more information, call First Plan HMO at (218) 724-3083.

Paid and Unpaid Leaves

Official University Holidays

Paid holidays must be recognized for graduate assistants.

- Graduate Assistants on Semi-monthly or Bi-weekly Fixed Percentage and Fixed Pay Period Time Payroll. If an official holiday falls on a day of the week normally scheduled for work, the graduate assistant shall receive the regular paycheck and shall not be required to make up the hours that fell on the holiday. If your schedule varies from week to week, the holiday pay shall be prorated for the work week. For example, a 25% appointment prorated for one week in which one official holiday occurred would provide two hours of released paid time for the graduate assistant.

- Graduate Assistants on Bi-weekly Flexible Hourly Payroll. Graduate assistants who work an average of ten hours a week or more shall be compensated for unworked time according to one of two decision rules: (a) if work hours are fixed on a weekly basis, holiday pay shall be provided if the holiday falls on the day of the week normally scheduled for work; or (b) if the work schedule is variable, holiday pay shall be prorated for the work week. For example, if you are working ten hours each week, you should receive two hours of holiday pay (unworked) during the week in which one holiday falls.

For bi-weekly flexible payroll hours that are irregular and variable and clearly do not meet the rule of an average of at least ten hours per week, no holiday pay is granted. Pay shall be based on actual time worked.

Quarter Breaks

For class break periods between fall and winter quarters and winter and spring quarters, paid time must reflect hours worked except for the following:

1. Official holidays shall be paid according to the provisions under the section above.

2. Teaching Assistants who are the day course instructors of record shall be paid over the entire quarter. Payment is made in six equal semi-monthly payroll checks or 6.5 bi-monthly payroll checks and includes course preparation, instruction, advising, and grading. The quarterly payroll periods do not necessarily reflect either the class schedule or the time period in which you prepared the course. The six or 6.5 pay periods in each quarter assure equal payment for a course taught in each of the three quarters. For a Teaching Assistant whose sole responsibility is the teaching of a course or courses, there is no work required during the break period following submission of grades.

3. Teaching Assistants who are not instructors of record, Research Assistants, and Administrative Fellows on fixed percentage time appointments also receive 6 equal semimonthly paychecks or 6.5 bi-weekly checks. In order for you, as one of these graduate assistants, to be paid if you wish to be absent during the break, you should make prior arrangements with your supervisor to work additional hours to compensate for the period of absence. You and your supervisor should discuss break plans at the beginning of the quarter to prevent misunderstandings between you and your department. In the event an arrangement for additional hours has not been made, holiday time is not paid. Note: Teaching Assistants who serve as instructors of record for courses have completed the quarter's work when grades are submitted. All other graduate assistants must be physically present at the job on the last day of the appointment. If you have arranged to leave the job early, then the appointment dates on your payroll document must reflect the actual dates you worked.

Daily Breaks

Graduate assistants are entitled to a 15-minute paid break when work is scheduled for four consecutive hours. There is no paid lunch time.

Vacation

Graduate assistants receive no paid vacation.

Sick Leave

Graduate assistants are entitled to paid informal sick leave, not to exceed two weeks' consecutive pay, for absences caused by occasional or serious illness or injury to yourself or to your dependent child or the dependent child of your registered same sex domestic partner. In the case of repeated absences due to illness, your appointing authority (dean or department head) may request a health care provider's certification verifying your inability to work.

For graduate assistants on an hourly payroll, sick leave will be unpaid except in the following circumstances: (a) if work hours are fixed on a weekly basis, sick pay shall be provided if the sick day falls on the day of the week normally scheduled for work; or (b) if the work schedule is variable, sick pay shall be prorated for the work week. For example, if you work ten hours each week, you should receive two hours of sick pay for each day you are sick.

Unpaid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act may be available. See below.

Parental Leave

Graduate assistants are eligible for parental leave if they have been employed for an average of twenty or more hours of paid service per week for at least nine months during the year prior to the leave, and are currently employed for an average of twenty or more hours during the period of the leave. Teaching appointments in Summer Session and CEE are recognized in determining eligibility for parental leave. Summer Session appointments will be counted at the percentage time for the dates shown on the appointment document or, if pay is hourly, on the actual hours paid. Appointments in extension classes paid on a credit hour basis will be counted as 30 hours per term for each credit taught. Non-credit courses will be computed on the basis of 10 contact hours in the classroom as being equal to one credit. Short-term conferences, seminars, and workshops, and Independent Study activities are not counted. Parental leave during Summer Session and Extension Class teaching appointments shall be without pay.

A female graduate assistant may take up to six weeks' leave with pay related to the birth of her child. This leave is for the purposes of recovery from physical disability associated with the birth (four weeks) and parental leave (two weeks). A male graduate assistant may, upon request, take up to two weeks' leave with pay followed by up to four weeks' unpaid leave for the birth of a child; a female graduate assistant receives this same time for the birth of a child by the registered same sex domestic partner.

Female and male graduate assistants may, upon request, take up to two weeks of paid leave for the adoption of a child followed by up to four weeks of unpaid leave.

The paid leave must fall within the dates of your appointment. Parental leave time must be taken consecutively and without interruption. The leave must start no later than six weeks after the birth or adoption and no sooner than two weeks before the birth or adoption. In the case where the child must remain in the hospital longer than the mother, the leave must begin no later than six weeks after the child leaves the hospital. A request to use parental leave must be submitted to your supervisor at least four weeks in advance, except in unusual circumstances.

In the case of pregnancy-related illness, a female graduate assistant may receive two weeks' paid informal sick leave. Medical verification may be required. For additional unpaid leave, see the Family and Medical Leave Act below.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

Under federal law, you may be eligible for up to twelve weeks' unpaid leave during a fiscal year for **parental leave** - childbirth and/or care of the newborn, placement of an adopted or foster child; **family medical leave** - care of a close family member (spouse/child/parent) with a serious health condition; or **personal medical leave** - a serious health condition that prevents you from performing your job. Eligibility requires that you have worked at least 1250 hours (an average appointment of 60% time) in the twelve months preceding the leave and that your earliest date of employment at the University occurred at least twelve months prior to the leave date.

Requests for family or medical leave should be submitted to your supervisor. You may obtain more information about the Family and Medical Leave Act from your department office or your unit's Human Resources Office.

Military Duty

Under state law, you are entitled to fifteen days' leave in a calendar year for active military duty. Such leave, if it falls within a paid appointment period, shall be with pay. You must provide verification of your notice to report for duty and the calendar dates to your department supervisor.

Jury Duty

If called to jury duty, provide a copy of the court's notice of service to your supervisor. You will be given leave with pay. If you are released early by the court administrator, you are expected to return to work.

Worker's Compensation

Graduate assistants are covered by the Worker's Compensation provisions of the State of Minnesota.

Unemployment Compensation

Graduate assistants are not eligible for Unemployment Compensation by Minnesota statute, which specifically excludes registered students.

Travel Insurance

Travel accident insurance is provided to graduate assistants on University of Minnesota business.

Grievances

Graduate assistants have the right to fundamental fairness regarding complaints arising from their appointments, without prejudice to other rights and/or privileges. If you have a complaint, you should first seek informal resolution through your Director of Graduate Studies, faculty advisor, or department/unit head. If your employment problem is still unresolved, contact the GAO. Graduate assistants with employment grievances are covered by the Regents' University Grievance Policy. The policy and form for filing a complaint may be obtained from the University Grievance Office, 419 Walter Library, (612) 624-1030.

Americans With Disabilities Act

If you are a graduate assistant with a disability, you may request accommodation from your employing unit that will enable you to perform the essential functions of your position. For assistance with accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services, 16 Johnston Hall, (612) 624-4037. Any questions you have about compliance may be directed to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, Stephanie Lieberman, Director, 419 Morrill Hall, 100 Church St. S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455; (612) 624-9547.

International Graduate Assistants

Everything in this handbook applies to international graduate assistants; however, there are some special situations of which international students should be aware.

Employment Limitations: F-1 and J-1 student visas

U.S. laws governing the presence of foreign persons in the United States restricts the employment of individuals holding F-1 and J-1 student visas to a maximum of 20 hours or 50% time per seven-day work week while scheduled classes and examinations are in session. Exceptions for F-1 and J-1 practical or academic training should be referred to the Office of International Student and Scholar Services, 20 Nicholson Hall, (612) 526-7100. Employment during periods between academic quarters or during summer holidays may be up to 100% time or 40 hours per week. Time worked in excess of these limitations will not be paid by the University.

Some international students receive approval of an Exception from the Full Course of Study. However, this does not exempt students from the minimum 1 credit requirement for holding a graduate assistant position. See Registration Requirements on pg 5).

Federal and State Income Tax Withholding

Income taxes will be withheld from your paycheck unless you are exempt from taxation under a tax treaty between your country and the United States. You can determine if a treaty exists by asking the University Payroll Department or consulting Internal revenue Service (IRS) Publication 901: U.S. Tax Treaties. Questions regarding your taxation can be answered by calling the University Payroll Department at 624-3869 or IRS at 1-800-829-1040 between the hours of 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM. Tuition benefit and health coverage based on holding an eligible graduate assistantship are not taxable income.

Non-resident aliens present in the United States on F-1 and J-1 visas must file an annual income tax return on Forms 1040NR or 1040NR-EZ as well as a Minnesota State income tax return, even though they have not earned any income while in the United States. Note that this is a special version of the normal Form 1040 used by most American citizens and permanent residents. The filing requirements and rules related to Form 1040 or 1040NR-EZ differ from the requirements that apply to U.S. residents. Generally you cannot claim any dependents (spouse or child) in the preparation of the 1040NR. The University will sponsor a series of tax help session conducted by volunteer assistants, from mid-February through mid-April for International students and scholars who face these filing requirements.

Relevant publications of the Internal Revenue Service are:

Publication 4: Student's Guide to Federal Income Tax

Publication 519: U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens

Publication 520: Scholarships and Fellowships

Publication 901: U.S. Tax Treaties

Publications and tax forms may be retrieved on the World Wide Web. You can order them by calling the Internal Revenue Service Forms Order number, 1-800-829-3676. The publications and forms will be mailed to you.

The University does not provide tax advice. If you have questions or need information about taxes, call the Internal Revenue Service at 1-800-829-1040. All Internal Revenue Service phone numbers listed above are toll free.

FICA (Social Security and Medicare) Tax Withholding

Students holding F-1 and J-1 visas may be exempt from Social Security and Medicare taxation during the first five years they are present in the United States. If these taxes are withheld from your paychecks you may recover these funds when you file your annual tax return prior to April 15 of each year. If you have returned to your home country it is possible to retrieve these funds by filing the IRS Form 843: Claim for Refund and Request for Abatement. These forms are available at the Internal Revenue Service and the Office of International Student and Scholars Services.

Institute of International Studies and Programs

Counseling and advisory services are provided for students from other countries by International Student and Scholar Services which is a division of the Institute of International Studies and Programs. Assistance is given to those seeking information about visa regulations; federal, state, and local regulations governing foreign nationals; financial aid requirements; English language requirements; and educational, social, and personal problems. This office also coordinates the Pre-Registration Program for new international students. You are invited to address inquiries to International Student and Scholar Services, 20 Nicholson Hall, 216 Pillsbury Drive, (612) 626-7100. The office hours are: 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, and 1:00 p.m. to 4:15 p.m., Monday through Friday.

International graduate assistants on the **Duluth campus** should meet the international student advisor located in 184 Darland Administration Building. (218) 726-8962.

Proficiency in Spoken English

If you are not a native speaker of English, the University of Minnesota employment policy requires that you pass a test of spoken English (the TSE or SPEAK Test). This oral proficiency requirement for employment is in addition to the admission and placement requirements made by the Graduate School and your department. This policy applies to all non-native English speakers (including those who have degrees from institutions in the United States or other countries where English is the medium of instruction and regardless of citizenship or resident status) who are hired for TA positions requiring interaction with students. These TA positions include assignments such as holding office hours or tutorials, leading laboratories, recitations, or discussion sections, and lecturing.

To sign up for the SPEAK Test, call 627-1892. The SPEAK Test is an institutional version of the Test of Spoken English (TSE) developed by the Educational Testing Service. Your department can provide you with a description of the test and how it is scored, or you can pick up a TOEFL Test

booklet in room 9 Eddy Hall and refer to the section on the TSE. University policy requires a score of at least 230 out of 300. There is no charge for the test.

Note that in 1995, the TSE was revised and test results on the revised forms are now reported by the Educational Testing Service in a range from 20 to 60. In mid-1997 the University will also begin using the revised form of the SPEAK Test. At the time of publication of this handbook, an official cut-off score for the revised forms had not been set by the University.

It is best to be tested as early as possible; if you do not pass the test, you will need to enroll in one or more quarters of TA English Program classes before being hired for positions such as those described above. TAs who pass the SPEAK Test may also enroll. (See TA English Program, page 10.)

In these classes, TAs meet twice a week for a two-hour class to videotape short presentations and work on language, teaching, and interaction skills. Each TA is also scheduled for a weekly 25-minute tutorial. The Office of Human Resources at the University pays one-half of the total \$450 fee for graduate students who will be hired by their departments as TAs. The department or the student pays the other \$225.

If you need to take any English classes for admission or academic placement purposes (that is, if you have an AZ hold on your registration) contact Lynne Ackerberg, Minnesota English Center, phone: 624-5838, fax: 625-2312. Ms. Ackerberg will determine which, if any, courses you should take in the English Program for International Students. After you have fulfilled all admission and academic placement requirements, you may still need to take one or more TA English Program classes to fulfill employment requirements. TA English Program classes may not be used to fulfill admission or academic placement requirements and are not covered by the tuition benefit program.

International graduate assistants on the **Duluth campus** with questions about the SPEAK test should contact the Instructional Development Service Office (218) 726-7515.