

**Handbook for**

**Graduate Assistants**

**1997-98**

**THE OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES  
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA**

### **Alternative Formats of this Handbook**

This publication is available in alternative formats upon request from the Office of Human Resources, Graduate Assistant Office, 1-41 Donhowe Building, Mailing address; Suite 200, 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 Dr. 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	4
General Graduate Assistant Job Descriptions	4
Teaching Assistant	4
Research Assistant	4
Administrative Fellow	4
Graduate Assistant Class Titles, Numbers and Tuition Status	5
Appointments to Graduate Assistantships	5
Opportunities for Assistantships	5
Eligibility for a Graduate Assistant Appointment	6
Ph.D. Candidate With 36 Thesis Credits	6
Advanced Masters Assistant	6
Registration Requirements	6
Fall, Winter, Spring	6
Six credit registration requirement job classes	6
One credit registration requirement job classes	7
Special topic: Applying for Exemption from 6 credit registration requirement	7
Summer Session	8
University College, Extension Classes Registration	8
Terms and Conditions of Graduate Assistantships	8
Assistantships Combined With A Fellowship or Traineeship	9
Acceptance of Appointment	9
Reappointment/Non-reappointment	10
Contract and Appointment Types	10
Standard Appointment Contract and Types	10
Flexible Hourly Appointments	10
Fixed Hourly Appointments	10
Single-Quarter Appointments	10
Annual Appointments	10
Conditional Annual Appointment Contracts	11
Work Study Appointments	11
Teaching Assistants in CEE Extension Classes	11
Assignment and Reassignment of Duties	11
Termination for Cause; Student Conduct Code	12
Financial Aid	12
Workloads and Compensation	13
Workloads	13
Compensation	13
Official Pay Period Quarter/Semester dates	14
Additional Compensation Terms	14
Payrolls and Pay Types	15
Biweekly Payroll	15
Paychecks	15
FICA (Social Security and Medicare) Tax Withholding	15
Federal and State Income Taxes	16
Payroll Deduction	16
Direct Deposit	16

Benefits	16
Tuition Benefit Based on Graduate Assistant Appointment	16
Maximum Dollar Amount Cap on Tuition Benefits	16
Six Credit Registration Load Class Titles	17
One Credit Advanced Status Registration Load Class Titles	17
Summer Only Class Titles	17
Prorated and Rebilling of Tuition Benefits	17
Non-Refundable Fees	18
Tuition Benefit Processing	18
Academic Year	18
University College, Extension Classes	20
Summer Session	21
Medical School Students	21
Resident Tuition Privilege	21
Extended Resident Tuition Privilege	22
Resident Rate vs. Reciprocity	23
Medical Coverage Benefit: Graduate Assistant Health Care Plan	23
Paid and Unpaid Leaves	24
Official University Holidays	24
Quarter Breaks	24
Daily Breaks	25
Vacation	25
Sick Leave	25
Parental Leave	25
Family and Medical Leave Act	26
Military Duty	26
Jury Duty	27
Worker's Compensation	27
Unemployment Compensation	27
Travel Insurance	27
Grievances	27
Americans With Disabilities Act	27
Center for Teaching and Learning Services	27
Teaching Enrichment	28
Consultation	28
Opportunities for International Teaching Assistants	28
Resources	28
Preparing Future Faculty	28
International Graduate Assistants	30
Employment Limitations: F-1 and J-1 Visa Holders	30
Federal and State Income Tax Withholding	30
FICA (Social Security and Medicare) Tax Withholding	31
Institute of International Studies and Programs	31
Proficiency in Spoken English	31

**See also the Graduate School ombuds memo entitled *Tuition Remission Policy for Graduate Assistants 1997-1998*. This document has been provided to all Department Heads and Directors of Graduate Study and is another resource for policy clarification.**

**The Graduate Assistant Office**  
**Office of Human Resources**  
**Walk-in assistance: Area 1-41**  
**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](mailto:gaoinfo@gold.tc.umn.edu)**  
**WWW: <http://www.umn.edu/ohr/gao/>**

The Graduate Assistant Office (GAO) is responsible for checking employment 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 Job 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 Graduate Assistant Grapevine*, and this annual *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 employment 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 make satisfactory academic progress in 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 standard assistantship categories: Teaching, Research, or Administrative. Each department may supplement the general descriptions provided here with specific descriptions of the duties required of the graduate assistants it employs.

## **General Graduate Assistant Job Descriptions**

For the purpose of recovering tuition costs from departments more appropriately, the original three Graduate Assistant Titles; *Teaching Assistant*, *Research Assistant* and *Administrative Fellow* have been further broken down to reflect advanced degree, and summer non-tuition bearing statuses. See section on Class titles and numbers following for details.

### **Teaching Assistant Duties**

(Job Classes 9511, 9518, 9519, 9571, 9574, 9575)

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 Duties**

(Job Classes 9521, 9528, 9529, 9572)

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 Duties**

(Job Classes 9531, 9532, 9533, 9573)

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.

## **Graduate Assistant Class Titles, Numbers and Tuition Status**

### Six Credit Registration Load Class Titles

Number	Title	Tuition Benefit Eligible
9511	Teaching Assistant	Yes, \$1,660 Max
9521	Research Assistant	Yes, \$1,660 Max
9531	Admin Fellow	Yes, \$1,660 Max

### One Credit Advanced Status Class Titles

9518	Advanced Masters TA	Yes, \$290 Max
9528	Advanced Masters RA	Yes, \$290 Max
9532	Advanced Masters AF	Yes, \$290 Max
9519	Ph.D. TA w/36 Thesis Credits	Yes, \$290 Max
9529	Ph.D. RA w/36 Thesis Credits	Yes, \$290 Max
9533	Ph.D. AF w/36 Thesis Credits	Yes, \$290 Max

### Summer Only Class Titles

9571	Summer Quarter TA	No
9572	Summer Quarter RA	No
9573	Summer Quarter AF	No
9574	Summer Session TA w/ T. Ben.	Yes, see section on summer benefits page 17
9575	Summer Session TA w/o T. Ben	No and 21

See Appendix A for Professional School Titles covered under the tuition benefit program.

## **Appointments to Graduate Assistantships**

### **Opportunities**

Graduate 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 Job Center, 1st floor, 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.

NOTICE: The many assistantship appointments which are available through departments to their own students only, are not required to be centrally posted. It is advisable to check with your own degree program for any available assistantship positions.

### **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.B.A., 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 some students admitted for fall quarter may hold graduate assistantships during the preceding summer. (New restrictions apply to some visa holders coming to the University in summer, see the section on International Students 30 for details). For official quarter dates, see the Workloads and Compensation section, page 14.

### **Ph.D. Candidates With 36 Thesis Credits**

Ph.D. Candidates w/ 36 thesis credits job titles (9519, 9529, 9533) have additional eligibility requirements as follows; a doctoral student who has passed the preliminary oral examination, plus has completed the doctoral thesis credit requirement (36 xxxx-8888 thesis credits). Effective Summer '97 the Graduate School will place "GT" tracking flags on students' computer records approximately the third week of the quarter in which they take their 36<sup>th</sup> thesis credit. You may then be appointed to these class titles the following quarter.

### **Advanced Masters Assistant**

Advanced Masters Assistant job titles (9518, 9528, 9532) have additional eligibility requirements as follows; a Master's students who has a degree program form approved by and on file with the Graduate School; all coursework included on the degree program form is complete, with grades posted on the transcript; and if Plan A, the master's thesis credit requirement (16 xxxx-8777 thesis credits) is completed. Effective Fall '97 students may be appointed to this class title the quarter following completion of all requirements, providing the *Request for Advanced Master's Assistant Tracking Flag Form* (available from your Director of Graduate Studies or the Graduate School) has been filed with the Graduate School by the following deadlines; July 15 for Fall Quarter, October 15 for Winter Quarter, January 15 for Spring Quarter, and April 15 for Summer Quarter. The Graduate School will place a "GV" tracking flag on your computer record once they file and approve your form. You may then be appointed to these class titles the following quarter.

### **Registration Requirements Fall, Winter, Spring**

#### **Six (6) Credit Registration Requirement Job Classes**

Students holding the following class titles (9511, 9521, 9531) must register for a minimum of six course, pre-thesis, or thesis credits during each quarter or semester of the academic year in which they hold any of these job titles. (See special topic section below on applying for exemption from this requirement.)



NOTICE: Failure to register for any credits during a quarter or semester, or subsequent cancellation of all credits, will result in termination of your graduate assistantship without further notice or process. Registration deadlines are printed in the *Class Schedule*. If you have withdrawn from all credits, 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. One credit of registration must be for credit, with A-F or S-N grading, or for thesis or pre-thesis credit. Audit only and Independent and Distance Learning, Independent Study courses do not fulfill the one credit registration requirement.

## **One (1) Credit Registration Requirement Job Classes**

### **Advanced Masters Assistants**

Students holding the following class titles (9518, 9528 and 9532) must register for a minimum of one graded, pre-thesis, or thesis credit during each quarter or semester of the academic year in which they hold that job title. (See notice above regarding failure to register.)

### **Ph.D. Candidates with 36 Thesis Credits**

Students holding the following class titles ( 9519, 9529 and 9533) must register for a minimum of one graded, pre-thesis, or thesis credit during each quarter or semester of the academic year in which they hold that job title. (See notice above regarding failure to register.)

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

NOTICE: 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 15.

NOTICE: 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 credits specified above, appropriate to their class title, during quarters in which they are holding an assistantship.

### **Special topic:**

#### **Applying for Exemption from Six (6) credit registration requirement**

Students holding the following class titles (9511, 9521, 9531) who meet the specific criteria (circumstances and requirements) established and monitored by their graduate program may register for 1-5 credits in select quarters by applying for an exemption. Students who wish for this Special Graduate Assistant Registration Status (SGARS) who feel their circumstances

argue for exemption from full-time registration for a specific quart, must obtain the approval for SGARS from their employer, faculty adviser, and director of graduate studies (DGS).

To apply; you must obtain a SGARS form from the department where you are working and have it approved by your advisor, DGS and employer prior to the quarter in which you are requesting the exemption. *Students who submit request forms to their advisor/DGS for authorization after the beginning of the quarter are at serious risk of having their request denied.* A separate request must be processed for each quarter of exemption.

NOTICE: Applying for SGARS does not exempt students from other rules which govern their registration, i.e. International Students and students deferring loans as stated above, check with those offices if you have questions. Any student in the 9511, 9521, 9631 job classes who does not take 6 credits will have FICA withholding during that quarter.

NOTICE: See Appendix B page 34 for a chart illustrating some of the different registration requirements for graduate students.

### **Summer Session Registration**

Registration for most students 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. However, new INS rules state that F1 visa holders, newly admitted for fall quarter, may NOT work prior to their fall admission date unless they are appropriately registered during the summer term.

### **University College, Extension Classes Registration**

There are additional registration requirements in order to have tuition costs covered by the tuition benefit program. 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.

Information about obtaining a tuition benefit for University College courses is found in the Tuition Benefit Processing section on page 20.

### **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, 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 30.)

- type of appointment (fixed or flexible hourly) 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; (Note: 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 in-service 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 document, 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.

NOTICE: Other terms of which you should be aware can be found under the compensation section on page 13.

### **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 (or \$6,033.33) during the 97-98 academic quarters or semesters. 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/Non-reappointment**

To the extent that the budget and other essential information permit, actions on appointments and nonreappointments for the following year, as a guideline, should be completed and confirmed by April 15. However, students should realize that department budgets are frequently in flux until late summer, especially in odd-numbered years when the University's biennial budget is before the state legislature. To deal with such contingencies departments will make many appointments, especially to returning students, between April 15 and the new academic year, or quarter-by-quarter during the year itself.

NOTICE: 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.

NOTICE: 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 12), or in accordance with the nonreappointment terms of your Conditional Annual Appointment.

## **Contract and Appointment Types**

### **Standard Appointment Contracts and Types**

#### **Flexible Hourly Appointments**

Flexible Hourly Appointments are generally explained as having intermittent hours or by-piece type of work assignments such as paper grading, setting up video equipment etc. Generally speaking these appointments would require the use of a time card, and may or may not run the full length of a quarter.

NOTICE: Some types of funding such as Federal Work Study require the production of time cards. However, if your hours are standard throughout the quarter your department may choose to place you on a fixed hourly (percentage) appointment as detailed below.

#### **Fixed Hourly Appointments (percentage)**

Single-Quarter Appointments generally run according to the "Official" quarter dates as listed on page 14. 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.

### **Conditional Annual Appointment**

A Conditional Annual Appointment (CAA), 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 non-reappointment, Twin Cities campus

**February 15** for spring quarter non-reappointment, Twin Cities campus

**November 1** for winter quarter non-reappointment, Duluth campus

**February 1** for spring quarter non-reappointment, 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.

### **Work Study Appointments**

Graduate students in assistantships or fellowships are eligible to use Work Study awards to fund their positions. If you are a graduate assistant, you must provide a copy of your Financial Aid Notification to prospective employers. Please advise your hiring department(s) to send a photocopy of your payroll document (PAF) to the WS Manager, Job Center, 100 Donhowe Building, Minneapolis Campus.

You are responsible for maintaining proper registration of at least 3 credits each quarter you receive work study. If you fall below the required credits, it is your responsibility to inform your employer. You are also responsible for informing your employing department of any changes to your financial aid package that influences your Work Study award.

### **Appointment to Teaching Assistantships in University College, 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 University College, 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, violation of the **Student Conduct Code** or any other serious misconduct or breach of your responsibilities. 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.

NOTICE: Loss of funding is not cause for termination during the term of your appointment. See page 11 for section on Conditional Annual Appointments for possible limited exceptions.

NOTICE: 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 Failure to Register section page 7.

**Financial Aid**

Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid, Graduate and Professional Services Unit, 210 Fraser Hall, 106 Pleasant St. S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455, 612-624-1665.

Graduate assistant tuition benefits, fellowships, stipends, etc., reduce student's eligibility for student loans. The Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid will reduce loans throughout the year whenever any additional sources of funding become known, and returns ineligible funds to the lender. This reduces the debt to the lender, but creates a bill to Student Accounts Receivable. Immediate self reporting of tuition benefits, and other aid is the best prevention.

## Workloads and Compensation

### Workloads

Beginning summer quarter 1997, all graduate assistant appointments must be on bi-weekly payroll. Appointments may be either fixed or flexible hourly assignments. A fixed hourly appointment is based on a percentage of full-time position. For example, a 50% fixed hourly appointment implies an average of 20 hours of work per week at one-half the rate of pay for a full-time position. A flexible hourly appointment will generally have a variable work schedule and 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 plus University College activities. (See also section on combining a graduate assistantship with scholarships or traineeships, page 9.) 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 approved.

Notice: 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 on Employment Limitations: F-1 and J-1 Visa Holders on page 30.

NOTICE: 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.

NOTICE: In order to avoid the extra FICA withholding taxes, some departments have developed policy to restrict the amount of time a student can work at the University to 20 hours a week or 50% time. If you are considering taking (a) work appointment(s) in excess of 50% time, check with all work departments involved to see if any such policy has been adopted.

### 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 bi-weekly fiscal year for 1997-98 is June 23, 1997 through June 21, 1998. The academic year is nine months long, includes three quarters which run from September 15, 1997 through June 14, 1998; or two semesters which run from August 18, 1997 through May 17, 1998. The specific dates for an academic year may vary by campus, or college; see Official Pay Periods listed below.

For the 1997-98 fiscal year, the hourly graduate assistant rate ranges from a minimum of \$11.09 to a maximum of \$15.47 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 \$17,300 and the maximum is \$24,133; for a twelve-month appointment, the minimum is \$23,067.00 and the maximum is \$32,178.

Gross income for a 50% appointment would be:

Time Period	Minimum	Maximum
Bi-weekly	\$ 443.60	\$ 618.80
Per Quarter	\$ 2,883.42	\$ 4,022.22
Per 9 months	\$ 8,650.26	\$12,066.66
Per 12 months	\$11,533.68	\$16,088.88

**Official Pay Period Quarter/Semester dates for Twin Cities and Duluth Campuses and Law School for 1997-98:**

	Bi-weekly Payroll
<b>Twin Cities campus:</b>	
Fall quarter	09/15/97 - 12/14/97
Winter quarter	12/15/97 - 03/15/98
Spring quarter	03/16/98 - 06/14/98
<b>Duluth campus:</b>	
Fall quarter	09/01/97 - 11/30/97
Winter quarter	12/01/97 - 03/01/98
Spring quarter	03/02/98 - 05/31/98
<b>Law School:</b>	
Fall semester	08/18/97 -12/31/97
Spring semester	01/01/98 - 05/17/98

**University College, Extension Classes:**

Classes may be on either a quarter or semester basis.

**Additional Compensation Terms**

- 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 students in lieu of paid work time
- In-state tuition benefits cannot be provided to graduate students in lieu of paid work time.



## **Payroll and Pay Types**

Effective summer 1997, graduate assistants must be on bi-weekly payroll as either fixed or flexible hourly appointments. (Appointments to semi-monthly or fixed pay period [salary] bi-weekly payrolls will not be allowed.)

### **Bi-weekly payroll**

Fixed hourly - are appointments for a fixed percentage of time based on a 40 hour work week and pay is indicated at an hourly rate. Individuals on Fixed hourly appointments who have appointments processed in advance of the quarter are programmed to have tuition benefits transmitted to Student Accounts Receivable automatically.

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

NOTICE: It is imperative that students completing time cards, submit their hours for pay in a timely manner. Students who withhold their time cards can create excessive work for departmental and central offices, as well as cause the University to pay FICA withholding on the hours.

## **Paychecks**

Graduate assistant bi-weekly payroll checks are issued every other Wednesday. If the pay date falls on an official holiday, 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% (or more than 40 hours) in a bi-weekly pay period in any combination of appointment(s) 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(s). 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.

NOTICE: Graduate assistants should be advised that the University is awaiting written guidance from the National Office of the Internal Revenue Service on FICA withholding for students. This written guidance may become available within fall quarter, and changes to current policy may occur within the 97-98 academic year. If any changes do occur you will be notified through your department immediately.

## **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 30.

## **Payroll Deduction**

To be eligible to have your tuition and student service fees deducted from your payroll check, tuition and student service 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 flexible hourly appointments 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 (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 a 50% time appointment (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 quarter dates described on page 14 apply.

NOTICE: The tuition benefit covers tuition only, including the \$60 base registration assessment. Course fees, student service fees, computer fees, late registration and payment charge, and non-refundable fees, etc., are not covered by the graduate assistant tuition benefit program. The maximum tuition benefit allowable is 100% of the designated dollar maximum for your job classification. See the following section for maximum dollar amounts allowed.

NOTICE: Time worked during a quarter or semester may not be applied toward tuition benefit in a different quarter or semester.

### **Maximum Dollar Amount Cap on Tuition Benefits**

Effective summer 1997 tuition benefits were capped at a maximum dollar value eligibility per quarter or semester. Students exceeding their eligibility cap will be responsible for any resident rate tuition costs which are above the cap. Both University College and day classes count in this cap.

### **Six Credit Registration Load Class Titles**

Number	Title	Tuition Benefit Eligibility
9511	Teaching Assistant	\$1,660 Qtr. Max
9521	Research Assistant	\$1,660 Qtr. Max
9531	Admin Fellow	\$1,660 Qtr. Max

Example: A student working 25% time as a 9511 will be eligible for 50% of the maximum tuition benefit or \$830, while a student working 45% time in the same job category will be eligible for 90% of the maximum tuition benefit or \$1,494.

### **One Credit Advanced Status Class Titles**

9518	Advanced Masters TA	\$290 Qtr. Max
9528	Advanced Masters RA	\$290 Qtr. Max
9532	Advanced Masters AF	\$290 Qtr. Max

9519	Ph.D. TA w/36 Thesis Credits	\$290 Qtr. Max
9529	Ph.D. RA w/36 Thesis Credits	\$290 Qtr. Max
9533	Ph.D. AF w/36 Thesis Credits	\$290 Qtr. Max

Example: A student working 25% time as a 9528 will be eligible for 50% of the maximum tuition benefit or \$145, while a student working 45% time in the same job category will be eligible for 90% of the maximum tuition benefit or \$261.

### **Summer Only Class Titles**

9571	Summer Quarter TA	None
9572	Summer Quarter RA	None
9573	Summer Quarter AF	None
9574	Summer Session TA w/ T. Ben.	\$1,700 Summer '97
9575	Summer Session TA w/o T. Ben	None

Example: Details on the 1998 summer session tuition benefits will be distributed to departments in April. Summer benefits have many differences from the academic year. Make sure you get the information from your department when it becomes available.

See Appendix A for further information on the Professional Program Tuition Benefits.

### **Prorated and Re-billing of Tuition Benefits**

- Appointments that begin after the official start date or end before the official end date of the quarter or semester are prorated to find the appointment average for the term.
- If you end appointments prior to a quarter end date, for any reason other than graduation (see next paragraph), you will have the unearned portion of your tuition benefits billed back to you. If the prorated appointment average falls below the 25% time minimum requirement, 100% of the tuition benefit will be billed back at non-resident rates, if applicable.
- Graduating mid-term and ending your assistantship prior to the official term end date will result in a bill to you reflecting the unworked portion of the quarter. If your appointment ends early because of graduation, you

will receive credit for the prorated appointment average you have worked, even if this average falls below the 25% time minimum. The billing will be on resident tuition rates if you are not a Minnesota resident.

- If you do not work the minimum time required, or work less than the hours estimated on a flexible hourly appointment for which you have received provisional tuition benefits, you will be billed for the amount of the tuition benefit that was credited but not earned. If applicable, billings for provisional tuition benefits will be on the total cost of non-resident tuition, 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.

### **Non-Refundable Fees**

Effective summer 1997 the Graduate Assistant Tuition Benefit Program no longer covers non-refundable fees. Non-refundable fees are charged when you drop classes after the first week of classes (see the refund section of the class schedule each quarter for definite dates), or if you do a cancel/add to your registration record in two separate actions.

### **Tuition Benefit Processing**

#### **Academic Year**

During the academic year, the dollar amount of your 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 your initial registration). The self-registration system available for use by students who would normally register in Fraser or Coffey Halls, or who have already self registered, allows graduate assistants to check to see if their tuition benefits have been subsequently added to the registration system.

#### **Web Access**

The Web site 'View Your Student Record' is available to all students. This system allows graduate assistants to check to see if their tuition benefits have been added to 'View Your Student Record' and then cause those benefits to be applied to their student accounts by producing a new fee statement via 'Register for classes'.

Following are brief instructions. Log onto the Web using Netscape 3.0 or higher. (If you use another browser, be careful to use the buttons in the Student Access screens for navigation rather than the buttons in the browser toolbar.) The address to 'View Your Student Record' is:

<<http://www.umn.edu/tc/students/academic>>. Select 'Access your student record' and log on to the system using you ID number and student access password. Then select 'Check registration system', there will be a notation on the upper part of the screen under Agencies/Waivers: "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.

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 612-624-7070. (Please wait until you receive your bill and the benefit does not appear before calling.)

In order to process a change to your registration to reflect the Grad Assistant Benefit or Graduate Non Resident Waiver, exit the 'Registration Eligibility' screen and go back to the menu and exit the 'View Your Student Record' screen. Then enter the Web registration system by selecting 'Register for classes' and follow the five easy steps to produce a new fee statement. Make sure when you reach the Tuition and Fees screen that there is an amount in the "Change from Previous" field and then complete the fee statement. *If there is no amount in the "Change from Previous" field press 'Quit' to exit from the system.*

OR

### **Student Access System**

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 you 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 612-624-7070.

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.*

You should contact the GAO immediately if the billing received from Student Accounts Receivable, at your home address, 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 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.

NOTICE: Students falling below 130 hours a quarter or 195 hours a semester will be billed back for all of their tuition costs, at non-resident tuition rates if applicable. See section on prorated and rebilling of tuition benefits on page 17

Tuition benefits may be requested at the end of the quarter if desired. 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. (See page 14 for quarter and semester dates.) In these cases 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 University College class, an Application for University College Tuition Benefit. **Late registration and payment fee(s) cannot be waived by the Graduate Assistant Office.**

NOTICE: All tuition benefits should be processed within the same academic or fiscal year. If for some reason you do not receive your tuition benefit during the quarter in which it is earned, you must contact the GAO. Policy is currently being developed to clarify whether requests for tuition benefits outside the academic or fiscal year can be granted.

### **University College, Extension Classes**

You must complete the Application for University College Tuition Benefit to receive a tuition benefit for University College, Extension Classes. The application form is available from your department or the GAO. The application and a copy of your appointment document (called a PAF) must be taken to the Graduate Assistant Office for approval. The GAO will indicate on the approved application form the amount of your tuition benefit eligibility for Extension Classes courses. Once the GAO has approved and completed the application form you may then turn it in to University College, Extension Classes at the time you register. If you are taking both day school and Extension classes, your tuition benefit will be applied to day school first, then any remainder may be applied to Extension Classes tuition.

- Registration through Extension Classes: Your GAO authorized application form must be submitted to University College, 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. The GAO approved application form must be submitted to the registration center, at the time you register for an extension course.

To receive tuition benefit for University College, 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.

*Unless a University College, Independent and Distance Learning course has been approved for graduate credit by the Graduate School, these courses are not eligible for tuition benefit.*

NOTICE: Students who hold only University College, Extension Classes 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 Classes 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 1998 will be provided in a memorandum distributed during spring quarter 1998. 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 quarter dates shown on page 14, and must register for a minimum of six credits. The tuition benefit will be based on information on your appointment document (PAF). Generally medical students work no more than 25% time and are eligible for tuition benefits in the amount of \$830.

NOTICE: Students on flexible hourly appointments, receiving provisional tuition benefits, and who chronically turn in their time cards late may lose their eligibility to receive tuition benefits at the beginning of the quarter. Benefit adjustments requested after the close of the quarter and FICA charges on hours exceeding the 50% rule are costly to the University and will be monitored.

### **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 also applies to the eligible graduate assistant's immediate family, 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, 612-625-6936. 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 a phone call to the GAO.

NOTICE: 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, or four semesters. 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. Two semesters' employment will provide two semesters of extended resident tuition privilege; three and four semesters' employment provide three and four semesters, 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, 612-625-6936. 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 University College, and any 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.

NOTICE: 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 based on your employment, you may submit a written request to the Office of Admissions at 240 Williamson Hall, 231 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, to request removal of the reciprocity code from your record.

NOTICE: 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 the Office of Admissions at 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. To re-enroll after cancellation, you must once again fill out the enrollment form.

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 218-726-8839 or to Mary Richardt at Boynton Health Service 612-626-4155. Graduate assistants on the **Duluth campus** are covered by First Plan Minnesota. The UMD Health Services is the Primary Care Clinic. You must enroll at First Plan Minnesota, 1601 London Road, Duluth, within 30 days of the starting date of your appointment. For more information, call First Plan Minnesota at 218-724-3083.

## **Paid and Unpaid Leaves**

### **Official University Holidays**

Paid holidays must be recognized for graduate assistants.

- Graduate Assistants on Bi-weekly Fixed Hourly 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 6.5 biweekly 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 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 hourly appointments also receive 6.5 biweekly 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.

NOTICE: 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**

Sick leave days based on service are not accrued in any academic appointment. As a graduate assistant, you are entitled to 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\*. 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 flexible 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.

*\* The definition of "dependent child" here includes the dependent child of the employee's registered same-sex domestic partner.*

### **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 University College, Extension Classes 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 University College, Extension Classes teaching appointments shall be without pay.

A graduate assistant, on the occasion of the birth or adoption of the graduate assistant's child\* may, upon request, take up to two weeks' leave with pay.

If the graduate assistant is the birth mother, she may, upon request, take up to six weeks' leave with pay related to the birth of her child. You need not prove actual disability during this six-week period. This leave is for the purposes of recovery from physical disability associated with the birth (four weeks) and parental leave (two weeks).

Graduate assistants who are not the birth mother, may, upon request, take up to four weeks' unpaid leave for the birth of a child.

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 graduate assistant who is the birth mother may receive two weeks' paid informal sick leave. For additional unpaid leave, see the Family and Medical Leave Act below.

*\*The definition of "graduate assistant's child" here includes the adoptive or biological child of the graduate assistant's registered same-sex domestic partner.*

### **Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)**

Under federal law, you may be eligible for up to twelve weeks' absence 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/registered same-sex domestic partner/child\*/parent) with a serious health condition; **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.

*\*The definition of "child" here includes the adoptive, biological, or foster child of the graduate assistant's registered same-sex domestic partner.*

### **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.

## **Workers' Compensation**

Graduate assistants are covered by the Workers' 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**

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. Grievances regarding academic issues are covered by the Regents' Student Academic Grievance Policy. The policy can be found on the Web site <<http://www.umn.edu/regents/policies.html>>

## **Americans With Disabilities Act**

If you are a graduate assistant with a disability, you may register with Disability Services and request accommodation that will enable you to perform the essential functions of your position. For registration, 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, Dr. Stephanie Lieberman, Director, 419 Morrill Hall, 100 Church St. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455; 612-624-9547.

## **Center for Teaching and Learning Services**

120 Fraser Hall, 106 Pleasant Street S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455  
625-3041  
[teachlrn@tc.umn.edu](mailto:teachlrn@tc.umn.edu)  
<http://www.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn>

The Center for Teaching and Learning Services exemplifies the University of Minnesota's commitment to effective teaching. It works with all members of the University community on individual or programmatic teaching and learning concerns. Services and resources include the following:

### **Teaching Enrichment Series**

Campus-wide offerings include orientations for new teaching assistants and quarterly short courses, workshops, and topical discussions on a variety of instructional issues and strategies. These workshops and discussions can be requested by individual departments or colleges and will be customized to more closely match a program's or discipline's specifications. These sessions are facilitated by distinguished faculty and Center consultants.

### **Consultation**

Confidential consultations are available on general classroom concerns or specific teaching techniques. Consultants can assist TAs by helping to design customized early-quarter feedback forms or by meeting with them to discuss tabulated results of early quarter or end-of-term student evaluation forms. Consultations may involve one conversation or may consist of a series of observations and feedback sessions.

### **Opportunities for International Teaching Assistants**

The Center provides services for non-native English-speaking teaching assistants and prospective teaching assistants who are interested in improving their English language and classroom communication skills. These services (1)guide ITAs in the improvement of their communication and language skills; (2)provide ITAs with opportunities to practice using effective teaching and communication techniques appropriate for U.S. university classrooms; and (3)inform ITAs about the culture of the U.S. classroom.

In accordance with University policy, the Center assesses spoken language proficiency using the Educational Testing Service's SPEAK test. The Center 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 University of Minnesota classrooms. All courses include weekly tutorials with the instructor. The fee for enrollment in a course is \$225, which may be paid by the department who will be hiring the TA or by the student. Graduate Assistant Tuition Benefits and other scholarships do not apply.

On the **Duluth campus**, ITA orientation workshops are conducted at the beginning of fall quarter under the auspices of the UMD Graduate Office (218)726-8834.

### **Resources**

The Center's Teaching and Learning Resource Collection contains books, articles, journals and videotapes on teaching and learning issues. Center publications include handbooks for teaching assistants, guidelines for working with student evaluations, and a quarterly newsletter.

### **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 an 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, a program of the Graduate School and the Office of the Vice President of Human Resources, is administered through the Center for Teaching and Learning Services. It is funded by the Bush Foundation and the Pew Charitable Trusts. For specific requests about PFF, call 625-3811 or e-mail [pff@tc.umn.edu](mailto:pff@tc.umn.edu).

## **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 International Student and Scholar Services, 6<sup>th</sup> floor Mayo Memorial Building, 612-626-7100. 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 credit requirement for holding a graduate assistant position. (See Registration Requirements on page 6.)

### **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 612- 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 sessions 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, Box 263 Mayo Memorial Building, 420 Delaware St. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, 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 612-625-3041. 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-1998 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.

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: 612-624-5838, fax: 612-625-2312. She 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.

# Appendix A

## Professional School Titles Reference Chart

<b>Class Title</b>	<b>Class Number</b>	<b>Tuition Benefit Eligibility</b>
Professional Program Assistant	9535	No Tuition Benefit Eligibility
Legal Project Assistant w/Tuition Benefit	9538	\$4,330 Maximum Tuition Benefit; Fall and Spring Semester 97-98
Legal Project Assistant w/o Tuition Benefit	9539	No Tuition Benefit Eligibility
Dental Fellow	9553	\$1,660 Maximum Tuition Benefit; Fall, Winter, Spring 97-98
Medical Fellow	9554	\$1,660 Maximum Tuition Benefit; Fall, Winter, Spring 97-98

# Appendix B

## Registration Requirement Reference Chart

	U of MN Employment Credit Requirement*	FICA Withholding  Credit Requirement*
Masters	6	6
Advanced Masters	1	6
Special Graduate Assistant Registration Status	1-5	6
Ph.D.	6	6
Ph.D. Candidates	6	1
Ph.D. Candidates W/36 Thesis Credits	1	1
Professional Program Assistant	1	6

### **Definitions:**

Masters; students who have not completed all course work.

Advanced Masters; students who have a degree program form approved by, and on file with the Graduate School; all coursework included on the degree program form is complete, with grades posted on the Graduate School transcript and, if Plan A, the master's thesis credit requirement (16 credits) is complete.

Special Graduate Assistant Registration Status; master's or doctoral students who meet specific criteria (circumstances and requirements) established and monitored by their graduate program may register for 1-5 credits in select quarters. These established criteria are to be administered equitably among all Graduate Assistants in the graduate program who request Special Graduate Assistant Registration Status (SGAARS).

Ph.D.; students who have not completed all coursework and prelim oral examinations.

Ph.D. Candidates; students who have completed all coursework and prelim oral examinations, however have not yet taken all 36 thesis credits.

Ph.D. Candidates w/36 Thesis Credits; students who have complete all coursework, prelim oral examinations, plus have paid for all 36 thesis credits.

Professional Program Assistants; only students in the following professional schools may be appointed to this non-tuition bearing class title: MD, MPH, MBA, MHA, Mag, and MED.

\*Students may not hold only "Audit" registration, a minimum of one credit must be graded coursework, pre-thesis or thesis.