



Graduate Studies

Graduate Assistant Handbook & Policy Manual
As of June 2022

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SECTION ONE: GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS AT UW OSHKOSH

Preface

“Graduate Assistant” is a formal title, defined in the University of Wisconsin System Administrative Policy 1276 (formerly TC2) TITLE DEFINITIONS (<https://www.wisconsin.edu/uw-policies/uw-system-administrative-policies/title-definitions/>, appendices 1 and 1a) as a graduate student employed by and assigned responsibilities in an instructional department. Graduate Assistants (GAs) are salaried, non-represented employees of UW Oshkosh. Funding for most Graduate Assistants comes from the Office of Graduate Studies, which requires hiring units to abide by all Graduate Studies, UW Oshkosh, UW System, and State of Wisconsin policies, guidelines, and laws.

Graduate degree programs are designed to transform graduate students into professional practitioners or scholars. A well-planned and executed Graduate Assistantship will help facilitate this transformation.

A primary goal of a Graduate Assistantship is to aid in prompt, successful completion of a graduate degree program. Graduate Assistantships enable graduate students to enroll full-time in graduate degree programs, so they may complete their degree more quickly and participate in the benefits of full-time involvement in study and academically related pursuits at the University.

As of the posting of this handbook, at UW Oshkosh GAs are employed in the following areas:

College of Business <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dean’s Office• MBA• Professional Development Office	College of Letters and Science <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Biology• English• Environmental Research & Innovation Center (ERIC) Lab• Mathematics Tutoring Lab• Public Administration• Psychology• Writing Center
College of Education <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dean’s Office• Human Kinetics and Health• Human Services Leadership• Leadership, Literacy and Social Foundations• Reading and Study Skills Center• Teaching and Learning• Professional Counseling• Special and Early Childhood Education	College of Nursing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Center for Nursing Research

At UW Oshkosh, graduate students can also be employed as Student Assistants – hourly employees – but *Student Assistants are not GAs even though they may be a graduate student.*

Graduate Assistantship Positions

The Graduate Assistant is both a student and an employee. Guidelines for determining work assignments for Graduate Assistants are:

1. Assistantships should not detract nor distract graduate students from their graduate education.
2. Assignments should enhance the graduate student’s education by:
 - a. Exposing them to advanced professional activities and concerns of their discipline
 - b. Involving them in university activities related to their academic and professional interests

- c. Giving them opportunities to work closely with faculty and other university professionals.
3. Routine receptionist, administrative, secretarial, and clerical work are not to be assigned to GAs.
4. GAs **cannot** be assigned teaching/direct instruction responsibilities, but they may provide tutorial or lab assistance for a faculty member who is the instructor of record.

Possible Graduate Assistant Assignments

The following list provides examples of appropriate GA responsibilities. The list is not all-inclusive, and a single graduate assistant position does not include all these responsibilities. Duties vary by department.

- Laboratory preparation and assistance
- Development and testing of laboratory experiments and instruments
- Assist faculty with research projects, e.g., literature reviews, library research, data collection, coding, entry, analysis, interpretation, qualitative methods
- Assist faculty with in-class simulations, laboratory, or discussion sessions
- Proctor exams
- Prepare materials for courses, funding agencies, foundations, or partnerships
- Tutor individual or small groups of students
- Assist faculty with the grading of homework or exams
- Facilitate graduate program alumni relations, including annual surveys
- Coordinate a graduate program's communications (newsletter or social media)
- Write reports or design conference presentations

Eligibility for Graduate Assistantships

Graduate Assistantships are competitive and financial need is not the basis for a hiring decision. A graduate student must satisfy all the minimum requirements and conditions listed below.

Minimum Requirements

- Admitted in full standing in a UW Oshkosh graduate degree program (the graduate degree is conferred by UW Oshkosh). Exceptions for a student admitted to a graduate certificate program may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
 - If a GA/GA applicant is on academic probation or is not in full standing within the degree program, they are not eligible for a Graduate Assistantship or for reappointment.
- Enrolled in 6-12 graduate degree credits and remains in good academic standing during each term of employment.
 - Credits for a thesis, clinical paper, or field project may be counted toward these credit totals for two semesters only (the initial term of registration and the semester immediately following; summer session not included).
- Does not have any "In Progress" (IP) grades for more than three semesters, excluding summer.
- Has no more than two UW Oshkosh "Incomplete" (I) grades on their graduate program transcript.
- Is within the length of time to degree for their graduate program.
- Complies with [Responsibilities of the Graduate Assistant](#).

Conditions of Employment

- Applied online for a GA position including an updated resume (new applicants) or expressed interest when asked by the Office of Graduate Studies (existing GAs requesting reappointments).
- Cannot work more than a total of 20 hours per week for any one or multiple GA contracts.
- May not hold an assistantship in an academic department in which they were denied admission for any graduate program.
- May not have GA responsibilities pertaining to a course in which they are enrolled. The exception to this is laboratory preparation. GAs are allowed to prepare laboratory samples, instructions and other materials for courses in which they are currently enrolled.

Additional Conditions of Employment for International Student Graduate Assistants

International GAs cannot work in excess of a total of 20 hours per week in any combination of on-campus employment and an assistantships. The UW Oshkosh Office of International Student Services will help international graduate students obtain a Social Security Number during New International Student Orientation.

An international GA's contract end date cannot exceed the student's official program end date ([academic calendar with official class start/end dates](#)) which is the last class day (contact the Office of Graduate Studies for this date). This means international students cannot work once their classes have ended ([academic calendar with official class start/end dates](#)). International students are required to keep the Office of International Student Services informed of their program end date changes.

For graduate students whose programs do not require a dissertation, thesis, or field report option, the completion date is the official course end date which is the last day of classes (not the commencement date) of the 14-week term, J-Term, May-Term, or Summer Term. . All enrollments must be for coursework required for the graduate program and cannot include non-degree or undergraduate courses.

For graduate students with the dissertation, thesis, or field report option, the completion is considered the date that the student expects to submit final copies to the Office of Graduate Studies.

Ongoing Eligibility Requirements

At the end of each semester, the Office of Graduate Studies reviews the Graduate Assistants' enrollment, grades and academic standing to confirm their eligibility for continued employment. Contracts may be terminated if GAs no longer meet the following minimum eligibility requirements:

- Maintains full academic standing in their UW Oshkosh graduate degree program (a minimum cumulative graduate grade point average of 3.0).
 - If a GA/GA applicant is on academic probation or is not in full standing within the degree program, they are not eligible for a Graduate Assistantship or for reappointment.
- Enrolls in a minimum of 6 graduate credits and a maximum of 12 graduate credits during the 14-week semester, OR
- Enrolls in a minimum of three graduate credits and a maximum of 5 graduate credits during the 8-week summer semester. In any semester/term, the following apply:
 - Undergraduate class credit does not apply toward GA eligibility.
 - All coursework must be within the parameters of their graduate degree program.
 - Any waiver of credit requirements must be approved by the Office of Graduate Studies.
 - Dissertation, thesis, or field report credits may be included in these totals for the initial term of registration and one semester immediately following the registration term, summer excluded.
- Shows satisfactory progress toward degree completion, as defined by the graduate program.
- Performs Graduate Assistantship duties satisfactorily, as determined by the immediate supervisor or department and position description.
- Comes to work as scheduled and abides by the requirements of the work schedule.
- Maintains proper standards of academic conduct.
- Honors all terms of the contract agreement.

Graduate Assistant Hiring Process

Applying

Applications for Graduate Assistantships are accepted anytime. It is recommended that applications be turned in as early as possible as most open positions are filled starting April 15 for the following academic year. [The online application is available on the Office of Graduate Studies website](#) for new applicants.

Applications remain in the pool until the graduate student has received an assistantship or until the end of the academic year.

Interviewing

Graduate Assistant applications are reviewed by the hiring units according to job qualifications and criteria such as academic records, experience, time available to work by applicants, relationship of assistantship work to the student's program, special abilities of the student (e.g., computer skills, experience in operating research equipment, etc.). Hiring units coordinate all the interview process for their positions. Hiring units determine whether to contact references. All applicants who are interviewed will be officially notified of the hiring decision. HR will notify applicants who receive an offer and coordinate executing hiring contracts. Hiring units will notify interviewed applicants who will not receive offers as soon as possible after decisions are made.

Job Offer

The hiring unit confirms they have available funding before initiating an offer.

To initiate an offer, the hiring manager emails this information to the Office of Graduate Studies Graduate Assistant mailbox (GSO@uwosh.edu):

- Contract start and end date
- Number of work hours per week
- Hiring manager's name
- Account number to bill for salary/benefits if different than that unit's standard number for GA contracts
- Any waiver requests and justifications

The Office of Graduate Studies verifies the student meets eligibility requirements and creates the PageUp offer card. The offer card is electronically routed for approval to: hiring manager; the College dean (not required for reappointments); Office of Graduate Studies; HR recruiting. If approved, HR prepares the contract.

Contract Overview

Human Resources confirms aspects of employment eligibility. A criminal background check (CBC) will be done on all new GAs, continuing GAs who previously may not have had a CBC done, or a returning GA who has not been employed by UWOSH in over a year. Human Resources requests the CBC and Graduate Studies Office pays for the CBC. After HR learns the GA has passed the CBC, they send a PageUp contract (letter) via email to the applicant. If a GA doesn't pass the CBC, HR informs Graduate Studies and the hiring unit; further review will be needed before a contract is issued. The contract specifies the department, hiring manager, average number of hours per week, and the start and end dates.

GAs may have multiple contracts, up to a total of 20 hours per week. All contracts are saved in PageUp History Documents.

Applicants must sign and return contracts to the Human Resources Office by the deadline stated in the contract email. The signed contract is sent to the student and saved in PageUp History Documents. If not submitted to Human Resources by the deadline, the contract is forfeited.

Contract Details

Funding

Graduate Assistants are funded either through the College or through external grants. Employment is contingent upon availability of funds. Summer Graduate Assistantships are generally not available.

Work Schedule

Graduate Assistants are usually contracted for a semester (17 weeks, which includes the 14-week term plus 3-week interim) or the academic year (34 weeks); however, other start and end dates may be determined between the hiring department and graduate student.

The specific work schedule is at the discretion of the immediate supervisor. Work schedules should be arranged at the beginning of the semester so there are no conflicts with the GA's class schedule.

Impact of Study Abroad

Graduate Assistants enrolled in study abroad courses are not entitled to salary during study abroad activity, except when: 1) students join a study abroad activity as a faculty research assistant, but do not register for the coursework; 2) students register for the course and make up for the missed time within the dates of the contract period, and at the discretion of the supervisor.

If the GA is not entitled to an exception listed above, the GA contract should be amended (see **Changes to a Contract**).

Job Classification

Graduate Assistants are unclassified, salaried, exempt employees hired under a fixed-term terminal contract. As such, GAs are not paid for additional work beyond the work outlined in the contract. If GAs are asked to work more hours one week, they should plan with the hiring manager to work fewer hours in a future week within the same month to maintain the total hours worked over the course of the contract. Special note: Since GAs are considered first a student, then employee, this makes them ineligible to apply for unemployment benefits.

Salary

Salary is paid biweekly in arrears (each paycheck is for time worked the prior month). Salaries are considered wages and must be reported as taxable income. The University is required to withhold FICA. State and federal income taxes are withheld based on your Internal Revenue Service Form W-4 calculations. Human Resources will collect a W-4 form from you on your first day.

To calculate the Graduate Assistant's salary:

1. Calculate the **Contract Hours** by multiplying the contract hours / week times the number of weeks in the contract.
2. Calculate the **Contract FTE** by dividing the Contract Hours by 1,360 (a full-time employee works 34 weeks X 40 hours per week, or 1,360 hours)
3. Calculate the **Contract Salary** by multiplying Contract FTE times the full-time employee salary of \$20,843.

For example, a Graduate Assistant working 20 hours a week during fall and spring terms works a total of 680 Contract Hours (20 hours/week X 34 weeks), which is .5 FTE (680/1,360). Annual salary is \$10,422.50 (\$20,843 X .5 FTE).

For 2022-23, the following are common Graduate Assistant salaries before tax:

Hours per Week, and Number of Weeks	FTE	Total Contract Salary
10 hrs / wk @ 34 weeks	.25	\$5,211
13.5 hrs / wk @ 34 weeks	.3375	\$7,035
15 hrs / wk @ 34 weeks	.375	\$7,816
20 hrs / wk @ 34 weeks	.5	\$10,412

Paychecks

Graduate Assistants are paid generally twice per month. The biweekly salary, less withholdings, is directly deposited into the desired financial institution through the Human Resources System. Details about the paycheck salary and withholdings may be viewed online. Human Resources explains this in detail during onboarding.

For GA's contracted to work through the May-Term of an academic year contract, the pay for those weeks will be either one lump sum for the pay period, or two bi-weekly paychecks, each ½ of the total amount earned for the May-Term.

Benefits

Insurance

Health, vision and dental insurance are available for Graduate Assistants if the GA is expected to work at least 13.5 hours per week for an academic year appointment. Benefit options information can be found here (under **Benefit Summaries**, read the **Graduate Assistant / Short-Term Academic Staff** pdf).

Coverage is effective the first of the month following the eligibility date or hire date. Premiums are deducted from the paycheck. HR provides information about the premiums and enrollment to GAs at the beginning of each contract.

If a GA currently receiving insurance benefits is hired for at least 13.5 hours / week for the next academic year, and they are hired before the end of the current academic year, three months of insurance premiums (to cover the upcoming June – August) will be collected from the current academic year's last six bi-weekly paychecks. This keeps the insurance coverage in force while the GA is not under contract during the summer months.

A late hire date of a Graduate Assistant contract may affect insurance eligibility.

Tuition Remission

Nonresident Graduate Assistants qualify for a waiver of nonresident tuition if their contract is for at least .3375 FTE (13.5 hours/week for 34 weeks)¹. Nonresident tuition waivers are contingent upon available funding. These waivers are technically tuition scholarships and are also taxable income.

Time Off/Unemployment

Graduate Assistants are not eligible for vacation, personal holiday, sick leave (including family leave), or unemployment benefits.

Graduate Assistants observe the same official holidays as other non-faculty University staff. If their assistance is required by supervisors during such periods, arrangements should be made to compensate them by reducing hours from duties during other paid, slower/less needed times.

Work schedules should be arranged at the beginning of each semester so there is no conflict with the Graduate Assistant's class schedule, but also meets the needs of the department.

¹ Nonresident refers to that portion of tuition over and above resident tuition. *All* graduate students are still responsible for paying the resident portion of tuition for which they are billed. This is in addition to all other fees and expenses charged.

Changes to a Contract

If **any aspect** of the contract changes, the hiring manager must notify The Office of Graduate Studies via email (GSO@uwosh.edu). The Office of Graduate Studies will complete the Personnel Transaction Form (PTF), update the applicant's contract records² and notify Human Resources.

Responsibilities of the Graduate Assistant

Graduate Assistants are responsible for learning applicable departmental, college, and institutional regulations as they pertain to employees and students and following them consistently.

Regardless of the work assignment, GAs are obligated to maintain standards of academic and employee confidentiality, honesty, and integrity and to report violations of these to their supervisor. (See [FERPA General Guidance for Students: Disclosure of Education Records](#).)

GAs are employees of the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, and the following standards were established to advise GAs and supervisors, but not to restrict the rights of the employee. The following are the Office of Graduate Studies' expectations for acceptable personal conduct; academic departments may have other expectations based on the needs of the position.

1. GAs are expected to carry out their instructions, duties, and responsibilities as directed by those with authority to assign the work.
2. GAs are expected to conduct personal business unrelated to their positions on their own time.
3. GAs are expected to respect university resources, property, and equipment, and to use it only for appropriate university purposes.
4. GAs are expected to use care in guarding university keys and/or keycards and not to lend, borrow, duplicate, or use them for inappropriate purposes. University keys/keycards are issued and signed for by the GA. They are required to be returned in-person at the end of the contract period.
5. GAs are expected to perform their duties without impairment / influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

Responsibilities of the Hiring Unit

Graduate Assistants are to work under the supervision of faculty or professional staff who are experienced and knowledgeable in their field. Supervision of GAs includes providing appropriate training during the GA's employment. The immediate supervisor for each GA should be identified as early as possible. If there is more than one supervisor for a GA, the specific tasks to be performed for each and the role each supervisor will assume should be clearly identified.

Whenever possible, each hiring unit should provide an orientation and in-service training for GAs. Supervisors should assist GAs in securing access to applicable resources and facilities. The hiring unit must also follow all health and safety laws and regulations and educate the GA about them.

The hiring unit is responsible for ensuring that the assigned workload is appropriate to the GA's academic load. *Academic credit is not awarded for Graduate Assistant assignments* or any work or service performed as part of the assigned duties. GAs should not be assigned responsibilities for courses in which they are enrolled, except for laboratory preparation.

Hiring units will provide information about responsibilities, expectations, workspace, and support services, etc. GAs should be aware that they may be terminated prior to expiration of their contract if the terms of the appointment are not met.

² The Office of Graduate Studies will update PageUp History Documents, PeopleSoft Student Groups and email distribution lists.

Treatment of the Graduate Assistant

The Graduate Assistant deserves the courtesy and respect of being treated as a professional in his/her/their chosen field of study and should be extended the following privileges:

- The GA should be notified in writing of all decisions pertaining to or affecting the status of their assistantship.
- The GA has the right to respond to complaints and to present evidence in their defense of those complaints.
- The GA should be informed of a formal grievance procedure, and then have the right to initiate a grievance or to appeal a decision through the channels specified. (See [Graduate Assistant Grievance Policy](#)).
- The GA should receive sufficient advance notice of reappointment procedures.

Performance Evaluation

Work performance should be an ongoing process of communication between the Graduate Assistant and supervisor. The hiring unit and direct supervisor(s) are responsible for any evaluation(s) that are conducted. Performance evaluations are not done by Human Resources or the Office of Graduate Studies, however, these offices recommend having an established performance review process for all Graduate Assistants.

Evaluation forms may be retained in the student's official employee record in Human Resources. Any employment inquiries about GAs should be directed to the UW Oshkosh Human Resources Office. If Human Resources cannot respond to the inquiry, they will refer contractual information requests to the Office of Graduate Studies, and work performance inquiries to the hiring unit. The Office of Graduate Studies can provide contract period and eligibility information but cannot speak knowledgeably about a Graduate Assistant's work performance.

Termination During the Contract Period

The Office of Graduate Studies will complete the Personnel Transaction Form (PTF) and notify HR whenever a contract is terminated before the contract completion date.

Voluntary Termination

If a graduate student resigns from a Graduate Assistantship before the end of the contract period, they should provide sufficient notice in writing to the hiring unit (two weeks or more is the preferred standard). The graduate student submits an email of resignation to the hiring unit and a copy to the Office of Graduate Studies (GSO@uwosh.edu). The letter should include the date of the GA's last day of work. Resigning from a Graduate Assistantship may affect continuation of a nonresident fee waiver and/or fringe benefits. The Office of Graduate Studies will complete the Personnel Transaction Form (PTF) and notify HR.

Termination by the Office of Graduate Studies

A Graduate Assistant is automatically terminated when the student is placed on academic probation, suspended from the University, or is found guilty of academic misconduct and in some cases, non-academic misconduct. Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to:

- Plagiarism (turning in work of another person and not giving them credit)
- Stealing an exam or course materials
- Copying another student's homework, paper, exam
- Cheating on an exam (copying from another student, turning in an exam for re-grading after making changes, working on an exam after the designated time allowance)
- Falsifying academic documents

For more information about academic and non-academic misconduct, refer to the Dean of Students website: <https://uwosh.edu/deanofstudents/student-conduct/academic-misconduct/>.

Termination by Hiring Unit

A Graduate Assistant may be terminated by the hiring unit for the following reasons:

1. Failure to report for work on the starting date specified in the contract constitutes grounds for immediate termination of the assistantship at the discretion of the supervisor, and with no remuneration.
2. Absence from duties for one week or more without cause shall constitute grounds for immediate termination of the assistantship as of the date of the start of the unexcused absence.
3. In the opinion of the supervisor, continuation of the GA in that assignment poses a threat to the safety or well-being of the GA or others.
 - a. The GA may be reassigned to other duties if another appropriate assignment exists within the hiring unit, or if not, may be given notice of termination.
4. Work performance continues to be unsatisfactory after the hiring unit has notified the GA (see [Graduate Assistant Grievance Policy](#)).

Unsatisfactory Work Performance

Before termination for unsatisfactory performance, Graduate Assistants must receive from their immediate supervisor a notice of specific deficiencies in performance, as well as detailed suggestions for improvement. GAs should receive at least two warnings with time in between to improve performance.

If, in the judgment of the supervisor, the GA fails to show sufficient improvement over the period allowed for remediation, the supervisor may give the GA and the Office of Graduate Studies notice of termination. Assessment of the quality of work performance is the sole responsibility of the hiring unit and is an academic and professional judgment.

This notification of termination must be in writing/email, should indicate the reason(s) for termination, and must be submitted simultaneously to the GA and to the Office of Graduate Studies. The notice must indicate the effective date of the termination, which may not be more than 14 calendar days from the date upon which the notice is emailed to the GA's campus email address or mailed to his/her/their current local postal address on file in the Human Resources Office.

The GA may dispute any facts or procedures relating to the termination. The GA may appeal against the termination through appropriate departmental and/or College personnel procedures, and the [Graduate Assistant Grievance Policy](#).

If unacceptable performance continues, and a decision is made to proceed with termination of the assistantship, then the hiring unit must give the GA a pre-termination hearing.

The hearing should consist of oral or written notice of the charges against the GA, an explanation forming the basis for the dismissal, and an opportunity to present reasons (either in person or in writing) why the termination should not take place. After these proceedings, the hiring unit should notify the Office of Graduate Studies of the outcome.

If the hiring unit terminates the GA before the end of the contract period, the graduate student must be notified by the supervisor of the termination and grievance procedures available at the department and College levels, as well as the [Graduate Assistant Grievance Policy](#)).

Appeals arising from suspension or dismissal for disciplinary reasons will be processed under the UW System disciplinary code and UW Oshkosh provisions. Appeals for a sexual harassment complaint will be processed according to the appeal procedures specified in the UW Oshkosh Sexual Harassment Policy. Please see [Section Two: Graduate Assistantship Policies](#) for a list of policies.

Reappointment

After a contract is completed, Graduate Assistants may be considered for another contract in the same department or another department. GAs are not automatically rehired for another contract in the next year, even if they meet the minimum criteria. (See [Student Assistants and Employees in Training](#)).

Reappointment decisions are based on the GA's skills and qualifications, previous performance, department needs, financial resources, and the effort to provide as many graduate students as possible with assistantship opportunities. GAs must meet all the minimum eligibility requirements (listed in [Eligibility for Graduate Assistantships](#)) and departments rehiring GAs must follow current University hiring guidelines.

The GA should receive sufficient advance notice of reappointment or non-renewal and be informed of necessary procedures to respond in either case.

Summary

Graduate Assistantships are awarded on a competitive basis to graduate students who best meet the requirements set by the Office of Graduate Studies and the employing academic unit/department. The assistantship should not interfere with the student's educational goals; rather, the assistantship should aid in the prompt and successful completion of the degree program while supporting the unit for whom they work. While the Graduate Assistant makes progress toward an advanced degree, ideally, they also receive work experience in their given profession under the supervision of a faculty/department mentor. As such, Graduate Assistantships build confidence and help them become better professionals.

SECTION TWO: GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP POLICIES

Council of Graduate Schools Resolution

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh supports the Council of Graduate School Resolution, a national agreement establishing a policy regarding acceptance of Graduate Assistantship offers at UW Oshkosh and other graduate institutions. Based on this resolution, a graduate student who has already accepted a Graduate Assistantship offer from UW Oshkosh on or after April 15 for the following academic year must obtain written release from UW Oshkosh before accepting a different assistantship offer at another institution (Appendix A).

Federal Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA)

The Federal Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 mandates that any Graduate Assistant employed by the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh after November 6, 1986, must either be a United States Citizen or possess current employment authorization from U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). According to federal law, the Graduate Assistant must present original documentation of the U.S. citizenship or employment authorization within 3 days of the start of duties (the reporting date) or risk cancellation of the assistantship.

FERPA General Guidance for Students: Disclosure of Education Records

FERPA allows "school officials," including teachers, within a school to obtain access to personally identifiable information contained in education records provided the school has determined that they have "legitimate educational interest" in the information. Although the term "school official" is not defined in the statute or regulations, this Office generally interprets the term to include parties such as: professors; instructors; administrators; health staff; counselors; attorneys; administrative/clerical staff; trustees; members of committees and disciplinary boards; and a contractor, volunteer or other party to whom the school has outsourced institutional services or functions.

A school must inform eligible students of how it defines the terms "school official" and "legitimate educational interest" in its annual notification of FERPA rights. A school official generally has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh requires student workers to sign database request for access forms when they are working within the university's databases under their own account. These access forms include a confidentiality clause stating the student workers are to keep everything confidential.

Graduate Assistant Grievance Policy

The following grievance procedure is restricted to interpretation or application of established policies and procedures regarding Graduate Assistantships only. It does not apply to tuition and fees, revocation of nonresident fee waivers, or fringe benefits related to a Graduate Assistantship.

Prior to filing a grievance, the Graduate Assistant is encouraged to seek resolution with his/her/their immediate supervisor using informal discussion, collegial interaction, and existing departmental structures and policies to resolve conflicts and to remedy personal and professional concerns whenever possible. If the immediate supervisor is not a department head, the supervisor shall notify the department head about the grievance and ensuing discussion.

If the grievance cannot be settled at the departmental level, the Graduate Assistant should consult the College in which the Graduate Assistant is employed whether there are personnel policies and procedures applicable for grievances by Graduate Assistants. If there are, the Graduate Assistant should submit his/her/their grievance to that review process. The appeal should (a) contain specific objections to the department's policies and/or procedures and (b) be accompanied by copies of the correspondence

exchanged between the two parties. The Office of Graduate Studies should be notified of all grievances and be given copies of all documents pertaining to the issue and the resolution.

If there are no College policies or procedures for Graduate Assistants, or there are but the grievance cannot be resolved at the College-level, the Graduate Assistant may initiate the Graduate Assistant Grievance Procedure. The grievance must be submitted in writing by the Graduate Assistant to the Director of Graduate Studies with copies to the supervisor, the department head, the College's Dean, and Human Resources, as applicable. A copy of all prior correspondence is required. The formal grievance must be filed within thirty (30) calendar days after the date of the College-level review and notification to the graduate student of the decision.

As soon as possible after receipt of the grievance, the Director of Graduate Studies will convene an ad hoc committee of four Graduate Council members, each member representing one of the four Colleges, and notify the Graduate Assistant and hiring unit as soon as a meeting time has been set. None of the four Graduate Council Members may be from the hiring unit identified in the grievance. Representation on the Committee from the Office of Graduate Studies and Human Resources may be requested.

1. The Committee's meetings will be closed. In addition to the Committee members, the only persons present will be the Graduate Assistant submitting the appeal, the head of the hiring unit, and no more than one additional person accompanying each of these two to advise, observe, and counsel. This is not a legal proceeding, and there is no requirement that the Graduate Assistant be represented by legal counsel. However, if the Graduate Assistant chooses to be accompanied by such counsel, they must notify the Committee in advance, and the representative of the hiring unit may be accompanied by the University System's General Counsel. No other persons shall be present.
2. The Graduate Assistant and the head of the employing unit will each present his/her/their case orally. The Committee members have the option to ask questions for clarification, as necessary. The two parties may also present written supporting documentation, which may include statements from other parties having knowledge relevant to the case. If either party contests the facts as stated by the other, the person contesting shall have the opportunity to express the objection(s). Either party may call or question witnesses, and witnesses may be questioned by the Committee. Since the grievance issues are deemed academic rather than legal, the Committee will not be bound by strict rules of legal evidence and may present written statements, affidavits, or other evidence or information pertinent to deciding the issues involved. A recording of the proceedings may be maintained for a minimum of five years at the expense of the University. A duplicate recording will be available upon request by the Graduate Assistant during the minimum 5-year period.
3. If the grievance involves termination of a Graduate Assistantship, and if the findings of the Committee are that the termination should be rescinded, the assistantship will be restored without break from the date of termination. The decision of the Committee is final; there is no further appeal process.
4. A Graduate Assistant whose assistantship is terminated should expect cancellation of any nonresident tuition waiver and/or fringe benefits.

Residency for Tuition Purposes

Nonresident Graduate Assistants qualify for a waiver of nonresident tuition if their contract is for at least .3375 FTE (13.5 hours/week). Nonresident tuition waivers are contingent on funding. Nonresident refers to that portion of tuition over and above resident tuition. All students are still responsible for paying the resident portion of tuition for which they are billed. This is in addition to all other fees and expenses charged. Please see the following for more information:

- Wisconsin § 36.27: <http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/36/27> “Tuition”
- Wisconsin Administrative Code: http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/20 “Nonresident Tuition Determination Procedures and Appeals”

Sexual Harassment Policy

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh is committed to providing and maintaining an environment that respects and protects the rights of all its members. As both a student and an employee, GAs are offered protection and recourse through multiple policies at the UW Oshkosh:

- Title IX Law - <https://uwosh.edu/titleix/policies/>
- Equal Opportunity, Equity & Affirmative Action (<https://uwosh.edu/equity/policies/>) – Protection from and Recourse for Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment, Workplace Violence, Retaliation, and Discrimination

Any form of violence, harassment, or discrimination has no place in an educational or any other community and will not be tolerated at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh.

Student Discipline Code

UW Oshkosh students are subject in their academic and non-academic behavior to the Wisconsin Administrative Code, as well as specific disciplinary procedures duly adopted for our campus. Specific provisions of Chapter 14, 17, and 18 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code can be found on the UW Oshkosh Dean of Students website at <https://uwosh.edu/deanofstudents/student-conduct/>.

The UW System disciplinary code and UW Oshkosh provisions are available to all students in the Dean of Students Office, Polk Library, Reeve Memorial Union Office, Oshkosh Student Association (OSA) Office, Residence Life Office, and in each residence hall. Any questions may be directed to the Dean of Student's Office, Dempsey 125, which administers the University's student discipline code.

Student Assistants and Employees in Training (Other Appointments)

According to the UW-System Administrative Policy, state statutes permit the Board to make or authorize fixed term appointments for student assistants and employees in training. In general, such appointments are intended to allow a person to acquire additional training or experience in their field of specialization. As such, these appointments are not career choices per se. Instead, such appointments are provided to enhance the career options in other positions. Please see <https://www.wisconsin.edu/uw-policies/uw-system-administrative-policies/job-security/> for more information.

Leave Benefits and Policy

According to the UW-System Administrative Policy, Graduate Assistants do not qualify for these benefits. Please see <https://bit.ly/2Jw9Ff0> for more information

Appendix A: Council of Graduate Schools Resolution



The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh supports the following Resolution adopted by the Council of Graduate Schools, a national agreement establishing a policy regarding acceptance of assistantship offers.

Acceptance of an offer of financial support (such as a graduate scholarship, fellowship, traineeship, or assistantship) for the next academic year by a prospective or enrolled graduate student completes an agreement that both student and graduate school expect to honor. In that context, the conditions affecting such offers and their acceptance must be defined carefully and understood by all parties.

Students are under no obligation to respond to offers of financial support prior to April 15; earlier deadlines for acceptance of such offers violate the intent of this Resolution. In those instances in which a student accepts an offer before April 15, and subsequently desires to withdraw that acceptance, the student may submit in writing a resignation of the appointment at any time through April 15. However, an acceptance given or left in force after April 15 commits the student not to accept another offer without first obtaining a written release from the institution to which a commitment has been made. Similarly, an offer by an institution after April 15 is conditional on presentation by the student of the written release from any previously accepted offer. It is further agreed by the institutions and organizations subscribing to the above Resolution that a copy of this Resolution should accompany every scholarship, fellowship, traineeship, and assistantship offer.

Based on this resolution, a graduate student who has already accepted a graduate assistantship offer from UW Oshkosh on or after April 15 must obtain a written release from UW Oshkosh before accepting a different assistantship offer at another institution. Likewise, if a graduate student has already accepted a graduate assistantship from another institution, and receives an offer from UW Oshkosh on or after April 15, the offer from UW Oshkosh is contingent upon release from any existing assistantship commitment at the other institution. After accepting a UW Oshkosh graduate assistantship offer, students are required to obtain a written release from the Employing Department at the other institution before accepting a UW Oshkosh offer. The responsibility for compliance with this resolution rests with the Employing Department offering the graduate assistantship and the graduate students accepting them.

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