



GRADUATE

ASSISTANT

HANDBOOK

UNLV | GRADUATE
COLLEGE

GRADUATE ASSISTANT HANDBOOK

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GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP CATEGORIES

What is a Graduate Assistantship?

Graduate assistants, or GAs, have a unique dual role: they are both graduate students and research, administrative, or teaching assistants who contribute to the academic mission of the university. Graduate students awarded these competitive positions receive a stipend and benefits package for their work in the classrooms, laboratories, administrative units, and offices of the university. All GA offers must be extended and processed by the Graduate College via the Grad Rebel Gateway to be considered an official GA position. Any GA offers extended outside of the Graduate College are not considered an official GA and are not guaranteed to receive the benefits of an official GA position.

Graduate College State-Funded Graduate Assistants

Graduate College state-funded GAs are supported through state funds allocated to academic deans from the Graduate College. GAs who are supported through state funds must be assigned duties that are related to teaching or research. State GA funds cannot be used for summer GA appointments and must be spent by the end of the fiscal year on June 30.

Externally Funded Graduate Assistants

Externally funded (sometimes referred to as extramurally funded) GAs are funded by sources outside of the Graduate College, such as gifts to UNLV, privately or publicly funded grants, contracts, community internship graduate assistantships (CIGA), community graduate research assistantships (CGRAs), and departmental/nonacademic units on campus. These GAs are appointed as externally funded, and their work must be related to their degree program and advance their research, scholarship, creative, or professional skills.

Graduate Assistantship Categories and Descriptions

There are seven categories of graduate assistantships (GAs): graduate teaching assistant, instructional graduate assistant, graduate research assistant, community graduate research assistant, community internship graduate assistant, Top Tier doctoral graduate research assistant, and professional development graduate research assistant.

Below are the descriptions of each of the categories.

- **Graduate teaching assistant:** Graduate teaching assistant (GTA) is the term used at UNLV to refer to GAs assigned to work on campus in teaching-related positions. Most of the GAs on campus are GTAs. Within a college or school, 80% of the funds allocated from Graduate College state funds must be assigned to GTAs teaching as the instructor of record or providing teaching support for six credits, or the equivalent (as a teaching assistant, teaching labs, etc.), each semester. GTAs may not teach or provide teaching support for more than six credits each semester per NSHE policies. GTAs who are teaching are typically second-year students in a specialist or doctoral program who can serve as the instructor of record for lower-level undergraduate courses. Students must have completed some type of instructional workshop(s)/courses prior to serving as the instructor of record. There must be an identified professor who provides oversight, mentorship, and support for the GTA. GTA responsibilities vary greatly and may include, but are not limited to:

- Teaching as the instructor of record for undergraduate courses
 - Teaching a small section of a course
 - Holding office hours and meeting with students
 - Assisting with the grading of homework, exams, and/or written assignments
 - Administering tests or exams
 - Assisting a faculty instructor with large lecture classes by teaching students in laboratory or discussion sessions
- **Graduate research assistant:** Graduate research assistant (GRA) is the term used at UNLV to refer to GAs who work on campus in research-related positions. These research positions primarily exist in academic departments as well as some research centers and institutes. GRAs gain the experience of working alongside faculty members on research projects. GRAs are generally funded through competitive faculty grants and contracts but can also be supported with state-funded dollars. Within a college or school, only 20% of the funds allocated from Graduate College state funds can be assigned to GRAs. Responsibilities vary greatly and may include, but are not limited to:
 - Collecting, coding, and/or analyzing data
 - Conducting literature reviews or library research
 - Preparing materials for submission to funding agencies and foundations
 - Writing reports, publications, and grant applications
 - Preparing materials for IRB review
- **Community graduate research assistant:** Community graduate research assistants (CGRAs) are graduate research assistants funded by community partners in the private, public, and nonprofit sectors. CGRAs can either work on campus under the direction of a UNLV faculty member, or off campus under the direction of the funding agent. CGRAs may be asked to present to their funding agent each semester, to share research findings, etc. The selection process for a CGRA position depends on whether the CGRA is working on campus or off campus. If the CGRA position is on campus, the UNLV faculty member ultimately selects the CGRA. The Graduate College's Director of Development keeps the funding agent informed throughout the application process. If the CGRA position is off campus and under the direction of the funding agent, the funding agent follows an application and interview process facilitated by the Graduate College's Director of Development. The funding agent selects the final CGRA candidate. All UNLV GA guidelines and regulations apply to CGRAs. For more information on CGRAs, refer to the Graduate College [Community Opportunities webpage](#).
- **Community internship graduate assistant:** Community internship graduate assistants (CIGAs) are funded by community partners in the private, public, and nonprofit sectors. These partnerships will allow organizations to support graduate students by providing

them hands-on experience as interns at their site. CIGAs are supervised by the vice provost for graduate education and dean of the Graduate College, with input from the faculty adviser and onsite mentorship from their site coordinator. CIGA positions are funded by community partners and the funding agent is also involved in the process of selecting the GA after an extensive application and interview process coordinated by the Graduate College's Director of Development. All UNLV GA guidelines and regulations apply to CIGAs. For more information on CIGAs, refer to the Graduate College [Community Opportunities webpage](#).

- **Top Tier doctoral graduate research assistant:** Top Tier doctoral graduate research assistant (TTDGRA) refers to GAships that are awarded to faculty members based on a campuswide competitive grant application process. Duties for these GAs involve working on specific research topics alongside the faculty member who was awarded the TTDGRA position. TTDGRAs are awarded to faculty on a three-year cycle.
- **Professional development graduate research assistant:** Professional development graduate research assistants (PDGRAs) are professional development GAs funded by university department funds. PDGRAs work on campus, primarily in nonacademic departments, such as the Academic Success Center, Career Services, International Student and Scholar Services, the Graduate College, etc. GAs in this category gain professional skills in their field of study while supporting campus services. PDGRA positions must be related to the GA's scholarly area of study.

GRADUATE COLLEGE POLICIES ON GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP DUTIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Eligibility

In order to be eligible for a GA position, the student must be fully admitted as a degree-seeking graduate student. New students may not begin their GA before their term of admission.

Terms and Dates of Appointments

GAs are appointed by the university to conduct work in exchange for a stipend and benefits package. In this capacity, they are expected to report in the same timeframe as academic faculty (e.g., during academic semesters and not during break or vacation times). GAs must report to work one week prior to the first day of instruction for both fall and spring semesters. A GA contract ends one week after finals week. The Graduate College strongly suggests appointing a GA for the academic year. However, departments may appoint on a semester-by-semester basis.

Appropriate GA Duties

It is important to note that GAs are students first and foremost. GAships are designed to be supportive of graduate students' intellectual and professional development. Faculty should not ask GAs to perform administrative tasks that do not enhance professional growth in the field or activities that are unrelated to the student's academic development. Faculty should not ask GAs

to perform personal tasks for them under any circumstances. Individuals with questions about appropriate GA responsibilities are urged to contact [Graduate Financial Services](#) or the dean of the Graduate College.

Workload

GAs are hired by the university to perform work that is central to the goals of the hiring unit. Because GAs are students first, and their primary goal is to earn a graduate degree, **GAs will spend 20 hours per week (.50 FTE) fulfilling duties and responsibilities during the academic year.**

There are currently no half-time or part-time GA positions at UNLV. If a GA's workload assignment changes, this must be reported to the Graduate College to ensure accurate reporting of the GA's assignment. Furthermore, once the semester begins, GA duties may not be changed for that semester except under special circumstances (e.g., change to a grant, etc.).

Additional Employment

Additional employment on or off campus is prohibited unless approved by the GA supervisor, faculty advisor or advisory committee chair (if applicable and already appointed), graduate coordinator, department chair, and Graduate College dean. Such employment **may not exceed 10 hours per week** and must be limited in nature. All GAs requesting additional employment must submit a completed Graduate Assistant Request for Additional Employment form to the Graduate College before engaging in any additional employment. The form can be found by logging in to the [Grad Rebel Gateway](#), visiting the Forms tab, and clicking on the Graduate Assistant Forms link.

If adjustments are needed for a previously approved request, a new GA Request for Additional Employment form is required. An indication of the changes must be included in the request narrative. GAs must remain under the 10 hours per week total for all additional employment.

International GAs in F-1 or J-1 immigration status are typically limited to the 20-hour GA work week during the academic year. F-1 students cannot work any additional hours on campus or off campus unless they obtain Curricular Practical Training (CPT) approval from International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS). As an international student, it is very important to consult with ISSS before accepting any additional employment outside of the GA contract, as this could negatively impact their immigration status. F-1 status GAs requesting additional employment must attach the approved CPT and updated I-20 to the GA request for additional employment.

Additional employment within the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) may have tax implications and will impact a GA's Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) withholdings.

Students are expected to give their full-time attention to graduate study and may not engage in any remunerative employment while holding a merit-based award that includes a stipend. The dean's permission is required for any exception to this "no other employment policy," and notice must be given and approved by the Graduate College. Both domestic and international fellowship recipients should adhere to enrollment policies by considering the number of enrolled credits required as well as financial aid implications.

Working Over Winter, Spring, and Summer Breaks

GAs are expected to work during the academic year obligation dates (same timeframe as academic faculty). Winter and spring breaks are not included in the GA compensation schedule. If needed, departments can hire GAs on a separate non-GA contract in Workday to cover work during winter and spring breaks. Compensation, duties, and FTE should be decided between the hiring department and the student. Please note, work completed during winter and spring breaks may have tax implications and could impact the GA's FICA withholdings.

Students appointed as GAs during summer break must abide by the additional employment guidelines outlined above.

Fall, Spring, and Summer Semester Credit Loads

GAs must carry a minimum of six graduate credit hours and can carry no more than nine graduate credit hours for each fall and spring semester. Audited or undergraduate courses will not be counted toward the six-credit minimum requirement. Failure to remain in six graduate credit hours will result in the termination of the GAship contract. An Authorization For Overload Form, available on the Forms tab under Additional Forms in the [Grad Rebel Gateway](#), must be approved by the faculty advisor or advisory committee chair (if applicable and already appointed), graduate coordinator, and Graduate College dean for credit loads in excess of 15 credit hours. GAs working during the summer must enroll in at least one graduate credit during Summer Session I, II, or III in order to remain in "student status" for payroll tax purposes. Please note, only a maximum of nine graduate credit hours will be covered by the state-funded GA tuition waiver per semester.

Please note that UNLV considers GAs enrolled in six graduate credits full-time graduate students; however, for federal financial aid purposes, a GA enrolled in fewer than nine credits will be considered part-time. This **could** impact the cost of attendance for a GA in terms of tuition and the cost of course materials (e.g., books).

Please note: All credit hours must be taken at UNLV to maintain GA eligibility unless an official consortium has been approved.

GA Enrollment Deadlines

In order to remain eligible for their GA position, students must enroll in graduate-level credits in a timely manner. For fall, GAs must enroll in six graduate-level credits by July 15. For spring, GAs must enroll in six graduate-level credits by Dec. 15. Students appointed after the July 15 and Dec. 15 deadlines must enroll in six graduate-level credits two weeks before the start of the GA contract. Failure to enroll in the minimum number of graduate-level credits by the deadline may result in the revocation of the GAship. Please note, this deadline does not impact a student's ability to change courses once enrolled. Once registered in the required number of credits, students may swap classes as needed. The [MyUNLV Enrollment Guide](#) provides information on how to swap classes. Please refer to the [Academic Calendar](#) for specific course registration deadlines.

Adhering to Policies and Laws

GAs are required to abide by all federal and state laws; NSHE and university policies; standards

of professional conduct; and the rules, ethical codes, and policies that govern the GA's field of work, area of study, and funding source. Any violation thereof may lead to the termination of a student's GAship; separation from the graduate program; and possible legal action, criminal penalties, and/or other sanctions deemed appropriate.

Students receiving fellowships with paid stipends equivalent or exceeding state-funded stipends amounts may not be eligible to hold GA positions concurrently. Additionally, if approved by the unit and Graduate College, domestic GAs may be approved to work remotely within the US or hold flexible work schedules. Students may also be approved to hold their GA positions while traveling abroad for very brief durations, typically less than one semester, to meet program requirements or research expectations as long as they can continue to complete their GA duties and have attained appropriate approval from both their department, academic dean, and the Graduate College. It's assumed that students who are teaching/working remotely are provided appropriate and ongoing mentorship. Otherwise, students located outside of the US and/or international students may not hold GA positions from their respective home countries.

Application and Renewal of Assistantships

Students must submit a new GA application via the "Funding" tab in the [Grad Rebel Gateway](#) each academic year, even if the GA is continuing in the same position. If a GA is appointed for one semester at a time, a new application must be submitted each semester to be considered for an assistantship. Students must also submit a new GA application to be appointed for summer or to apply for a new or different assistantship.

Notification of Graduate Assistantships

Students are sent an email when a decision has been made on their application. If a GA position has been offered, students must log in to their [Grad Rebel Gateway](#) account and go to the Graduate Assistantships tab to view the GA decision letter and accept or decline the offer by the deadline posted on the GA offer letter. If the GA offer is not accepted within the timeframe posted on the GA offer letter, the GA offer will be rescinded. Hiring departments may contact the GA office at gradfinancialsvc@unlv.edu to request reinstatement of rescinded GA offers.

Equal Opportunity

The University of Nevada, Las Vegas is an equal opportunity institution. UNLV is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504 institution. All applicants to the Graduate College, and admitted students, will receive equal consideration, access to programs and activities, and equitable and just treatment without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, or covered U.S. veteran status. Persons having questions regarding university policies relating to nondiscrimination law are encouraged to contact the Office of Compliance & Title IX at 702-895-4055.

Consensual Relationship Policy

UNLV prohibits romantic or sexual relationships between members of the university community when one of the individuals involved has direct professional influence or direct authority over the other. In that circumstance, both the university and the person in the position of influence

are vulnerable to charges of sexual harassment from the person in the position of lesser power and/or by third parties. This includes graduate student GAs entering into a romantic or sexual relationship with undergraduate students in the courses they support as a GA.

For more information, please see the [Human Resources Consensual Relationships Policy](#) webpage.

Reporting Grievances

The Ombuds Office is a place where all UNLV employees can bring their concerns and is committed to helping UNLV become a more inclusive workplace that builds a sense of belonging for all members of its community. Please visit the [Ombuds Office](#) page for more information about the services offered.

All conduct code violations are handled by the Office of Student Conduct; academic appeals and requests for waivers of Graduate College policies are handled through the Graduate College. All graduate students have a due process right to appeal an academic policy, procedure, or GA issue and to request specific relief or remedy.

With respect to graduate assistantship appeals, graduate students are expected to comport themselves professionally and conform to the ethics, guidelines, policies, and standards of their discipline. It is the responsibility of GAs to know and observe all regulations and procedures related to their graduate program, the Graduate College, NSHE, and UNLV. Questions regarding graduate-level study, graduate student and GA policies, rights, responsibilities, and/or regulations and their interpretation should be addressed with the assistant dean for Student Services in the Graduate College. While the Graduate College will assist with nonacademic advising and hear GA issues, graduate assistants should first seek input and guidance from their faculty advisor, graduate coordinator, department chair, and/or college dean as many issues can be resolved at these levels without need for input from the Graduate College.

To submit a GA grievance form, graduate students may initiate a Graduate Grievance Report form in the Grad Rebel Gateway. The form must be filled out completely, and supporting documents should be attached, if available. The form will initially route to the Graduate College staff and then be reviewed by a committee within the Graduate College. The vice provost for graduate education and the dean of the Graduate College chairs the committee.. In particularly complex or difficult cases, the Graduate College dean may request that the assistant dean of Student Services convene a meeting with the Graduate Appeals and Legal Issues Committee (GALIC) and invite the student to present their case. Faculty or administrators in the student's department, school, and/or college may also be asked to participate in the committee meeting. The GALIC serves in an advisory capacity, and the dean will carefully consider their recommendation and the facts of the case before rendering the final university decision on the matter.

If a GA is terminated, students may appeal the termination of their GAship using the **GA Termination Appeal** form in Grad Rebel Gateway.

GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP BENEFITS

Stipend

All GA appointments must meet the minimum stipend amount for the student's academic program. GA stipend amounts vary by department and program. Stipends cannot exceed 50% FTE of the lowest-paid full-time faculty member in the student's academic program. The maximum stipend is determined based on the monthly payment compared to the lowest-paid faculty member. The GFS team will contact the department if the stipend needs to be adjusted for any reason. Please see the section in the handbook "Graduate Assistantship Stipend Information" for more information.

Program Level	Master's, Artist Diploma, & Specialist Programs (All Disciplines)	Doc/MFA Programs in Humanities & Fine Arts	Doc Programs in Social Sciences, Education, & Professional Schools	Doc/M.Arch. Programs in STEM
Minimum GA Stipend (fall & spring appointment)	\$17,000	\$21,000	\$21,500	\$22,000

Out-of-state Tuition/Fees Waiver

Out-of-state graduate students who become GAs will have the out-of-state tuition waived while under GA contract. It should be noted, however, that out-of-state tuition is waived only during the time the student holds the assistantship. Hence, if a student is no longer a GA, they will be considered an out-of-state student (and pay out-of-state tuition/fees), unless they have [applied for and received Nevada residency](#), as defined in the residency regulations in [Title 4, Chapter 15 of the BOR Handbook](#).

For more information on fees, please see [Tuition & College Costs](#).

Graduate College State-funded GA Tuition/Fees Waiver

A reduction of graduate course registration fees is available to Graduate College state-funded GAs for a maximum of nine credits per semester for students enrolled in state-funded programs. This means that nine graduate-level credits of the in-state per-credit registration fees are paid for by the Graduate College. Please note that state-funded GAs in graduate programs that are subject to differential tuition will only receive a reduction in their tuition equal to up to nine graduate credits at the standard state tuition/fee rate.

Externally Funded GA Tuition/Fees Waiver

If an externally funded (sometimes referred to as extramurally funded) GAship provides a tuition/fee waiver, then this will be indicated on the GA offer letter.

Processing of In-state Tuition/Fee Waivers

Tuition/fee waivers are processed when all required onboarding tasks have been completed. Students must be enrolled in their graduate courses before waivers can be processed.

Parental Leave Policy

Parental leave means leave with or without pay for childbirth or placement of a child for adoption or foster care. The Graduate College will provide up to six weeks of paid GA leave (during the standard GA appointment period), and up to an additional six weeks of unpaid leave or a flexible GA work assignment. For the six weeks of paid leave, the GA will also retain their full stipend and benefits during the leave. If both parents are GAs, the six-week leave may be divided between them, as per their request.

Departments, faculty, and GAs should continue to work collegially to agree upon the details of the leave, recognizing that these may differ from case to case depending on the timing of the birth/adoption, individual student circumstances/preferences, and type of GA work assignment. Supervisors are expected to work with GAs requesting allowable leave to accommodate requests for alternative workload assignments, and/or flexible workload assignments, in a way that recognizes the special needs of, and potential benefits to, the GA. The Graduate College encourages departments to support maximum GA utilization of the Parental Leave Program. GAs who would like to use the parental leave benefits must submit the Graduate College Parental Leave Form at least eight weeks prior to the anticipated leave, or two weeks before the start of the semester, whichever is earlier. To submit this form, log in to the [Grad Rebel Gateway](#) and select the Forms tab. You will find the GA Parental Leave form under Graduate Assistant Forms. For more information, please see the [UNLV Graduate Assistant Parental Leave Program](#).

Waiver for Mandatory Health Insurance

All GAs are required to have health insurance while under contract. All GAs enrolled in the UNLV Student Health Insurance Plan will be given a subsidy for the total cost (fall and spring) of the health insurance premium. The cost of the UNLV Mandatory Health Insurance is subject to change each academic year. Please see the [Student Health Insurance Frequently Asked Questions](#) webpage for the most up-to-date information.

All GAs appointed for fall and spring will be covered by the mandatory health insurance plan for one year (August-August). This plan will be renewed each year that the GA is rehired and does not opt-out of the health insurance program.

The cost of the health insurance will be automatically added to the student account in MyUNLV for both the fall and spring semesters. The amount added to the spring semester bill will be slightly higher, as the cost of the spring health insurance covers summer as well. Students who are able to provide proof of alternate insurance from a non-UNLV provider may qualify for a waiver, and the UNLV health insurance fee and subsidy will be removed from their account.

All international graduate students are required to carry student health insurance. International students who wish to waive out of the UNLV student health insurance must contact OISS for further information. Also, any international graduate students with insurance questions must contact OISS directly. OISS is located in the Office of the Registrar (SSC-C). Their phone number is 702-774-6477 and their email is oiss@unlv.edu. You may also visit the [OISS](#) website.

For additional information, please go to the [Mandatory Graduate Student Health Insurance](#) page on the Graduate College website or to the [Student Health Insurance](#) page on the Student Recreation and Wellness Center website.

University Benefits/Leave

GAs are not eligible to receive annual leave or sick leave. A discussion should be held between the student, department, and Graduate College to determine the best course of action if a student is unable to continue with job duties. GAs are not included in university employee benefits or retirement plans.

Jury Duty

Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 6.190 prohibits employers from terminating or threatening to terminate employees for jury duty. [Title 4, Chapter 3, Section 23 of the BOR Handbook](#) states that “Judicial leave also will be granted to serve on a jury or when summoned to be a witness.” UNLV has a policy of paid leave for employees who are serving on a jury or as a court witness.

Thus, GAs cannot be terminated or threatened to be terminated if they have jury duty. GAs should let their supervisor know as soon as possible of upcoming jury duty services.

For additional information, please see the [Board of Regents Handbook, UNLV’s Human Resources Jury Duty, Civil Leave, and Military Leave](#) page, and [Nevada Administrative Code, Rules for Personnel Administration, Classified Employees](#).

Civil Leave (Voting)

UNLV grants all employees paid time off to vote. The amount of time received to vote depends on the distance between the polling place and the university.

With prior supervisory approval, NRS 293.463 permits employees to use civil leave to the extent reasonably necessary to vote, when it is not practical for employees to vote on their own time.

GAs who anticipate the need to use any work time to vote must talk with their supervisor in advance. Supervisors are encouraged to work with employees to provide reasonable opportunity to vote (and may not unreasonably withhold approval for civil leave).

For additional information, please see [UNLV’s Human Resources Jury Duty, Civil Leave, and Military Leave](#) page and [Nevada Administrative Code, Rules for Personnel Administration, Classified Employees](#).

University Observed Holidays

If a GA’s work schedule falls on one of the university observed holidays, the GA is not expected to make up the hours missed due to the university's closure.

Summer Registration Fees

State-funded GAs who are under contract for the academic year and will be appointed as a GA in the following fall semester may be eligible to receive grant-in-aid for the payment of a specified portion of the tuition and/or registration fees (up to a maximum of three graduate credits) in the summer session(s). All GAs are eligible to receive a non-resident tuition waiver that will be applied to their summer balance. In order to receive this benefit, students must inform the Graduate College by emailing gradfinancialsvc@unlv.edu at the time they enroll in summer classes. The email to the Graduate College should include the GA’s full name, NSHE ID, and the number of credits enrolled.

Bookstore Discount

GAs receive 10% off purchases at the UNLV Bookstore by showing a copy of their GA offer letter (which they receive in the [Grad Rebel Gateway](#)).

Free Student Tickets to UNLV Athletic Events

GAs are eligible to receive free student tickets to UNLV athletic events.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND TAX INFORMATION FOR GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

Taxable and Non-taxable Items

For GAs, all stipends are reported as taxable income. In contrast, tuition/fee waiver/health insurance contributions/scholarships/fellowships are normally not taxed. An exception would be if any scholarship/fellowship amounts exceed qualified education expenses (cost of attendance). International students should expect to be taxed on scholarships, fellowships, and access grants.

GA Loans

GAs can apply for a GA loan of up to \$500 per semester with a fee of \$1 per \$100 borrowed. These loans must be repaid by the end of the semester in which they are granted. Recipients repay the loans through monthly payroll deductions. Please note that the loan is first applied to any unpaid university bills, with the remaining amount provided to the student. GAs may obtain a loan application from Graduate Student Financial Services by emailing gradfinancialsvc@unlv.edu.

Federal Income Tax

Federal income taxes must be deducted under federal laws. Taxes are withheld from each paycheck in accordance with the gross pay and the number of exemptions claimed on GAs' *W-4 Withholding Allowance and Certificate*. For additional information, please see the [Payroll Office](#) website.

FICA

Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) taxes, along with Medicare taxes, are generally withheld from employee paychecks and matched by employers. However, graduate students who are enrolled in more than three credit hours are exempt from FICA. If there is no more than a five-week break between enrollment periods (official semester beginning and ending dates according to the published class schedule), then work between those semesters will not be subject to FICA. Work for pay periods beginning after the end of the spring semester will be subject to FICA unless the student is enrolled in at least one credit during the summer term as long as the break between classes is no more than five weeks. A student in their last semester

of school may want to consult Payroll regarding special FICA exemption requirements that may apply to them. Please be aware that any GA who has additional jobs as a letter of appointment, PTI, or casual labor employee is not considered a student for purposes of exemption from FICA. For more information, please see the [Payroll Office](#) website.

Financial Aid

All GAs will have their GA tuition waiver reflected in their Financial Aid summary in MyUNLV for the terms appointed. Waivers are considered a form of aid and may impact the total funding available via financial aid. For additional information, please contact [Financial Aid](#) via the Self Service Help Center

UNLV considers GAs enrolled in six graduate credits full-time graduate students; however, for federal financial aid purposes, a GA enrolled in fewer than nine credits will be considered part-time. This could impact the cost of attendance for a GA in terms of tuition and the cost of course materials (e.g., books).

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

Overview of the Process

F-1 immigration status allows students who are enrolled in a full course of study to work on campus at the university that issued the I-20. Such employment is limited to 20 hours per week during the semester. A student's UNLV I-20 is their proof of work eligibility for on-campus employment only at UNLV. Students must maintain F-1 status to be eligible for this employment benefit. Degree-seeking J-1 students are also eligible to work up to 20 hours per week on campus as long as they are maintaining their lawful immigration status. J-1 students must have all employment, including on-campus GA work, approved by ISSS in writing before they can begin employment. Maintaining status means that they are in good academic standing and are registered for at least six graduate-level credits each semester that they are a GA. **Credit hours must be taken in residence to maintain GA eligibility unless an official consortium has been approved.**

Definition of On-Campus Employment

On-campus employment includes work done as a GA that takes place on-campus. Off-campus work that is educationally affiliated with UNLV may also be considered on-campus employment for immigration purposes. Please check with ISSS before beginning any work that occurs at an off-campus location for further guidance.

What is Considered Full-time Credit Hours

GAs must take a minimum of six graduate credits to be considered full-time. Note that graduate students who are not GAs must take nine credits to be considered full-time.

Expiration of On-Campus Employment Eligibility

On-campus employment eligibility expires:

- The last working day of the student's final semester (when they graduate), even if the I-20 or DS-2019 expiration date is in the future
- If the student transfers to another university
- If the student violates their F-1/J-1 immigration status

Documents Necessary for a Graduate Assistantship

The first step of completing the necessary documents for the GAship is to accept the GA offer before the deadline in the [Grad Rebel Gateway](#). New international students who have not gained entry to the United States yet will complete the rest of this process when they arrive on campus. Students have 30 days to enter the country before their official program start date, which is registered in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System by the Designated School Official. Students must report to ISSS by their program start date, or they are not maintaining lawful F-1/J-1 status.

In order to maintain valid F-1 or J-1 nonimmigrant status, students must complete a mandatory check-in with ISSS immediately upon arrival at UNLV. **Within one week of arrival at UNLV, students must submit copies of the following immigration documents, along with an updated local address in Las Vegas and contact information:**

- Passport
- F-1/J-1 visa (Canadian citizens are exempt from the visa requirement)
- **Signed** copy of the initial I-20 or DS-2019 (students must sign page 1)
- I-94 (available on the CBP website after entering the U.S: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov>; select "get most recent I-94")

These documents should be uploaded to the OISS Portal within the "Check-In and Maintaining Your Status" request. Their US address and phone number must be updated within their MyUNLV profile. In addition, students must complete the mandatory orientation presentation and quiz found within the OISS Portal.

Social Security Number

All international GAs must obtain a Social Security number (SSN) in order to receive a paycheck. When applying for a SSN, students need to have been in the United States for at least 10 days. Furthermore, it is also suggested that individuals wait at least 48 hours after checking in to the university before applying for a SSN. In order to receive a social security number, the following are required:

- Evidence of On-Campus Employment letter, which is initiated by the student in the Grad Rebel Gateway under the Forms tab. This form will be sent to and signed by an advisor at ISSS after being submitted.
- [Social Security Number Application](#)

- Passport
- F-1/J-1 Visa (Canadian citizens are exempt from the visa requirement)
- Current Continued Attendance I-20 issued by UNLV/Signed DS-2019
- I-94

In most cases, it takes about two weeks to obtain a SSN once the application has been submitted. However, in some rare cases, it can take several weeks. **If students experience a delay in receiving their SSN, please let the Graduate College GA program coordinator know as soon as possible.** International GAs can begin work without having a SSN, but cannot receive pay until the SSN is received by the Graduate College. **Please note, the I-9 must be completed within three days of employment regardless of the status of the SSN.** If an international GA begins work during the contract period without a SSN, they will still be compensated for the time worked once the number is received and a contract is initiated.

U.S. Taxes

All individuals who are not citizens or permanent residents of the United States are required to complete an [Alien Information Collection Form](#) before receiving any payment from NSHE. All new employees are required to meet with UNLV's Nonresident Alien Tax Specialist. Once students have signed their official GA contract, they will be contacted by the Nonresident Alien Tax Specialist to set up a meeting. Please visit the [UNLV Nonresident Tax Procedure](#) page for more information and required documents.

English Proficiency Requirement for New International Graduate Assistants

All new international students who are first-time GAs without sufficient Proof of English Proficiency (PEP) will be required to take the Duolingo English Test. This includes: all GAs who will be advising or teaching students as an instructor, teaching assistant, or lab supervisor; research assistants; and GAs with other professional duties.

The Duolingo English Test must be taken **before** the start of the semester the GA intends to work at UNLV. Specifically, the last day to take the Duolingo English Test is two weeks before the start of the GA contract. International GAs who cannot provide sufficient PEP or pass the Duolingo English Test cannot serve in a teaching capacity during their first semester as a GA and will be reassigned to non-teaching duties if applicable.

Passing Score and ESL 580X: Students must receive a score of 110 or better on the Duolingo English Test in order to receive a passing score. Results from the Duolingo English Test are forwarded to the Graduate College after they have been evaluated by the Duolingo Testing Center. GAs who do not obtain a score of 110 or higher will be required to enroll in ESL 580X during their first semester as a GA. Failure to attend ESL 580X will result in the termination of the GA contract. GAs must receive a "B" or better in ESL 580X. If a passing grade is not earned in ESL 580X, the GA department can request to terminate the GA contract if non-teaching assignments are not available.

Retesting: Retesting of the Duolingo English Test may occur up until one week before ESL 580X

begins. Once ESL 580X begins, there will be no further testing offered until the following semester. ESL 580X start dates are posted in the academic class schedule. Retesting is at the student's own expense and must be paid for at the time of testing.

ESL 580X Overview: ESL 580X will be offered each fall and spring semester. The course will be scheduled on Friday mornings and will be offered in a 10-week modular format, which begins three weeks after the start of the regularly scheduled classes.

Modification of GA Duties: Any international GTA who does not receive a passing score of 110 or higher on the Duolingo English Test cannot be assigned to any duties that involve teaching or advising students. This includes teaching courses, instructing lab sessions, or advising students in office hours or lab settings. Normal teaching duties can be reinstated once a passing score is received on the Duolingo English Test or ESL 580x is successfully passed with a grade of "B" or higher.

Duolingo Test Exemption: Returning international GAs, new GAs from countries where English is both the national and home language, and international students who have obtained a degree from an English-speaking institution will be exempt from taking the Duolingo English Test. Other exemptions include new international GAs who scored a minimum of 22 on the TOEFL IBT Speaking component or a minimum of 6.5 on the spoken English portion of the IELTS exam. All scores are valid for two years and must be officially reported to UNLV. Self-reported scores will not be accepted.

For additional information, please see the [Graduate College's English Proficiency Requirement for New International Graduate Assistants](#) website.

GRADUATE COLLEGE POLICIES ON GA PERFORMANCE

Academic Performance

GAs are first and foremost students. Thus, they should be familiar with the provisions of the current [Graduate Catalog](#) and their specific program handbook. GAs must satisfactorily progress toward their degree and remain in good academic standing as defined in the Graduate Catalog and program handbooks. To be in good academic standing, graduate students must have a 3.0 or higher graduate program GPA in their current certificate/program(s), have met any provisional and conditional admissions requirements, comply with the continuous enrollment policy, and not be involved in any type of active conduct investigation on campus. Please note that students return to good academic standing once they successfully remedy the issue that impacted their standing.

Student conduct policy breaches may also impact a student's eligibility to hold a GA appointment.

GA Resignation

The decision by a student to resign from their GA position, especially in the middle of an appointment period, can have significant financial, academic, and personal implications. GAs

are encouraged to consult with their supervisor or the dean of the Graduate College before making the decision to resign. A written statement is required to resign the appointment and must be sent to the Graduate College (gradfinancialsvc@unlv.edu). Students must cite the effective date of resignation and, to the extent possible, a reason for the resignation.

Tuition/Fees Upon Termination or Resignation

If a GA appointment is terminated early, after the start of the contract, tuition and fees are generally not rescinded for the current semester. If a GA resigns before the end of the contract, written notification must be sent to the Graduate College and the GA department. GA resignation may result in loss of tuition/fee benefits if the resignation occurs 45 days into the contract period of the current semester.

GRADUATE ASSISTANT LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Read the Information Below Before Completing a Leave of Absence Form in the Grad Rebel Gateway

A leave of absence (LOA) can be granted for up to one or two academic year(s). While on leave, students retain their admitted student status; however, they are not registered and therefore do not have the rights and privileges of registered students, such as holding a GA position. Failure to return as scheduled or to secure an extension of a prior leave of absence will result in separation from the university. Taking an LOA can have an impact on financial aid, as well as impact visa status for international students. Students considering taking an LOA should discuss options with their graduate coordinator and review the [Graduate Student Handbook](#) prior to submitting an LOA form.

Taking a Leave of Absence from a Graduate Assistantship

Students unable to perform GA duties, but are able to remain enrolled in classes should contact their GA supervisor to discuss options. If it is agreed that it is appropriate and necessary to take an LOA from the GA position for the current term, the GA should follow the guidelines under the GA resignation section of the handbook. The GA and supervisor should discuss options for future GA positions within the department and follow all guidelines regarding reapplying for a GA position.

TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

Mandatory GA Orientation

New GAs are required to attend Graduate Assistant Orientation. The online orientation will consist of representatives from the university discussing such issues as student conduct, disability resources, policy and procedures, meeting a class for the first time, and an FAQ session with current GAs.

Mandatory Trainings

FERPA: The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. § 1232g is a federal law enacted in 1974. FERPA is designed to protect the privacy of students' educational records. All educational institutions that receive federal funding must comply with FERPA. For more information, please see the [Office of the Registrar's](#) website.

All GAs are required to complete the FERPA training. To access this training, please go to the [Understanding FERPA Training](#).

Sexual Harassment Prevention Training: NSHE policy states that institutions must provide new students and new employees primary prevention and awareness training that promotes awareness of rape, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking as defined in this policy. The training must address safe and positive options for bystander intervention to prevent harm, including how to intervene in risky situations, the recognition of abusive behavior, and how to avoid potential attacks.

Incoming graduate students within their first semester of enrollment shall receive training regarding the prevention of unlawful discrimination and harassment, including primary prevention and awareness training.

Within six months after an employee is initially appointed to NSHE, the employee shall receive training regarding the prevention of unlawful discrimination and harassment, including primary prevention and awareness training. At least once every two years after the appointment, an employee shall receive training concerning the prevention of unlawful discrimination and harassment.

For more information, please visit the [Sexual Harassment Prevention Training](#) website and the [Office of Equal Employment and Title IX](#).

Training and Support

Academic Policies: For information on the academic policies for undergraduate students, please see the current [Undergraduate Catalog](#). From here, click on 'Academic Policies' (box on the left) and then select 'Grades.' For graduate students, please see the current [Graduate Catalog](#).

Graduate College Events: To stay up-to-date on Graduate College events, please visit the [Graduate College student calendar](#).

The Grad Academy: [The Grad Academy](#) is a virtual success center that offers support and many professional development opportunities, enhances the graduate experience, and helps prepare students for future success. The Grad Academy offers free, year-long professional development programs in the areas of [research](#), [teaching](#), and [mentorship](#). The Grad Academy also offers a number of other programs, including the [Grad Rebel Ambassadors program](#) and the [Grad Rebel Writing Boot Camp](#). The Graduate College and GPSA co-sponsor more than 30 [workshops](#) each semester (UNLV Libraries and the Writing Center also offer workshops). All graduate and professional students and graduate certificate students can attend these workshops. Please visit [The Grad Academy](#) webpage for additional information, or contact gradacademy@unlv.edu with any questions.

UNLV Faculty Center/Teaching and Learning Commons: The [UNLV Faculty Center/Teaching and Learning Commons](#) promotes the professional development of all UNLV educators, researchers, and other academic professionals through a program of research, consultation, events, and resources. Many campus units, academic and administrative, work in collaboration to provide the center's services, along with a team of Faculty Center/Teaching and Learning Commons fellows. Services at the Faculty Center/Teaching and Learning Commons focus on teaching development, research support, and career planning.

LinkedIn Learning: LinkedIn Learning is an award-winning, web-based training service available for free to UNLV students, faculty, and staff. GAs have unlimited access to the vast LinkedIn Learning training library, which can help with learning new software or improving existing skills with a variety of programs. For more information, including how to log in, please see the [Office of Information Technology](#) website.

Policies for Faculty and All Teaching Staff: Policies relevant to faculty and all teaching staff, including classroom guidelines, grading, syllabi content, and midterm grades, can be found on the [University Policies](#) webpage. To review current policies, visit the [Current Policies](#) page. From here students can use the search bar to find the most recent memos for the current academic year.

UNLV Alcohol and Drug-Free Workplace Policy: Alcohol and drug abuse and the use of alcohol and drugs in the workplace are issues of concern to the state of Nevada. It is the policy of the state to ensure that its employees do not report for work in an impaired condition resulting from the use of alcohol or drugs, or consume alcohol while on duty, at a work site, or on state property. Any employee who violates this policy is subject to disciplinary action.

HOW TO FIND A GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP

Below is information for how students might find a GAsip on the UNLV campus:

- It is standard practice for many academic departments to offer GA positions to matriculating students using internal selection criteria and processes. This option is typical for departments that use GA positions for recruitment and are looking for students with specific skillsets and interests to meet programmatic need. This is the most common way of finding a GA.
- Non-academic units put information about positions on the [UNLV Career Services](#) website. Students must create an account with the Handshake platform in order to see information on GAsips. To look for GAsips, please log in to [Handshake](#).
- Students should regularly check their Rebelmail. Important information is regularly emailed to graduate students, including information about GAsips. Rebelmail is considered the official email account for communication at UNLV.

STEPS FOR FIRST-TIME GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

Students who have been selected to receive a GAship must follow these steps:

- Log in to the [Grad Rebel Gateway](#) to view the offer letter.
- Accept or decline the assistantship offer in the [Grad Rebel Gateway](#) by the deadline provided on the letter. Offers not accepted by the deadline will be rescinded. Students whose offers have been rescinded should contact the GA department for instructions. The department may contact Graduate Financial Services at gradfinancialsvc@unlv.edu to request a reinstatement of rescinded offer. This is at the discretion of the GA hiring department.
- After accepting the GA offer in the [Grad Rebel Gateway](#), the student will receive an email (typically within five business days) from Graduate Financial Services (gradfinancialsvc@unlv.edu) with information about onboarding tasks.
- The employment contract will be initiated in a system called Workday (a cloud-based administrative software, which provides key HR, benefits, and financial services). Once the contract has been initiated and approved, the student will receive an email from Workday regarding mandatory onboarding tasks required for employment at UNLV. Some of these onboarding items could include completing:
 - Section 1 of I-9
 - W-4
 - [Alcohol and Drug Free Workplace](#)
 - Direct Deposit (strongly recommended)
 - Nevada Constitutional Oath (GAs in F-1 or J-1 immigration status are not required to subscribe to the oath)
 - Voluntary Self-Identification of Disability
- GAs must register for classes by the deadlines discussed in the GA Enrollment Deadline section of the handbook. Tuition/fee waivers will not be processed until the student is registered in the appropriate number of credits.

STEPS FOR RETURNING GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

Returning GAs, must follow these steps:

- Log in to the [Grad Rebel Gateway](#) to view the offer letter.
- Accept or decline the assistantship offer in the [Grad Rebel Gateway](#) by the deadline provided on the letter (two weeks from when you received your GA offer letter). Offers not accepted by the deadline will be rescinded. Students whose offers have been rescinded should contact the GA department for instructions. The department may contact Graduate Financial Services at gradfinancialsvc@unlv.edu to request a reinstatement of the rescinded offer. This is at the discretion of the GA department.
- After accepting the GA offer in the [Grad Rebel Gateway](#), the student will receive an email (typically within five business days) from Graduate Financial Services (gradfinancialsvc@unlv.edu) with information about onboarding tasks.
- The employment contract will be initiated in a system called Workday (a cloud-based administrative software, which provides key HR, benefits, and financial services). Once the contract has been initiated and approved, the student will receive an email from Workday regarding any mandatory onboarding tasks required for employment at UNLV.
- GAs must register for classes by the deadlines discussed in the GA Enrollment Deadline section of the handbook. Tuition/fee waivers will not be processed until the student is registered in the appropriate number of credits.

SUMMER GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

Currently, only externally funded (sometimes referred to as extramurally funded) GA positions are available during the summer sessions. Summer GAs can be appointed for half of the summer or the entire summer. Summer GAs are required to work 20 hours or 10 hours per week depending on the FTE% of the contract. GAs working during the summer must enroll in at least one graduate credit during Summer Session I, II, or III in order to remain in “student status” for payroll tax purposes.

The Graduate College will process summer employment contracts through Workday. Students will be sent an email from Graduate Financial Services (gradfinancialsvc@unlv.edu) if there are any onboarding steps that must be completed.

GRADUATE ASSISTANT STIPEND, PAYROLL, AND APPOINTMENT INFORMATION

GA Stipend Information

All GA appointments must meet the minimum stipend amount from the student's academic program. If the department decides to provide a stipend that is higher than the minimum stipend, they are encouraged to ensure stipends are equitable.

A GA stipend cannot exceed 50% FTE of the lowest paid full-time faculty member in the student's academic program. The maximum stipend is determined based on the monthly payment compared to the lowest paid faculty member.

Please note that GAs are not permitted to work more than 20 hours per week, no matter the stipend amount. GA stipends should be equitable across disciplines. Any increase to an individual GA stipend should be tied to program milestones and consistent for all GAs within the program.

Please see the [Graduate Assistant Stipend, Payroll, & Appointment Information](#) page for specific stipend amounts by program.

Maximum Time Limits for State GA Funding Policy

Please find below the details of the policy regarding maximum time limits for state-funded GAs and its enforcement.

- The maximum time limits for state-funded GAs are as follows:
 - Master's-level state-funded GAs may hold their position for two years with the possibility of a one semester extension if degree completion is pending.
 - Post-bachelor's doctoral-level state-funded GAs may hold their position for four years and then be renewed up to two additional one-year extensions, if the student is making good progress toward degree completion.
 - Post-master's doctoral-level state-funded GAs may hold their position for three years, with a possibility of up to two additional one-year extensions, if the student is making good progress toward degree completion. MFA students may be supported on a state-funded GA for three years with the possibility of a one-year extension for pending degree completion.
- Academic units will need to set appropriate policies internally regarding currently and previously funded state GAs; the policy must be clear, fair, and consistent for all students in the unit.
- This policy does not impact non-state-funded GAs. If a Graduate College funded state GA receives grant funding for a year and then returns to Graduate College state funding, their year off of state funding will not count toward their maximum time limit.

- State-funded GAs are operationalized as those who are appointed by an academic unit using state funds allocated by the Graduate College to the dean of the academic college, and then assigned to the department/school for distribution. Grants, contracts, and the use of department, college, or unit funds to appoint GAs are beyond the “Grad College state-funded GA” category (called externally or extramurally funded GAs), and are therefore exempt from this time limit policy.
- Despite having all “externally funded” (sometimes referred to as extramurally funded) GAs exempt from this policy, departments are encouraged to mentor all their graduate students to timely degree completion and not to elongate graduate programs due to the availability of other GA funds.

Council of Graduate Schools April 15 Resolution and Deadline to Accept GA Offers

The UNLV Graduate College supports the Council of Graduate Schools Resolution Regarding Graduate Scholars, Fellows, Trainees and Assistants. Accepting a GA offer for the upcoming academic year by a prospective or enrolled graduate student is an agreement that both the student and the university expect to honor. Students are under no obligation to respond to offers of financial support prior to April 15. If a student accepts a GA offer before April 15 and wishes to withdraw that application, they may do so by sending written notification to the GA department and Graduate College. Offers of financial support accepted after April 15 commits the student to not accept another offer without first obtaining a written release from the institution to which an offer has been accepted. An offer by an institution after April 15 is conditional on presentation by the student of the written release from any previously accepted offer. For more information, please see the [Council of Graduate Schools: Resolution Regarding Graduate Scholars, Fellows, Trainees, and Assistants](#). GA offer letters posted after April 1 will have a two-week acceptance deadline before the GA offer is rescinded.

Faculty Responsibilities

To ensure clear communication and to protect all parties involved, the GA supervisor must provide the GA with pertinent objective and subjective work standards that comport with NSHE and UNLV guidelines and as stated in [Title 4, Chapter 5 of the BOR Handbook](#).

Deadlines for Appointing a Graduate Assistant

Fall Semester and Fall/Spring Semester Contracts: May 15* is the deadline for requesting a GA for the fall semester, or for the fall/spring academic year. The only exceptions to the deadlines are replacement appointments due to resignations or appointments resulting from new funding.

Spring Semester Contracts: Dec. 15* is the deadline for requesting a GA for the spring semester. The only exceptions to the deadlines are replacement appointments due to resignations or new appointments resulting from new funding.

Summer Session Contracts: May 15* is the deadline for requesting a GA for the summer session. The only exceptions to the deadlines are replacement appointments due to resignations or for new appointments resulting from new funding.

**Please note: All GA department reviews should be submitted in the Grad Rebel Gateway by the*

deadlines listed above unless the appointment meets one of the exceptions. The Graduate College cannot guarantee that tuition waivers will be processed before the payment deadline or the date of the first GA paycheck for any department review submitted to the Graduate College after the deadline. It is the responsibility of the hiring department to manage the expectations of GAs that are submitted to the Graduate College after the appointment deadlines.

It is important that all GA appointments are submitted in the Grad Rebel Gateway in a timely manner. It is a violation of labor laws to have an employee work without compensation and is not acceptable under any circumstances. Withholding pay until a grant is in place is also not permissible. **GA appointments will not be accepted or processed by the Graduate College for a contract period that has already ended.**

GA positions should typically be appointed for an academic year, both fall and spring semesters (moving away from semester-by-semester appointments). NSHE Board of Regents Handbook Title 4, Chapter 5, Section 2 states, “Normally, appointments shall be made either for the academic year or for 12 months; however appointments may be offered for a shorter period to fill vacancies created by resignations or by establishment of temporary positions.”

Maximum Number of Courses Graduate Teaching Assistants May Teach Per Semester

Per the [Board of Regents Handbook](#) (Title 4, Chapter 5, Section 3), GTAs may teach or provide teaching support for no more than two courses per semester (maximum six credits), or the equivalent. This includes courses where GTAs are instructors of record, even when faculty have provided the bulk of teaching materials that the GTAs use in their instruction.

Remaining Graduate College State GA Allocations

Graduate College state allocations should be used to make timely GA appointments that support the academic program and mission. If a department does not have enough funding to appoint a final GA but has departmental funds to contribute to the minimum stipend, please reach out to the respective Graduate College GA program coordinator or email gradfinancialsvc@unlv.edu. GA stipend increases can be given to currently appointed GAs using remaining Graduate College state allocations as long as the remaining allocation is less than the amount of a full GA stipend. The stipend increase cannot be less than \$500 per GA and must be equitable among the GAs in a department. Ideally, stipend increases should be tied to academic accomplishments, program milestones, or other measurable markers. Please note that GAs are not permitted to work more than 20 hours per week, no matter the stipend amount.

Making Changes to an Accepted GA Offer

It is understandable that from time to time changes will need to be made after an offer has been extended. Please note, due to the high demand of meeting deadlines to ensure GAs are hired and on-boarded on time, and that tuition waivers are processed before the payment deadline, any changes to accepted GA offers will not be processed until after the start of the current semester. This includes stipend increases, updating Workday worktags, and changing tuition packages. Please note, the Graduate College will not decrease the amount of a GA offer after it has been extended.

Setting Expectations Between the Department/Hiring Unit/Faculty Supervisor and the Graduate Assistant

It is critical that both the GA and the department/ hiring unit/faculty supervisor hold collectively common understanding and expectations of the GA's duties and responsibilities. As such, the Graduate College recommends jointly setting and documenting specific expectations and goals early in the term (and doing this for each term that the graduate student holds the GA position). There should also be a discussion on opportunities to touch base and a reasonable plan for efficient communication in a timely manner.

The Role of the Department/Hiring Unit/Faculty Supervisor

The department/hiring unit/faculty supervisor is responsible for the work of the GAs. This includes assigning them their duties, providing adequate supervision, training GAs on new tasks, ensuring compliance with IRB and all regulatory offices, providing ongoing feedback, and annual performance evaluation. Many departments and hiring units will conduct periodic reviews and evaluations to monitor the progress of the GAs. When GAs have questions concerning their appointments, the hiring department should be consulted first.

In regards to GAs in the department, they are often assigned to work with specific faculty members. These faculty members help to monitor the GA during the period of the semester and should be able to help the student if any questions or issues do arise. Department chairs have the ultimate responsibility for assistants in their departments, although this responsibility may be delegated to another administrator or faculty member. **Department chairs are responsible for ensuring that no GA works more than 20 hours per week.**

Departments generally provide office/laboratory space, and other facilities and tools necessary for effectively fulfilling their GA responsibilities.

Addressing Performance Issues

Setting and documenting specific expectations and goals early in the term is key to preventing performance issues, which can be related to degree progress or specific duties/responsibilities. The department/hiring unit/faculty supervisor is encouraged to communicate with their GAs about any perceived performance issues as clearly and concretely as possible. This communication should also be done in a timely manner. The GA should be provided with the opportunity to make improvements on performance. The Graduate College encourages the use of informal discussion first to resolve performance issues, but it is important to have documentation of these discussions.

If discussion with the GA fails to resolve the performance issue, then there is a possibility of termination of the assistantship. In general, the Graduate College relies on the expert judgment and recommendation of the departments as to whether the GAs are fulfilling their responsibilities to be renewed. Supervisors must follow the procedures below in order to terminate a GA appointment early. This should be a last resort after appropriate warning, mentorship, and due process.

Termination Policy Information and Directions for Faculty and Impacted GA

- Once appointed, GAs may not have their tuition/fee waiver revoked for the current semester.
- If the GA is properly notified about pertinent work standards and fails to meet those standards, the [Termination Request form](#) may be used to terminate a GAship appointment and the stipend prior to the end of the GA's appointed term of service.
- The GA's supervisor must complete the Termination of Graduate Assistant Form in its entirety. Supporting documentation may be attached and submitted with the form. The form is submitted by logging in to the [Grad Rebel Gateway/Salesforce](#), finding the GA application for the current term, and selecting the GA Termination Request button at the top of the page. If you do not have access to the Grad Rebel Gateway, please contact gradfinancialsvc@unlv.edu.
- The form will be routed through Docusign and must be approved by the GA supervisor, graduate coordinator, department chair, and college dean before it will be submitted to the Graduate College and Graduate Financial Services team.
- The termination request will be reviewed, and a final recommendation will be made by the Graduate College.
- Official notice will then be sent to the GA supervisor and the impacted GA.
- Once officially notified of termination, a GA may submit the [Termination Appeal form](#) (with supporting documentation) **within five business days**. Failure to do so will suspend the student's right to review. The appeal form can be found by logging in to the [Grad Rebel Gateway](#) and visiting the Forms page under Graduate Assistant Forms.
- The GA Termination Appeal Form and supporting documents must be speedily reviewed and responded to by the GA supervisor, graduate coordinator, department chair, and college dean.
- The GA Termination Appeal documents and signed form will then be submitted to the Graduate College and Graduate Financial Services team that will consult with an independent review committee comprised of appropriate persons, which may include representatives from legal counsel, research services, sponsored programs, and/or the Graduate College faculty and student issues committee, as well as a GPSA representative.
- The final decisions will be rendered, and the final resolution will be signed, by the dean of the Graduate College.

GRADUATE TEACHING QUALIFICATIONS

Though the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities does not provide detailed specifications regarding requirements for undergraduate or graduate teaching credentials, other regional accrediting bodies, such as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, do.

These teaching standards are best practice at most Top Tier institutions and ensure quality and excellence of instruction at all levels. In spring 2018, the Graduate College, Graduate Council, and Graduate Council Executive Committee endorsed a measured and thoughtful transition to the guidelines outlined below.

Current faculty successfully teaching at any graduate level without meeting the new requirements may be grandparented in with approval of the department chair, academic dean, and the Graduate College dean. These guidelines should be kept in mind when making new hiring decisions as new faculty, faculty-in-residence, and part-time instructors (PTI) hires should have the qualifications outlined below to teach at the desired level. Likewise, graduate program teaching assignments should conform to the guidelines described below. For additional information about Graduate Faculty Status requirements and the graduate teaching, advisement, mentorship rights thereof, please refer to the [Graduate Faculty Status guidelines](#).

Limit on Teaching for Graduate Teaching Assistants

- Per Title 4, Chapter 5 of the NSHE Board of Regents Handbook, graduate teaching assistants may teach no more than two courses per semester (6 credits), or the equivalent.
- Graduate assistants may be assigned tasks to assist a professor. Tasks may include, but are not limited to, grading papers, proctoring examinations, serving as laboratory assistants, and/or leading discussion groups of a subdivided class.
- Graduate assistants may also teach under the supervision of a professor or director. The course should follow the prescribed course syllabus, in conformity with standards adopted by the department, and at a level determined by the department as appropriate for each individual. The Graduate College recommends that this is done after completing a teaching methods course, workshop, or training. Minimum Qualifications for Graduate Students to Teach Undergraduates
- The Graduate College requires graduate student instructors of record (GAs, PTIs, etc.) for 100- to 400-level courses to hold a master's degree or higher in the field of instruction, or a closely related field. For those who do not have a graduate credential in the field of instruction, they must have successfully completed a minimum of nine to 18 graduate credits in the discipline (or a closely related discipline) in which they are teaching, or be approved as nationally/internationally recognized as experts in their field. More specifically:
 - Graduate students who are providing instructional support for classes (as a GTA), leading recitations, labs, or discussion sessions (not as instructor of record) may do so at any time under close supervision of faculty.
 - For students who are instructors of record, a minimum of nine successfully completed (B or better) graduate-level credits in the field of instruction are required.
- Departments, schools, and colleges may have stricter guidelines or additional requirements for instructional faculty.
- Graduate students must demonstrate sufficient English language proficiency, as delineated in the Graduate Catalog and Graduate College website. Proof of English

proficiency for international students will be assessed by standardized tests like TOEFL, IELTS, the MTELP, or Duolingo English test for non-English language speakers, prior to being approved as an instructor of record.

- The Graduate College recommends that graduate students complete a pedagogy class, a teaching certificate program, and/or other substantive teacher training before and/or during their time as the instructor of record in a class.
- Graduate students must be closely supervised by a UNLV faculty member while engaged in autonomous instruction. There must be ongoing oversight and mentorship of all GTAs and graduate student instructors from academic faculty to ensure excellence, rigor, and compliance with appropriate norms, guidelines, and standards of the discipline and UNLV.

Minimum Graduate Faculty Teaching Qualifications

- Faculty teaching graduate classes (500- to 700-level) must have a terminal degree in the field of instruction or a closely related discipline.
 - Master's-credentialed individuals who have distinguished themselves in their fields; have a national or international professional reputation; and/or engage in quality research, scholarship, or creative activities may, on a limited basis, be approved to teach master's-level students, particularly in professional degree programs.
 - These requests for exceptions shall be rigorously reviewed and adjudicated on a case-by-case basis through the department/school, academic dean, and Graduate College dean and handled via the Graduate College's Graduate Faculty Appeal Form when necessary.
- Instructors teaching doctoral students must hold a terminal degree in the field of instruction, or in a very closely related field with evidence of research, scholarship, performative or creative activity in the teaching area.
- **Graduate students may not teach graduate-level courses as the instructor of record or evaluate fellow graduate students in any capacity.** The only exception is if they are simultaneously tenure-track or tenured faculty in another program at UNLV.
- Departments, schools, and colleges may have stricter guidelines or additional requirements for graduate instructors as appropriate.

EXTERNALLY FUNDED GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

Graduate Assistant Appointments

- State funded GAs are allocated to support faculty and courses based on departmental availability and internal departmental processes unique to the home unit. The Graduate College does not accept faculty requests for GAs. The standard process is as follows: (1) the Graduate College allocates funding to the academic college dean's office; (2) the academic college dean allocates funding to each unit/department within the college based on their own internal metrics; (3) the chair, in collaboration with faculty, allocates

GA support to specific faculty, research, or teaching support based in their own internal metrics. Faculty must work with their graduate coordinator or department to appoint (or decline to appoint) student GA applications in the Grad Rebel Gateway. All appointment information is contained in the Grad Rebel Gateway application, and each department has one or more trained users who can access the system and work on GA appointments.

- Faculty who are planning on hiring a GA on a grant should review the section below on “Budgeting for an Externally Funded Graduate Assistant.”
- Once appointed, externally funded (sometimes referred to as extramurally funded) GAs and supervisors must abide by the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook. All the same policies and guidelines that apply to state-funded GAs also apply to externally funded GAs.

Budgeting for an Externally Funded Graduate Assistant

The Graduate College encourages faculty to seek external funds to support graduate student research endeavors. This may be accomplished in a variety of ways, including but not limited to, writing GAs into grants and contracts. For more information about obtaining external funds, contact UNLV’s [Office of Sponsored Programs](#).

Please see the [Graduate College’s Budgeting for a GA](#) website for information on calculating GA costs. The projected costs for future fiscal years are included in the table for your convenience in budgeting for multi-year grants. Externally funded (sometimes referred to as extramurally funded) GRAs and GTAs must be appointed for a minimum of one semester (summer, fall, or spring). All the same policies and guidelines that are identified for state-funded GAs apply to externally funded GAs.

APPENDIX A: POINTS OF CONTACT

Dean of the Graduate College

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GTW 272

International Student and Scholar Services

Current F-1 students at UNLV

Office Location: [Student Services Complex, Building A Suite 201](#)

Phone: 702-774-6477

Fax: 702-774-3639

Email: oiss@unlv.edu

International Student and Scholar Services (J-1, H-1B, TN, O-1, E-3, PR)

Office Location: [Student Services Complex, Building A, Room 201](#)

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