



## **GRADUATE ASSISTANT HANDBOOK**

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## LIST OF TERMS

**AY:** Academic Year (fall and spring)

**BOR:** Board of Regents

**CGRA:** Community Graduate Research Assistant

**DSO:** Designated School Official is a person that assists and oversees international students to help them maintain F-1 non-immigrant status.

**FERPA:** The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law enacted in 1974 that protects the privacy of student education records.

**FICA:** Federal Insurance Contributions Act is the federal law that requires an employer to withhold three separate taxes from employees' wages.

**FTE:** Full-time equivalent salary

**GA:** Graduate Assistant

**GC:** Graduate College

**GC State-Funded Graduate Assistants:** Graduate Assistants who are supported through state funds allocated directly from the Graduate College.

**GCTP:** Graduate College Teaching Program

**GCMP:** Graduate College Mentorship Program

**GCRP:** Graduate College Research Program

**GFS:** Graduate Financial Services

**GPSA:** Graduate and Professional Student Association

**GRA:** Graduate Research Assistant

**GTA:** Graduate Teaching Assistant

**Non-State-Funded Graduate Assistants:** Graduate assistants that are funded by grants, contracts, CGRAs, and departmental/ non-academic units on campus.

**NSHE:** Nevada System of Higher Education

**LOA:** Leave of Absence

**LOA:** Letter of Appointment

**OISS:** Office of International Students and Scholars

**On-Campus Employment:** On-campus employment includes work done as a GA, as well as any paid work anywhere on campus or any employment paid by an office of the university.

**OSP:** Office of Sponsored Programs

**Parental Leave:** “Parental leave” means leave with or without pay for childbirth or placement of a child for adoption or foster care

**PDGRA:** Professional Development Graduate Research Assistant

**SEVIS:** Student and Exchange Visitor Information System is a nationwide, Internet-based database used by the U.S. government to maintain accurate and current information on the arrival, enrollment, and departures of international students and their dependents.

**TTDGRA:** Top Tier Doctoral Graduate Research Assistant (formerly known as DGRA, or Doctoral Graduate Research Assistant)

**UG:** Undergraduate

**UNLV:** University of Nevada Las Vegas

**Workday:** Workday is cloud-based administrative software, which provides key HR, benefits, and financial services.

## DESCRIPTIONS OF 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.

Graduate College State-Funded Graduate Assistants: Graduate assistants who are supported through state funds allocated directly from the Graduate College. All state funds must be spent by the end of the fiscal year on June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Extramurally or Non-State-Funded Graduate Assistants: Graduate assistants that are funded by grants, contracts, CGRAs, and departmental/ non-academic units on campus

### GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP CATEGORIES AND DESCRIPTIONS

There are five main categories of graduate assistantships: Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA); Graduate Research Assistant (GRA); Community Graduate Research Assistant (CGRA); Top Tier Doctoral Graduate Research Assistant (TTDGRA); and Professional Development Graduate Research Assistant (PDGRA).

While a student may fall into one of these categories, they are still considered a graduate assistant.

Below are the descriptions of each of the categories.



Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA): Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) is the term used at UNLV to refer to graduate assistantships that work on campus in teaching-related positions. Most of the graduate

assistantships on campus are GTAs. Within a college or school, 80% of the graduate assistants have to be Graduate College state-funded GTAs. GTAs teach a maximum of 6 credits each semester. GTAs assist faculty members with teaching. GTA responsibilities vary greatly and may include, but are not limited to:

- 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 (GRA): Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) is the term used at UNLV to refer to graduate assistantships that 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 cutting edge research. GRAs are generally funded through competitive faculty grants and contracts. GRA 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
- Preparing materials for IRB review

Community Graduate Research Assistant (CGRA): Community Graduate Research Assistant (CGRA) is the term used at UNLV to refer to Graduate Research Assistants that are funded by community partners. These GAs are always funded by partners external to UNLV. CGRAs work on campus under the direction of a UNLV faculty member, not the funding agent. CGRAs may be asked to present to their funding agent each semester, to share research findings, etc. All UNLV GA guidelines and regulations apply to CGRAs.

Top Tier Doctoral Graduate Research Assistant (TTDGRA): Top Tier Doctoral Graduate Research Assistant (TTDGRA) is the term used at UNLV to refer to graduate assistantship positions that are awarded to faculty members based on a campus competitive grant application process. These positions were formerly known as Doctoral Graduate Research Assistants (DGRAs). Duties for these graduate assistants include working on specific research topics alongside the faculty member that was awarded the TTDGRA. TTDGRAs are awarded to faculty on a three year cycle.

Professional Development Graduate Research Assistant (PDGRA): Professional Development Graduate Research Assistant (PDGRA) is the term used at UNLV to refer to graduate assistants that are funded by university department funds. PDGRAs work on campus, primarily in non-academic departments, such as the Academic Success Center, Career Services, Office of International Students, the Graduate College, etc. Duties can involve counseling and playing a leader role with regard to specific programs. Graduate assistants in this category gain professional skills in their field of study while contributing to student services around campus. PDGRA positions must be related to the GAs scholarly area of study.



# **GRADUATE COLLEGE POLICIES ON GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP DUTIES AND EXPECTATIONS**

## **ELIGIBILITY**

In order to be eligible to apply for a GA, the student must have been fully admitted as a degree-seeking student into a master's or doctoral degree program. New students may not begin their GA before their first semester of matriculation.

## **TERMS AND DATES OF APPOINTMENTS**

Graduate assistants are appointed by the university to conduct work in exchange for a stipend package. In this capacity, they are expected to report in the same timeframe as faculty (e.g., during academic semesters and not during break or vacation times). Graduate assistants must report to work one week prior to first day of instruction for both fall and spring semester. A graduate assistant contract ends one week after final's 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. Graduate assistantships are designed to be supportive of graduate students' intellectual and professional development. Faculty should not ask GAs to perform menial labor, such as office cleaning, personal errand running, dog-walking, babysitting, or similar activities that are unrelated to the student's academic development. Faculty or GAs with questions about appropriate GA responsibilities are urged to contact Graduate Financial Services or the Dean of the Graduate College.

## **WORKLOAD**

Graduate assistants are graduate students, first and foremost. Thus, their primary goal is to earn a graduate degree. That said, as a GA they have been hired by the university to perform work that is central to the goals of the hiring unit (e.g., department or academic unit). Because GAs are students first, they are expected to spend on average, no more than 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 graduate assistant's workload assignment changes, then these changes must be reported to the Graduate College to ensure accurate reporting of the GAs assignment. Furthermore, once the semester begins, the GA may not be changed for that semester except under special circumstances (e.g., change to a grant, etc.).

## **MAXIMUM NUMBER OF COURSES GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS MAY TEACH PER SEMESTER**

As per the [Board of Regents Handbook](#) (Title 4, Chapter 5, Section 3), graduate teaching assistants may teach no more than two courses per semester (max 6 credits).

## **ADDITIONAL EMPLOYMENT**

Additional employment on or off campus is prohibited unless approved by the department chair and Graduate Dean. Such employment **may never exceed 10 hours per week** and must be limited in nature. Failure to request prior approval of employment may result in the assistantship being rescinded. All domestic students requesting additional employment must submit a completed [Graduate Assistant Request for Additional Employment](#) form to the Graduate College before beginning any outside employment.

International students on an F-1 or J-1 visas are limited to the 20 hour GA work week during the academic year. They cannot work any additional hours on campus or off campus. F-1 and J-1 students may, however, accept additional employment over winter break and spring break. F-1 students are restricted to on-campus. Similarly, J-1 students are restricted to on-campus work unless they apply for and get special worth authorization with the OISS Assistant Director. For the summer, if an F-1 or J-1 student has a GA contract, they can work an additional 10 hours on top of this contract. J-1 students are encouraged to consult with the Office of International Student and Scholars to make sure they are in full compliance with their visas. International students on F-1 visas must check in with the Office of International Students & Scholars to ensure you remain in legal status with respect to your student visa. If you have/are applying for OPT, this extension approval does not mean that you are eligible to work on or off campus. Please consult with OISS regarding your immigration status.

#### **WORKING OVER WINTER, SPRING, AND SUMMER BREAKS**

If the department/ hiring unit/ faculty advisor asks the GA to work over winter, spring, or summer break and the GA agrees, then the GA must be hired on a separate contract that is prepared by the department that is hiring them. A GA can work for more than 20 hours per week, but no more than 40 hours per week, during the break. GA contract should not begin before the current or academic semester contract ends.

#### **FALL, SPRING, AND SUMMER SEMESTER CREDIT LOADS**

Graduate assistants must carry a minimum of 6 graduate credit hours for each Fall and Spring semester. Audited or undergraduate courses will not be counted toward the 6 credit minimum requirement. Failure to remain in 6 graduate credit hours for a grade will result in the termination of the graduate assistantship contract. An overload petition must be approved by the department chair and Graduate Dean for credit loads in excess of 12 credit hours. **Credit hours must be taken in residence to maintain GA eligibility unless an official consortium has been approved.**

Graduate assistants working during the summer must enroll in 3 graduate credits during Summer Session I, II, or III. Departments can request an exemption to the summer policy if they are hiring a summer GA with grant funding.

Please note that UNLV considers GAs enrolled in 6 credits as a full-time graduate students. However, for federal financial aid purposes, a GA enrolled in less than 9 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). **Credit hours must be taken in residence to maintain GA eligibility unless an official consortium has been approved.**

### **ADHERING TO POLICIES AND LAWS**

Graduate assistants are required to abide by all federal and state laws, as well as 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 graduate assistantship, possible separation from his or her graduate program, as well as possible legal action, criminal penalties, and/ or other sanctions deemed appropriate.

### **APPLICATION & RENEWAL OF ASSISTANTSHIPS**

A new application must be submitted by a student to their [Grad Rebel Gateway](#) account for each academic year, even if they want to continue in the same GA position. The GA application is submitted on the "My Funding tab." 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 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. The students must log-in to their [Grad Rebel Gateway](#) account to view the decision and accept or decline the assistantship offer. Students will have two weeks from when their GA offer letter is posted to their Grad Rebel Gateway account to either accept or decline the GA offer. If they fail to do so in this timeframe, their GA offer will be rescinded. Departments may contact the GA office at [gradfinancialsvc@unlv.edu](mailto:gradfinancialsvc@unlv.edu) to request reinstatement of rescinded GA offers.

### **CGS APRIL 15TH RESOLUTION & 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<sup>th</sup>. If a student accepts a GA offer before April 15<sup>th</sup>, 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<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>th</sup> 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](#).

### **FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES**

To ensure clear communication and to protect all parties involved, the GA supervisor must provide his/her 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 graduate assistant for the fall semester, or for the fall/ spring academic year. The only exceptions to the deadlines are: replacement appointments for GTAs, TTDGRAs, or GRAs; new GRA appointments resulting from new funding; and PDGRAs.

Spring Semester Contracts: **Dec 15** is the deadline for requesting a graduate assistant for the spring semester. The only exceptions to the deadlines are: PDGRAs and replacement appointments for GTAs, TTDGRAs, or GRAs; new GRA appointments resulting from new funding.

Summer Session Contracts: **May 15** is the deadline for requesting a graduate assistant for the summer session. The only exceptions to the deadlines are: PDGRAs and replacement appointments for new GRA appointments resulting from new funding.

#### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**

It has been and will continue to be the policy of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, to be an equal opportunity institution. All decisions of admissions and employment are based on objective standards that will further the goals of equal opportunity. The University is committed to assuring that all programs and activities are readily accessible to all eligible persons without regard to their race, color, religion, gender, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, Vietnam-Era and/ or disabled veteran status, any protected class under relevant state and federal laws, and, in accordance with University policy, sexual orientation. Persons having questions regarding university policies relating to nondiscrimination law are encouraged to contact Barrett Morris, Executive Director, Office of Compliance, 702-895-4055.

#### **CONSENSUAL RELATIONSHIP POLICY**

The University of Nevada, Las Vegas 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.

Consensual relationships existing between individuals — neither of whom has direct professional influence or authority over the other — are not prohibited by this policy.

A member of the university community is considered to have direct professional power or direct authority over another individual when he or she is in the position to do any of the following:

- Supervise a student in any capacity, including evaluating any academic work, assigning grades, academic advising, formal psychological counseling, or serving on thesis, dissertation, or scholarship committees;
- Influence a student's employment, graduate assistantship, housing, participation in athletics, or any other university activity;
- Supervise and/or evaluate the work performance of a member of the faculty or professional or classified staff;
- Recommend or award merit or promotions to a member of the faculty or professional or classified staff;
- Serve on promotion or tenure committees.

When a romantic or sexual relationship exists, both parties involved may be subject to disciplinary action. Both parties are equally responsible for reporting the existence of the relationship to the appropriate supervisor at the beginning of the relationship. A self-report will be kept confidential by the supervisor unless university policy requires him/her to divulge it.

When a relationship exists between a student who is being paid to administer a recognized student organization/group and another member of the organization/group, the above policy applies. If the student leader involved in such a relationship is not being paid to administer the organization, special circumstances apply; the involved students will report the relationship to the organization's advisor (or another university representative assigned by the office of the vice president for student life). Thereafter they will refrain from making decisions within the organization that are designed specifically to benefit or harm the other individual in the relationship. This policy shall not be construed to mean that either party to the relationship will necessarily be required to forfeit his or her membership status or position within the organization.

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

## **GRADUATE TEACHING QUALIFICATIONS**

Though the NWCCU doesn't provide detailed specifications regarding requirements for undergraduate or graduate teaching credentials, but other regional accrediting bodies (such as SACS) 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 GC 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 department chair, academic dean, and the Graduate Dean. These guidelines should be kept in mind when making new hiring decisions as new faculty, FIR, and 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.

### **MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS TO TEACH UNDERGRADUATES**

1. Graduate student instructors of record (GAs, PTIs, etc.) for 100-400 level courses should 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 9-18 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:
  - a. Graduate students who are TA-ing for classes, leading recitations, labs, or discussions sessions (not as instructor of record) may do so at any time under close supervision of faculty.
  - b. For students who are instructors of record for 100/200-level courses, a minimum of 9 successfully completed (B or better) graduate credits in the field of instruction are required.
  - c. For those graduate students who are the instructor of record for higher-level UG courses (300/400), 18 graduate credits must be successfully completed (grades of B or better) in the field of instruction.
2. Departments, Schools, and Colleges may have stricter guidelines or additional requirements for instructional faculty.
3. Graduate students must demonstrate sufficient English language abilities, as delineated in the Graduate Catalog and GC website. Proof of English proficiency will be assessed by standardized tests like TOEFL, IELTS, the MTELP, SPEAK, or Duolingo test for non-English language speakers, prior to being approved as an instructor of record.

4. Graduate students should complete a pedagogy class, the Graduate College teaching certificate program, and/or other substantive teacher training before and/or during their time as the instructor of record in any class.
5. 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**

1. Faculty teaching graduate classes (500-700 level) must have a terminal degree in the field of instruction or a closely related discipline.
  - a. 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 and special basis, be approved to teach Master's level students, particularly in professional degree programs.
  - b. These exceptions shall be rigorously reviewed and adjudicated on a case-by-case basis through the department/school, academic dean, and graduate dean and handled via the Graduate College's Graduate Faculty Appeal Form when necessary.
2. 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.
3. Graduate students may not teach graduate courses as the instructor of record, nor may they 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.
4. Departments, Schools, and Colleges may have stricter guidelines or additional requirements for graduate instructors as appropriate.

## GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP BENEFITS

### STIPEND

Both Graduate College state-funded and extramurally funded graduate assistants will receive a stipend. All GA appointments must meet the minimum stipend amount from the student's academic department. Graduate assistantship stipend amounts vary by department. Please see the section in the handbook 'Graduate College State-Funded Graduate Assistantship Stipend Information' starting on page 27. Externally funded GA stipends must meet the minimum state-funded GA stipend amount for the student's home department.

### OUT-OF-STATE TUITION/ FEES WAIVER

Out-of-state graduate students who become graduate assistants 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 you hold your assistantship. Hence, if you are no longer a GA, you will be considered an out-of-state student (and pay out-of-state tuition/fees), unless you 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 the [Tuition/Fee Estimator](#).

### GRADUATE COLLEGE STATE-FUNDED GA TUITION/ FEES WAIVER

A reduction of graduate course fees is available to Graduate College state-funded graduate assistants for a maximum of 9 credits per semester for students enrolled in state-funded programs. This means that 9 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 9 graduate credits at the standard state tuition/ fee rate. **Credit hours must be taken in residence to maintain GA eligibility unless an official consortium has been approved.**

### EXTRAMURALLY FUNDED GA TUITION/ FEES WAIVER

If an extramurally funded graduate assistantship 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 paperwork has been completed and submitted. Students must be enrolled in their graduate courses before waivers can be processed. Please allow at least three business days and up to 2 weeks after all documents have been received for processing tuition waivers.

### 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 6 weeks of paid GA leave (during the standard GA appointment period), and up to an additional 6 weeks of unpaid leave or a flexible GA work assignment. For the 6 weeks of paid leave, the GA will also retain their full stipend and benefits during the leave. If both parents are GAs, the 6 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 8 weeks prior to the anticipated leave, or two weeks before the start of the semester, whichever is earlier. To view this document as well as additional information, please see the [UNLV Graduate Assistant Parental Leave Program](#).

#### **WAIVER FOR PORTION OF MANDATORY HEALTH INSURANCE**

All graduate assistants are required to have health insurance while under contract. All Graduate College state-funded graduate assistants enrolled in the UNLV Student Health Insurance Plan will be given a subsidy of \$500 per semester (fall & spring) that will go towards a portion of the health insurance premium. Many extramurally funded graduate assistants will also receive a subsidy towards the student health insurance plan. Details can be found on the GA offer letter. The cost of the UNLV Mandatory Health Insurance is subject to change each academic year the, 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 both the fall and spring semesters. Please note that the amount added to the spring semester bill will be slightly higher, as the cost of the spring health insurance covers summer as well. If you are able to provide proof that you carry alternate insurance from a non-UNLV provider, you may qualify for a waiver and the UNLV health insurance fee will be removed from your account.

All international graduate students are required to carry student health insurance. The cost of the health insurance will be automatically added to the student account in both the fall and spring semesters. Please note that the amount added to the spring semester bill will be slightly higher, as the cost of the spring health insurance covers summer as well. 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 [ois@unlv.edu](mailto:ois@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**

Graduate assistants 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 his or her job duties. Graduate assistants are not included in university employee benefits or retirement plans.

## **JURY DUTY**

Nevada 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 also has a policy of paid leave for employees who are serving on a jury or as a court witness.

Thus, graduate assistants cannot be terminated or threatened to be terminated if they have jury duty. Graduate assistants should let their supervisor know as soon as possible of up-coming 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 you receive 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.

Graduate assistants fall under this policy. If you anticipate the need to use any work time to vote, you need to talk with your 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](#).

## **SUMMER REGISTRATION FEES**

A state-funded graduate assistant who is under contract for the academic year and will be appointed as a state-funded GA in the following fall semester may receive grant-in-aid for the payment of a specified

portion of the registration fees (up to a maximum of 3 graduate credits) in the summer session(s). In order to receive this benefit, you must inform the Graduate College at [gradfinancialsvc@unlv.edu](mailto:gradfinancialsvc@unlv.edu) at the time you enroll in summer classes. The email to the Graduate College should include the student full name, NSHE ID, and the number of credits enrolled in. **Credit hours must be taken in residence to maintain GA eligibility unless an official consortium has been approved.**

#### **BOOKSTORE DISCOUNT**

If you are a Graduate College state-funded graduate assistant, you can receive 10% off purchases at the UNLV Bookstore by showing a copy of your GA offer letter (which you receive in Grad Rebel Gateway).

#### **FREE STUDENT TICKETS TO UNLV ATHLETIC EVENTS**

Graduate assistants enrolled in 6 or more graduate credits receive free student tickets to UNLV athletic events.

# IMPORTANT GA INFORMATION FOR INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

## OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

Your F-1 student status allows you to work on campus at the university that issued your I-20 while you are enrolled in a full course study. Such employment is limited to 20 hours per week during the semester. Your UNLV Continuous I-20 is your proof of work eligibility for on-campus employment only at this institution. You must maintain F-1 status to be eligible for this employment benefit. Maintaining status means that you are in good academic standing and are registered for at least 6 graduate level credits each semester that you 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, as well as any paid work anywhere on campus or any employment paid by an office of the university.

## WHAT IS CONSIDERED FULL-TIME CREDIT HOURS

If you are a GA you must take a minimum of 6 graduate credits to be considered full-time. If you are not a GA you must take 9 credits to be considered full-time. **Credit hours must be taken in residence to maintain GA eligibility unless an official consortium has been approved.**

## EXPIRATION OF ON-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY

Your on-campus employment eligibility expires:

- 1.) The last working day of your final semester (when you graduate), even if your I-20 expiration date is in the future.
- 2.) If you transfer to another university.
- 3.) If you violate your F-1 status.

## DOCUMENTS NECESSARY FOR A GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP

The first step of completing the necessary documents for your graduate assistantship is to accept your GA offer before the deadline in the Grad Rebel Gateway. If you are a new international student who has not gained entry to the United States yet, you will complete the rest of this process when you arrive on campus. You have 30 days to enter the country before your official program start date, which is registered in SEVIS by a DSO. You must report to OISS by your program start date, or you are not maintaining lawful F-1 status. You must contact OISS immediately once you enter the country so that there is no question of your arrival.

In order to maintain valid F-1 nonimmigrant status, you must complete a mandatory check-in with the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) upon your arrival to University of Nevada – Las Vegas.

**Within 1 week of your arrival at UNLV, you must submit copies of the following immigration documents, along with an updated local address in Las Vegas and contact information:**

- Passport
- F-1 visa
- a **signed** copy of this initial I-20 (you 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 emailed to: [OISS@unlv.edu](mailto:OISS@unlv.edu), OR copies may be submitted in-person at OISS (located in building SSC-A suite 201 of the UNLV main campus)

In addition, you must attend the **mandatory new international student orientation which is held each semester. For additional information, please see**

You can complete your reporting at UNLV. You must complete the [new international student online check-in](#). You will complete your reporting by going to the SSC-C Building on campus to have a DSO make copies of your I-20, passport, F-1 visa, and I 94 card (front and back).

### **SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER**

As an international GA you must obtain a Social Security number in order to receive a paycheck. It is suggested that you wait at least 48 hours after you check in to the university before applying for a social security number. In order to receive a social security number you must have the following:

- “[Evidence of On-Campus Employment](#)” letter completed by your GA hiring department (not the Graduate College) and signed by an advisor at OISS
- [Social Security Number Application](#)
- Passport, Visa
- Current Continued Attendance I-20 issued by UNLV
- [I-94](#)

In most cases, it takes about 2 weeks to obtain a social security number once the application has been submitted. However, in some rare cases, it can take several weeks. International GAs can begin work without having a social security number, but cannot receive pay until the social security number is received by the Graduate College. If an international GA begins work during the contract period without a social security number, they will still be compensated for the time work, once the number is received and a contract is initiated.

### **U.S TAXES**

All individuals who are not Citizens or Permanent Resident of the United States are required to complete an Alien Information Collection Form before receiving any payment from the Nevada System of Higher Education. All new employees are required to meet with UNLV’s Nonresident Alien Tax Specialist. Once you have signed your official GA contract, you 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 graduate assistants without sufficient Proof of English Proficiency (PEP) will be required to take the SPEAK Test. This includes: all graduate assistants who will be advising or teaching students as an instructor, teaching assistant, or lab supervisors; research assistants; and graduate assistants with other professional duties.

The SPEAK Test must be taken **before** the start of the semester the GA intends to work at UNLV. Specifically, the last day to take the SPEAK Test will be the Friday before classes start. International GAs that cannot provide sufficient PEP or pass the SPEAK test cannot serve in a teaching capacity during their first semester as a GA. GAs that are offered teaching assistants and do not meet the requirements of PEP/SPEAK will be reassigned to non-teaching duties their first semester as a GA.

Passing Score and ESL 580X: Students must receive a score of 48 or better on the SPEAK Test in order to receive a passing score. Results from the SPEAK Test are forwarded to the Graduate College after they have been evaluated by The English Language Center. GAs who do not obtain a score of 48 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. Graduate assistants must receive a “B” or better in ESL 580X. If a passing grade is not earned in ESL 580X, then the GA may be terminate, or be required to repeat the course.

Retesting: Retesting of the SPEAK 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: Two sections of ESL 580X/ 380 will be offered in parallel each fall semester and one section during the spring semester. The course will be scheduled on Friday mornings and will be offered in a 10-week modular format, which beings 3 weeks after the start of the regularly scheduled classes.

Modification of GA Duties: Any International GTA who does not receive a passing score of 48 or higher on the SPEAK Test cannot be assigned to any duties that involves 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 SPEAK Test or ESL 580x is successfully passed with a grade of “B” or higher.

SPEAK Test Exemption: Returning International graduate assistants, new graduate assistants from countries where English is both the national and home language and international students that have obtained a degree from an English speaking institution will be exempt from taking the SPEAK Test. Other exemptions include new International Graduate Assistants that scored a minimum of 25 on the TOEFL

IBT speaking component or a minimum of 7 on the spoken English portion of the IELTS exam. All scores must be officially reported to UNLV. Self-reported scores will not be accepted.

Preparing for the SPEAK Test: To prepare for the SPEAK Test, the [Center for Innovation in Teaching & Learning](#) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign provides a practice test.

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

## **GRADUATE COLLEGE POLICIES ON GRADUATE ASSISTANT PERFORMANCE**

### **ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

Graduate assistants are first and foremost student. Thus, they should be familiar with the provisions of the current Graduate Catalog and their specific departmental requirements. Graduate assistants must satisfactorily progress toward their degree and remain in good standing. Good standing is defined by the Graduate College (e.g., it includes maintaining a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or greater) as well as by your graduate program. In order to get the program-specific criteria, please contact your graduate program/department. Student conduct policy breaches may also impact a student's eligibility to hold a GA appointment.

### **SETTING EXPECTATIONS BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT/HIRING UNIT/ FACULTY SUPERVISOR AND THE GRADUATE ASSISTANT**

It is critical that both the graduate assistant and the department/ hiring unit/ faculty supervisor are on the same page when it comes to expectations of the GAs duties and responsibilities. As such, we recommend 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 graduate assistants. This includes assigning them their duties, providing adequate supervision, training GAs on new tasks, ensuring compliance with IRB and all regulatory offices, provide 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 graduate assistants 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 assistant 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. 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



his/ her performance. We encourage the use of informal discussion first to resolve performance issues, but it is important to have documentation of these discussions.

If discussion with the graduate assistant 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 judgement and recommendation of the departments as to whether the GAs are fulfilling their responsibilities to be renewed. Supervisors must follow the procedures on the [Termination of Appointed Graduate Assistant Guidelines](#) in order to terminate a GA appointment early. This should be a last resort after appropriate warning, mentorship, and due process.

#### **TERMINATION POLICY INFORMATION & DIRECTIONS FOR FACULTY AND IMPACTED GA**

1. Once appointed, graduate assistants may not have their tuition/ fees revoked for the current semester.
2. If the graduate assistant is properly notified about pertinent work standards and fails to meet those standards, the [Termination of Appointed Graduate Assistant Form](#) may be used to terminate a graduate assistantship appointment and the attendant stipend prior to the end of the GA's appointed term of service.
3. 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.
4. The form must be signed by the Graduate Coordinator, Department Chair, and College Dean before being submitted to the Office of Graduate Financial Services.
5. The termination request will be reviewed and final recommendation will be made by the Graduate College.
6. Official notice will then be sent to the GA supervisor and the impacted GA.
7. Once officially notified of termination, a GA may file a [Summary Due Process Review Guidelines Form](#) (with supporting documentation) **within 5 business days**. Failure to do so will suspend the student's right to review.
8. *The Summary Due Process Review Form* and supporting documents must be speedily reviewed and responded to by the GA supervisor, Graduate Coordinator, Department Chair, and College Dean.
9. *The Summary Due Process Review* documents and signed form must then be submitted to the Office of Graduate Financial Services who 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.
10. The final decisions will be rendered, and the final resolution will be signed, by the Dean of the Graduate College.

#### **GA RESIGNATION**

The decision to resign your 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 your appointment and must be sent to the Graduate College. Please cite the effective date of your resignation and, to the extent possible, a reason for the resignation.

#### **TUITION/FEES UPON TERMINATION OR RESIGNATION**

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

## TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

### MANDATORY NEW GA ORIENTATION

Any new graduate assistants are required to attend the New Graduate Assistant Orientation. The workshop 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 a panel discussion with that year's Outstanding Teaching Award Finalists.

### MANDATORY TRAININGS

FERPA: FERPA is the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. It is a federal law that was enacted in 1974. FERPA protects the privacy of student education records. Since we are an educational institution that receives federal funding, we must comply with FERPA. For more information, please see the [Office of the Registrar's](#) website.

Graduate assistants are required to do the FERPA Training. To access this training, please go to the [Online Training Classes](#) on the About MyUNLV website.

Sexual Harassment Prevention Training: NSHE requires all faculty and staff to complete training that addresses sexual harassment and sexual misconduct. The training, as stated in the NSHE Board Handbook, must be completed within 6 months after an employee is initially appointed to an affiliated institution. In addition, and at least once every two years after the appointment, an employee shall receive training concerning the prevention of sexual harassment. In October 2015, UNLV launched the NSHE endorsed and used system-wide an interactive and engaging one-stop-shop online training by award-winning LawRoom, which focused on sexual harassment prevention, unlawful harassment prevention, and discrimination in the workplace training for faculty and staff. The online training, for both supervisors and non-supervisors, is compliant with complex federal laws, including Campus SaVE Act, VAWA, Clery Act, and Title IX. For more information, including how to register, please see [UNLV's Human Resources](#) website and its [Sexual Harassment Prevention Training](#) page.

### TRAINING AND SUPPORT

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

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

Professional Development Academy: The [Graduate College Professional Development Academy](#), formerly known as the Student Success Institute, is a virtual success center that offers support and many professional development opportunities to build Grad Rebels, enhance your graduate experience, and help prepare you for future success. The Graduate College offers four free, year-long professional development programs in the areas of [research](#), [teaching](#), [mentorship](#) and [communication](#). Each

certification helps students develop and hone skills through a series of workshops, cohort meetings, and the completion of a culminating experience. The Graduate College also offers a number of other programs, including the [Grad Rebel Ambassadors Program](#), the [Rebel Research and Mentorship Program \(RAMP\)](#), 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. Additionally, the Graduate College Professional Development Academy provides [career support](#), skills support, and non-academic advising. Please contact [GradRebel@unlv.edu](mailto:GradRebel@unlv.edu) with any questions about the Graduate College Professional Development Academy or visit the [Graduate College Professional Development Academy web page](#) for additional information.

[Instructional Development and Research, Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost](#): UNLV's instructional development and research services promote UNLV students' academic success by advancing research-based teaching and learning practices across the campus and online.

[Lynda.com](#): Lynda.com is an award-winning web-based training service available for free to UNLV students, faculty, and staff. As a member of the UNLV community you have unlimited access to the vast Lynda.com training library, which can help you learn new software or improve on previous 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. In the *Quick Access* box, type in 'Policies for Faculty and All Teaching Staff' and 'Syllabi Content.' This will allow you to retrieve the most recent memos.

## HOW TO FIND A GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP

Below is information for how you might find a graduate assistantship on the UNLV campus:

1. Contact your academic department to learn about available GA opportunities.
2. Nonacademic units put information about positions on the [UNLV Career Services](#) website. You must create an account with the Hire a Rebel platform in order to see information on graduate assistantships. To look for graduate assistantships please log into your [Hire A Rebel](#) account. Under Shortcuts (on the right-hand side of the main page), please click on the *UNLV Graduate Assistantships* option. All UNLV graduate assistantships will be posted here.
3. Check your Rebelmail. Important information is regularly emailed out to graduate students, including about graduate assistantships. Rebelmail is considered the official email account for communication at UNLV.
4. Follow the Graduate College's social media posts:  
[Facebook](#): UNLV Graduate College  
[Twitter](#): @UNLV\_GC  
[LinkedIn](#): UNLV Graduate College

## STEPS TO FOLLOW IF RECEIVED A GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP: FIRST TIME GRADUATE ASSISTANT

If you have been selected to receive a graduate assistantship, simply follow these steps:

- 1.) Log back into the [Grad Rebel Gateway](#) to view your decision letter
- 2.) Accept or decline your assistantship offer in the Grad Rebel Gateway by the deadline provided (two weeks from when you received your GA offer letter). If you do not accept your GA offer by the deadline, your offer will be rescinded. If your GA offer is rescinded and you still wish to be a GA, please contact the GA department for instructions. Department may contact the GA Office at [gradfinancialsvc@unlv.edu](mailto:gradfinancialsvc@unlv.edu) to request a re-instatement of rescinded offer. This is at their discretion.
- 3.) After accepting your GA offer in the Grad Rebel Gateway, you will receive an email (typically within 5 business days) from Graduate Financial Services ([gradfinancialsvc@unlv.edu](mailto:gradfinancialsvc@unlv.edu)) with information about onboarding tasks.
- 4.) Your employment contract will be initiated in a system called Workday (a cloud-based administrative software, which provides key HR, benefits, and financial services). Once your contract has been initiated and approved, you 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 I9
  - W4
  - Alcohol and Drug Free Workplace
  - Direct Deposit (optional)
  - Nevada Constitutional Oath (**Note:** The Nevada Constitutional Oath will eventually be part of Workday, but currently it will be part of the onboarding tasks that are included in the Graduate Financial Services email (see point #3 above).
  - Voluntary Self-Identification of Disability
- 5.) Register for your classes as soon as possible. We cannot process your tuition/ fee waiver until you have registered!

## STEPS TO FOLLOW IF RETURNING GRADUATE ASSISTANT

If you are a returning graduate assistant, simply follow these steps:

- 1.) Log back into the [Grad Rebel Gateway](#) to view your decision letter
- 2.) Accept or decline your assistantship offer in the Grad Rebel Gateway by the deadline provided (two weeks from when you received your GA offer letter). If you do not accept your GA offer by the deadline, your offer will be rescinded. If your GA offer is rescinded and you still wish to be a GA, please contact the GA department for instructions.
- 3.) After accepting your GA offer in the Grad Rebel Gateway, you will receive an email (typically within 5 business days) from Graduate Financial Services ([gradfinancialsvc@unlv.edu](mailto:gradfinancialsvc@unlv.edu)) with information about onboarding tasks.
- 4.) Your employment contract will be initiated in a system called Workday (a cloud-based administrative software, which provides key HR, benefits, and financial services). Once your contract has been initiated and approved, you 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 I9
  - W4
  - Alcohol and Drug Free Workplace
  - Direct Deposit (optional)
  - Nevada Constitutional Oath (**Note:** The Nevada Constitutional Oath will eventually be part of Workday, but currently it will be part of the onboarding tasks that are included in the Graduate Financial Services email (see point #3 above).
  - Voluntary Self-Identification of Disability
- 5.) Register for your classes as soon as possible. We cannot process your tuition/ fee waiver until you have registered!

## SUMMER GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

Currently, only 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. All summer GAs must enroll in 3 graduate level credits during one of the 3 summer sessions. **Credit hours must be taken in residence to maintain GA eligibility unless an official consortium has been approved.** Summer GAs appointed with grants and contract funding may be exempt from this policy.

The Graduate College will process your summer employment contract through the system called Workday. You will be sent an email from Graduate Financial Services ([gradfinancialsvc@unlv.edu](mailto:gradfinancialsvc@unlv.edu)) if there are any onboarding steps that need to be completed.



## EXTRAMURALLY FUNDED GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

### HOW TO REQUEST A GRADUATE ASSISTANT

Consult with your department chair regarding the availability of funds to support a state-funded GA or with OSP to verify funds to support a GA on a grant or contract.

1. Have candidates for your GA position apply via the [Grad Rebel Gateway](#) available through the Graduate College Website.
2. Work with your graduate coordinator or department office to appoint (or decline to appoint) your student applicants 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 with you on GA appointments.
3. If you are planning on hiring a GA on a grant, review the *How to Budget for a Non-State Funded Graduate Assistant* and *How to Request a Graduate Assistant* sections on the [Graduate College's Graduate Assistantships](#) website.
4. Review GA Duties/ Expectations. Do not begin working with a student before s/he signs a contract. GAs may not begin work before the start date on their signed contract. You must make arrangements with the Graduate College and follow the processes in place before GA teaching or research may begin. New international GAs may not participate in teaching or work with undergraduates until required SPEAK Test is passed.
5. Outside employment for GAs, both on and off campus, is discouraged. However, graduate assistants may request permission to seek up to 10 hours a week of outside employment through a Request for Additional Employment form. If the GA is on a letter of appointment at an NSHE institution, please contact the Graduate College GA Office at 895-3970 or 895-2921. Also, please note that International Students (on an F-1 visa) are ineligible for additional work beyond their GA appointment.

### BUDGETING FOR AN EXTRAMURALLY FUNDED GRADUATE ASSISTANT

The Graduate College encourages faculty to seek extramural 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 extramural 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. 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 apply to state-funded GAs also apply to non-state-funded graduate assistants.

## GRADUATE ASSISTANT STIPEND, PAYROLL, & APPOINTMENT INFORMATION

### GA STIPEND INFORMATION

Graduate assistantship stipends must be paid at or above the minimum amount per contracted time period.

#### Minimum Masters Stipend: Effective Fall 2017

Level	Fall and Spring	Fall or Spring	Full Summer	Half Summer
Masters	\$11,250.00	\$5,625.00	\$3,750.00	\$1,875.00

#### Minimum Doctoral and MFA Stipend: Effective Spring 2016

Program	Fall and Spring	Fall or Spring	Full Summer	Half Summer
Curriculum and Instruction Ph.D.	\$16,750.00	\$8,375.00	\$5,583.33	\$2,791.67
Curriculum and Instruction / Teacher Education Ph.D.	\$16,750.00	\$8,375.00	\$5,583.33	\$2,791.67
Educational Psychology Ph.D.	\$15,750.00	\$7,875.00	\$5,250.00	\$2,625.00
Educational Psychology / Learning and Technology Ph.D.	\$15,750.00	\$7,875.00	\$5,250.00	\$2,625.00
Executive Educational Leadership Ed.D.	\$15,750.00	\$7,875.00	\$5,250.00	\$2,625.00
Higher Education Ph.D.	\$15,000.00	\$7,500.00	\$5,000.00	\$2,500.00
Special Education Ph.D.	\$15,000.00	\$7,500.00	\$5,000.00	\$2,500.00
Civil and Environmental Engineering Ph.D.	\$16,750.00	\$8,375.00	\$5,583.33	\$2,791.67
Computer Science Ph.D.	\$18,000.00	\$9,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$3,000.00
Electrical and Computer Engineering Ph.D.	\$16,750.00	\$8,375.00	\$5,583.33	\$2,791.67
Mechanical Engineering Ph.D.	\$17,750.00	\$8,875.00	\$5,916.67	\$2,958.33
Architecture M.Arch	\$15,000.00	\$7,500.00	\$5,000.00	\$2,500.00
Art MFA	\$15,000.00	\$7,500.00	\$5,000.00	\$2,500.00
Film / Writing for Dramatic Media MFA	\$15,250.00	\$7,625.00	\$5,083.33	\$2,541.67
Musical Arts DMA	\$15,000.00	\$7,500.00	\$5,000.00	\$2,500.00
Theatre MFA	\$15,000.00	\$7,500.00	\$5,000.00	\$2,500.00

Hospitality Administration Ph.D.	\$15,000.00	\$7,500.00	\$5,000.00	\$2,500.00
Anthropology Ph.D.	\$15,250.00	\$7,625.00	\$5,083.33	\$2,541.67
English Ph.D.	\$17,500.00	\$8,750.00	\$5,833.33	\$2,916.67
English / Creative Writing MFA	\$15,000.00	\$7,500.00	\$5,000.00	\$2,500.00
History Ph.D.	\$15,000.00	\$7,500.00	\$5,000.00	\$2,500.00
Political Science Ph.D.	\$15,000.00	\$7,500.00	\$5,000.00	\$2,500.00
Psychology Ph.D.	\$15,500.00	\$7,750.00	\$5,166.67	\$2,583.33
Sociology Ph.D.	\$16,500.00	\$8,250.00	\$5,500.00	\$2,750.00
Astronomy Ph.D.	\$19,250.00	\$9,625.00	\$6,416.67	\$3,208.33
Biological Sciences Ph.D.	\$17,750.00	\$8,875.00	\$5,916.67	\$2,958.33
Chemistry Ph.D.	\$19,250.00	\$9,625.00	\$6,416.67	\$3,208.33
Radiochemistry Ph.D.	\$18,000.00	\$9,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$3,000.00
Geoscience Ph.D.	\$17,250.00	\$8,625.00	\$5,750.00	\$2,875.00
Mathematical Sciences Ph.D.	\$18,500.00	\$9,250.00	\$6,166.67	\$3,083.33
Physics Ph.D.	\$18,250.00	\$9,125.00	\$6,083.33	\$3,041.67
Criminology and Criminal Justice Ph.D.	\$20,750.00	\$10,375.00	\$6,916.67	\$3,458.33
Public Affairs Ph.D.	\$17,250.00	\$8,625.00	\$5,750.00	\$2,875.00
Workforce Development and Organizational Leadership Ph.D.	\$15,000.00	\$7,500.00	\$5,000.00	\$2,500.00
Interdisciplinary Health Sciences Ph.D.	\$18,500.00	\$9,250.00	\$6,166.67	\$3,083.33
Medical Physics D.M.P.	\$17,000.00	\$8,500.00	\$5,666.67	\$2,833.33
Kinesiology Ph.D.	\$16,750.00	\$8,375.00	\$5,583.33	\$2,791.67
Physical Therapy DPT	\$20,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$6,666.67	\$3,333.33
Public Health Ph.D.	\$16,000.00	\$8,000.00	\$5,333.33	\$2,666.67
Nursing Ph.D.	\$20,250.00	\$10,125.00	\$6,750.00	\$3,375.00

### GA PAYCHECK INFORMATION

The number of paychecks that a GA will receive is dependent on the official start date and the length of the contract.

Appointment Terms	Grad Rebel Gateway Appointment Deadlines	# of Paychecks	First Paycheck
Fall and Spring	May 15 <sup>th</sup>	10	First Business Day of September
Fall Only	May 15 <sup>th</sup>	5	First Business Day of September
Spring Only	December 15 <sup>th</sup>	5	First Business Day of February
Entire Summer	May 15 <sup>th</sup>	2	First Business Day of July
First Half of Summer	May 15 <sup>th</sup>	1	First Business Day of July
Second Half of Summer	May 15 <sup>th</sup>	1	First Business Day of August

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

### 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 charges.

### GA LOANS

Graduate assistants 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. You may obtain a loan application from Graduate Student Financial Services, located in FDH 344. For more information, call 702-895-3320.

### 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 your *W-4 Withholding Allowance and Certificate*. For additional information, please see the [Payroll Office](#) website.

### FICA

FICA is the abbreviation for the Federal Insurance Contributions Act Taxes which, along with Medicare taxes, are generally withheld from employee paychecks and matched by employers. However, graduate students that are enrolled in more than 3 credit hours are exempt from FICA. If there is no more than a 5 week break between enrollment periods (official beginning and ending dates according to the published class schedule), then work between those semesters will not be subject to FICA. There is no work hour limitation. Work for pay periods beginning after the end of the spring semester will be subject to FICA unless the student is enrolled in a class during the first or second term. A student in their last semester of school may want to consult their student employment or student personnel office regarding special FICA exemption requirements that may apply to them. Please be aware that any employee that has additional jobs as an academic or administrative faculty member, classified employee, letter of appointment or casual labor employee is not considered a student for purposes of exemption from FICA. For more information, please see the [Payroll Office](#) website.

## **MAXIMUM TIME LIMITS FOR STATE GA FUNDING POLICY**

### **EFFECTIVE FOR NEW STATE-FUNDED GAs BEGINNING FALL 2015**

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

1. The new maximum time limit policy on Graduate College funded State GAs will begin tracking new, state-funded GAs in AY 2014-15.
2. The new maximum time limits for Grad College funded State GAs are as follows:
  - Masters level state GAs may hold their position for 2 years with the possibility of a 1 semester extension if degree completion is pending.
  - Post-Bachelors Doctoral level state GAs may hold their position for 2 years and then be renewed for an additional 3 years by their department for a total of 5 years of funding. Up to a 1 year extension may be possible for pending degree completion.
  - Post-Masters Doctoral level state GAs may hold their position for 4 years, with a possibility of up to a 1 year extension for pending degree completion.
  - MFA students may be supported on a State GA for 3 years with the possibility of a 1 year extension for pending degree completion.
3. Students who have been appointed as state-funded GAs prior to fall 2015 will not be tracked by the Graduate College, and the policy will not be enforced.
4. 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.
5. This new 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.
6. 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 “state-funded GA” category (called non-state-funded GAs) and therefore exempt from this time limit policy.
7. Despite having all “non-state-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.

## **GRADUATE ASSISTANT LEAVE OF ABSENCE (LOA)**

### **READ THE INFORMATION BELOW BEFORE COMPLETING [LOA FORM](#)**

A leave of absence 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. Leaves of absence do not delay candidacy or master's program expiration dates (the six year limit on coursework will still be applied). Failure to return as scheduled or to secure an extension of a prior leave of absence will result in separation from the university.

### **FINANCIAL AID**

Taking a leave of absence may affect the student's loan repayment terms, including the expiration of the student's grace period. A student requesting a leave of absence will need to meet with a financial aid counselor to discuss any implications this may have on his/her financial aid status.

### **INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ONLY**

U.S. government regulations require that a student holding a non-immigrant visa who takes a leave of absence must either (1) leave the U.S. within 15 days or (2) apply for optional practical training before the effective leave of absence date. Before leaving the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, the student should contact the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) office for information on maintaining visa eligibility for re-entering the United States.

In addition, international students on F-1 visas must check in with the Office of International Students & Scholars to ensure you remain in legal status with respect to your student visa. If you have/are applying for OPT, this extension approval does not mean that you are eligible to work on or off campus. Please consult with OISS regarding your immigration status.

### **RETURNING FROM A LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Upon return from leave, the student will resume his/her academic program based on the requirements outlined in the Graduate Catalog indicated on the form. Prior to an approved Leave of Absence, the student and department must discuss which Graduate Catalog the student will have to follow, and fill out the LOA form indicating the year. There are four options for Graduate Catalog year: the year when the graduate student was first admitted to her/his program; a subsequent year; the semester/year when she/he returns from leave; or the semester/year of graduation. The student should also contact his/her department for advice on which courses to register for upon return from leave. Note that a student returning from an LOA must (re)apply if he/she wants to compete for a graduate assistantship.

Students who return as scheduled do not need to do anything. If a student returns earlier than scheduled, he/she must contact the Graduate College to have registration privileges reactivated. Students who do not return as scheduled from leave will be separated from their graduate program.



If you have any questions, please send an email to [GradRebel@unlv.edu](mailto:GradRebel@unlv.edu).

## APPENDIX A: POINTS OF CONTACT

### **Dean of the Graduate College**

Kathryn Hausbeck Korgan, Ph.D.

Office: FDH 304

Phone: 702-895-0446

Email: [kate.korgan@unlv.edu](mailto:kate.korgan@unlv.edu)

### **Associate Dean of the Graduate College**

Emily Lin, Ph.D.

Office: FDH 303

Phone: 702-895-1039

Email: [emily.lin@unlv.edu](mailto:emily.lin@unlv.edu)

### **Graduate Student Financial Services**

Email: [gradfinancialsvc@unlv.edu](mailto:gradfinancialsvc@unlv.edu)

702-895-3320

FDH-362

### Executive Director of Graduate Financial Services & Business Operations

Brianne Heinle

Office: FDH 301

Phone: 702-895-3320

Email: [brianne.heinle@unlv.edu](mailto:brianne.heinle@unlv.edu)

### GA Program Coordinator

Cathy "CC" Dyer

Office: FDH 344

Phone: 702-895-4273

Email: [cathy.dyer@unlv.edu](mailto:cathy.dyer@unlv.edu)

### Graduate Financial Service Program Coordinator

Ashlyn Gray

Office: FDH 344

Phone: 702-895-3970

Email: [ashlyn.gray@unlv.edu](mailto:ashlyn.gray@unlv.edu)

### Administrative Assistant

Adriana Burnett

Office: FDH 344

Phone: 702-895-1877

Email: [Adriana.burnett@unlv.edu](mailto:Adriana.burnett@unlv.edu)

### **Executive Director of Graduate Student Services**

Valarie Burke

Office: FDH 361

Phone: 702-895-3320

Email: [valarie.burke@unlv.edu](mailto:valarie.burke@unlv.edu)

**Graduate College Professional Development Academy**

Email: [gradrebel@unlv.edu](mailto:gradrebel@unlv.edu)

Phone: 702-895-3320

FDH 361

**Office of International Students and Scholars**

Current F-1 students at UNLV

Office Location: Student Services Complex, Building A Suite 201

Phone: 702-774-OISS (6477)

Fax: 702-895-4661

Email: [oiss@unlv.edu](mailto:oiss@unlv.edu)

International Scholars (J-1, H-1B, TN, PR)

Office Location: Student Services Complex, Building A, Room 201

Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.- 5 p.m. PST

Phone: 702-895-0218

Fax: 702-895-4661

Email: [scholar@unlv.edu](mailto:scholar@unlv.edu)