



Policy Handbook for
Graduate Assistants and Supervisors

Office of Graduate Studies

July 2006

Philosophy:

Graduate degree programs are designed to transform graduate students into professional scholars. A well-planned and executed graduate assistantship will help facilitate this transformation. The primary goal of a graduate assistantship is aid in the prompt and successful completion of the graduate degree program.

Graduate Assistants are both students and employees. As students, the Graduate Assistants are expected to perform well academically and be accepted into UW Oshkosh graduate degree programs in full standing. As employees, Graduate Assistants are expected to meet specified obligations as assigned by their employing academic departments. Graduate Assistants in turn receive financial support (salary) for graduate study and contributing to the mission of the University.

Graduate studies and assistantship responsibilities should reinforce each other. The best Graduate Assistant experience will evolve from careful planning and monitoring to see that both the graduate student and the University benefit from the relationship.

Application:

Applicants must be graduate students admitted in full standing to UW Oshkosh graduate degree programs. They must also complete and return the application for a graduate assistantship. (Please see Appendix A, page 7). Enclosure of a current resume is also encouraged. Male applicants should also complete the Statement of Selection Service Compliance form (Please see Appendix B, page 8).

Applications for graduate assistantships are accepted on or before the following priority dates: March 15, April 15, May 15, June 15, August 15, and September 15, for the fall semester and January 15 for the spring semester. It is recommended that applications be turned in as early as possible as all available positions may be filled by the April 15 priority date. Priority dates are established to provide clear cut-off dates for the recipient of applications. All applicants will remain in the pool until all available positions have been filled.

Qualification for a Graduate Assistantship:

Graduate assistantships are awarded on a competitive basis by academic departments to domestic or international students who are admitted to UW Oshkosh graduate degree programs. Financial need is not a consideration in the selection process.

To qualify for a graduate assistantship the graduate student must:

- Be admitted in full standing to an UW Oshkosh graduate degree program.
- Be in good standing within the degree program (maintain a 3.0 or B grade point average).

- Be enrolled for at least 6 but not to exceed 12 graduate credits during the 14-week academic term. Credits for a thesis, clinical paper, or field project may be included toward these totals for the initial term of the registration and the following semester. Summer session is not included, e.g., a spring registration would also be included for the following fall semester.

Conditions:

A Graduate Assistant is expected to make steady progress toward the master's degree. A Graduate Assistant may only work a maximum of 20 hours per week. Additional employment beyond the graduate assistantship is not recommended.

A Graduate Assistant should register for a minimum of 6 graduate credits but no more than 12 graduate credits during the 14-week academic term. A Graduate Assistant should maintain a grade point average of at least a 3.0 or a B grade average. Graduate Assistants are not allowed to teach courses nor to enroll in courses for which they are assigned responsibilities. Also, they should not be assigned responsibilities for courses in which they are enrolled. The exception to this is laboratory preparation.

If a Graduate Assistant or a Graduate Assistant Applicant is on academic probation or is not in full standing within the degree program, they will not be eligible for a graduate assistantship or for renewal/reappointment.

A Graduate Assistant enters into a contract with the University. The contract includes a description of the position offered, terms of employment eligibility, salary, and length of employment. The specific nature of the responsibilities as a Graduate Assistant should be discussed with the immediate supervisor at the beginning of the appointment.

A Graduate Assistant is required to be on campus for the same work periods as faculty. They are entitled to official holidays and normal break periods between academic sessions. The specific work schedule is at the discretion of the immediate supervisor. Work schedules should be arranged at the beginning of the semester so there are no conflicts with the Graduate Assistant's class schedule.

Responsibilities of the Graduate Assistant:

The Graduate Assistant is responsible for working closely with the employing academic department in carrying out assigned duties, at the same time making good progress toward the completion of the degree program. Whether working in a laboratory, classroom, office, or other setting, the Graduate Assistant is obligated to maintain standards of academic honesty and integrity and to report violations of these to the faculty supervisor. The Graduate Assistant should keep well-informed of departmental, college, and institutional regulations, and follow them consistently.

A Graduate Assistant will receive professionally related assignments that assist faculty in such tasks as paper grading, laboratory sections, research projects, developing materials to assist in classroom instruction, assisting in departmental libraries, etc. (For a list of potential assignments, please see Appendix C, page 9.) Secretarial work should not be assigned to Graduate Assistants. Recognizing that the assistantship is a temporary position, the Graduate Assistant should leave records such that decisions can be traced, results verified, and incomplete work finished after the Graduate Assistant has left the position.

Responsibilities of the Employing Academic Unit:

The employing academic department is responsible for reviewing applications, interviewing qualified applicants, and recommending employment of the Graduate Assistant Applicant to the Office of Graduate Studies. (Please see Appendix D, pages 10-11.) The employing academic department is also responsible for informing the qualified applicants who are not hired that all positions have been filled. Graduate Assistant appointments should be made as soon as possible so that both the Graduate Assistant and the employing academic department may plan effectively.

The employing academic department should work closely with the Graduate Assistant to train and orient him/her to the department, assist him/her in learning assigned duties and responsibilities, and provide appropriate resources and an adequate work environment, including basic office supplies and materials necessary for performing the job. The employing academic unit must also follow all applicable health and safety laws and regulations and educate the Graduate Assistant about these laws and regulations.

The hiring unit will utilize the established evaluation process to formally evaluate the Graduate Assistant's performance of duties at least once during the contract period. The Graduate Assistant will also be provided with the opportunity to formally evaluate the hiring unit at least once during the contract period. (Please see Appendix E, pages 13-15.)

Evaluation:

Evaluation of job performance should be an ongoing process of communication between the Graduate Assistant and the Supervisor. At least one formal evaluation should be conducted during the employment period. The evaluation is intended to be a supportive process that helps the Graduate Assistant identify areas of strength and weakness, and to help plan for improvement if necessary. Excellence should be noted in the Graduate Assistant's record, as should inadequacies in performance.

Goals should be worked out with the Supervisor early in the contract period. Ongoing informal evaluation should precede more formal measures, the results of which will be entered in the Graduate Assistant's employment record. As a part of the total evaluation process, the assistant should self-evaluate his or her performance and assess the experience from his or her perspective.

To view the formal evaluation forms, see Appendices D, “Graduate Assistant Orientation, Evaluation,” page 12, and Development Checklist,” and E, “Graduate Assistant Evaluation Form,” pages 13-15.

Extent of Employment, Stipends, and Benefits:

If appointed to a graduate assistantship, recipients will be offered up to 20 hour per week contracts (some positions are fixed). The contract period is a 17-week semester, or a 34-week academic year. Although a few programs offer summer graduate assistantships, in general graduate assistantships are not available during the summer sessions.

Academic year stipends are as follows, based upon the AY 2006-07 base salary of \$19,834.00 for Graduate Assistants:

10 hours/week	\$4,958.50
13.5 hours/week	\$6,693.98
15 hours/week	\$7,437.75
20 hours/week	\$9,917.00

A Graduate Assistant is an employee of the University, and his/her salary is taxable. For Graduate Assistants who work at least 13.5 hours/week, fringe benefits are available. Fringe benefits include health insurance, dental insurance, and a death benefit at minimal cost to the graduate student.

Nonresident Graduate Assistants qualify for nonresident tuition waivers if their contract is for 13.5 hours (33.75% of full-time) or more per week.

Rights:

The Graduate Assistant has the privilege of being treated as a professional in his/her chosen field of study and therefore is entitled to certain rights such as those listed below.

- The Graduate Assistant should be notified in writing of all decisions pertaining to or affecting the status of his/her graduate assistantship.
- The Graduate Assistant has the right to respond to complaints and to present evidence in his/her defense, if appropriate.
- The Graduate Assistant should receive sufficient advance notice of reappointment procedures.
- The Graduate Assistant should be informed of a formal grievance procedure, and then have the right to initiate a grievance or to appeal a decision through the channels specified.

Grievance Procedure:

If a Graduate Assistant believes that he/she has been unfairly treated, he/she may file a formal grievance. The goal of a grievance is to have the problem be heard and resolved if at all possible in a timely manner. To initiate a grievance, the perceived offense should first be discussed, orally or in writing, with the individual(s) most directly involved. If no resolution results, the department chair should be consulted. Every effort should be made to resolve the issue(s) at the department level and in accordance with sound academic policy and the welfare of all involved. If the grievance is not resolved at the department level, the Office of Graduate Studies may be consulted simultaneously.

An appeal may be made to the proper authority in response to how procedures were followed in reaching a decision. An appeal may be initiated by writing the appropriate school or college dean. The appeal should (a) contain specific objections to the department's procedures and (b) be accompanied by copies of the correspondence exchanged between the two parties. The Office of Graduate Studies should be notified of all grievances and be given copies of all documents pertaining to the issue and the resolution.

Reappointment:

Priority for reappointment/rehiring is given to those Graduate Assistants making progress toward completion of the degree and performing well in the assistantship duties. Criteria for reappointment is as follows:

- Minimum overall G.P.A. of at least 3.0.
- Report of academic advisor
- Formal evaluation by the supervisor of the Graduate Assistant.
- Length of time in the degree program.

Reappointment is not automatic for Graduate Assistants who meet the minimum criteria. Rather, final decisions should be based on the Graduate Assistant's skills and qualifications, departmental needs, financial resources, equal opportunity/affirmative action, and the effort to provide as many graduate students as possible with assistantship opportunities.

The Graduate Assistant should receive sufficient advance notice of reappointment or non-renewal, and be informed of necessary procedures to respond in either case. The Graduate Assistant should be notified in writing of all decisions pertaining to or affecting the status of his/her graduate assistantship.

Termination:

A Graduate Assistant contract may be terminated by either the Graduate Assistant or the employing academic unit. In either case, either party should provide sufficient notice (two weeks or more preferred). An exemption to this requirement is when a Graduate Assistant is

placed on academic probation or suspended from the University, or is found guilty of academic misconduct. (See relevant section in the UW Oshkosh Graduate Bulletin). Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to the following:

- Cheating on an exam
- Plagiarism
- Stealing exams or course work/materials
- Intentionally damaging the work of others
- Fabricating data in any academic area
- Falsifying or forging documents
- Assisting another student(s) in these acts.

Summary:

Graduate assistantships are awarded on a competitive basis to students who best meet the requirements set by the Office of Graduate Studies and the employing academic unit. The assistantship should not interfere with the student's educational objectives; rather, the assistantship should aid in the prompt and successful completion of the degree program. While the Graduate Assistant makes progress toward an advanced degree, he/she also receives work experience in a profession under the supervision of a faculty/department mentor. As such, graduate assistantships can build confidence in graduate students from diverse backgrounds as it helps them to become better professionals.



APPENDIX A--Application for Graduate Assistantship

For which term are you applying, e.g., Academic Year, Fall, or Spring: _____

Name _____

Student Information System ID# _____

Permanent Address _____
Street City State Zip

Local Address _____
Street City State Zip

Phone _____ Email address _____

Undergraduate Major _____ Year Graduated _____

Employment (Please summarize work experience and skills, and attach resume.)

Are you presently employed? Yes No If yes, how many hours/week? _____
Are you presently employed at UW Oshkosh? Yes No If yes, where? _____

What is your **Master's Degree** program: _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Note: YOU MUST SUBMIT A NEW GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP APPLICATION FOR EACH ACADEMIC YEAR THAT EMPLOYMENT IS DESIRED.

Other Qualifications:

- 1. Full Standing admission in a master's degree program at UW Oshkosh.
- 2. Enrolled for a minimum of six graduate credits each semester at UW Oshkosh.
- 3. Not more than one "Incomplete" course grade carried over to the next semester.

Please submit 2 copies each of the application form and your resume to:

**The Office of Graduate Studies
University of Wisconsin Oshkosh
Dempsey Hall--Room 337
Oshkosh Wisconsin 54901-8621 • (920) 424-1223**

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN OSHKOSH IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY • AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

For Graduate Studies Office Use Only:	Program: _____
Date Admitted: _____	Term Admitted: _____
Full Standing <input type="checkbox"/>	Requires Degree Conferral: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Probation <input type="checkbox"/> Denied <input type="checkbox"/>	Withdrew from Program (Date): _____
Wisconsin Resident <input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Resident <input type="checkbox"/>
Current INS Classification: _____	International <input type="checkbox"/> Minnesota <input type="checkbox"/>
	Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>



Office of Graduate Studies

APPENDIX B--Statement of Selective Service Compliance for Graduate Assistant Employment (Effective February 1, 2003)

Information on Selective Service registration status must be provided as a condition of graduate assistant employment in order to comply with Wisconsin law [s.230.08(2) (k)]. This requirement applies to all male students seeking graduate assistant employment who are 18, but not yet 26 years of age. (For information about Selective Service and on-line registration, go to www.sss.gov.)

NAME [please print]

Last Name

First Name

Middle Initial

I affirm that the following information is true and correct and I understand that any misstatement, falsification, or omission may be grounds for refusal to hire, or if hired, termination.

Student's Signature

(Date [Mo/Day/Yr])

1. I certify that I am registered with Selective Service.
2. I certify that I am NOT required to register with Selective Service because:
 - I am not 18 through 25 years of age. Enter date of birth _____
 - I am a non-immigrant alien lawfully admitted to the United States.
 - I am a member of the Armed Forces on active duty. (Note: those in the National Guard and Reservists not on active duty must still register with the Selective Service.)
 - I am a citizen of Federal States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshal Islands, or the Republic of Palau.

This form must be returned to:
Office of Graduate Studies
Dempsey 337
800 Algoma Blvd
Oshkosh WI 54901

APPENDIX C

Possible Graduate Assistant Assignments

The following list is not all inclusive. Duties vary by department, and all graduate assistants do not perform all of these assignments.

- Laboratory preparation and assistance
- Development and testing of laboratory experiments and instruments
- Assist faculty with research projects, e.g., data/bibliographic searches, library research
- Perform computerized data collection, coding, entry, analysis, interpretation
- Provide computer laboratory assistance
- Assist with in-class computer simulations
- Proctor exams
- Preparation of course materials
- Tutoring
- Grading assignments
- Graduate Program alumni relations, including annual surveys of Graduate Program's students
- Coordination/publication of a Graduate Program's newsletter
- Maintain database of curriculum information related to specific Graduate Program, for future curriculum development efforts
- Animal Colony Coordinator
- Quantitative Methods Assistant
- Instrumentation Coordinator
- Development of Graduate Program's informational materials.

APPENDIX D
REQUEST TO HIRE A GRADUATE ASSISTANT
UW OSHKOSH

This form initiates the processing for hiring a graduate assistant. Please complete and return it to the Office of Graduate Studies. If the graduate assistant does not have a current Application for Assistantship on file with the Office of Graduate Studies, the application form must be completed by the graduate student as part of the contracting process.

Name of Student: _____

Address: _____

National ID# (SS#): _____ EMPLID#: _____

Term of Employment (please check one):

- Fall Semester: _____ (Year) _____
- Spring Semester: _____ (Year) _____
- Academic Year: _____ to _____ (Year) _____

Hours Per Week: (to a maximum of 20 hours) _____

Contract Start Date: _____ Contract End Date: _____

(Note: All Fall and AY contracts begin on September 1st; all Spring contracts begin on the first day of the 14-week term. Fall and Spring contracts end on the last day of the respective 17-week semester; AY contracts end on the last day of the 17-week Spring Semester. Graduate Assistants are contracted for the 14-week and 3-week terms in each semester, for a total of 17 weeks. If proposed contract dates are other than these, please contact the Graduate School prior to submitting this form.)

Graduate Program Employed By: _____

Other Graduate Programs related to this position if appropriate: _____

Approved by: _____
Supervisor

Dept Chair/Assoc Dean/Dean (as appropriate)

APPENDIX E
GRADUATE ASSISTANT
ORIENTATION, EVALUATION,
AND DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

The following checklist reflects the performance feedback process for graduate assistants as instituted by the Office of Graduate Studies and based on the University's statement of the function of graduate assistants.

<u>Unit</u>	<u>✓</u>	<u>Action</u>
College or Program or Department	____ ____	1. Conduct an orientation for all graduate assistants. 2. Familiarize the graduate assistant with the following Function Statement on which their job assignments and performance evaluation are based: Graduate Assistants work in their academic fields or in closely related areas. Functions include laboratory assistance, research, tutoring, proctoring, and other programmatically/academically oriented work. Secretarial activity is not included in this description.
Program or Faculty	____	3. Share performance expectations with graduate assistants at the beginning of their employment.
Faculty	____	4. Conduct periodic performance discussions with graduate assistants. The faculty member who has the most direct contact with a graduate assistant should reinforce positive performance and highlight areas for improvement for the remainder of the individual's employment. If a graduate assistant is assigned to more than one faculty, the program coordinator should determine how the evaluation should be completed.
Faculty	____	5. Conduct a final performance evaluation.
Faculty or Program	____	6. Schedule and conduct a meeting with the graduate assistant to provide performance feedback before signatures are affixed to the Evaluation Form.
Program	____	7. Forward Evaluation Form to Dean's Office. Signature at that level simply connotes transmittal to the Graduate School within the unit's report (see 8 below).
College/ Division	_____	8. Sign Evaluation Form and file.

APPENDIX F
GRADUATE ASSISTANT EVALUATION FORM

FOR USE BY GRADUATE FACULTY

**OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN OSHKOSH**

GRADUATE ASSISTANT EVALUATION FORM

(This form is to be used as one method of collecting and analyzing the data on graduate assistants.)

Meets Performance Expectations				
1	2	3	4	5
Lowest	Low	Normative	High	Highest

A rating of "3" is normative and indicates that a graduate assistant is fulfilling his/her professional responsibilities. Please document extreme ratings with examples. If your graduate assistant receives the highest (or lowest) possible rating in a category, please explain your justification for this rating. Your documentation of extreme ratings is important to establish the validity of this process.

Name of Graduate Assistant: _____

Program Area: _____

Laboratory Assistance 5 4 3 2 1 N/A
(Circle a Rating)

- Performs laboratory procedures carefully and skillfully.
- Requires a minimum of guidance and supervision.
- Finishes assigned duties in a timely fashion (within prescribed deadlines).

Research Assistance 5 4 3 2 1 N/A
(Circle a Rating)

- Demonstrates a clear understanding of the research process.
- Uses current technology in the research process (as appropriate).
- Completes a literature search as part of the review of the professional literature (as required).
- Summarizes and critiques publications in the professional literature.
- Presents information in a clear and organized manner.
- Has writing skills commensurate with their professional development.
- Other (dependent on specific research project/design).

Tutoring 5 4 3 2 1 N/A
(Circle a Rating)

- Capably utilizes appropriate background.
- Understands errors and explains them clearly person being tutored.
- Encourages students to feel they can succeed.
- Meets scheduled tutoring times.

Proctoring 5 4 3 2 1 N/A
(Circle a Rating)

- Understands the need for test security and academic honesty within the assessment process.
- Is willing to make time arrangement for specific proctoring needs.
- Uses good judgement regarding unanticipated events.
- Follows through, accurately, with any special needs or instructions.
- Is sensitive to the roles and needs of both test giver and test taker.
- Demonstrates moral courage.

Programmatically/Academically Oriented Work

5 4 3 2 1 N/A

(Circle a Rating)

- Initiates and sustains action in tasks.
- Plans ahead for those activities under his/her cognizance (responsibility/jurisdiction).
- Is receptive to constructive suggestions for change.
- Communicates in a timely and responsive manner.
- Integrates appropriate human and material resources in job completion.
- Demonstrates organizational skills by being up-to-date on projects.

Outcomes

5 4 3 2 1 N/A

(Circle a Rating)

- Evaluation of performance in duties not described above (responsibilities unique to program). Please list: Unique experience, project, award, accomplishment, etc.

Work Habits (Behaviors)

(Circle a Rating for Each Attribute)

- Has working knowledge of job responsibilities..... 5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- Identifies and maintains a work schedule..... 5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- Communicates to supervisor changes
in work schedule or dates of project completion 5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- Informs supervisor of work progress regularly 5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- Completes work efficiently and on time..... 5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- Performs work tasks accurately 5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- Handles work problems logically 5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- Is knowledgeable about resources, places to go for help/assistance..... 5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- Asks for help when needed 5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- Provides accurate information/assistance when working with others 5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- Is cooperative to work with 5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- Is respectful toward supervisor, faculty, staff, students and other GA's..... 5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- Shows initiative to ask for work when he/she has completed projects..... 5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- Puts his/her best effort into work assignments 5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- Demonstrates ability to communicate orally and in writing..... 5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- Responds to memos, phone messages,
and directives from supervisor promptly 5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- Is able to listen to and follow directions..... 5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- Works well under time constraints/pressures 5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- Is on time to scheduled meetings..... 5 4 3 2 1 N/A

