



UNIVERSITY of
LOUISIANA
L A F A Y E T T E *

**Graduate
School**

Fall 2025

GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP HANDBOOK

**Guidance and Guidelines for
Graduate Students & Supervisors**

Table of Contents

A Unique Dual Role	3
Types of Assistantships	4
Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA)	4
Graduate Research Assistants (GRA)	4
Graduate Assistants (GA)	4
Other Positions	5
Fellowship Recipients	5
Hourly Graduate Student Workers	5
Adjunct Faculty	5
Assistantship Roles and Responsibilities	6
Duties and Responsibilities	6
General Graduate Assistantship Expectations	6
Appointment-Type-Specific Expectations	7
Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA) Appointments	7
Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA) Appointments	7
GTA Instructor of Record Appointments	7
General Expectations for Departmental Support and Supervision Responsibilities	8
Mandatory Trainings	9
Professional Ethics and Important Policies	9
Appropriate and Inappropriate Tasks and Requests	11
Appropriate Assistantship Tasks	11
Additional Service or Work	11
Avoiding Exploitative Situations	12
Resolution of Conflict	12
Terms, Conditions, and Continuation of Appointment	14
Eligibility	14
Conditional Admission Assistantship Appeal	14
GRA Screening	14
English Language Proficiency	14
GTA Instructor of Record	15
Conditional Admission Assistantship Appeal	15
Appointment and Reappointment	15
Enrollment Requirements	16
Summer Enrollment	16
Final Semester Exemption	17
Post-Graduation	17
Appointment Term	17
Late Arrival or Early Departure	17
Other Appointment Periods	17
Work Location	18
Remote Work	18
Work Hours	18
Hours Required	18

Banner Time Entry (Timesheets)	19
International Students	19
Other Work	20
On Campus Employment (Second Jobs)	20
Off-Campus Employment	20
Disclosure	20
International Students	20
University Holidays	21
Absences and Leave	21
Primary Contact	21
Scheduled Absences	21
Unscheduled and Unauthorized Absences	22
Official Leave of Absence from Graduate Studies	22
Continuation of Appointment	23
End of Appointment	23
Non-Renewal	23
Cancellation	24
Resignation	24
Termination	24
Financial and Administrative Implications	25
Compensation, Benefits, and Resources	26
Compensation	26
Stipends	26
Tuition and Fee Waivers	27
Taxation	27
Leave, Unemployment, and Retirement	28
Workplace Reporting Requirements	28
Reporting an Incident, Concern, or Complaint	28
Accommodation Requests	29
Disability Accommodation	29
Pregnancy Accommodation	29
Religious Accommodation	29
Requesting Accommodations	30
Health and Safety	30
Health Insurance	30
Workplace Injury	30
Intellectual Property	31
Campus Logistics and Access	31
Parking	31
Building and Office Access	31
Campus Resources	32
Acknowledgments	34
Appendix: Tips for Communicating with your Supervisor	35

A Unique Dual Role

As a graduate student with an assistantship or fellowship, you help to advance our teaching, research, and service mission—and your role is unlike any other on campus.

Whether you have been appointed to a Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA), Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA), Graduate Assistantship (GA), or Fellowship, you occupy a unique place in our campus community. You are both a graduate student—pursuing advanced study under the guidance of our graduate faculty—and a graduate student employee, contributing your learning, skills, and expertise to advance the University’s mission.

With this dual role comes a dual set of expectations. In the classroom, lab, or office, you may be in a position of authority, guiding undergraduate students, collaborating with peers, or representing faculty research and teaching. At the same time, you remain first a student, navigating academic work and relationships with faculty, supervisors, peers, and others in your field of study. Effectively balancing these dual roles—and the unique challenge of holding authority in some settings but not necessarily in others—calls for professionalism, integrity, and appropriate boundaries.

This handbook is for both you and the supervisors who guide your work. It identifies broad expectations, summarizes relevant University policies, and offers strategies for navigating challenges. It is meant to foster transparency, support your academic and professional growth, and promote healthy working and learning environments. Many departments also have assistantship guidelines specific to their individual graduate programs; and these should be read alongside this document.

This handbook is not meant to replace [University policies](#), the [2025-2026 Academic Catalog](#), or the codes of conduct that govern employment and graduate education at UL Lafayette. Nor does it replace the support provided by your department, your faculty and supervisors, and the Graduate School—we are always here to guide you, especially when complicated situations arise. Rather, this handbook is a practical starting point—a place to begin when you have questions or need direction.

We are glad you are here, and on behalf of the Graduate Council and the Graduate Faculty, welcome. We look forward to supporting your contributions as both a student and a colleague.

All my best,
Dr. MFK

Mary Farmer-Kaiser, Ph.D.
Dean of the Graduate School

Types of Assistantships

The Graduate Council of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette authorizes the appointment of degree-seeking graduate students who have been accepted in regular admission status to graduate assistantship roles. Policies governing graduate assistantships are in the [Academic Catalog](#).

Students appointed to graduate assistantship roles are salaried student employees (as determined by Human Resources) who receive a tuition waiver. In instances approved by the Dean of the Graduate School, a half-time tuition/fee-waiver-only assistantship with no stipend may be awarded.

Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA)

GTA job duties consist primarily of direct involvement in classroom or laboratory instruction, and these duties are performed under the supervision of faculty. The University also requires that a GTA teaching assignment be in the student's own field of study or one that is closely related. Out-of-field GTA appointments require consultation with the student's graduate program and the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School.

Graduate Research Assistants (GRA)

GRA job duties consist of performing research that is in a student's field of study (or a closely related field) and is integral to their education. These primary duties are performed under the direct supervision of faculty or research professionals and do not involve classroom instruction. Beyond approval of the Dean of the Graduate School, GRA appointments must be approved by Sponsored Programs Finance Administration and Compliance (for all research/sponsored-program-funded positions) or the Office of Finance and Administration (for state- or foundation/endowment-funded positions).

Graduate Assistants (GA)

GA positions further the professional and/or academic development of the student. The duties performed in this type of assistantship are professional in nature with primary duties that require advanced knowledge, defined as work that is predominantly intellectual in character and that includes work requiring the consistent exercise of discretion and judgment) and under the direct supervision of faculty, academic professionals, or administrators. These primary duties do not involve classroom instruction or research integral to the student's academic degree program, thesis, or dissertation. GA positions are a distinct category of graduate student support; this assistantship type does not include Graduate Research Assistants or Graduate Teaching Assistants.

Other Positions

Fellowship Recipients

Fellowship recipients typically have more limited duties than those appointed to GTA or GA roles. Some fellowships, such as dissertation completion fellowships, are non-service. This document does address fellowship eligibility or renewal (see the Academic Catalog for that information). However, some University fellowships include a teaching commitment similar to that of a GTA role. Fellowships recipients who receive a stipend must complete all compliance training required for assistantship recipients.

Hourly Graduate Student Workers

Graduate student hourly workers are paid to perform duties that may or may not relate to their professional and/or academic development. These positions require completion of a timesheet to document hours worked but do not include a stipend or tuition waiver. This type of funding is sometimes used when students are not required to be enrolled—such as during breaks or the summer—and therefore do not need a tuition waiver. It may also be used when work is insufficient to warrant a 20-hour assistantship appointment or grant funds are insufficient to cover both a stipend and tuition waiver. Graduate hourly student workers are employees and have many of the same training requirements, work expectations, and employee protections as students appointed to GTA/GRA/GA roles.

Adjunct Faculty

Graduate students are sometimes hired to teach specific courses outside of a GTA role. This occurs most often in the summer, when a graduate student who has served as a GTA Instructor of Record during the academic year is hired to teach the same course as an adjunct faculty member. It may also occur when assistantship or fellowship funding has ended but degree requirements have not yet been met. Graduate students hired in adjunct roles should review the [Faculty Handbook](#) for guidelines and expectations. If you are seeking employment as an adjunct, contact your department head for guidance about eligibility and to discuss openings.

Assistantship Roles and Responsibilities

Duties and Responsibilities

The duties and responsibilities of a graduate assistant are specified by the department or administrative unit to which you are assigned. These are generally equivalent to teaching two lower-division classes or providing 20 hours of service per week. Always consult your assistantship supervisor and offer letter to confirm the specific responsibilities for your research, classes, or other assignments. Assistantship assignments and/or duties may be changed with notice to you in advance.

General Graduate Assistantship Expectations

Graduate students appointed to assistantship roles, or in any other paid role, are responsible for fulfilling their duties with professionalism and integrity. While specific duties will vary by assistantship type, department or administrative unit, and supervisor, it is expected that you will:

- Complete all hiring paperwork and receive clearance from the Office of Human Resources prior to beginning work.
- Participate in all required University and departmental orientation or onboarding activities. Graduate students appointed for the first time to an assistantship or fellowship **must** attend the Graduate Assistantship and Fellowship Orientation. Your department or administrative unit may require additional orientation activities.
- Complete mandatory training assigned by the Office of Human Relations within 30 days of hire and once per calendar year.
- Complete additional training as assigned by the Graduate School, the Dean of Students, your hiring department or unit, and/or assistantship supervisor.
- Consult with your supervisor to verify specific responsibilities for research, classes, and other assistantship assignments.
- Attend meetings required by your department and/or supervisor.
- Identify and adhere to schedules set and/or approved by your supervisor.
- Keep your work organized and make records available when requested and/or as required.
- Adhere to University and departmental records retention policies.
Consult with your supervisor about record and data management, sharing, and retention requirements.

Appointment-Type-Specific Expectations

Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA) Appointments

- Follow all protocols established by your supervisor.
 - Familiarize yourself with [Responsible Conduct of Research](#) standards and security.
- Complete [appropriate training](#) when working with [human subjects](#), [animals](#), [recombinant DNA or biological agents](#), or [radioactive materials or ionizing radiation machines](#).

Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA) Appointments

- Evaluate student work and treat students fairly, impartially, and with respect.
- Work with your supervisor to provide [reasonable and appropriate accommodations](#) to students when requested by the Office of Disability Services.
- Departmental Expectations: Departments and schools are responsible for developing a plan for the supervision of graduate students appointed to GTA roles. These plans should include such items as orientation and in-service training, preparation of syllabi, review of examinations and grade assignments, classroom visitation, and evaluation of assistantship performance.

GTA Instructor of Record Appointments

Qualified graduate students may be appointed as a GTA Instructor of Record based on departmental needs, credential review, and approval by Academic Affairs. (See eligibility requirements in next section.)

As a GTA Instructor or Record, you are responsible for the day-to-day management of your course, including for example:

- General Responsibilities
 - Adhere to all University, college, and department policies regarding syllabi, instruction, feedback, evaluation, and grading.
 - Be present for [every](#) scheduled class meeting. For emergency absences, contact your department immediately. For planned professional absences, follow your department's absence procedures.
 - Maintain availability to students by establishing and publishing office hours in accordance with University and departmental requirements.
 - Provide regular and prompt feedback on student performance, including timely grading of assignments and exams. Evaluate student work and treat students fairly, impartially, and with respect.
 - Submit all required course-related reports—such as grade checks, attendance checks, and final grades—by the deadlines established by the University, college, or department.

- Syllabus Requirements
 - Distribute the syllabus to students at the first class meeting. Provide a copy to your department.
 - Ensure inclusion of course and section number, contact information, course objectives, standards of achievement or learning outcomes, grading methods, and performance evaluation criteria.
 - Follow the university-wide syllabus requirements as outlined in the [Faculty Handbook](#), and incorporate any additional requirements from your department or college.
- Student Accommodation Requests
 - Provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations to students when requested by the Office of Disability Services.
 - Consult with your supervisor when unsure of how to address an accommodation request.
- Professional Guidance and Support
 - Seek guidance from your supervisor before taking action in difficult or unfamiliar situations.
 - Utilize campus resources like those offered by the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities and others identified here to support your students.
 - If your experience comes from an educational system different than a state public research university or U.S. institution, be aware that instructor and student expectations may differ from your past experience. Consult with your supervisor and/or the Office of International Affairs to clarify uncertainties.

General Expectations for Departmental Support and Supervision Responsibilities

Departments, administrative units, and individual faculty who appoint graduate students to assistantship roles are responsible for providing guidance, training, and supervision.

Departments should have a plan for GTA supervision and support for faculty who work with students appointed to these roles. While they will look different across disciplines and departments, these plans should generally include onboarding, orientation and/or in-service training, preparation of syllabi, review of examinations, assignments, and grading, classroom visitation, and feedback and evaluation of assistantship performance.

GRA and GA duties vary widely across departments, disciplines, and administrative units, but it is similarly expected that supervisors will provide onboarding, instructions, access to necessary resources, and feedback to ensure students appointed to these roles can perform assigned duties.

Whatever the appointment type, supervision should foster graduate students' academic and professional development, uphold academic and workplace standards, ensure completion of required training, and create safe and respectful working and learning environments.

Mandatory Trainings

Graduate students appointed to assistantship roles must complete mandatory training assigned by the Office of Human Relations within 30 days of hire and once per calendar year. Instructions for accessing these virtual training modules are provided during the mandatory Graduate Assistantship and Fellowship Orientation and via email notifications sent directly from the Office of Human Resources. The training courses include:

- Ethics Training for Public Servants (1 hr.)
- Shots Fired on Campus: Surviving an Active Shooter Situation (30 min.)
- Cybersecurity Awareness (30 min.)
- Reporting Power-Based Violence (1 hr.)
- Preventing Harassment and Discrimination (2.25 hrs.)

Additional trainings vary by appointment and may be assigned by the Graduate School, the Dean of Students, your hiring department or unit, and/or the assistantship supervisor.

Graduate students in assistantship and fellowship roles are responsible for completing all assigned training on time and as instructed, and for applying content to assigned duties and workplace activities. Not completing assigned training courses or not applying them as required constitutes a failure to meet assistantship terms and may result in non-renewal or termination of appointment.

Professional Ethics and Important Policies

Graduate students appointed to assistantship or fellowship roles are expected to follow both the [**Student Code of Conduct**](#) and the [**Code of Conduct and Ethical Behavior Policy**](#) for employees.

Beyond these two important codes of conduct, several other University policies outline prohibited actions for all employees, including graduate students appointed to assistantships and fellowships. Many of these policies also identify and provide protections against inappropriate behavior by faculty, supervisors, staff, and students (see also *Protections*).

Key prohibited actions include:

- **Disclosing protected student information**—such as grades, contact information, or other protected information—to unauthorized individuals.
See: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)
- **Engaging in power-based violence** intended to control or intimidate another person through the assertion of power over the person. Power-based violence includes but is more expansive than sexual misconduct and Title IX misconduct.
See: Power-based Violence Policy

- **Engaging in sexual harassment** or participating in sexual relationships with individuals over whom you have supervisory authority, including students you teach.
See: Sexual Harassment and Other Prohibited Sexual Conduct Policy
- **Discriminating** based on an individual's protected status, or **retaliating** against those who file complaints in good faith.
See: Non-Discrimination Policy, Prohibiting Workplace Harassment and Discrimination Policy, and Preventing and Addressing Retaliation Policy
- **Violating** the University's drug and alcohol policy
See: University Drug and Alcohol Policy

Graduate students in assistantship and fellowship roles are responsible for knowing and following all University policies that apply to them as graduate student employees.

UL Lafayette is governed by [other policies, procedures, laws, and regulations](#) set by the UL System, Board of Regents, state of Louisiana, and U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Civil Rights, and the Equal Employment Commission.

While not comprehensive, some key policies to review include:

- Student Code of Conduct
<https://studentrights.louisiana.edu/student-conduct/code-conduct>
- Code of Conduct and Ethical Behavior Policy (for employees)
<https://policies.louisiana.edu/code-conduct-ethical-behavior-policy>
- Disability Accommodations for Applicants and Employees
<https://policies.louisiana.edu/disability-accommodations-applicants-employees-policy>
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)
<https://policies.louisiana.edu/node/153>
<https://louisiana.edu/registrar/records/ferpa/student-privacy>
- Non-Discrimination Policy
<https://policies.louisiana.edu/non-discrimination-policy>
- Power-based Violence Policy
<https://policies.louisiana.edu/alphabetical/l-p/power-based-violence-policy>
<https://police.louisiana.edu/jeanne-clery-act/campus-security-report/power-based-violence>
- Preventing and Addressing Retaliation Policy
<https://policies.louisiana.edu/node/79>
- Prohibiting Workplace Harassment and Discrimination Policy
<https://policies.louisiana.edu/node/80>
- Research Integrity Policy
<https://policies.louisiana.edu/node/121>

- Sexual Harassment and Other Prohibited Sexual Conduct Policy
<https://policies.louisiana.edu/titleix>
- University Drug and Alcohol Policy
<https://studentaffairs.louisiana.edu/node/36>

Appropriate and Inappropriate Tasks and Requests

In an assistantship or fellowship, you work at the intersection of two roles—as both a graduate student and as a graduate student employee—and sometimes expectations may blur academic and professional boundaries.

Appropriate Assistantship Tasks

Duties should contribute to your academic and professional development and align with the outlined expectations for assistantship and offer letter.

Assistantship assignments and/or primary duties may be changed with notice to you in advance. Occasionally, you may be asked to assist with tasks outside the primary scope of your duties. If such tasks become routine or begin to replace your core responsibilities, a formal update to your appointment should be initiated.

Examples of inappropriate duties include personal errands (e.g., house sitting, dog walking, babysitting), office work that is unrelated to official University business, and/or other tasks that do not support academic or professional mission.

Additional Service or Work

Graduate students in assistantship roles should not be asked or expected to work beyond their assigned duties or hours unless this is agreed upon in advance by the student and supervisor and any required approvals by the department head and administrative unit head (e.g., department head) and the Dean of the Graduate School have been secured.

This expectation applies to assistantship duties only. Education- and research-related work performed as part of a student's academic program—such as coursework, thesis, or dissertation—is not considered “additional work” for the purpose of this discussion. For GRA appointments that closely align with a student's own thesis or dissertation research, the distinction between compensated assistantship work and academic work can be less clear. Both supervisors and students should communicate regularly to maintain understanding of the distinction.

Because of the inherent power imbalances, it's important to remember too that students may feel pressured to agree to extra work. Requests for personal errands are particularly problematic, as they may cause tension, perceptions of favoritism, or—in the case of international students—jeopardize visa compliance.

Exceptions may arise when an additional opportunity may clearly benefit the student's academic or professional development. For example, a graduate student might volunteer uncompensated hours to be included as a co-author on work that falls outside their own thesis, dissertation, or synthesis project research. Such collaborations should be acknowledged and documented to avoid misunderstandings and should not involve additional monetary compensation or hours unless appropriately approved by the graduate program and the Dean of the Graduate School.

Avoiding Exploitative Situations

Proactive communication is key to maintaining healthy professional relationships (see Appendix: Communicating with Your Supervisor for guidance). That said, both graduate students in assistantship and fellowship roles and their supervisors should remain alert to potential red flags, such as:

- Requests to socialize in non-professional or private settings
- Comments on personal life
- References to appearance unrelated to assistantship and/or professional expectations
- Invitations that blur professional boundaries
- Inappropriate commentary, disrespectful behavior, or disregard for the student's academic or professional development

If maintaining healthy boundaries with a supervisor is not possible—or you feel that raising concerns might jeopardize your position—bring the matter to your Graduate Coordinator and/or Department Head. Depending on the circumstances, the Dean of the Graduate School, Dean of Students, Title IX, and/or the Office of Human Resources may need to be consulted. See the policies above and reporting expectations in the section below for further guidance.

Because of your unique dual role, it's also important to recognize that you may be in the position of authority in classes, labs, or office hours. Thus, the same professional boundaries and expectations apply in your relationships with undergraduate students and others you may supervise. Ensure that all interactions remain professional and consistent with University and departmental expectations.

Resolution of Conflict

A healthy working relationship requires open, timely communication between graduate students in assistantship and fellowship roles and their supervisors. Both parties share responsibility for raising and addressing concerns promptly as they arise.

If you are experiencing conflict with your supervisor, or encounter issues affecting job performance or working conditions:

1. Start with direct communication: Discuss the matter with your supervisor as soon as possible (see Appendix: Communicating with Your Supervisor for guidance).

2. If unresolved: Bring the matter to your Graduate Coordinator.
3. If still unresolved: Escalate to the administrative unit head (e.g., the Department Head) and, as appropriate to the Dean of the Graduate School, Dean of the academic college, Dean of Students, Title IX, and/or the Office of Human Resources.

Supervisors also have an obligation to provide feedback, especially when concerns about academic progress, job performance, or workplace conduct arise. While face-to-face conversations are especially important, written feedback and documentation, where appropriate, is encouraged.

If you are unsure who to contact for a specific concern, the Graduate School can guide you to the right resource. See also the University's policies and the reporting expectations in the next section.

Terms, Conditions, and Continuation of Appointment

Two core principles guide all graduate assistantship appointments. First, to hold an assistantship you must be a graduate student who is making satisfactory progress toward a graduate degree. Second, you must satisfactorily perform your duties and/or responsibilities. These guiding principles also hold true for the term of a fellowship appointment.

Eligibility

To qualify for an assistantship, you must be admitted in regular admission status (i.e., without conditions) as a degree-seeking student to a master's or doctoral program.

Students admitted conditionally, to a graduate certificate program, or as a non-degree-seeking student (e.g., entrée student or Master's +30 student) are not eligible for an assistantship.

Conditional Admission Assistantship Appeal

A department or other administrative unit—not the graduate student—may appeal to the Dean of the Graduate School to offer an assistantship to a conditionally-admitted graduate student. The dean may rule independently or refer the appeal to the Graduate Council Standing Committee on Graduate Appeals. Decisions of the dean may be appealed to this committee.

GRA Screening

In compliance with Louisiana Revised Statute 17:1826.3, the University requires additional screening for students being considered for GRA positions funded by a grant, gift, or contract.

- This pre-screening must occur before an assistantship offer is made.
- It applies to both newly-admitted students or current students being appointed to a GRA role for the first time.
- Faculty and supervisors should refer to the [Funding Your Students webpage](#) and the [Human Resources Employment Opportunities webpage](#) for details.

English Language Proficiency

Students who have not earned a degree from an accredited institution in the United States—or from a country exempted by the Graduate School for English language proficiency admissions requirements—may not be assigned GTA Instructor of Record duties until they demonstrate satisfactory English language proficiency.

While the [Academic Affairs Certification of Faculty English Proficiency](#) webpage identifies multiple ways proficiency can be certified, the Graduate Council has identified the following:

- Official test scores: Submission of satisfactory official test scores during the admission process.
- Additional assessment or training: Departments may also require additional English language assessment or training through the Department of Modern Language, English as Second Language (ESL) course(s), or the Intensive English Program (IEP).

If additional training is required, departments are encouraged to consider appointment to non-instructor-of-record GTA or GRA roles while training is in progress.

For all assistantship and fellowship appointments, departments may require additional English language training as duties and/or performance demand.

GTA Instructor of Record

To be eligible for appointment as a GTA Instructor of Record for undergraduate courses (100-300 level), a graduate student must meet both of the following requirements:

1. Academic Credentials
 - Hold a doctorate or master's degree in the teaching discipline, or
 - Hold a degree in any discipline with at least 18 graduate credit hours in the teaching field.
2. English language proficiency certification:
 - Per ACT 745 of the 1991 Session of the Louisiana legislature, all GTA Instructor of Record appointments require certification of English language proficiency by the appointing department.
 - More information is available on the [Academic Affairs Certification of Faculty English Proficiency](#) webpage.

Conditional Admission Assistantship Appeal

A department or other administrative unit—but not the graduate student themselves—may submit an appeal to the Dean of the Graduate School to offer an assistantship to a graduate student admitted conditionally. The dean may rule independently on these appeals or refer them to the Graduate Council Standing Committee on Graduate Appeals; decisions of the dean may be appealed to this committee.

Appointment and Reappointment

Selection of assistantship recipients, notification of the appointment, duration, and management of stipend amounts above the University minimum are the responsibility of the hiring department or unit. Offer letters must follow the template provided by the Graduate School. All assistantship appointments require approval by the Dean of the Graduate School.

Assistantship eligibility is reviewed each semester by the Graduate School to confirm that enrollment and academic performance requirements are being met. Reappointment is contingent upon continued eligibility, satisfactory job performance, and the appointment term and funding source identified in the offer letter.

A graduate student who becomes academically ineligible may not continue to hold an assistantship. While an appeal to continue in their graduate studies is possible, approval by the Graduate Council Graduate Student Appeals Committee to continue the University does not guarantee reinstatement of an assistantship. For reinstatement to be considered, the department or other hiring unit must formally recommend appeal for reinstatement of the assistantship.

Supervision and Evaluation

Each graduate student appointed to an assistantship will be assigned a supervisor for that role. This individual is identified initially in your offer letter, however they can change as GTA, GRA, or GA responsibilities shift from semester to semester or year to year.

In academic areas, the assistantship supervisor is often different from the student's advisory committee chair or research faculty mentor; however, for those in GRA roles, the same faculty member may serve in both capacities. Often, the graduate coordinator fulfills the supervisor role. For those serving as GTA Instructors of Record, the supervisor is typically the department head, graduate coordinator, or a designated faculty member assigned to oversee all students in such roles.

Work-related matters—such as absences, injuries, conflict, or other issues affecting performance of assigned duties—must be reported directly to the assistantship supervisor.

Departments, graduate programs, supervisors, and other hiring units are encouraged to adopt formal processes for evaluating assistantship performance. While the Graduate School does not prescribe a specific format, the purpose of these assessments should be to provide the student with meaningful, constructive feedback and to share results only with limited and appropriate University officials (e.g., graduate coordinator, department head, or other administrative unit head).

Enrollment Requirements

Graduate students appointed to assistantships and fellowships must maintain full-time enrollment in courses applicable to their degree in the Fall and/or Spring semesters. Full-time status for graduate students is 9+ credit hours of graduate-level coursework.

Summer Enrollment

Enrollment is not required in the summer session. However, to receive a tuition/fee waiver—if included as a benefit in your assistantship or fellowship offer—you must enroll in at least 6 credit

hours applicable to their degree. Students seeking a summer tuition/fee waiver should discuss this request with their graduate coordinator or assistantship supervisor well in advance of the summer session.

Final Semester Exemption

A graduate student in their final semester may appeal to the Dean of the Graduate School to enroll in fewer than 9 credit hours and still retain assistantship eligibility. This exemption is restricted to master's student pursuing a non-thesis, coursework plan of study and who are not continuing as a doctoral student at UL Lafayette. If approved, the minimum enrollment requirement is 6 credit hours in a Fall or Spring final semester or 3 credit hours in a Summer final semester.

Post-Graduation

A student who has earned a graduate degree may not continue in an assistantship or fellowship after the conferral of their degree unless they have been accepted into, and are registered for, another graduate program at UL Lafayette.

Appointment Term

Assistantship and fellowship appointments begin on the day that the **semester begins for faculty** (typically three business days before classes begin) and end on the **last day for faculty to submit final grades** (usually this is the Monday after final exam week). For Fall 2025, this means that the assistantship appointment term start date is August 20, and the end date is December 15.

Note that these dates are **not** the first day of classes and the last day of final exams or graduation. The appointment term aligns with the faculty schedule because assistantship appointments are intended to support the University teaching, research, and service mission. Setting start and end dates in this way ensures that graduate students appointed to GTA, GRA, GA and fellowship roles are available when faculty, academic and research areas, and administrative units need them most.

You can find these dates for the current and future semesters on the Academic Calendar posted on the Office of the University Registrar website at <https://louisiana.edu/registrar/registration/academic-calendar>.

Late Arrival or Early Departure

Arrival after the official assistantship start date or departure before the official assistantship end date identified above requires proration of the stipend and tuition/fee waiver.

Other Appointment Periods

Assistantship appointments that do not align with the academic year or the Fall or Spring semester—such as summer, monthly, or fixed-period appointments—will have start and end dates determined by the supervisor and in accordance with the funding source. Stipends and benefits like tuition and

fee waivers are adjusted accordingly. Such variation should be documented in the offer letter and appointment forms.

Work Location

Graduate students in assistantship roles are expected to be in residence in Louisiana and available to work on campus at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

An assistantship appointment that requires on-site work at University facilities located away from the main campus and/or outside of the Lafayette area (e.g., the New Iberia Research Center) that would require a student to have their own transportation should be clearly outlined at the time of hire and in an assistantship offer letter.

Short-term travel to research field sites, conferences, or workshops for assistantships duties require an approved travel request and, if operating a motor vehicle for University purposes, completion of all the driver safety training course requirements. Discuss these requirements with your supervisor.

Remote Work

Fully remote assistantship appointments are not permitted.

Temporary remote duties may be considered by the Graduate School in consultation with Human Resources under extraordinary circumstances, if:

- The location is within the United States and there are no restrictions that disallow;
- The duties meet expectations for both the assistantship appointment and teleworking;
- The student and supervisor can remain fully engaged.

Because the University has determined that individuals who are outside of the United States cannot be paid stipends or be asked to complete assistantship duties in return for a tuition/fee waiver, completion of temporary remote assistantship or fellowship duties from abroad cannot be approved.

Work Hours

Hours Required

An assistantship appointment is 20 hours per week during the appointment term. In Human Resources terminology, this is called half-time employment, 50% effort, or .50 full-time equivalent (FTE).

For GTA appointments, this workload is generally the equivalent of teaching two lower-division level lecture courses. The actual weekly time commitment will fluctuate—weeks with exams, grading, or

major assignments will be heavier, while weeks limited to class meetings, class prep, and office hours may be lighter.

For GRA appointments that align with a students' own thesis or dissertation research, time in the lab or on research activities may extend beyond 20 hours per week. However, it is important to distinguish between work performed as part of the assistantship and work that is part of your academic program—some hours contribute to your compensation, while other hours contribute to your education.

Assistantships are intended to be compatible with your graduate studies. Thus, it is expected that the remaining portion of your work week will be dedicated to your full-time courseload, research, and other progress toward degree.

Banner Time Entry (Timesheets)

Each month, you will be required to verify that you completed your assistantship duties by submitting a timesheet in Banner Time Entry located in ULink. Instructions on how to complete your timesheet are available by clicking the "View instructions" link in the Time Entry card.

If you did not complete your assistantship duties as directed, do not complete your timesheet online. Rather, notify your department head and Payroll Services immediately for instructions.

Supervisors are responsible for notifying department heads or other administrative unit heads (or their delegate) who approve assistantship/fellowship timesheets in Banner Time Entry that duties were/were not completed as directed.

International Students

International students on an F1 visa must comply also with work-hour restrictions set by the Student and Exchange Visitors Program (SEVP) and U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement. At this time, these rules include, but are not limited to, caps on the number of hours you may work when classes are in session and during official breaks. General guidance is as follows:

- Fall/Spring semesters: Maximum of 20 hours per week while school is in session.
- Summer session: Maximum of 20 hours per week if enrolled; if not enrolled, may enroll in up to 30 hours per week (considered "on holiday").
- Semester breaks (defined as the periods between the Fall/Spring semesters and/or the Summer session when classes are not in session): Maximum of 40 hours per week (i.e., "fulltime").

Because visa regulations can be complex, you should always confirm specific work-hour allowances with the Office of International Affairs before considering any employment beyond the 20 hours per week required by your assistantship.

Other Work

Assistantships are an investment intended to support your research and degree progress, and additional employment is generally discouraged to given workload concerns and a desire to see you meet academic and assistantship expectations. We recognize, however, that additional employment may sometimes be necessary. The guidance below outlines key considerations and the importance of disclosure.

On Campus Employment (Second Jobs)

During the appointment term, graduate students in assistantship roles may not receive additional payment for other on-campus employment. Exceptions—allowing for up to 5 additional hours per week—must be requested and approved before the work begins. Approval requires support from the student's graduate program and authorization by the Dean of the Graduate School and Human Resources. If granted, the total combined on-campus work (including assistantship duties) may not exceed 25 hours per week during the academic year.

Off-Campus Employment

Off-campus employment is not prohibited (except in the case of international students with certain visa types and some fellowships) but is discouraged if it interferes with academic progress or assistantship duties.

Disclosure

Graduate students who engage in off-campus employment are expected to disclose this employment to their graduate coordinator and assistantship supervisor. Disclosure ensures transparency, supports conversations about time management, and helps address potential conflicts early. Supervisors are not required to adjust assistantship responsibilities or duties to accommodate off-campus work.

Departments and supervisors may not prohibit off-campus employment. They are encouraged to collect and review records of employment disclosure, however, and to discuss potential implications with graduate students during onboarding, advising, and evaluations.

International Students

International students should be aware that additional on-campus and off-campus employment may not be permitted depending upon their visa type. For other on-campus employment, see discussion above in Work Hours. If off-campus employment is allowed, it typically requires prior authorization from the Office of International Affairs to ensure compliance with CPT and OPT regulations.

University Holidays

Graduate students appointed to assistantship and fellowship roles are entitled to the official holidays when the University is closed as well as breaks observed by students and faculty.

Any anticipated deviations from the typical academic calendar—such as expectations to work weekends, perform evening duties, or care for lab animals during holidays—should be discussed prior to hire and are typically documented in the offer letter.

If assistantship duties must be performed during a holiday or break, the student and supervisor should agree in advance on how those hours will be scheduled so they do not exceed the expected workload for the appointment term (e.g., semester, summer session, or semester breaks).

Absences and Leave

The University depends on graduate students appointed to assistantship roles to carry out essential duties. Reliable, consistent attendance—and completion of assigned hours and work—is therefore essential. Graduate students in assistantship roles do not accrue paid leave such as annual (vacation) or sick leave.

Primary Contact

Your assistantship supervisor is your primary point of contact for any absence, whether scheduled or unscheduled, authorized or unauthorized. This individual is distinct from your graduate coordinator, the professors teaching your courses, and—with perhaps the exception of GRA appointments—your advisory committee chair or the research faculty mentor directing your thesis/dissertation research. Additional notification may be required depending on the reason and length of the absence, if accommodations are being requested, the location of potential alternate duties or worksite, and/or any reassignment of work.

If an emergency or illness prevents you from fulfilling your assistantship duties, notify your supervisor immediately to arrange coverage, explore rescheduling, and address missed work. Your supervisor is also responsible for approving scheduled leave, coverage arrangements, and/or alternate duties, and may coordinate any additional approvals that are required.

Remember your dual role as both a graduate student and graduate student employee. If an absence prevents you from attending your own classes or completing coursework, you also must notify the Dean of Students and professors for any courses in which you are enrolled.

Scheduled Absences

If you anticipate absence for professional or personal reasons, notify your supervisor as soon as possible to request approval and to discuss plans for missing duties. Come prepared with ideas about how the missed hours and duties will be completed.

If coverage or alternate duties are not possible, the absence should also be discussed with the department head or administrative unit head. Such absences may need to be recorded on your timesheet and can result in a prorated stipend and tuition/fee waiver.

Depending on the situation and length of absence, some absences—particular those involving a GTA Instructor of Record—may require another individual be identified and compensated for assuming the duties, and that requires advance arrangements and additional approvals.

Unscheduled and Unauthorized Absences

Repeated tardiness, unscheduled absences, and unauthorized absences violate standards of attendance for University employees. (See the Code of Conduct and Ethical Behavior Policy.)

- Supervisors may require a statement from a health care provider upon return to work for unscheduled absences for more than three consecutive days.
- Consequences can be as significant as proration of stipend and tuition/fee waiver, disciplinary action, non-renewal or termination of the assistantship appointment.
- Missing work for three consecutive days without notification or satisfactory reason may be considered job abandonment and treated as a voluntary resignation.

Graduate students in assistantship roles are not only employees, however; they are foremost students. Thus, in instances of repeated unscheduled or unauthorized absences, assistantship supervisors and graduate coordinators are encouraged to alert the Students of Concern Team (SOCT). SOCT is a campus resource dedicated to assisting students who may be in distress or experiencing challenging or difficult life circumstances. Referrals to this Student Affairs resource can be made online at <https://studentaffairs.louisiana.edu/dean-students/students/report-student-concern>.

Supervisors and hiring units must consult with the Graduate School, the Dean of Students, and Human Resources prior to imposing consequences that may include proration of stipend and tuition/fee waiver, disciplinary action, and/or or non-renewal or termination due to repeated unscheduled or unauthorized absences.

Official Leave of Absence from Graduate Studies

A graduate student on official leave of absence from graduate studies cannot hold an assistantship or fellowship role, thus if an official leave of absence is necessary, cancellation of the appointment is required. Additionally, and while the Graduate School will advocate for funding consideration, reinstatement of an assistantship or fellowship is not guaranteed. You must work directly with your graduate coordinator and supervisor to request funding. An official leave of absence is not intended for short-term personal or professional leave. See the Academic Catalog for complete policy.

Continuation of Appointment

Assistantships and fellowships are intended to support your degree completion. In most cases, the appointment ends because you have successfully completed your graduate program—a welcome conclusion for both you and the University.

Until graduation time comes, three main considerations guide whether a graduate assistantship or fellowship continues:

1. **Satisfactory academic progress toward your degree**

At minimum, you must maintain full-time enrollment in courses applicable toward the degree, hold at least a 3.0 overall GPA, and make timely progress in coursework and other degree requirements.

2. **Satisfactory performance of assigned duties and responsibilities**

At minimum, you must complete assigned responsibilities, complete all mandatory or assigned training, and adhere to expectations for conduct appropriate to a graduate student employee.

3. **Offer letter appointment term and continuation clause**

Your appointment is also governed by the terms stated in your offer letter. If your assistantship is for a set duration (e.g., one semester, two years, or a maximum number of years/semesters), the appointment is not guaranteed to continue beyond that time. If continuation was identified as dependent upon a particular funding source, that funding also must be available.

While appeals and extension requests may be considered, continuation of assistantship and fellowship appointments always depend on meeting academic eligibility requirements, fulfilling job expectations well, and having an active appointment with a funding source in place.

End of Appointment

Beyond graduation, assistantships and fellowships typically end in one of four ways: non-renewal, cancellation, resignation, or termination. Each occurs under different circumstances, and some can have significant financial implications.

Non-Renewal

Non-renewal occurs at the end of a semester when an assistantship or fellowship is not continued into the next semester.

- Non-renewal happens most often because the appointment term as stated in the offer letter has concluded, but it also can result when unsatisfactory job performance or unsatisfactory academic progress results in a decision of non-renewal.
- In the case of an offer letter with a continuation clause dependent upon availability of funding, non-renewal can result from funding limitations.
- Non-renewal does not mean that the graduate student is dismissed from the University.
- Because graduate students often rely on funding, departments and supervisors are encouraged to communicate non-renewal decisions clearly and as early as possible.

Cancellation

Cancellation occurs before the semester ends when an assistantship is cancelled when it is no longer possible for a graduate student to hold an assistantship.

- Most cancellations are a result of dropping below full-time enrollment when a student withdraws from classes.
- An assistantship can also be cancelled due to academic ineligibility mid-semester when an academic deficiency becomes apparent, and a student is declared ineligible to continue in graduate studies.
- Cancellation is distinct from termination (below) in that it is triggered by ineligibility, not job performance or misconduct.

Resignation

Resignation occurs before the semester ends when the student voluntarily ends the appointment.

- Students considering resignation should consult with their supervisor, Graduate Coordinator, and department head. International students should also consult with the Office of International Affairs before resigning, as doing so may affect visa status.
- Resignation should be submitted in writing and include an effective date and, to the extent possible, a reason for the resignation.
- Customary professional standards is to give at least two weeks' notice when resigning.

Termination

Termination refers to ending an assistantship before the end of its appointment term, typically for cause. It may also coincide with dismissal from a program and/or the University. While termination can occur at any time, it most often happens mid-semester, as non-renewal typically concludes an appointment at the nature end of a semester.

Termination may result from:

- Persistent unsatisfactory performance of assistantship duties despite feedback and opportunities for improvement.

- Serious or repeated violation of University policy, including but not limited to the Student Code of Conduct, Code of Conduct and Ethical Behavior Policy, Academic Honesty Policy, Research Integrity Policy, or policies prohibiting discrimination, power-based violence, or sexual harassment.
- Other significant misconduct or behavior that compromises the working and learning environments, integrity, or operations of the University.

Termination for unsatisfactory job performance should be a last resort and come only after documented feedback, appropriate warning (e.g., letter of concern, letter of reprimand), and corrective measures have been attempted.

Recommendations for termination must be referred to the Graduate School for review prior to action. Depending on the situation, other administrative offices (e.g., academic college dean, Dean of Students, Human Resources, Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities, Office of Research Integrity) may also be engaged.

Graduate students whose assistantships have been terminated—or not renewed—may seek guidance from the Dean of the Graduate School, the Dean of Students Office, HR Consultancy, and/or Title IX, particularly if there is concern that the action was unfair, capricious, or in violation of University policy.

Financial and Administrative Implications

Ending an assistantship or fellowship—whether planned or unplanned—can affect stipend payments, tuition, fees, and other benefits.

- For cancellation, resignation, and termination, the cost of assistantship waivers (tuition, fees, and any other benefits) will be prorated to the effective end date. The student is responsible for the remaining balance of the full tuition/fee rate for the semester.
- Stipend payments stop immediately upon the end date. Any stipend payment that includes compensation beyond the effective end date must be returned to the University.
- Because non-renewal takes effect at the natural end of a semester, proration of stipend, waiver, or other benefits is not applicable.

If the end of an assistantship or fellowship coincides with resignation from the University or disciplinary action that results in dismissal from the University, it's important also to note that University housing and visa status can be impacted.

Compensation, Benefits, and Resources

Assistantships and fellowships provide more than financial support—they also include benefits, protections, and resources to help you succeed in your dual role as a graduate student and employee. This section outlines the stipends and tuition/fee waivers that come with your appointment, the protections and accommodations you are entitled to as a University employee, and the resources available to support your work, health, and academic progress.

Compensation

Stipends

The Graduate School—following an annual assistantship budget approval process with the Provost, President, Vice President for Administration and Finance and Chief Financial Officer, among others—confirms minimum stipend levels.

- Effective 2024-2025, minimum stipend levels are:
 - master’s-level assistantship: \$11,500 per year (\$5,750/semester)
 - doctoral-level assistantship: \$20,000 per year (\$10,000/semester)
 - university doctoral fellowship: \$22,000 per year (\$11,000/semester)
- Stipends must meet or exceed these minimums, and they vary greatly by discipline and funding source.
- Exceptions below the minimum will be approved only for grants with budgets created before the 2024–2025 academic year.

Academic year stipends are for work completed during a nine-month period but, to ensure that graduate students appointed to these roles receive a monthly paycheck beginning in August and continuing through May, they are paid over a ten-month period.

Monthly stipends are direct deposited into your bank account on the last business day of each month. The payroll schedule for graduate assistantship and fellowship is posted on the Office of Payroll Services website at <https://louisiana.edu/payroll/pay-information/pay-schedules/graduate-assistants-fellows>.

If the first assistantship or fellowship paycheck is delayed due to appointment paperwork processing or hiring delays, graduate students may request emergency short-term assistance. The University

provides this non-interest-bearing assistance through a short-term loan program. Funding for this program comes from a .50 fee paid by students and it is administered by the Financial Aid Office.

Except for tuition-waiver-only assistantships, a graduate assistantship includes both a stipend and tuition waiver that cannot be separated. If a student is awarded an assistantship stipend, they must receive a tuition waiver.

Tuition and Fee Waivers

Assistantship awards include a 100% tuition waiver for enrollment as a full-time graduate student during the appointment period.

Assistantship awards also include a full waiver of mandatory student fees assessed with tuition.

- Late fees, course and laboratory fees, online course fees are not included in this waiver.
- The assistantship fee waiver also does not cover 100% of the supplement insurance fee for international students on F1-, J-1, or other non-immigrant visas.

Assistantship recipients should always review their Statement of Account and pay student fees not waived prior to University deadlines.

Taxation

Graduate assistantships can have different tax implications depending on the type of award. There are also different implications for domestic and international students.

The University is not authorized to provide tax advice. In the United States, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) interprets and enforces tax laws. If you have questions about taxation, it is best—always—to consult a qualified tax professional or the IRS for guidance.

The IRS offers information regarding tax responsibility for fellowship and other stipend awards under [Scholarships, Fellowship Grants, Grants, and Tuition Reductions](#) (for U.S. citizen students) and under [Taxation of Non-resident Aliens](#) (for non-U.S. citizen students).

The information below outlines some general tax considerations for stipend and tuition waiver taxability:

- Stipends: All graduate students must pay income tax on stipends received for graduate assistantships, per the U.S. federal tax code revisions effective January 1, 1987.
- Tuition Waivers: Per Internal Revenue Service regulation IRC 127: Educational Assistance Programs, tuition waivers awarded as part of an assistantship are considered taxable income once the total exceeds \$5,250 in a calendar year.

- GRA and GTA awards are exempt from taxation of tuition waiver in full at this time.
 - GA awards are exempt from taxation only on the first \$5,250 of the tuition waiver each calendar year
- IRS Definition of Compensation: IRS regulations consider anything of value provided to an employee, including student employee, by an employer to be a form of compensation.

International students may also be exempt from some taxation based on tax treaties between the United States and their home countries. The University provides information during the assistantship hiring process, but international students should review the Nonresident Alien Payments Policy at <https://policies.louisiana.edu/node/236> for more guidance.

Leave, Unemployment, and Retirement

Graduate students in assistantship roles do not accrue paid leave such as annual (vacation) or sick leave. They are also not eligible for unemployment compensation or University retirement programs.

Workplace Reporting Requirements

Reporting an Incident, Concern, or Complaint

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette is committed to maintaining safe and respectful working and learning environments. Graduate students appointed to graduate assistantship and fellowship roles are colleagues and should be treated respectfully. All employees are entitled to a workplace free from harassment, discrimination, and retaliation.

If incidents, concerns, or complaints arise, they should be reported promptly. The Office of Human Resources offers the following guidance for reporting concerns:

- Workplace misconduct: <https://humanresources.louisiana.edu/resources-reporting-incident/workplace-misconduct-and-employee-performance-concerns>.
- Discrimination, harassment, sexual violence or retaliation: <https://humanresources.louisiana.edu/resources-reporting-incident/discrimination-harassment-sexual-violence-or-retaliation>.
- Anonymous reporting: The University provides an anonymous option through EthicsPoint at <https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/34137/index.html>.

All members of the University community have a responsibility—and in many instances an obligation—to act when an issue or concern arises. If you are unsure whether a situation should be reported, it is better to report so it can be addressed appropriately by those best equipped to do so.

Retaliation against individuals who make good-faith reports is strictly prohibited.

Accommodation Requests

Graduate students appointed to assistantship or fellowship roles may seek accommodation as a student. As graduate student employees, you may also seek accommodation as an employee and, of course, are responsible for responding appropriately to accommodation requests from students in your classes or labs.

Disability Accommodation

In compliance with the [Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 \(ADA\)](#), Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the University's Disability Accommodation for Applicants and Employees Policy, the University prohibits employment discrimination based on disability and will provide reasonable accommodation to allow qualified individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity for employment and access to University services, programs, and activities.

- Disability Accommodation Policy
<https://policies.louisiana.edu/disability-accommodations-applicants-employees-policy>

Pregnancy Accommodation

The [Pregnant Workers Fairness Act \(PWFA\)](#) requires [covered employers](#) to provide “reasonable accommodations” to a worker’s known limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, unless the accommodation will cause the employer an “undue hardship.” The PWFA applies only to accommodations. [Existing laws](#) that the EEOC enforces make it illegal to fire or otherwise discriminate against workers on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. The PWFA does not replace federal, state, or local laws that are more protective of workers affected by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions.

- Employee Pregnancy
<https://humanresources.louisiana.edu/resources-reporting-incident/ada/pregnancy-accommodations>
- Pregnant and Parenting Students
<https://titleix.louisiana.edu/title-ix/pregnancy-and-parenting-students>

Religious Accommodation

In accordance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as well as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s Guidelines on Discrimination Because of Religion, the University supports the employment of all qualified employees and applicants and prohibits discrimination based on religious beliefs, practices, or affiliation. Social, political, or economic philosophies, or personal preferences, are not “religious” beliefs protected under Title VII.

- Religious Accommodation for Applicants and Employees Policy
<https://policies.louisiana.edu/alphabetical/q-u/religious-accommodation-applicants-and-employees-policy>

Requesting Accommodations

- If an employment disability, religious, pregnancy accommodation is being requested, contact the ADA Coordinator in Human Resources at (337) 482-1014 or hrcompliance@louisiana.edu.
- If a disability accommodation is being requested as a student or you have questions about a disability accommodation for the students you teach, contact the Office of Disability Services at 337-482-5252 or ods@louisiana.edu. The Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities is also an important resource when seeking academic accommodations.
- If seeking accommodation as a pregnant and parenting student, contact Teressa LaDay, Title IX Coordinator, at 337-482-1819 or titleix@louisiana.edu
<https://titleix.louisiana.edu/title-ix/pregnancy-and-parenting-students>

Health and Safety

Health Insurance

Additional information about available health insurance options—both for international and domestic students—is available from the Student Health Services.

International students holding an F or J visa are required to carry the University's international student health insurance plan unless proof of other coverage meeting or exceeding the University's requirements is provided. Enrollment in this plan is automatic upon registration, and the cost is added to the student account each Fall and Spring semester; summer enrollment is strongly encouraged. The University shares the cost of the international student insurance premium for F and J visa holders who have been appointed to an assistantship or fellowship role, covering 50% of the premium for the Fall and Spring semesters. The remaining 50% is billed directly to the student. For details about this requirement and mandatory plan, visit the Office of Student Health Services website.

- International student insurance: <https://louisiana.edu/studenthealth/student-insurance>
- Domestic student Insurance: <https://louisiana.edu/studenthealth/student-insurance/domestic-insurance>
- GSO Resources on Affordable Health Insurance Navigation through SWLAHEC: <https://gso.louisiana.edu/node/76>
- Health Insurance Marketplace: <https://www.healthcare.gov/>

Workplace Injury

Employees of the University are covered by Workers' Compensation Insurance, and this coverage extends to graduate students appointed to assistantship roles. This insurance is applicable only in the event of an accident while the employee is on duty. In the event you are injured on the job, see

Procedures to Follow for Workers' Compensation Accidents & Injuries. It is critical for graduate students to report all injuries to their assistantship supervisor as soon as possible.

- Worker' Compensation and Procedures to Follow for Workers' Compensation Accidents and Injuries: <https://humanresources.louisiana.edu/benefits/workers-compensation>
- On-the-Job Injury: <https://safety.louisiana.edu/report-issue/job-injury>

Intellectual Property

Graduate students appointed to assistantship roles, especially GRA roles, participate in the “creations of the mind” that may be subject to intellectual property (IP) protections such as copyright, patents, and trademarks. As a public institution, the University’s goal is to ensure that intellectual property created here is used in ways that benefit the public, stimulate economic development in Louisiana, and enhance the University’s reputation and impact.

If you create intellectual property in which the University has an ownership interest, that has potential for public benefit, or for which disclosure is required by law, you have a duty to promptly and fully report it—even if the work was done as a GRA, on personal time, while consulting for another entity, or away from campus.

Graduate students, especially those in GRA roles, should seek early clarification from their supervisor about authorship expectations, order of authors, and copyright assignment for any work that could be part of a jointly published project, thesis, or dissertation.

- Intellectual Property Policy
<https://policies.louisiana.edu/node/113>

Campus Logistics and Access

Parking

If you plan to park on campus, your vehicle must be registered with the Office of Parking and Transit (Olivier Tower Parking Garage, first floor) and display a valid permit. Graduate students appointed to assistantships and fellowships are eligible to purchase special parking permits, subject to availability, through ULINK during the dates set by the Parking and Transit. Because demand is high, purchase your permit as soon as sales open. As we prepare for each semester, the Graduate School shares assistantship and fellowship recipient information to the Office of Parking and Transit daily as we receive appointment paperwork.

Building and Office Access

Keys to University buildings and offices are issued by the Facilities Management Department to faculty, staff, and graduate students for the purpose of conducting official University business.

Consult your supervisor to determine if keys or card access is needed for completion of assistantship or fellowship duties and, if so, [review the policy to secure the required permissions and complete a Key Request Form](#). A minimal deposit (currently \$2.00 for a office door key) is required at the time of issue. Building access is moving away from keys to access cards.

You are responsible for safeguarding keys and/or access cards and for returning them promptly at the end of your appointment and/or before the end of your graduating semester.

Lost keys must be reported to the Facilities Management Department within 24 hours.

Campus Resources

The following offices and resources will be especially valuable to your work supporting teaching, research, and service at University of Louisiana at Lafayette:

- [Academic Success Center](#) and [The Learning Center](#)
Provides advising, tutoring, and support resources for undergraduates. The Learning Center offers free tutoring, supplemental instruction, and study resources that you can recommend to your students to reinforce coursework objectives and promote independent learning.
- [ADVANCE](#)
Supports undergraduate research and creative projects. You can connect your students to this resource for mentored research opportunities and guidance on developing, presenting, and sharing their work.
- [Counseling & Testing Center](#) and [UWill](#)
Provides critical mental health resources, including access to free, 24/7 teletherapy through UWill. You can refer students here if they are struggling with wellness, stress, counseling resources.
- [IT Service Desk: Knowledge Base](#)
The University's hub for technical support, software access, and training tools. Offers how-to guides and real-time help for both your own research and teaching needs as well as student tech troubleshooting.
- [Library Instructional Services](#) (Dupré Library)
Offers tailored research support, consultations, and course resources. Use these services to strengthen information literacy instruction and help integrate research into your teaching.
- [Moodle Faculty Help](#)
Provides self-service assistance for the University's course management system, useful for preparing and managing the courses you teach or support.

- [NCFDD](#)
UL Lafayette is an institutional member of NCFDD, which provides independent professional development, training, and mentoring for grad students, postdocs, and faculty.
- [Office of Distance Learning](#)
Provides course design resources and training to enhance teaching effectiveness in both online and on campus courses.
- [Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)
Upholds the Code of Student Conduct and a respectful campus community. Work with this office when academic or behavioral misconduct arises in a class, labs, or research settings, or when guidance on [reporting a student of concern](#) or referrals are needed.
- [University Research Online Training](#)
A centralized training portal compliance and research integrity training via CITI platform and other external research resources. Especially relevant to those in GRA roles involving human subjects research, animal care, biosafety, or projects with export controls.
- [The Writing Lab](#)
Provides resources and support for writers from all disciplines and at all stages of the writing process. Especially valuable as a recommended partner to support undergraduate and multilingual writers seeking extra support or feedback on their work.

Acknowledgments

The Graduate School extends its sincere appreciation to the Graduate Council for calling for the creation of this resource and to the Graduate Assistantship Handbook Ad Hoc Committee for their dedicated work in its development.

The Ad Hoc Committee, chaired by **Paul Leberg (Associate Dean of the Graduate School and Professor of Biology)**, was charged with drafting a handbook that consolidates existing practices, policies, and procedures into one resource, while also identifying areas where clearer guidance or new policies are needed. In fulfilling this charge, the committee benchmarked against handbooks and policies at other peer and aspirant R1 universities, including Clemson University, Louisiana State University, Mississippi State University, Florida International University, University of Rhode Island, and University of Michigan. The Graduate School extends much appreciation to these institutions and others for providing models that informed this work and inspiration for future policy development.

The Graduate School especially thanks Dr. Leberg and the members of the committee for their thoughtful contributions:

- Wesley Bradford, College of the Arts
- Bob Viguerie, College of Business Administration
- Amanda Mayeaux, College of Education and Human Development
- Mark Zappi, College of Engineering
- Laurel Ryan, College of Liberal Arts
- Scott Sittig, College of Nursing and Health Sciences
- Arturo Magidin, College of Sciences
- Brian Schubert, College of Sciences
- Jennifer Chang, Finance and Business Affairs Manager, Graduate School (ex-officio)

Their expertise and collaboration have been invaluable in shaping this resource that will serve graduate students, faculty, and academic units for years to come.

Appendix: Tips for Communicating with your Supervisor

Clear, consistent communication with your assistantship supervisor is one of the most important factors in your success—both in fulfilling your assigned duties and in maintaining a positive working relationship. Many performance problems arise from misunderstandings about expectations, deadlines, and priorities. Establishing strong communication habits from the beginning can prevent problems and help you navigate challenges productively.

1. Establish a Communication Plan

At the start of your appointment, discuss and agree on:

- Preferred communication method (e.g., email, text, phone, Teams, Zoom) and typical response times.
- Emergency contact plan and method.
- Availability (days/times when each of you is reachable).
- Meeting format and frequency (in-person, virtual) and what to do if one of you needs to cancel.
- Expectations for meeting follow-up (e.g., sending a recap summarizing advice, decisions, or next steps).
- Technology preferences and tools for sharing work (e.g., OneDrive, Zoom or Teams, Trello).
- Confidentiality of the work, records management, and when discretion is especially important.
- How to handle disagreements, conflict, or difficult interactions (including those with students).

2. Clarify Role and Work Expectations

Have an early conversation about:

- Your primary responsibilities and position expectations (including lab or office hours, reading requirements, or course prep).
- How and how often you will receive feedback—including turnaround time for written work.
- Expectations for research travel, conference attendance, and available funding.
- Authorship norms and recognition on publications.
- Professional goals (short- and long-term) and opportunities for skills development.
- Target milestones for the semester, especially defense or graduation dates.
- Work–life balance, vacation planning, and procedures for requesting time away.

3. Practice Professional Email Etiquette

When emailing your supervisor (or other faculty):

- Use your UL Lafayette email and a clear, informative subject line.
- Begin with a professional greeting (e.g., *Dr.* or *Professor*, unless told otherwise).
- Be clear and concise—use bullets for updates and attach documents rather than pasting long text.
- Thank the recipient and sign your name.
- Use correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization—no text abbreviations.
- Proofread before sending.
- Do not use email to avoid a conversation that is better handled in person.

4. Repairing Communication Breakdowns

If misunderstandings or frustrations develop:

- Request a face-to-face meeting (in person or via Zoom or Teams with the camera on).
- Be open to feedback—remember, critique is a normal and constructive part of graduate training.
- Be honest and transparent about challenges you are facing.
- Ask directly: *“What should I be doing differently?”*
- Listen carefully, take notes, and agree on specific next steps.
- Follow up with a written recap to confirm your understanding and alignment on priorities.
Example: *“Hi Dr. X, thanks for a productive meeting. To recap, we discussed... I will move forward by... If I don’t hear otherwise, I’ll assume I’m on the right track.”*