Graduate Assistant Employment Handbook

NORTHWEST MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY

Approved by the Board of Regents

October 2020

Graduate School
Northwest Missouri State University
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Welcome

Welcome to Northwest Missouri State University. The University's main responsibility, as a public institution of higher learning, is to provide a quality education for all who attend. All activities are carried out with this goal in mind and the graduate assistant employee [hereinafter "graduate assistant(s)" or "employee(s)" or "graduate employee(s)" or "graduate student(s)", unless the context dictates otherwise] has a role in helping to achieve it. The University enjoys the reputation of having the most beautiful, functional, and friendly campus in the state. Without the cooperation and support of all employees, this reputation would not be possible. Courtesy and mutual respect among students, faculty, and staff are of utmost importance in creating an environment conducive to education.

This Graduate Assistant Handbook has been prepared by the Graduate School as a guide to inform graduate assistants of their responsibilities. Graduate assistants are strongly encouraged to read this Graduate Assistant Handbook and keep it available for reference. In addition to the policies outlined in this Graduate Assistant Handbook, each graduate assistant should familiarize himself or herself with the specific policies and responsibilities of their department. Every attempt has been made to ensure that this Graduate Assistant Handbook is complete and that the policies and procedures contained herein conform to local, state and federal requirements. Graduate assistants who have questions about employment policies or procedures that are not answered in this Graduate Assistant Handbook should contact their supervisor, department head, or the Office of Human Resources for assistance. The most recent edition of the Graduate Assistant Handbook is also available on the *myNorthwest* web portal and the graduate assistantships website: https://www.nwmissouri.edu/graduate/ga/index.htm.

The Graduate School has established the following as values of the Graduate Assistantship program:

- Providing professional development opportunities for graduate students,
- Providing opportunities to assist in financing graduate education,
- Providing access to graduate education,
- Recognizing students' contributions to Northwest and to the Graduate School,
- Providing opportunities to develop teamwork skills,
- Providing opportunities for graduate assistants to manage projects and reports not

suitable for undergraduate workers,

- Providing professional level employees to assist in meeting staffing needs at Northwest.

Additional assistance to address specific issues in the Graduate Assistantship program is available at:

Graduate Office
257 Administration Building
(660) 562-1145

Office of Career Services
(Interviewing skills, Résumé writing)
130 Administration Building
(660) 562-1250

Student Payroll Supervisor
(Paychecks, W-2's)
102A Administration Building
(660) 562-1108

Equal Employment Opportunity Committee
(Discrimination, Sexual harassment)
125 Administration Building
(660) 562-1128

1.2 Northwest's Vision and Mission Statements

Vision

- We will be THE university of choice for a comprehensive, exceptional student experience.

Mission

- Northwest Missouri State University Focuses on Student Success-every student, every day.

Values

- Student Success
- Scholarship and life-long learning
- Intercultural competence
- Collaboration
- Respect and integrity
- Strategic thinking
- Excellence

Our DNA

- Advocating one to one engaging relationships
- Keeps costs affordable
- Providing beautiful and safe surrounds
- Driving economic development entrepreneurship to better our region and community

- Being socially responsible
- Delivering excellence through high expectations and servant leadership

1.3 At-Will Employment

This Graduate Assistant Handbook is not a contract of employment. Unless otherwise agreed in writing signed by the Board of Regents and subject to these policies and any applicable law, all University graduate assistants are employed on an at-will basis. This means that employment is not guaranteed for any specific duration of time, and the University retains the right to terminate an individual's employment at any time, with or without cause. No oral representations made by a University employee with respect to continued employment can alter this relationship. Likewise, no statement made in this Graduate Assistant Handbook is intended to alter the at-will nature of employment with the University.

1.4 Policy Changes

The University retains the right to change, modify, suspend, interpret, or cancel in whole or in part any of its published or unpublished policies or practices, with or without advance notice. If statements in this Graduate Assistant Handbook are found to be in conflict with existing or future local, state or federal laws or regulations, such rules shall supersede and prevail over the Graduate Assistant Handbook statements. This edition of the Graduate Assistant Handbook supersedes all previous editions of the Graduate Assistant Handbook.

The regulations and policies contained herein shall cover all graduate assistants by the University. Policies pertaining student employees are contained in the Student Employee Handbook.

CHAPTER 2
GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

2.1 Nondiscrimination/Equal Employment Opportunity

Northwest Missouri State University emphasizes the dignity and equality common to all persons and adheres to a strict nondiscrimination policy regarding the treatment of individual faculty, staff, students, third parties on campus, and applicants for employment and admissions. In accord with federal law and applicable Missouri statutes, the University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, ancestry, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other legally-protected class, in employment or in any program or activity offered or sponsored by the University, including, but not limited to, athletics, instruction, grading, the awarding of student financial aid, recruitment, admissions, and housing. As an equal opportunity employer, the University promotes and maintains affirmative action programs to ensure that all individuals participate fully in every facet of employment opportunities.
Persons having inquiries concerning the University's compliance with this policy or any laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination are directed to contact the following:

- An employee with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination in the workplace, including discriminatory harassment, is encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Officer, who may be contacted at: EEO Officer, Northwest Missouri State University, 800 University Drive, Maryville, Missouri, 64468-6001 (660-562-1128).

- Questions or concerns regarding the University's compliance with Title IX may be directed to the University's Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Title IX Coordinators. The University has designated the following Title IX Coordinator and Deputy Title IX Coordinators as named in the University's Title IX Policies and Procedures:

  William Sabio
  Assistant Vice President in Student Affairs
  Title IX and Equity
  25 North Complex
  Tel: 660-562-1476

  Email: wsabio@nwmissouri.edu

  Krista Barcus
  Assistant Vice- President of, Human Resources (Deputy Employee Coordinator)
  125 Administration Building
  Tel: 660-562-1128

  Email: kbarcus@nwmissouri.edu

Kori Hoffmann
Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs/Student Engagement and Development (Deputy Student Coordinator)
Student Union, Room 2290 Tel: 660-562- 1535
Email: khoff20@nwmissouri.edu

- For ADA/Section 504 related questions or concerns, please contact:

  William Sabio
  Assistant Vice- President in Student Affairs
  Title IX and Equity
  25 North Complex
  Tel: 660-562-1476
  Email: wsabio@nwmissouri.edu

- For all other inquiries related to discrimination at the University, please contact:

  William Sabio
  Assistant Vice- President in Student Affairs
  Title IX and Equity
  25 North Complex
  Tel: 660-562-1476
  Email: wsabio@nwmissouri.edu

No individual will be subject to any form of retaliation, discipline, or other adverse action for reporting conduct in violation of the University's nondiscrimination/EEO policy, assisting/cooperating in making a complaint, or assisting with the investigation of a complaint. Any individual who believes they have experienced or witnessed retaliation should immediately notify the appropriate member(s) of the administration as identified above. Those found to be engaging in any type of discrimination in violation of the law or University policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal or termination of employment.

Copies of the University's Equal Employment Opportunity ("EEO") Guidelines are available in the Office of Human Resources.

2.2 Harassment

Northwest's Commitment

All members of the University community have an interest in increasing and maintaining an environment free from harassment, including sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is a violation of federal and state law, as well as Northwest policy. All faculty, staff, and students need to be aware that they will be subject to disciplinary action for violations of this policy up to and including termination. Northwest is committed

to providing an environment in which individuals are treated fairly and with respect. Harassment will not be tolerated under any circumstances within the University's jurisdiction, whether it is in an academic, employment, residential, or social situation.

Definition of Sexual Harassment/Sexual Violence

Defined by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ("EEOC"), unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic standing, or
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions or academic evaluations affecting such individual, or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working, academic, or social environment.

Examples of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment include:

- Verbal: suggestive comments about a person's clothing, body, or sexual activity; humor or jokes about sex or about gender-related characteristics; sexual innuendos and comments; direct or indirect threats linked to sexual propositions or sexually- explicit questions
- Nonverbal: suggestive or insulting sounds (leering, whistling); display of sexually- explicit pictures or photographs; obscene gestures; staring at a person's physical features
- Physical: intentionally brushing a person in passing; inappropriate touching, patting, or tickling; pinching or squeezing; coerced sexual activity and sexual assault
- Written: suggestive notes, letters; suggestive E-mail messages, text messages

Reporting Procedure

Early reporting and intervention have proven to be the most effective method of resolving actual or perceived incidents of harassment. If you feel you have experienced or observed any form of unlawful harassment, please take the following actions:

- Promptly advise the offender(s) that the conduct is unwelcome and request that it be stopped immediately.
- Document the incident as to date, time, place, witnesses, and nature of the incident.
- Report the incident to the EEO Officer immediately.

In all cases, the EEO Officer or his or her designated representative will be available to hear complaints. The EEO Officer can be contacted at: EEO Officer, Northwest Missouri State University, 800 University Drive, Maryville, Missouri, 64468-6001 (660-562-1128).

Additional Points

Every effort will be made to ensure the confidentiality of those who report a complaint or participate in the procedures. Persons making false accusations in harassment cases will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Persons, who retaliate against those who report sexual harassment, use the reporting procedures, or are involved in the harassment procedure, will likewise be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

2.3 Consensual Amorous Relationships

In General

There are special risks in any sexual or romantic relationship between individuals in inherently unequal positions, and parties in such a relationship assume those risks. In the University context, such positions include (but are not limited to) supervisor and employee, senior faculty and junior faculty, mentor and trainee, and professor and student. Because of the potential for conflict of interest, exploitation, favoritism, and bias, such relationships may undermine the real or perceived integrity of the supervision and evaluation provided. Such relationships may be less consensual than the individual whose position confers power or authority believes. The relationship is likely perceived in different ways by each of the parties to it, especially in retrospect.

Moreover, such relationships may harm or injure others in the academic or work environment. Relations in which one party is in a position to review the work or influence the career of the other may provide grounds for complaints by third parties when that relationship gives undue access or advantage, restrict opportunities, or creates a perception of these problems. Furthermore, circumstances may change, and conduct that was previously welcome may become unwelcome. Even when both parties have consented at the outset to a romantic involvement, this past consent does not remove grounds for a charge based upon subsequent unwelcome conduct after notice is given that such conduct is no longer welcome.

Where such a relationship exists, the person in the position of greater authority or power will bear the primary burden of accountability, and must ensure that he or she, and this is particularly important for teachers, does not exercise any supervisory or evaluation function over the other person in the relationship. Where such recusal is required, the recusing party must also notify his or her supervisor or department head, so that such supervisor or department head can exercise his or her responsibility to evaluate the adequacy of the alternative supervisory evaluative arrangements to be put in place. Graduate assistants, may instead, as an option, notify the Office of Human Resources. To reiterate, the responsibility for recusal and notification rests with the person in the position of greater authority or power. Failure to comply with

these recusal and notification requirements is a violation of this policy, and therefore grounds for discipline, up to and including termination.

With Students

The University will view it as unethical and a violation of this policy if University employees engage in sexual or romantic relationships with students enrolled in their classes or subject to their supervision. Such employee-student relationships may include, but are not limited to, faculty and student, advisor and advisee, teaching assistant and student, coach and athlete, the individuals who supervise the day-to-day student living environment of student residents, graduate assistant and student, and graduate assistant supervisor and graduate assistant. The behavior is, in most cases, unethical even when the relationship is consensual (i.e., both parties have consented), because the voluntary consent of the student is in doubt, given the power imbalance in the student-employee relationship. Even if consent were to be shown, a clear conflict of interest would still exist which might create the appearance of discrimination or favoritism in grading or access to educational opportunities. Relationships between a graduate student and an undergraduate student, when the graduate student has some supervisory responsibility for the undergraduate student, are covered by this policy.

An employee with questions or concerns about consensual amorous relationships in the workplace is encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of the EEO Officer.

2.4 Disability and Reasonable Accommodation

Northwest's Commitment

Northwest Missouri State University is committed to providing an accessible and supportive environment for employees with disabilities. Equal access for qualified employees with a disability is an obligation of the University under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA). The University does not discriminate on the basis of disability against otherwise- qualified individuals in any program, service or activity offered by the University. The University is committed to ensuring that no otherwise qualified individual with a disability is excluded, denied services, segregated or otherwise treated differently than other individuals because of the absence of auxiliary aids or other appropriate services; however, accommodations cannot result in an undue hardship to the University or fundamentally alter the essential functions of the job.

Implementation and Responsibility

Employees are responsible for initiating requests for any desired disability related workplace accommodations. Requests by employees should be made to supervisors or to the Office of Human Resources.

Supervisors/Department Heads are responsible for receiving requests for workplace accommodations, informing employees of the process and referring requests to the Office of Human Resources. Supervisors are also responsible for initiating a discussion concerning accommodations when they have reason to believe that an

employee's disability precludes the employee from initiating a request. Supervisors should inform the Office of Human Resources of all requests for accommodations.

Office of Human Resources and the Office of Equity and Accessibility are responsible for evaluating the request, determining what type of documentation is necessary, and determining if the requested accommodation is appropriate and effective.

Definitions

Disability: The term "disability" means, with respect to an individual— (a) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual, (2) a record of such an impairment; or (3) an impairment that is episodic or in remission if it substantially limits a major life activity when it is active.

Substantial Limitation: An impairment is substantially limiting if it prohibits or significantly restricts an individual's ability to perform a major life activity as compared to the ability of the average person in the general population to perform the same activity. The determination of whether an impairment substantially limits a major life activity depends on the nature and severity of the impairment, the duration or expected duration of the impairment, and the permanent or long-term impact of the impairment.

Major Life Activity: A major life activity is defined as the act of caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working. A major life activity also includes the operation of a major bodily function, including but not limited to, functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions.

Qualified Individual with a Disability: An employee or applicant for employment who, with or without a reasonable accommodation can perform the essential functions of the position.

Reasonable Accommodation: A modification or adjustment to a position, an employment practice, or the work environment that makes it possible for a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of the position. Examples of reasonable accommodations may include, but are not limited to: (1) making existing facilities readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities; (2) job restructuring, modifying work schedules, reassignment to a vacant position; or (3) acquiring or modifying equipment or devices, adjusting or modifying examinations, training materials, or policies, and providing qualified readers or interpreters.

Essential Job Function: The fundamental duties of the position or the primary reasons the position exists. The University does not have to eliminate an essential function from the position, nor does it have to lower quality or performance standards to make an accommodation, as long as those standards are applied uniformly to employees with or without a disability. The University does not have to create a new position to accommodate an employee.

Undue Hardship: An accommodation or action requiring significant difficulty or expense when considered in light of factors such as the University's size, financial resources, and the nature and structure of its operation. Undue hardship also refers to an accommodation that is unduly expensive, substantial, or disruptive, or one that would fundamentally alter the nature of the position.

Procedure to Request a Reasonable Accommodation

Applicant and employee requests for reasonable accommodations shall be made to the Office of Human Resources. The Office of Human Resources will work together with the Office of Equity and Accessibility and will immediately contact the EEO Officer with each request.

Appeals/Grievance Procedure

In the event an employee disagrees with the determination and/or proposed accommodation, he or she may contact the EEO Officer.

Confidentiality

All necessary steps will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of information pertaining to an employee's disability or request for accommodation. Information should be shared on a limited basis with supervisors or department heads regarding necessary accommodation, first aid, emergency procedures, and insurance companies, as necessary. All medical records of employees are kept in separate confidential files.

2.5 Illegal Drug and Alcohol Policy

Northwest Missouri State University ("The University") recognizes its responsibility to foster a learning environment that minimizes negative impact of high-risk alcohol use and drug use/possession on student life and academic success. The University recognizes that unlawful drug use must be prohibited and care must be taken to allow alcohol only in settings where it is responsible to do so, and to ensure that policies do not result in an atmosphere in which irresponsible or dangerous alcohol use is likely to result.

The University takes seriously the need to enforce federal, state and local rules and laws prohibiting the illicit use of drugs and limiting alcohol on campus and at University-sponsored events. In accordance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Amendments of 1989 as well as other federal, state, and local laws, the University has adopted this anti-drug and alcohol abuse policy for its campus, employees, faculty, students and student organizations. (Faculty and staff are collectively referred to as "Employees" throughout this policy)

Annual distribution of alcohol and drug prevention materials to all students and Employees are accomplished through the Annual Security Report.

As mandated by federal regulation, the University compiles a Biennial Review of the University's alcohol and drug policy and initiatives. It can be found at http://www.nwmissouri.edu/facts/pdf/AlcoholDrugReview.pdf.

Drug Free University

The University prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance on University owned or controlled property, as any part of a University activity, and while doing University work. The University prohibits individuals from being under the influence of illegal drugs on University owned or controlled property or as part of a University activity.

This practice does not prohibit use of legally obtained drugs, including prescription drugs and over-the-counter drugs, while on University premises, while engaged in a University activity, or while performing University work, provided those drugs are used in accordance with the prescription by the prescription holder or with over-the-counter directions.

Such use by an Employee must not impair the Employee's ability to perform the essential functions of his or her job effectively and in a safe manner. An Employee using prescription or over-the-counter drugs is required to report such to their supervisor or the Office of Human Resources if it may affect the Employee's capacity to perform job duties or may create a danger to the Employee or others.

Employees must report to the University any conviction or guilty plea under a criminal drug statute for violations occurring on or off University premises. A report of conviction must be made to the Office of Human Resources within five (5) days after the conviction or guilty plea.

University policy does not recognize use of illegal drugs or abuse of other drugs as an excuse for misconduct of any kind – including violations of University policies – by Employees, students, or student organizations.

Responsible Use of Alcohol

University policy also does not recognize the misuse of alcoholic beverages as an excuse for misconduct of any kind – including violations of University policies – by Employees, students, or student organizations. Emphasis is placed on the responsible use of alcohol. Responsible drinking is the use of alcohol in ways that do not negatively affect either the individual or the community and do not violate the law. Alcohol is not permitted anywhere on University property except as specified in the University's Alcoholic Beverages on University Property Policy found on myNorthwest under the Policies tab.

Other than responsible use in the context of appropriate University-related social events, Employees may not use, possess, distribute, sell or be under the influence of alcohol while on University premises or doing University work.

Alcohol/Drug Testing

To ensure an environment free of illegal drugs and irresponsible use of alcohol, the University reserves the right to require an Employee to undergo alcohol and/or drug testing (such as on urine and/or blood) as a condition of employment or continued employment at the following times:

1. Reasonable Suspicion. “Reasonable suspicion” exists when an Employee exhibits signs of impairment due to the use of illegal drugs and/or irresponsible use of alcohol. In such a situation, an Employee may be asked to report to a testing facility for a drug/alcohol screening.
2. Post-Accident. An Employee who is involved in an accident or other incident while on University business that results in injury and/or property damage who exhibit signs of impairment will be assessed using reasonable suspicion and may be asked to to report to a testing facility for drug/alcohol testing.

The University will incur the cost of the drug/alcohol screening. The following may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment with the University: (1) a confirmed positive drug screening, and/or (2) a confirmed positive alcohol screening that demonstrates illegal conduct or – outside of responsible use in the context of appropriate University-related social events – alcohol use while on University premises or doing University work. Additionally, interference with or refusal to submit to a drug and/or alcohol screening will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment with the University. Two or more diluted or adulterated samples, without a medical explanation, will be deemed interference.

The University reserves the right to inspect or search University vehicles, desks, and/or other University property at any time. Refusal to cooperate will subject the Employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment from the University. A confirmed positive drug and/or alcohol screening (regardless of responsible use of alcohol) or any other violation of this policy may also influence an Employee’s workers’ compensation and/or unemployment compensation benefits.

Potential University Sanctions

Any Employee, student, or student organization found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action pursuant to University policies and consistent with local, state, and federal laws. Such disciplinary action may include counseling, mandatory participation in an appropriate rehabilitation program, a verbal or written warning, suspension from or termination of employment or academic program, and expulsion from the University. Sanctions will be determined pursuant to applicable Employee, faculty, student, or student organization procedures. In addition, violators may be referred to appropriate law enforcement authorities for prosecution.

Drug Convictions and Student Financial Aid Eligibility

Under federal regulations, students convicted for a drug offense that occurred during a period of enrollment while they were receiving Title IV Federal Student (Financial) Aid, lose eligibility for that aid. Federal Student Aid includes grants, loans, and work assistance otherwise provided to eligible college students under Title IV of the Higher Education Act. The period of non-eligibility begins on the date of the conviction and remains in effect until the student has met certain rehabilitation requirements.

The prohibition on federal aid applies to any student who has been convicted of any offense under any Federal or State law involving the possession or sale of a controlled substance as defined by Section 102(6) of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. § 802(6)). Laws

regulating distilled spirits, wine, and malt beverages are not included within the definition of "controlled substance."

Other financial aid programs, including certain state programs, may also limit eligibility for students convicted of a drug offense.

Parental Notification

It is not the intent of the University to institute a policy of parent notification for every incident involving student use of alcohol or other controlled substances. Rather, student affairs personnel will use these guidelines to intercede in situations where alcohol and drug abuse has led to situations which threaten the health or safety of individual students, has contributed to significant deterioration of the living-learning community, or has interfered with a University sponsored activity or event.

Examples of incidences in which parents could be notified include intoxication or impairment which was deemed to be health threatening, fighting, harassment, or property damage which can be linked to excessive drinking or drug use. Evidence of recurring patterns of alcohol or drug related violations, residence hall violations, and/or other violations of the University's judicial code may also result in parent notification.

Federal, State, and Local Alcohol and Drug Laws

Federal Law

Federal law provides strict penalties for violation of federal drug laws. For a first conviction of illegal possession of a controlled substance, a person may be imprisoned for up to one year and/or fined at least $1,000 but not more than $100,000; after two or more prior convictions the penalty increases to at least 90 days in jail but not more than three years and/or a fine of at least $5,000 but not more than $250,000. Federal trafficking penalties for controlled substances (such as marijuana, heroin, cocaine, PCP and LSD) range from less than five years in prison and/or a fine of less than $250,000 to life imprisonment and/or a fine of up to $8 million (for an individual). Other penalties may apply, such as forfeiture of personal and real property used to possess or to facilitate possession of a controlled substance, denial of certain federal benefits, and revocation of certain federal licenses.

Certain federal laws may apply to unlawful manufacture, possession, and trafficking of alcohol as well. Penalties range from fines to prison terms.

State and Local Law

Missouri law and local law also provide penalties for violations of laws relating to the unlawful manufacture, sale, use or possession of controlled (and/or imitation of) controlled substances and alcohol. In addition, Missouri and localities have laws relating to underage drinking, driving while intoxicated or under the influence of alcohol and/or illicit drugs. Sanctions for violations may range from local citation to

state law felonies. Penalties may range from small fines to prison terms, depending on the violation and past criminal history of the individual.

Health and Safety Risks of Drug and Alcohol Use

Alcohol Health and Safety Risks

Alcohol use carries several risks. These include drinking/driving accidents, increased incidents of rape and assault, academic problems, police involvement, medical problems including alcohol abuse and dependence and fetal alcohol syndrome, and fatalities.

Substance Abuse Health and Safety Risks

Substance abuse may result in a wide array of serious health and behavioral problems. Substance abuse has both long and short-term effects on the body and the mind. These effects may include toxicity, HIV infection with intravenous drug use, heart attack, stroke, sudden death, pregnancy complications, birth complications and defects, physical and psychological dependence, withdrawal, disruption of normal heart rhythm, high blood pressure, stroke, bleeding and destruction of brain cells, memory loss, depression, infertility, impotency, immune system impairment, kidney failure, cirrhosis of the liver, and neurological and pulmonary damage.

Further Information

Further information on these laws and penalties is available at https://revisor.mo.gov/main/OneChapter.aspx?chapter=631

University and Community Resources and Referral Information

Northwest Missouri State University provides counseling services for students and Employees seeking assistance or information concerning alcohol and drug issues. Students wishing to take advantage of this service may contact the University Wellness Services at (660) 562-1348**.**

In addition, other resources are available. Several self-help groups hold meetings throughout the area, including Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and Al-Anon. Individuals can contact the National Clearinghouse for Drug and Alcohol Information (800-729-6686), which is operated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; specialists provide information and referrals.

2.6 Smoke-Free Campus

The University is committed to providing an environment that is safe and healthy. Consistent with this policy, the University became a smoke-free campus as of August 1,

2010. Smoking is prohibited on all University owned or leased property and in all university vehicles. This policy will apply to all students, employees, contractors, volunteers, and visitors on University- controlled property. Smoking encompasses cigarettes, cigars, pipes, and all other forms of smoke-generating products.

Cats Advocating Smoke-Free Environment (CASE) along with the University Wellness Center will coordinate University efforts for policy notification, education, promotion, support and assessment to ensure successful implementation.

The University reserves the right to initiate disciplinary procedures against any individual found to be in continuous violation of this policy; however all faculty, staff, and students will have a collective responsibility to promote the safety and health of the campus community and therefore share in the responsibility of enforcement. Individuals observed smoking are to be reminded in a professional and courteous manner of the University policy.

2.7 Solicitation

The University's policy regarding solicitation on campus is covered in the following resolution of the Board of Regents.

> "No agent, solicitor, peddler, or other person shall solicit, offer for sale or sell any subscription, policy, service, article or things whatsoever ... upon the premises of the University, while it is in session, and for one half hour before school convenes and for one half hour after school has dismissed, PROVIDED this prohibition shall not apply to any school, University or civic enterprise specifically approved by the President of the University."

The attention of the faculty, students, employees of the University and all other persons is directed to the above resolution and full cooperation is required. Solicitation for a University project must be made in writing to the Student Affairs Office.

2.8 Employment of Relatives

No Regent, officer, faculty, or employee shall participate, either directly or indirectly, in a decision to appoint or hire an employee of the University, including regular and part-time appointments, who is related to such person within the fourth degree by blood or marriage. It also shall be a violation of this policy for an employee to supervise, either directly or indirectly, the work of another employee who is related within such fourth degree, unless the supervisory role is specifically approved by the President of the University. A relative within the fourth degree includes, but is not limited to spouse, child, grandchild, great-grandchild, great great- grandchild, parent, grandparent, great grandparent, great great-grandparent, brother/sister, aunt/uncle, great aunt/uncle, niece/nephew, grandniece/nephew and cousin. All relationships are included, whether full-, half-, step-, foster-, adopted, or in-law. An employee or supervisor who has a question pertaining to the relatives covered by this policy should contact their supervisor or the Office of Human Resources.

2.9 University Closings

Emergencies, such as inclement weather, may arise and the President or his/her designated representative will make the decision and announcement of any University closings or cancellations. Northwest Missouri State University will maintain essential services and operations as needed. When a closing or cancellation occurs, essential staff will report to work as usual. Essential staff provides services that relate directly to the health, safety, and welfare of the University, ensure continuity of key operations, and maintain and protect University properties.

Employees within the areas of University Police Department, Facility Services, and Residential Life are designated as essential staff. Essential staff is required to report to work during an emergency or when the University has suspended operations. There are some individuals who may be required to perform essential services remotely. Those individuals will be identified in advance and notified by their supervisor. In most cases essential staff is expected to be on-site.

2.10 Workplace Violence and Threats

The University is concerned about the safety of its employees and is committed to maintaining a work environment that is secure and free from incidents of violence or threats of violence. The University will not tolerate incidents of violence because such incidents are contrary to and interfere with University objectives. Acts of aggression are often precursors to actual violence so the University will give immediate attention and serious consideration to all reports of incidents of aggression and will initiate appropriate actions.

This policy defines aggression broadly as any of the following: unwelcome forceful physical touching; intimidating, threatening or hostile actions; intimidating, threatening or hostile communications, whether oral, written, or nonverbal, made in person or communicated by or any other means; vandalism; arson; sabotage; throwing objects; unauthorized possession or use of a weapon on University property; or any other acts or communications of a similar nature. This policy also covers interpersonal conflicts occurring off campus that may create the risk of aggression resulting from such conflicts being carried out on campus.

The Assistant Vice President of Human is responsible for the overall implementation and oversight of the University's workplace aggression management plan. After University Police responds to a threat or act of aggression, the Assistant Vice President of Human Resources will determine whether further investigation is required, the manner of that investigation, and will oversee any such investigation of the incident. The Assistant Vice President of Human Resources, Assistant Director of Wellness Services-Counseling-, and University Police Chief shall also be charged with reviewing incidents of aggression to identify ways in which similar incidents can be prevented. The Assistant Vice President of Human Resources shall also coordinate all critical incident debriefings of students, staff or faculty that are affected by the incident.

All University employees are required to immediately report any acts or threats of aggression. If urgent, call University Police (660-562-1254) or call 911. For help with non-

urgent threats, call the Office of Human Resources (660-562-1128) or the Wellness Services (660-562-1348).

All employees and students who apply for or obtain a protective or restraining order (Ex Parte, Full Order of Protection, Child Protection Order) which lists University property as being a protected area must provide a copy of the Order to University Police and the Office of Human Resources.

2.11 Weapons

To improve the overall safety of the campus community, employees (other than University Police officers) are not permitted to bring weapons on the University campus. Prohibited weapons include guns, switchblades, or other knives (deemed to be dangerous or illegal), hunting bows, explosives, or other items which could be construed as weapons, such as paintball/airsoft guns. A violation of this policy will be considered a serious offense, and employees violating this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

2.12 Workplace Surveillance and Searches

The University may utilize reasonable surveillance and search measures that ensure an appropriate work environment and compliance with University policies and applicable law. Subject to legal requirements, the University reserves the right to inspect and search all work areas, desks, computers, file cabinets, lockers, lunch boxes, or other containers, and personal vehicles on University premises. In addition, all records contained in computers (including voice mail and e-mail) and storage devices (including removable media) should be business-related, and are therefore open to inspection by the University in accordance with University policies, subject to applicable legal requirements.

2.13 Driver Requirements

Graduate assistants may be authorized to operate University vehicles for the purpose of conducting University business, provided that driving is formally listed in the job description, and provided they have an appropriate and valid U.S. driver's license for the vehicle being used, and agree to operate the vehicle in a safe and prudent manner. The driver's requirements are in addition to any requirements, standards, operating restrictions, or suspensions imposed by Missouri law. Drivers are to have in their possession a valid driver's license at all times. Graduate assistants expected to operate a 15-passenger vehicle shall complete a training session with Facility Services prior to operating the vehicle.

2.14 Information Technology

It is the policy of the University to maintain access for its community to local, national and international sources of information and to provide an atmosphere that encourages the free exchange of ideas and sharing of information. Access to this environment and the University's information technology resources should be considered a privilege and must conform with all laws, with University policy, and with any policies specific to a

resource. All University employees are subject to the University's technology policies, which can be found on the University's Information Systems website at: https://www.nwmissouri.edu/compserv/technology-policies.htm.

2.15 Children in the Workplace

The University values family life and has worked to develop employment policies and benefits that are supportive of families. While the University seeks to focus on providing an environment open to work and family issues, it also believes that the work place should not be used in lieu of a child care provider.

It is the policy of the University that minor children in an employee's care may not be present at an employee's workplace (e.g., office, classroom, shop area), in lieu of other child care arrangements, during the employee's working hours. The supervisor is responsible for enforcing this policy in their respective work areas. This policy is not intended, however, to prohibit children from the campus when the purpose of their visit is to attend classes or to participate in University-sponsored activities specifically scheduled for their benefit.

2.16 Child Protection Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the fulfillment of Northwest employees and anyone serving as a staff member or volunteer through the University and/or private entities engaging in University-sponsored activities in protecting children as vulnerable members of society and the obligation that is mandated by Missouri Law. Specifically, this policy addresses preventing abuse of minor children.

A University employee who has reason to believe that a minor has been abused on campus; on property owned or leased by the University; while members of the faculty, staff or student body are participating in a University-connected activity off campus; or who has received a report of such alleged abuse while assuming responsibility for the care of the child, whether the reported abuse occurred in conjunction with a University event or not, must report this information to the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-392-3738. **After the hotline call is made**, a report should also be made to University Police.

A student who has reason to believe that a minor has been abused on campus; on property owned or leased by the University; while members of the faculty, staff or student body are participating in a University-connected activity off campus; or who has received a report of such alleged abuse must report this information to University Police. The student may also choose to make a report to the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-392-3738.

In addition to this policy and to insure compliance, any camps or events in which minors will be participating must be properly registered. To register your camp/event, please contact the Student Conduct & Development Coordinator, Dr. Kori Hoffmann, for completing the required procedures.

CHAPTER 3
EMPLOYMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

3.1 Application

3.1.a Eligibility to Work

To be eligible for a Graduate Assistantship, the student must be fully accepted into a Masters program and must have a minimum undergraduate GPA of 2.75 or a graduate GPA of 3.00 on a 4.00 scale. Full acceptance indicates completion of all admission entrance requirements. These may include the GRE/GMAT test, or alternate admission examination, as required by the program. Requirements vary by program. Students enrolled in fully online graduate programs are not eligible for a graduate assistantship.

International students who did not complete both their primary and secondary education in a nation or territory in which English is the primary language must have completed one semester of in-residence graduate work and completed the minimum English Proficiency Test Scores required for their program of study before they can be appointed as a Graduate Teaching Assistant or as a Graduate Tutor. The academic unit responsible for the teaching assistantship shall provide a cultural orientation to prepare them for such teaching appointment. An exception may be granted in special cases upon approval of the Provost. A first term international student may apply for research or administrative assistantships if they have the skills required in the job description.

3.1.b Enrollment Requirements

The graduate assistant must enroll in and complete a minimum of 6 hours with at least 3 hours at the graduate level per semester to be eligible for a Graduate Assistantship. Incomplete coursework from previous semesters do not count towards the number of hours for eligibility. Students must also maintain an overall 3.00 grade point average and a 3.00 grade point average in graduate courses each term of enrollment to be a Graduate Assistant. Graduate Assistants must complete their Degree Audit within the first two weeks of their first semester.

A Graduate Assistant must take a minimum of 6 credits of graduate work to be eligible for a twenty-hour assistantship in the summer. Summer Graduate Assistants can be appointed for a maximum of twelve weeks only. A graduate assistant may take no more than 3 credits during the two-week August session. A 2- or 3-session Graduate Assistant may not receive a tuition waiver on more than fourteen credits in a total Summer Semester. A 1-session Graduate Assistant may not receive more than 7 credits of tuition waiver in the total Summer Semester.

3.1.c Hour Limits

The maximum number of hours that a Graduate Assistant may enroll in is 18 hours. Students enrolling in more than 18 hours must complete and file a Petition for Excess Credit

with the Graduate Office. A Graduate Assistant, completing their last semester, may enroll in three graduate hours if also completing the comprehensive assessment during that term.

3.1.d Work Requirements

Graduate Assistantships require 20 hours of work per week during each semester. Hours in excess of 20 are not allowed. Some positions may be approved for a three-quarter (15 hours) or half (10 hours) GA assignment. If a graduate assistant feels their workload cannot be completed within the 20-hour limit they must communicate their concerns and consult with their immediate supervisor to shift the workload or consider other alternatives. A Graduate Assistant may not hold other employment on the Northwest campus. In extraordinary circumstances a written request for additional work hours may be made to the Graduate Dean. Any additional work hours will be paid by the supervising department from regular student labor funds.

3.1.e Openings

Contact Graduate Office for a Graduate Assistantship Packet.

3.1.f Web

All Graduate Assistantship information and applications are available on the Graduate Home Page at www.nwmissouri.edu/graduate.

3.1.g Pay Rate

The current pay rate for Graduate Assistantship is available in the Graduate Office. In addition to the stipend, a waiver up to 100% of the standard tuition is provided for both resident and non-resident Graduate Assistants. The fee waiver does not include the designated fees, technology fee, health fee, or activity fee. Courses taken at another institution to be used toward a Northwest Degree, are not covered by the Graduate Assistant tuition waiver. The fee reduction is prorated if the student is not employed for the full Fall or Spring semester. Contracts for Summer are based on each separate session. The 9-month Graduate Assistant stipend is divided into 8 equal payments. For purposes of the Summer stipend a weekly rate is calculated equivalent to the weekly rate for the 9-month stipend.

3.1.h Certificate of Appointment

All positions require a Certificate of Appointment. This certificate is signed by the Graduate Dean and issued after the student has responded to the Graduate Office with an acceptance letter, signed job description, and signed confidentiality statement. The certificate should be reviewed carefully and retained by the student. The certificate states assignment area, specific hours of work required, beginning and ending dates of the employment period, the amount of the stipend, and the amount and date the paychecks will be issued.

3.1.i Job Description

Graduate Assistants bring competencies developed through their undergraduate degree and work experience to the graduate assistantship. Therefore, the assistantship position is designed to use these competencies to enhance the accomplishments of the program or office in which they are assigned, and provide an opportunity for the student to work as a valued part of a team in higher education. The major portion of tasks assigned to the Graduate Assistant should result in meaningful educational experiences, rather than focus on basic office maintenance tasks. The job descriptions for each graduate assistant position should explicitly state the job duties for the position. It is the supervisor's duty to update the position description as job duties are assigned or taken away.

The basic descriptions for the three types of Assistantships offered through Northwest's Graduate Program are:

Administrative Assistant: Collect and compile data for reports, develop and assemble materials for booklets and handouts, recording information, develop files, update files, do library searches for faculty and administrators, proctor examinations, and such other duties as may be assigned from time to time.

Research Assistant: Assist in research design, assist in writing project proposals, assist in preparation of grant proposals, conduct literature reviews, analysis of research data and preparation of tables, writing research reports, and such other duties as may be assigned from time to time.

Teaching/Counselor/Tutor Assistant:

- Teaching: Assist in set-up for laboratory, monitor laboratories, assist students with problems, operate audio visual equipment, assist in preparation of course materials, assist in administering and scoring examinations, monitor classes as requested, and such other duties as may be assigned from time to time.
- Tutor: Work one-on-one with small groups of students to provide supplemental instruction.

3.1.j Graduate Assistantship Rehire

Students may be rehired for the same position if all eligibility requirements are met, if funding is available, and with the supervisor's approval. Graduate Assistantship applications are due in the Graduate Office by March 1 for the following academic year (Fall/Spring/Summer). Graduate Assistantship applications are valid for one year (Fall/Spring/Summer). If hired as a Graduate Assistant, and retaining the position, reapplication is not necessary. If the Graduate Assistant is changing positions (different job description), the Graduate Assistant must complete the renewal application. If, for any reason, the Graduate Assistant does not plan to apply for rehire to the same position, OR if the supervisor does not plan to rehire the eligible Graduate Assistant into the same position, notification must be provided to the appropriate party immediately when the decision is made.

3.1.k Insurance Availability

For those graduate students who may not have personal health insurance coverage, Northwest makes available a student injury and sickness insurance plan. This is available on an annual basis with premiums prorated in terms of when you enter the program. For more information about this program contact the Bursar's Office at (660) 562-1578.

3.2 Work Responsibilities

3.2.a Schedules

Work schedules are determined between the immediate supervisor and the Graduate Assistant. Supervisors understand graduate assistants' academic success is of primary importance. Required work hours missed, must be made up. Supervisors may discuss scheduling conflicts with a student when abuses of flexible scheduling occur. Supervisors may require Graduate Assistants to complete time sheets.

Graduate Assistant Supervisors are asked to place top priority on the responsibilities the Graduate Assistant has as a student. Therefore, work responsibilities should not displace class attendance. If the work will provide valuable educational experience for the student, the supervisor may request the student's teacher to facilitate the graduate student's participation by excusing the Graduate Assistant from class. However, the decision regarding absence from class is between the teacher and the graduate student.

3.2.b Holidays

Graduate Assistants are required to work all regular work days during their contracted dates except official university holidays. Official university holidays include New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, and Thanksgiving break (Thursday/Friday). The Graduate Assistant Supervisor and Graduate Assistant may arrange for alternate schedules to make up work hours missed for additional vacation time.

3.2.c Absences

The University requires regular attendance and punctuality at work. Prior notification of an absence shall be communicated to supervisors. If prior notification is not feasible, communication shall be made as soon as possible.

3.2.d Dress Code

The University recommends that Graduate Assistants refer to their individual job description for specific details of required dress. If further clarification is required, appropriate professional dress may be discussed with the supervisor.

3.3 Eligibility to Work

Eligibility to work is based on a student's enrollment status and eligibility to legally work in the United States as set forth by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S.

Citizenship and Immigration Services. A student is eligible for employment regardless of financial need.

Students may not work as both a graduate assistant and a staff member or student employee at the same time.

3.4 Graduate Assistantship Applications

The University relies upon the accuracy of information contained in the employment application, as well as the accuracy of other data presented throughout the hiring process and employment. Any misrepresentations, falsifications, or material omissions in this information or data may result in the University's exclusion of the individual from further consideration for employment or, if the person has been hired, termination of employment.

Hiring Documents

Every student who is hired for the first time shall complete a Federal W-4, Missouri W-4 and Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9; Section I) prior to the first day of employment.

Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9)

The I-9 Form establishes eligibility to legally work in the United States as set forth by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and is located at https://www.uscis.gov/i-9. This form shall be completed by every newly hired graduate assistant prior to or on the first day of employment. Students shall adhere to the following guidelines:

- The top portion is completed by the student.
- The second portion is completed by personnel in the Office of Human Resources.
- The second section requires presentation of identification that establishes identity and eligibility to work.
- A list of documents that may be presented may be viewed at https://www.uscis.gov/i-9.
- Only ORIGINAL documents may be accepted.

Start Date

Graduate assistants may begin working after all hiring documents from the supervisor and employee are complete.

3.5 Orientation

The department in which the graduate assistant is hired will provide training and orientation concerning the employee's position. Graduate assistants will complete all employment paperwork and forms required for payroll and human resources prior to or on the first day of employment. The Graduate Office will inform the graduate assistant about completing this paperwork.

3.6 Background Checks and Criminal Convictions

Candidates selected for graduate assistant employment University positions involving interaction with minor children are required to pass a background check. This background check may include, but not be limited to, criminal history, verifications of employment and education, and driving records. If the candidate challenges the information contained in the background check with the screening agency, the University is not required to hold open the position. Consideration will be given to the relationship between the information obtained in the background check and the responsibilities of the position. A relevant job-related conviction or guilty plea is grounds for termination of employment or non- selection of the candidate. Convictions and guilty pleas include all felonies and misdemeanors except minor traffic violations in relation to any position which does not require driving. For positions that require operation of a motor vehicle, the terms conviction and guilty plea shall include minor traffic violations.

Applicants for employment who plead guilty to or are convicted of a criminal violation after they have applied should contact the Office of Human Resources within five (5) days of the conviction or guilty plea. Individuals who have begun employment with the University must notify their supervisor within five (5) days of a conviction or guilty plea to a criminal violation. Failure to report a conviction or guilty plea is grounds for discipline up to and including termination of employment or non-selection of an applicant. Supervisors should notify the Office of Human Resources immediately upon being informed of any such conviction or guilty plea.

3.7 Job Postings

University system-wide vacancy announcements of graduate assistant employment opportunities are available online on the University's website.

3.8 Dual Employment

No individual may occupy a graduate assistant employment position in conjunction with other University employment within the University employment structure.

3.9 Personal Data Changes

It is the responsibility of each employee to promptly notify the University of any changes in personal data. Mailing address, name changes, marital status, and other such status reports should be accurate and current at all times. The Office of Human Resources should be notified immediately of any such changes.

3.10 Graduate Assistantship Performance Evaluations

The value of performing and documenting a performance evaluation includes, but is not limited to, fostering the professional development of employees, providing clarification of job expectations, raising employee morale, documenting and correcting performance problems, and reviewing individual levels of performance in comparison to established

standards, as well as identifying individual goals that support the University's mission. Performance evaluations are optional to the department/unit in which the graduate assistant is hired and may be used as standard practice or for a specific means of correction.

3.11 Separation from Employment

Employment at the University shall be "at will" and shall be terminable "at will" by the University or the employee with or without cause. No representative of the University has any authority to enter into any employment agreement for any specified period of time or to make any employment agreement contrary to the foregoing. Oral statements and representations are not binding on the University, and any exception to the foregoing must be made in writing and agreed to in writing by the University's Board of Regents. Separation of employment with the University can occur in several ways. The following is an explanation of each type of separation of employment and the procedures that apply to each type of separation of employment.

Resignation

An employee may terminate employment with the University by submitting a written resignation to his/her supervisor or department head. All resignations should include the reason for leaving the University and the date of resignation which will be the last day the employee is physically present at work. Employees who plan to resign are asked to provide the University with reasonable advanced notice (or as otherwise provided by agreement).

Termination

Employment with the University is "at will" and may be terminated at any time. The University, at its discretion, may utilize progressive disciplinary procedures in appropriate circumstances. Dismissal requires the approval of the Office of Human Resources.

Graduation

Students graduating during the fall, spring, or summer semester may work through the day of commencement. Their employment is terminated upon graduation.

Enrollment Revision

Graduate assistants who withdraw or drop enrollment below six credit hours during any time of the semester become ineligible for a graduate assistantship on the date of withdraw or enrollment change.

3.12 Exit Procedure and Property Clearance

When employment with the University is discontinued, for any reason, the employee is responsible for returning all University property in his/her possession.

3.13 Confidentiality

Employees of the University and the University anticipate that while serving the University, employees may come into contact with, produce, and/or learn confidential information concerning the University's personnel, business, including but not limited to its method of doing business, trade secrets, patents, data, and other similar information. Employees shall have access to such information under the conditions that such confidential and/or proprietary information remain confidential and the property of the University.

A. All information of a tangible or intangible nature disclosed to Employee, shall be considered confidential and the property of the University.
B. All rights in and title to confidential information, related materials, samples, products, data or processes disclosed to employees, shall remain the property of and/or vest in the University.
C. Employees shall not, without the prior written consent of the President (Chair) of the Board of Regents or a majority of the Board, disclose or provide access to the University's confidential information to any other person for any purpose, nor reproduce in any media the confidential information disclosed to employees, except for communication to persons aware of the University's confidential information and/or to proceed with instructions of the Board or the Chair or to discuss legal issues or concerns with the University's General Counsel.
D. The obligation of employees to protect confidential information shall not apply to information which:
    1. Is or becomes publicly known through no wrongful act of employees;
    2. Becomes rightfully known to employees without confidential restrictions from a source other than the University and/or any of its Regents, consultants or contractors;
    3. Is approved by the University for disclosure without restriction by the Board of Regents of the University; or
    4. If said information is sought from employees by judicial process or under color of law, employees shall immediately notify the University of said process so as to provide the University a reasonable opportunity to participate if necessary in such process.
E. The obligation of employees to hold the confidential information in confidence shall survive the termination (for any reason) of employee's employment with the University.

A graduate assistant statement of understanding of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act must be acknowledged by the graduate assistant at the time employment paperwork is completed.

CHAPTER 4
CLASSIFICATION AND COMPENSATION

4.1 Workweek and Work Hours

The University workweek is defined as a seven-day period that begins at 12:00 a.m. Monday and ends at 11:59 p.m. on Sunday. A normal workweek of a maximum 20 hours is established for graduate assistants, with hours generally between 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. A graduate assistant works 20 hours a week. Because of the variety of functions of the many departments within the University, there may be differences in normal hours and days of work. An employee starting a new job should ask their supervisor or department head for the work schedule. Assignments may fall outside these hours, which are a part of the employee's responsibility and the employee is expected to perform these responsibilities.

Hour Limits

A student will work 20 hours per week during the fall and spring semesters while classes are in session. A student may work up to 20 hours a week during the summer semester sessions they are enrolled (3 credits per summer block) and classes are in session.

Hour Limits for International Students

According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, international students are limited to a maximum of 20 hours per week during the fall and spring semester while classes are in session.

A student may not volunteer "extra hours" while employed or be asked to work more time than what they can be paid.

4.2 Work Scheduling

Schedules are determined between the immediate supervisor and the graduate assistant. Flexible scheduling is offered to graduate assistants to accommodate their academic success.

4.3 Meal and Rest Periods

Graduate assistants will be provided a meal period of at least 30 minutes long if they are scheduled for an increment of eight hours or greater. Meal period of at least 30 minutes long generally are not compensable time if the employee is relieved completely from duty for the purpose of eating. Any other breaks shall be discussed with the supervisor.

4.4 Payroll

Graduate assistants are paid once per month following the month work was performed. Payday for graduate assistants is on the last day of the month or prior to, if the last is a

holiday or weekend. Direct deposit is available and graduate assistants may enroll by reporting to the Payroll Office with identification and voided check. New employees using direct deposit must sign an authorization form to have their paycheck electronically transferred to a bank. If a graduate assistant does not enroll in direct deposit, payment may be picked up at the Student Services Center in the Administration Building upon presentation of identification. Graduate assistant time sheets are due by Midnight of the first business day after the end of the pay period.

The Payroll Office receives records of time worked by each employee and ensures proper payment in accordance with Northwest, Internal Revenue Service, Fair Labor Standards Act and federal work-study policies and laws. Failure by graduate assistants to follow proper procedures may result in untimely payment to students. The following procedures are established to pay graduate assistants:

Time Sheet Guidelines for Graduate Assistants

- Electronically record work times accurately through 'CatPaws' Web Time Entry.
- Submit electronic timesheet to supervisor by the deadline.

FICA Taxes

FICA taxes are a combination of Social Security and Medicare taxes. Graduate assistants, including international students, are exempt from FICA taxes based on Internal Revenue Service Code. This exemption exists only when enrollment of a minimum of six credit hours per academic semester is verified with the University Registrar. Students enrolled in fewer than six credit hours per academic semester are not eligible for the FICA tax exemption and therefore may not be paid as a graduate assistant.

CHAPTER 5
LEAVE BENEFITS

Graduate assistants are ineligible for sick, vacation and holiday pay or unemployment benefits.

Scheduling Leave

Supervisors reserve the right to deny, revoke, or reschedule leave requests based on workloads and deadlines.

CHAPTER 6
BENEFITS

6.1 Workers' Compensation

All employees of the University are covered by Missouri Workers' Compensation and are entitled to treatment by an authorized medical doctor for any injury sustained on the job. The employee also may be reimbursed for lost time, disability or dismemberment. Injuries must be reported immediately to the employee's supervisor and the Office of Human Resources. Employees are required to contact the Central Accident Reporting Office (CARO) at 1-800-624-2354 prior to any medical treatment. Reporting injuries to CARO in a timely manner will allow CARO to make a determination of compensability and direct medical treatment efficiently. It is important to note that CARO cannot consider payment of lost wages, medical bills or medical referrals unless the injury is reported.

Workers' Compensation paperwork is available on the *myNorthwest* web portal, or from the Office of Human Resources.

6.2 Uniforms

Some departments within the University require the wearing of distinctive work uniforms. Where uniforms are required, they will be provided by the University. Cleaning and maintenance of uniforms are the responsibility of the individual.

6.3 Keys, Equipment and Other University Property

All keys, equipment, manuals, books, and subscriptions issued to University employees become the responsibility of the employee. Keys are not to be loaned or otherwise distributed to other personnel, faculty or students. All items issued to University employees (including pagers, cell phones, radios, etc.) may be recalled by the University at any time and must be surrendered upon cessation of employment.

CHAPTER 7
EMPLOYEE CONDUCT

7.1 Conduct

Conduct during working hours is expected to reflect the individual's position as an employee of a public institution of higher learning in the State of Missouri. Conduct that disrupts departmental or University functioning cannot be tolerated and will subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, as determined appropriate by the University.

Fundamental Habits and Attitudes

When a student is hired, they become a member of a team or work group. This team or work group relies on graduate assistants, as they are a valuable part of University operations. Fundamental attitudes and work habits that are expected of employees are:

- To perform all work assigned completely in a professional and satisfactory manner;
- To treat others courteously and with respect;
- To report to work promptly;
- To communicate with supervisors regarding tardiness or absences;
- To refrain from conducting personal business while working;
- To report hours worked accurately.

Additional Expectations

Departments/offices/work units may have additional policies, procedures and expectations that shall be communicated and adhered to as a condition of employment.

7.2 Personal Appearance

Dress is in accordance with requirements of the various departments. Where uniform requirements do not exist, the employee is requested to observe a standard of dress appropriate to the University.

7.3 Attendance

To maintain a productive work environment, the University expects employees to be reliable and to be punctual in reporting for scheduled work. Absenteeism and tardiness place a burden on other employees and on the University. In the rare instance when employees cannot avoid being late to work or are unable to work as scheduled, they should notify their supervisor as soon as possible in advance of the anticipated tardiness or absence. Poor attendance and excessive tardiness are disruptive and may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

7.4 Disciplinary Action

The University, at its discretion, may determine that disciplinary action less than dismissal may be appropriate in some circumstances.

First Warning

A first warning brings the problem to the attention of the employee, emphasizes the seriousness of the situation, and presents suggestions or instructions to resolve or correct the problem. A note documenting the incident and the discussion will be sent to the Office of Human Resources.

Written Reprimand

A written reprimand documents the occurrence and the severity and usually warns that further violations will result in suspension without pay or termination. It may be a final opportunity to improve. A note documenting the incident and the discussion will be sent to the Office of Human Resources.

Disciplinary Suspension

A disciplinary suspension may be used in cases when the infraction is of such seriousness that it may warrant dismissal pending review of the facts. Disciplinary suspension should be followed immediately by a thorough investigation of the situation to determine the appropriate action to be taken.

Termination

A serious offense or repeated disciplinary problems may require termination of employment. While employment may be terminated at any time without cause, serious misconduct of the following nature may result in immediate termination of employment on the first offense:

1. Theft of University property and/or theft of the property of University employees/students/guests while such property is on University premises (or in University conveyances).
2. Illegal conduct while on University premises.
3. Fighting with any other person while on University premises.
4. Refusal to follow orders/instructions of an appropriate University supervisor or official and/or general insubordination.
5. Destruction of property, equipment, or materials.
6. Reporting to work under the influence of alcohol and/or narcotics or the consumption of these substances while on the University premises.
7. Any actions on the part of the employee which endanger the safety of any person, including the safety of the employee.
8. Falsifying University records.
9. Infraction of any University policies, procedures and/or regulations.

It is the policy of the University to be fair and impartial in all its relations with employees and to recognize the dignity of the individual. Fairness and consistency require that certain general principles of administering discipline be followed by all supervisors.

Representatives in the Office of Human Resources are available to discuss the appropriate course of action in a particular case.

Nothing in this policy or in this Graduate Assistant Handbook (including a description of various types of discipline which may be administered) is intended to limit, in any way, the University's right to terminate an employee at-will at any time, with or without cause, and with or without advance notice. The fact that different levels of discipline are mentioned above shall not be construed as the University's adoption of a policy of "progressive discipline" before termination may occur.