

UVM GRADUATE STUDENTS' *Frequently Asked Questions*

In general, what rules apply to me as a graduate student?

Graduate students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the policies and procedures of the University, the Graduate College, and their academic department or program.

Institution-wide policies are posted on the UVM Policies website:

<http://www.uvm.edu/policies/>.

Graduate College academic policies are published in the Graduate College Catalogue (see next FAQ). In addition to addressing academic status issues, the Graduate College Catalogue summarizes graduate student rights and responsibilities, as further described below, and found here:

<http://catalogue.uvm.edu/graduate/academicenrollment/rightsdresponsibilities/>

Academic Matters

Where do I find Graduate College Academic Policies?

Graduate College policies are published in the Graduate College Catalogue. Among other issues, the academic status policies address Change of Graduate Program; Conferral of Graduate Degrees; Continuous Graduate Registration; Enrollment Policies and Procedures; Grading Policies; Inactivation, Deactivation and Reactivation; Leave of Absence; Requirements for Visiting Graduate Students; Time Limits for Graduate Degree Completion; Transfer Credit and Credit by Examination; and Withdrawal from a Graduate Degree Program.

<http://catalogue.uvm.edu/pdf/2016-17-graduate.pdf>

The University's Code of Academic Integrity applies to graduate as well as undergraduate students.

<http://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/acadintegrity.pdf>

✚ **Quality advising is important to my success as a graduate student. How does the Graduate College manage advising?**

Unless a department or program uses an alternative procedure approved by the Graduate College Dean, each graduate student is assigned a faculty advisor to offer counsel on matters of course selection, research direction, and overall guidance, from admission to the Graduate College to completion of degree requirements. The initial advisor is assigned by the department chair or the graduate program coordinator before or shortly after enrollment. In some situations, one faculty member serves as an initial advisor for several students, and the advisor may change as the students' program and research interests develop.

Another model, especially in doctoral programs, is appointment of a graduate studies committee composed of faculty who share a student's scholarly and professional interests. The committee is expected to meet regularly to discuss, and document for the student, the student's academic development and progress.

If an initial advisor is not assigned to you within two weeks after the initiation of course work in your chosen graduate program, please contact the Graduate College Dean's Office promptly.

✚ **I am engaged in research that I think may lead to a novel invention. What rights do I have?**

Under UVM policy, students in their capacity as such own the intellectual property that they develop as part of their coursework, with certain exceptions. As to exceptions, sometimes an external research sponsor (such as a private company or foundation) will require students to assign their ownership rights in any intellectual property generated by the project as a condition of participation. As another example, if a student uses a significant amount of UVM funds or other resources in developing the project, the intellectual property is "assigned" to UVM as a matter of UVM policy; however, please note that financial aid is not considered "significant use of University funds" unless the assistance consists of employment at the University (*e.g.*, teaching or research assistantships) or is charged against a grant, contract or other agreement between the University and an external funding source. If your research involves collaboration with faculty or other students, intellectual property rights may be jointly owned by those contributing, and the arrangement should be clarified and documented at the outset of the work.

If you generate intellectual property in the course of your duties as a UVM employee, UVM Intellectual Property Policy provisions governing employees apply.

The UVM Intellectual Property policy is found here:

http://www.uvm.edu/policies/general_html/intellectualproperty.pdf

It is important for you to consult with the UVM Office of Technology Commercialization (OTC) as soon as you have questions regarding intellectual property ownership. You are encouraged to contact OTC if you are asked by a third party to assign your ownership rights, or to sign a confidentiality agreement, as a condition of your participation in a project, or if you will be collaborating with others on a project that could lead to an invention, discovery, or creative work.

Office of Technology Commercialization: Given Building E201, Burlington VT; 802-656-8780; innovate@uvm.edu.

✚ ***I have a **disability** that I believe should be accommodated to help me succeed academically. Whom do I contact?***

A UVM program called Student Accessibility Services (SAS) provides accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Among its programs and services, SAS offers exam accommodations, meetings with disability specialists to receive advice and advocacy, eBooks, deaf and hard-of-hearing services, notetaking, and adaptive technology. It is essential that you contact SAS before courses begin to determine which, if any, accommodations are appropriate. Contact information is available here: <http://www.uvm.edu/access/>. The University policy on Disability Certification, Accommodation and Support – Students is found here: <http://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/disability.pdf>.

SAS can also help you contact appropriate persons in UVM Human Resource Services if you are seeking an accommodation in your capacity as an employee while performing job duties associated with your assistantship.

✚ ***I have been invited to **present a paper at a conference** but I need financial assistance to attend. Are there resources?***

The Graduate College provides mini-travel grants to help students underwrite the cost of attending conferences where they will offer presentations based upon their

research. The Mini-Grants Program, which is competitive, is administered by the Graduate Student Senate (GSS). Funds are awarded three times per year. The student's home department must provide a match of 50% of the amount provided by the Graduate College. Information on the Mini-Grants Program is available at the GSS website: <http://www.uvm.edu/~gss/>

Graduate Research and Teaching Assistantships

✚ What are *graduate research and teaching assistantships*?

Graduate research and teaching assistantships (“assistantships”) may be funded by the University through general funds or extramural sources.

Assistantships are awarded on a funds-available basis through departments and programs offering graduate studies. Generally, assistants are appointed in the departments in which they are doing graduate work. For AY 2017-2018, nine-month appointments have minimum stipends of \$16,050 for Master's students and \$19,875 for doctoral students; 12-month appointments have minimum stipends of \$21,400 for Master's students and \$26,500 for doctoral students. *The amount of the stipends is determined annually.* Assistants must maintain full-time enrollment of a minimum of nine, and a maximum of 15, credit hours per semester; summer enrollment is not required.

Stipends are designed to cover your living expenses. In addition to the stipend, an assistantship award includes a tuition scholarship for up to nine credits per semester, and up to five credits in summer if you are on a 12-month assistantship. A scholarship cannot be applied toward courses that you wish to audit, physical education activity courses, or courses numbered below the 200-level or 200-level courses that the Graduate College Dean has not pre-approved for graduate credit.

Assistantships generally require approximately 20 hours of research or teaching effort per week, and **may not** consistently exceed 20 hours per week. Special permission must be obtained from the Graduate College Dean if you wish to take on additional (and separate) UVM employment above these 20 hours per week. International students may not exceed 20 hours per week as a matter of immigration law.

See also the question below on payment of “overtime” and the Fair Labor Standards Act.

✚ ***My area of interest involves student affairs and administration. Are there relevant assistantships available?***

In partnership with the graduate program in Higher Education and Student Affairs in the College of Education and Social Services, the UVM Division of Student Affairs offers a number of assistantships annually, comprised of stipends and tuition scholarships. The candidates selected to fill these positions are assigned administrative and advisory positions in the residence halls, departments within the Division, and other student services areas. These assistantships are awarded to graduate students enrolled in the Higher Education and Student Affairs graduate program. See: <http://go.uvm.edu/hesaga>

✚ ***Are there other types of assistantships to provide me tuition relief and to help me gain experience in my discipline?***

- Externally-sourced funded Graduate Assistantships. Graduate assistantships may become available when a faculty member receives a grant from a source external to the University. These Graduate Assistants are generally appointed for 12 months with minimum stipends set annually (\$21,400 for Master's and \$26,500 for doctoral students for 2017-2018). The stipend can be pro-rated for appointments of less than twelve months. In addition to the stipend, the award includes a tuition scholarship for up nine credits per semester (and up to five credits in summer if on a 12-month assistantship) during the period of the assistantship from a combination of grant and UVM resources
- Graduate Fellowships/Traineeships. Graduate Fellowships/Traineeships are available in some departments through grants from various state and federal agencies. These grants also may be available to students directly from agencies. Fellowships/Traineeships may include both a stipend and tuition scholarship. Deans' offices responsible for the departments or programs through which these grants are offered are expected to augment scholarship awards and stipends so that they are commensurate with those otherwise provided to graduate assistants at UVM. Please contact your graduate program director or the Graduate College Dean for more specific information about grant-based fellowships and traineeships.

- Other Fellowships. Fellowships established by private donors or through departmental resources are available periodically in some departments. Please contact your department or program chair for information on the availability of fellowships relevant to your area of study.

See generally

<http://catalogue.uvm.edu/graduate/admissionfinancial/fellowshipsassistantships/>

✚ **For what reasons can an assistantship be terminated?**

Grounds for termination of an assistantship before the term would otherwise end include a change in enrollment status (withdrawal, suspension or dismissal from the Graduate College, dropping below full time status); inadequate progress toward the degree as determined by the Graduate College Dean or the sponsoring unit or program; if an assistantship is offered for more than one semester and your GPA falls below a 3.0; or inadequate performance of specific duties associated with the assistantship as determined and documented by your employment supervisor (*e.g.*, laboratory director, department chair, or research advisor). In the latter instance, the supervisor must send documentation to you and to the Graduate College Dean before the assistantship is terminated, and the Graduate College Dean must approve the termination.

If your assistantship is paid for through a grant awarded to a faculty member, your appointment may also be subject to the continued availability of those funds.

✚ **I am an international student. What do I need to know about assistantships because of that status?**

International students enrolled in a full course of study and holding the F-1 or J-1 visa may work *up to* 20 hours a week for compensation when supported by a graduate assistantship

[For information, please contact the Office of International Education.](#)

<https://www.uvm.edu/oie/iss>; email: InternationalStudents@uvm.edu;

802-656-4296

✚ ***Is my tuition support subject to federal and state income tax?***

IRS regulations provide that tuition support paid to graduate assistants constitute qualified scholarships and may be excluded from income if “the primary purpose of the studies or research is to further the education and training of the recipient in his individual capacity,” and the payments do not represent compensation for services. Qualified Scholarship tuition support is limited to payment of tuition and related expenses, which are defined as tuition and required fees, books, supplies, equipment, or any course-related expense required of all enrolled students.

Other types of support received, such as a living allowance, payments for travel, research, internships, personal expenses, and non-required fees, books, supplies and equipment, are potentially subject to income tax withholding and reporting.

Compensation for teaching, research, and/or other activities performed for the benefit of the University are also subject to income tax withholding and reporting.

For tax-related questions, please contact UVM Payroll:

<http://www.uvm.edu/~cntrllrs/?Page=payroll.html>

For financial aid related questions, please contact Student Financial Services:

<http://www.uvm.edu/~stdfinsv/>

✚ ***I am working more than 20 hours a week on my assistantship duties. Am I eligible for overtime wages?***

Under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), student workers paid on an hourly basis are eligible for overtime for hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week, but those receiving salaries or stipends as graduate teaching assistants or research assistants are generally ineligible for overtime.

Time you spend on your own academic endeavors, such as research and scholarship, is considered educational and not employment activity. Approximately four hours per week per credit are expected from you with regard to your academic work during the academic year (adjusted upward for shorter summer sessions); your effort in this respect is not considered “compensated” and is thus not attributed to the 20 hours per week maximum relative to your assistantship job duties. If your

supervisor is requiring you to work more than 20 hours per week on the assistantship, please contact the Graduate College Dean.

For questions on the FLSA, contact UVM Human Resource Services, 228 Waterman Building; HRSInfo@uvm.edu; (802) 656-3150.

✚ ***Is there a summary somewhere of graduate student fees?***

Yes, see <http://www.uvm.edu/~stdfinsv/?Page=graduate-tuition.html&SM=tuitionsubmenu.html>; or contact Student Financial Services, 223 Waterman Building, (802) 656-5700.

✚ ***To the extent that I am a UVM employee in my capacity as a graduate or teaching assistant, what are my responsibilities as such?***

Graduate and teaching assistants are UVM employees when they are performing job duties associated with their assistantships-- but not when they are engaged in academic study.

There are numerous policies applicable to UVM employees, reviewable at the UVM Policies webpage, <http://www.uvm.edu/policies/?Page=alphalist.php>. Policies of which you may wish to take special note include Alcohol Policy – Faculty and Staff; Drug-Free Workplace; Amorous Relationships with Students; Computer, Communication, and Network Technology Acceptable Use; Copyright; Intellectual Property; Data Breach Notification; Discrimination and Harassment; Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Policy Statement; FERPA Rights Disclosure; Laboratory Health and Safety; Minors in Laboratories; Misconduct in Research and other Scholarly Activity; and Sexual Harassment and Misconduct. Certain UVM employees also have responsibilities under federal law to report any instances of crimes occurring on or around campus, and all instances of sexual misconduct involving a member of the campus community of which they become aware. These “UVM reporters” include all faculty, University administrators, and personnel who have significant responsibility for student or campus activities, such as student life employees, coaches and coaching staff, and advisors to recognized student organizations. UVM Reporters receive notice of their status each semester; however, if you are unsure whether you are a UVM Reporter, contact the campus Title IX Coordinator (802) 656-3368; the campus Clery Act Coordinator (802) 656-3052; or UVM Police Services (802) 656-3473.

See also: https://www.uvm.edu/aaeo/mandatory_reporters_and_csas.

Graduate students who are receiving any compensation for UVM employment must, under immigration law, complete an Employment Eligibility Form known as “I-9” before the end of their first day of employment. This requirement applies to graduate assistantships of all types. For information see <http://www.uvm.edu/policies/hr/I9.pdf>

✚ ***Apart from rules governing UVM employees generally, what professional standards apply to me?***

There may be professional discipline-specific standards, about which you should receive information during your course of study. You may address any questions you have regarding these standards with the faculty member teaching the relevant course or supervising you in a clinical setting, or with your advisor.

In addition to complying with the standards specific to their professional discipline, graduate students are required to adhere to the highest general standards of professionalism as students, researchers, and teachers.

✚ ***I think my supervisor is violating research protocols but I am reluctant to have a confrontation because I fear retaliation. What should I do?***

UVM has an Ethics and Compliance Reporting and Help mechanism called EthicsPoint, which permits anonymous reports of possible violations of law or policy. See: <https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/24544/>

Student Disciplinary Issues

✚ ***Are there general disciplinary rules that apply to me in my capacity as a student?***

Yes, graduate students’ conduct is governed generally by the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, which covers offenses including those against persons, property, public order, and other violations of University policies or laws. <http://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/studentcode.pdf>.

The University's Code of Academic Integrity applies to graduate as well as undergraduate students: <http://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/acadintegrity.pdf>

Additional disciplinary provisions applicable to students are articulated in the University's Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Policy and the University's Discrimination and Harassment Policy.

<http://www.uvm.edu/policies/general/html/sexharass.pdf>;

<https://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/studentharas.pdf>

Graduate Student Rights

✚ *I seem to have many responsibilities. What are my rights?*

Many, if not most, University policies create reciprocal rights and responsibilities. Among the rights of critical importance to you and other members of this community are (1) free expression; (2) non-discrimination and protection from discriminatory harassment; and (3) intellectual property.

✚ *If I believe my rights have been violated, where do I go?*

Each University policy identifies a channel to pursue a perceived violation of that right. In addition:

- The Graduate College is ultimately responsible for grievances regarding policies and procedures related to graduate education. A grievance properly begins within a student's department by the student sharing a concern with a program director or chair. If this does not resolve the grievance, the student can present the grievance in writing to the Dean of the unit in which the program resides, and after that to the Dean of the Graduate College. Grievances must state clearly the nature of the concern and the basis for appeal, including relevant evidence. The Graduate College Dean, who may seek input from the Graduate College Executive Committee, is the final arbiter of Graduate College regulations.

Excluded from the Graduate College appeals process are grievances that contest grades on grounds other than due process: the process to appeal a

grade requires students to pursue department or program and School or College channels, is set out in the University Grade Appeal Policy, <http://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/gradeappeals.pdf>

- In addition, the Graduate College has an ombudsperson program. The Ombudsperson is responsible for providing independent, informal and impartial assistance to graduate students on matters affecting their graduate education. Ombudsperson contact information is available at <http://www.uvm.edu/~ombdsman/>

✚ *Sexual assault is a matter of great concern on college campuses. What is UVM doing to address this issue?*

UVM takes incidents of sexual harassment and misconduct, which includes all forms of sexual violence, very seriously, and strongly encourages all members of the campus community to connect with confidential support resources and to make a criminal and an internal complaint when incidents occur.

If a report is made *to* you, or you learn of a possible incident of sexual misconduct when you are serving in your capacity as a University employee, you may be required by federal law to share certain information with the University's Title IX Coordinator and UVM Police Services about the incident. See the [University's Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Policy](#). See also discussion above regarding "UVM Reporters".

The options available with respect to sexual assault allegations are:

- Initiate a criminal investigation by contacting UVM Police Services at (802) 656-3473, or completing an online form: <http://www.uvm.edu/police/?Page=reportcrime/index.php>.

****If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, always call 9-1-1 ****

- Initiate an internal UVM (non-criminal) investigation by contacting the [Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity](#) (AAEO) at (802) 656-3368, or completing an online form: https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofVermontAAEO&layout_id
- Receive support and resources on campus from:

- Dean of Students Office – (802) 656-3380
 - AAEO Intake and Outreach Coordinator - (802) 656-3368
 - Campus Victim’s Advocate (*confidential*) - (802) 656-7892 or (802) 656-9538 (direct)
 - UVM Counseling & Psychiatry Services (*confidential*) - (802) 656-3340
 - Student Health Center (*confidential*) - (802) 656-3350
- Receive support and resources in the community from:
 - UVM Medical Center Emergency Department (*confidential*) (802) 847-2434
 - H.O.P.E. Works - Rape Crisis (*confidential*) - (802) 863-1236 or (800) 489-7273
 - Steps to End Domestic Violence (*confidential*) - (802) 658-1996
 - SafeSpace at Pride Center Vermont – LGBTQA Survivors (*confidential*) - (802) 863-0003 or (866) 869-7341

Reasonable remedial and protective measures (“interim measures”) designed to protect the parties involved may be imposed regardless of whether a formal investigation or disciplinary action is initiated. Interim measures may include changes to campus housing, class or work schedules; rescheduling of class or work assignments and deadlines; and issuance of a campus “no-contact” directive. Measures that may be taken after formal process include a University-imposed suspension or separation from the University. The Dean of Students Office and AAEO can assist with obtaining interim measures.

See UVM’s Sexual Conduct Education and Resources page:
<http://www.uvm.edu/~aeo/sexualmisconduct/>.

Health Insurance

What rules apply with respect to health insurance?

As a full-time student, you must either purchase the health insurance plan UVM offers to students or provide verification of comparable other coverage. This requirement applies to graduate students registered for nine or more credits and Graduate students enrolled in Grad 903 credits. This must be done online, and annually, using the Insurance Decision/Waiver Form. See <https://www.uvm.edu/~chwb/insurance/?Page=mandatory.html>.

Graduate students enrolled half time may elect this health insurance coverage. Graduate students enrolled half-time (5-8 credits or GRAD 902 credits) may elect to purchase the UVM student health insurance plan.

In addition, graduate students enrolled full-time must pay the UVM Comprehensive Fee, which entitles you to receive medical care at the UVM Center for Health and Well-Being, regardless of what insurance you carry. In addition, graduate students enrolled half-time who elect UVM student health insurance must pay the Center for Health and Well-Being fee.

Housing

What options are available to me for housing?

Campus Residential Life does not offer on-campus housing to graduate students, but graduate students can apply for housing at any of the Affiliate Housing locations:
https://reslife.uvm.edu/content/off_campus_housing/affiliate_housing

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

GENERAL INFORMATION

Academic and Student Life

<http://catalogue.uvm.edu/graduate/academicstudentlife/>

Funding your education

<http://www.uvm.edu/~gradcoll/?Page=Funding.html&SM=Fundingmenu.html>

International student services

<http://www.uvm.edu/oie/>

Student Clubs and Organizations

http://www.uvm.edu/sga/?Page=clubs.php&SM=menu_clubs.html

HEALTH

Center for Health and Well-Being

Providing prevention-oriented student health care, mental health services

<http://www.uvm.edu/~chwb/>

Student Accessibility Services

Accommodations, Consultation, Collaboration, and Educational Support Services

<http://www.uvm.edu/access/>

COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST

Graduate Student Senate

311T Davis Center:

<http://www.uvm.edu/~gss/?Page=calendar.html>

Mosaic Center for Students of Color

<https://www.uvm.edu/mcsc/>

LGBTQA Center

<http://www.uvm.edu/~lgbtqa/>

Student Veteran Services

<http://www.uvm.edu/~veterans/>

Women's Center

<http://www.uvm.edu/~women/?Page=cap.html&SM=capmenu.html>

LEGAL ADVICE

Student Legal Services: personal legal matters

<https://kheffrin.w3.uvm.edu/cs008/slsproject/>

Office of the General Counsel: UVM, not personal legal, matters

<http://www.uvm.edu/~gencnsel/>

BIAS INCIDENT REPORTING

Bias Response Program

http://www.uvm.edu/deanofstudents/bias_response

ETHICS AND COMPLIANCE REPORTING AND HELP LINE

EthicsPoint

<https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/24544/>