

CHAPTER 9: GRADUATE STUDENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

9.1 Introduction

Iowa State University is committed to the excellence of graduate education and seeks to provide and sustain an environment conducive to the sharing, extending, and critical examination of knowledge. Graduate students play an integral role in the capacity of the University to fulfill both its research and teaching mission. By their accomplishments and future promise, graduate students represent one of the University's best investments in producing a distinguished history and rich legacy. A graduate student experience marked by fairness and equitable treatment is the first step in forging a lifelong commitment to the University.

In turn, graduate students are expected to demonstrate a commitment to their academic endeavors, to make steady progress toward academic milestones and goals, and to demonstrate ethical practices at all times. In addition to the provisions of this handbook, all graduate students are governed and protected by:

- the Board of Regents' Uniform Rules of Personal Conduct,
- the [Student Disciplinary Regulations](#) that contain the Student Conduct Code and student judicial process,
- University regulations in the “Student Life” section of the [Policy Library](#),
- for students on appointment, the “[Personnel and Human Relations](#)” section of the Policy Library, department procedures, and the terms of sponsored research agreements that fund their assistantships or other employment,
- Academic Policies in the University Catalog,
- departmental/program rules and policies,
- grievance procedures described in this chapter,
- the University's [Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Assault, Sexual Harassment, Stalking, and Intimate Partner Violence Involving Students Policy](#), and
- the University's [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#).

This Chapter does not replace these standards; nor does it constrain the procedures or sanctions provided by these policies.

Graduate students on assistantship appointment also are governed by the policies applicable to instruction, research, and the conduct of University business as found in the [Policy Library](#).

9.2 Environment for Student Success

The Graduate College encourages students to take advantage of opportunities for professional development during their graduate studies, and the college expects all engaged in graduate education to adhere to the University's [Principles of Community](#).

As teaching, research, and administrative assistants, graduate students occupy an impressionable and susceptible position on campus. Graduate students rely on faculty and advisors to guide them to meet realistic expectations. Except for justifiable circumstances, funding and tuition scholarships should not be denied to an assistantship appointee mid-contract. Graduate assistants who have performed well but cannot be reappointed due to budget shortfalls should be informed in a timely manner to allow the student to seek alternative funding.

As developing professionals, graduate students expect fair treatment and constructive feedback from faculty and advisors with an understanding that graduate students may one day be peers. Graduate students should expect reasonable confidentiality in their communications with faculty and advisors. Graduate student performance and behavior should only be discussed for professional purposes in a collegial manner, in accordance with the Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA).

Graduate students should feel free to engage in an exchange of ideas, self-expression, and the challenging of beliefs and customs without concern that they may be treated or spoken to in an unprofessional manner. As members of the University community, graduate students have the right to express their own views, but must also take responsibility for respecting the same rights of others and acting in accordance with the Student Disciplinary Regulations and other applicable policies.

Incoming graduate students shall be provided graduate program degree requirements. When requirements subsequently change, a student may choose between meeting the requirements in place when they matriculated or adhering to the updated requirements, as approved by the student's Program of Study (POS) committee.

Graduate students on assistantships are expected to be provided a safe and clean space to conduct their duties.

Like all researchers, graduate students who sufficiently contribute to research activities have the right to be credited at an appropriate level (co-authorship, acknowledgement, etc.) on related publications and presentations, consistent with the ethical standards in their fields of study and University guidelines on authorship.

Graduate assistants have the right to request a change in assistantship appointment supervisor. These requests should be reserved for extreme situations, and the student is expected to make every reasonable effort to resolve the issue(s) with the supervisor

in a professional manner. If the student does not feel comfortable discussing the situation directly with the supervisor, the student should contact the program director of graduate education (DOGE) and/or department chair. If a request is made, the program DOGE and/or department chair is expected to make a reasonable effort to find an alternative assignment. If no solution is available at the department/program level, the next consideration should be made at the Graduate College. However, the graduate student should be aware that funding and alternative assignments are not guaranteed. A change to the supervisor for an assistantship does not affect the composition of the POS committee.

9.3 Resources and Best Practices to Promote Graduate Student Success

The success of a graduate student often depends on the effectiveness of faculty advisors/mentors/advisors and a strong, professional student-faculty relationship. The Graduate College promotes student success via tools and services for both students and faculty that are updated frequently and publicized.

9.3.1 Resources for Graduate Students to Succeed

Primary tools and resources include:

- required orientation for new members of the graduate faculty,
- onboarding of new graduate students,
- checklist of discussion topics for newly partnered students and major professors,
- annual evaluations of doctoral (required) and master's (encouraged) students,
- templates for student individual development plans,
- guides, articles, and workshops on advising graduate students,
- services for students and faculty at Iowa State University's Ombuds Office,
- communication and career services.

9.3.2 Best Practices for Graduate Assistant Supervisors

Supervisors of graduate assistants should consider the following practices that are intended to contribute to productive assistantship experiences.

- Create fair and equitable educational environments with information about the benefits, terms, and conditions of the appointment clearly communicated at the outset of the appointment;
- Clearly define and articulate the nature and scope of tasks associated with the assistantship appointment;
- Monitor demands on the student's time commitments and their availability to meet tasks related to an assistantship appointment;

- Define tasks that are consistent with the student's academic success;
- In partnership with the International Students and Scholars Office, assist in verifying that a student's immigration status allows for an assistantship appointment;
- Provide accurate information regarding projected financial support for the duration of the graduate student's education and training upon entry into an academic program. Should this support change at any time during the course of study, graduate students should be informed in writing in a timely manner;
- Provide a safe, clean, and appropriate office and/or laboratory space commensurate with the responsibilities of the student;
- Provide thorough training to ensure success as research, teaching, and/or administrative assistants.

Assistantship appointments are defined in Chapter 3, Subsection 3.2 of the Graduate College Handbook. For half-time appointments, the university guideline is that 20 hours per week should be spent on assistantship duties, with slight variability depending on whether it is a research, teaching, or administrative appointment. It is understood that these hours include only duties necessary for completion of research, teaching, and/or administrative appointment responsibilities, excluding research time leading to a thesis or dissertation.

Supervisors are encouraged to provide written performance reviews for graduate research, teaching, and administrative assistants on a regular basis and in a fair, transparent, and confidential manner, especially when requested by the graduate student. Results of performance reviews should be shared with the graduate student, who should be given the opportunity and guidance to redress claims and/or remedy deficiencies in performance of assistantship duties.

Graduate assistants should be allowed to attend seminars, workshops, and conferences to support their professional development, unless participation will interfere with meeting expectations related to assistantships.

9.4 Specific Policies and Laws of Interest to Graduate Students

The following policies and laws apply to graduate students or assistants:

- **Student Disciplinary Regulations (Student Conduct Code).** All students, including graduate students, are subject to the [Student Disciplinary Regulations](#) that contain the Code of Conduct. Behaviors not permitted include: academic misconduct, abuse of controlled substances, assault or threat of assault, bribery, contempt, disruption of the rights of others, violation of fire or safety regulations, endangerment, gambling, harassment, hazing, misuse of computers, false identification, misuse of keys, sexual abuse, theft, threat of harm, unlawful entry, possession of weapons, and violation of law.

- **Academic Misconduct.** Instances of suspected academic misconduct in research should be reported to the Office of the Vice President for Research. Applicable rules and procedures appear in Section 7.2 of the [Faculty Handbook](#). For issues regarding conduct of research, graduate students are held to the same standards as faculty. Instances of graduate students suspected of academic misconduct not involving research should be reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs in the Dean of Students Office. See the [Student Disciplinary Regulations](#) for applicable rules and procedures.
- **Discrimination and Harassment Policy.** The University's policies on discrimination and harassment apply to graduate students. See the University's Policy Library at <http://policy.iastate.edu/policy/discrimination/>. Issues and concerns of discrimination and harassment should be reported to the Office of Equal Opportunity.
- **Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Assault, Sexual Harassment, Stalking, and Intimate Partner Violence Involving Students.** The University's policies and procedures on sexual misconduct apply to graduate students. See the University's Policy Library at <https://www.policy.iastate.edu/policy/students/sexualmisconduct> . Issues and concerns relating to sexual misconduct should be reported to the Office of Equal Opportunity.
- **Conflicts of Interest.** Several provisions of law and policy related to conflicts of interest apply to graduate students (see the [Policy Library](#), Personnel & Human Relations Section; [Faculty Handbook](#), Section 7.2, 8.2). As required by federal regulations, the University has adopted a conflict of interest policy affecting employees who have outside business commitments. Graduate assistants, especially those on research appointments, with significant private business arrangements must comply with this policy. University facilities should not be used for private commercial purposes without approval.
- **Statement on Professional Ethics.** Graduate students are expected to comply with the Faculty Statement on Professional Ethics (see [Faculty Handbook](#), Section 7.2).
- **Compliance with Research Standards.** Graduate students conducting research must comply with the University's procedures for human subjects review, animal care and use, use of radioactive materials, prior approval of certain recombinant DNA experiments, and various safety requirements (see [Faculty Handbook](#), Section 8.3).

- **Ownership of Intellectual Property and Data.** Iowa State University subscribes to the general principle that the intellectual property created by a student is generally owned by that student. However, student work often owes much to faculty initiative. In addition, the provisions of sponsored research grants that fund research appointments may affect the ownership of intellectual property. Students must be aware of these restrictions on ownership of intellectual property as provided by University policies on patents and copyrights. Graduate students will be given an opportunity to use data resulting from sponsored research grants; however, that opportunity is subject to the university's obligations with respect to those grants. The university has a general obligation to publish the results of scientific investigation. Consequently, the student's right to control data collected under sponsorship is not exclusive. Unless prior approval for a temporary embargo is secured from the Graduate College, theses and dissertations are made publically available upon their final approval by the Graduate College.
- **Tutoring.** A graduate teaching assistant may not tutor a course that he or she is teaching. In addition, graduate students must check with their department or graduate major before entering into a tutoring agreement to learn whether additional regulations exist.

9.5 Student Grievance Procedures

Several formal avenues of appeal are available to graduate students depending on the nature of the grievance. Outlined in this section are procedures designed to handle grievances concerning grades and instruction and for grievances related to scholarly and professional competence. Other appeal routes are available within the student disciplinary process and for inappropriate termination of assistantship appointments. All procedures start at the department or program level and lead through a series of steps to higher appeal channels. If a student's complaint relates to a general policy, he or she may also bring the matter to the attention of the GPSS either by contacting a senator or the GPSS president. Students also have the right to complain to the Dean of the Graduate College.

The following grievance procedures may not be used when students are afforded due process hearings or appeals as provided by university policy. For example, these grievance processes are not available for failure to meet clearly stated academic requirements, for violations of the Student Disciplinary Regulations handled by the Student Conduct Administrator, or where a research misconduct proceeding has been initiated by the Research Integrity Officer. A student may withdraw from any student-initiated grievance procedures outlined below by writing a signed and dated letter to the Dean of the Graduate College.

9.5.1 Grievances about Grades and Instruction

If a graduate student believes a faculty member, in his or her academic capacity as a course instructor, has behaved unfairly or unprofessionally, a grievance may be reviewed through the procedure described below. This procedure may not be invoked more than one year following completion of the course. An appeal of a course grade must be initiated by midterm of the semester following the student's completion of the course.

- If the dispute or perceived violation does not directly involve the graduate student's major professor, the graduate student is encouraged to contact his or her major professor.
- The graduate student may contact the Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS) by contacting the senator representing the student's academic unit, or the GPSS president. The GPSS will represent the best interests of the student and may serve as a liaison between the student and the appropriate university administration and offices.
- The graduate student may contact Student Assistance staff within the Dean of Student's Office.
- Students may contact the Dean of the Graduate College to pursue informal dispute resolution.
- Graduate students are encouraged to contact the Ombuds Office for unbiased and neutral assessment for informal resolution of a dispute.
- Concerns of discrimination, harassment, and/or sexual misconduct do not fall within these procedures, and instead should be reported to the Office of Equal Opportunity as soon as possible.

Before initiating a formal appeal, the student may wish to discuss the situation informally with a staff member of the Dean of Students Office for advice on how to deal most effectively with the problem.

Academic grievances should be resolved, if at all possible, with the individual instructor involved. If resolution cannot be reached, the student should discuss the grievance with the instructor's department chair and submit it in writing to him or her. The department chair will discuss the grievance with the instructor involved

and/or refer it to a department grievance committee. The department chair should respond in writing to the student within five class days.

If a resolution of the grievance cannot be made with the department chair, the student may appeal in writing to the dean of the instructor's college. In cases involving Graduate College policy or procedure, the appeal should be made to the Dean of the Graduate College. The dean will hear the explanations of the department chair and instructor, and should respond in writing within ten class days of receipt of the written notice of appeal.

If the grievance cannot be resolved with the dean, the student may forward a written appeal to the Provost, who will convene a quorum of the Committee to Review Student Grievances to hear the appeal within ten class days. Within five class days following the hearing, the Provost will make a decision regarding the grievance and transmit this decision to the student, dean, department chair, and instructor involved. An appeal of the decision of the Provost may be made to the President of the University.

The time limit specified at each level may be extended by mutual agreement of all parties concerned.

9.5.2 Grievances Related to Scholarly and Professional Competence

Judgment of professional competence as demonstrated in qualifying, preliminary and final oral examinations, and other clearly stated program requirements concerning competence in the field of study is the responsibility of the academic program and POS committee.

If a student contends that their scholarly or professional competence has not been evaluated fairly, they should first discuss the complaint with the person or persons most directly involved in the matter: a faculty member, major professor, POS committee, DOGE, or department chair. If these discussions are unsuccessful and further adjudication is desired, the student may submit the grievance, which must be in writing, to the appropriate program grievance committee. If no such committee exists, the DOGE (or department chair when appropriate) will appoint one. The committee should respond in writing within fifteen (15) class days. If the grievance occurs within the 15 class days of the term, the committee should respond expeditiously, within 15 class days or no later than the beginning of the next term. The following procedures apply:

- Each program offering graduate study must form a grievance committee (of at least four members) composed of equal numbers of representatives from the program graduate faculty and graduate students. The grievance committee may

be a standing committee or may be an ad hoc committee, depending upon the program.

- The DOGE (or department chair) may serve as a nonvoting chairperson of the grievance committee.
- Written records of the committee shall include the complaint itself, the disposition of the complaint, and any other information the committee deems pertinent. Written records of the program grievance committee are available for study by the complaining student and those making decisions at higher levels in the event of further appeal.
- The program grievance committee deliberates in private except in instances where **parties** contend the issue under consideration is of general interest and importance. In those cases, the committee may hold public meetings with the consent of both parties involved in the complaint.
- The graduate student (or chosen representative or adviser) and the other party (or chosen representative or adviser) have the right to present their cases orally to the grievance committee.
- The committee shall provide a written recommendation regarding the grievance to the DOGE (or department chair) of the student's major and to the student.
- The DOGE (or department chair) will then provide a written response from the graduate program to the student.

A graduate student unsatisfied with program action may appeal in writing to the Dean of the Graduate College within 15 calendar days. Upon receipt of the written appeal, the Dean forms a grievance appeal committee to review both substantive and procedural issues of the matter. The committee is constituted as follows:

- One voting member selected by the Dean of the Graduate College from among the faculty membership of the Graduate Council.
- One voting member selected by the relevant college dean.
- One voting member selected by the Executive Committee of the Graduate and Professional Student Senate.
- The committee may, in addition, request the participation of one nonvoting member selected by the relevant graduate program from among those faculty members who had not participated in the original program grievance procedures.

The role of this nonvoting member is to provide consultation to the committee or student on matters of professional competence.

- The Dean of the Graduate College will respond to the student within 10 calendar days, and the committee will attempt to reach a final determination within 30 calendar days. It is understood, however, that this deadline is sometimes impossible to meet because of a need to interview key persons who are not available within the 30-day time frame. In such cases, every reasonable effort will be made to expedite the review, and the plaintiff shall be informed of the delay in writing.

Provisions of program grievance committees regarding the keeping of written records, opening of proceedings, and oral presentations also apply to the grievance appeal committee. Each student presenting an appeal is expected to participate actively and responsively in the grievance process at this and each level of the procedure. The grievance appeal committee submits its recommendation regarding the appeal to the Dean of the Graduate College for action. Graduate student(s) still unsatisfied with the disposition of the grievance—on matters of procedure only—may appeal in writing to the Provost and, if necessary, to the President of the University.

9.6 Maintaining Academic Standing

Active enrollment status is achieved by admission either to a graduate program or to non-degree-seeking status and admission to the Graduate College. If active status is lost, then the individual is transferred to an inactive status.

Students lose active status due to any of the circumstances described below.

- Lack of registration for two consecutive years or for four continuous semesters (excluding summer)
- Resignation or withdrawal from a graduate program
- Dismissal from a graduate program for lack of progress
- Dismissal for failure to maintain academic standing
- Dismissal as an outcome of the student judicial process
- Failure of the final oral exam or the preliminary exam with no opportunity to retake
- Failure to complete remaining degree requirements in a timely manner after a final oral examination

The Graduate College may change a student to inactive status directly for any of these reasons, or DOGE and the major professor, if there is one, may submit a written request that provides justification to the Graduate College. Appeals and grievances for this action should follow those outlined in the Graduate College Handbook.

Graduate students not in active graduate status cannot register for courses. Reinstatement of active status requires approval of a graduate program or formal acceptance to non-degree seeking status. Either action also requires approval of the Graduate College. Transferring from one program to another does not affect active status, but must be approved by the receiving program and the Graduate College. Reinstatement requires submission of a "Reinstatement to Active Status" form and the written approval of a graduate program and the Graduate College. When considering reinstatement, both the program and the Graduate College may consider the student's overall fitness for continued studies, including information about the student's conduct, employment and education since the student's last enrollment. If reinstatement involves a change of program, the procedure for transferring to another graduate program also applies. A student who is denied reinstatement may request that the denial be reviewed by the Provost.

If a graduate student does not maintain a cumulative 3.0 grade point average (GPA) on all course work taken (including undergraduate courses), exclusive of research credit, he or she may be placed on academic probation by the Dean of the Graduate College. Probationary status for more than two years is grounds for dismissal for failure to maintain academic standing. A new, degree-seeking graduate student with less than a 3.0 GPA at the end of the first semester at Iowa State University will be given a one-term grace period to improve the GPA to at least 3.0. These students will receive a warning letter from the Graduate College. While on academic probation a student will not be admitted to candidacy for a degree and if appointed to a graduate assistantship, the student may be denied a tuition scholarship by his or her academic college.

To ensure that registration does not take place without a review by faculty in the program, the Graduate College places a hold on future registrations by a student on probation. Before a student on probation registers for each term, there must be a review of his or her record, and the DOGE must recommend whether the Graduate College should permit further registration.

Before graduation is approved by the Graduate College, the student must complete all courses listed on the program of study with a minimum grade of C and have achieved a cumulative 3.0 GPA or greater in all courses taken as a graduate student, including undergraduate courses and courses not on the program of study.

9.7 Dismissal for Failure to Maintain Academic Standing

Under certain circumstances it may be necessary to dismiss a graduate student from an academic program. If a student is unable to transfer to another program, this will lead to the loss of active graduate status. One or more of the following are grounds for dismissal for failure to maintain academic standing.

- Failure to maintain a 3.0 cumulative grade point average

- Failure to pass within the time frame designated by the relevant academic program any required examinations (this includes qualifying, preliminary, or final oral)
- Failure to complete within the time frame designated by the relevant academic program any required coursework, including 599 and 699 credits
- Failure to demonstrate scholarly and professional competence
- Students engaged in programs leading to professional licensure are expected to comply with the ethical standards of the profession
- Academic probationary status for two or more years
- Failure to identify a major professor in the time frame specified by the major program or the Graduate College
- Failure to comply with graduate student responsibilities or requirements discussed in this handbook or in the relevant program's student handbook
- A finding by a Research Misconduct Investigatory Committee constituted under the University's Research Misconduct Policy
- Failure to meet the specific requirements of the program of study as established and published by the academic department
- Failure to meet behavioral expectations of the Student Conduct Code

Procedure for Dismissal:

- Informal conference. If fitness of a graduate student to remain in the relevant academic program is questioned, an informal conference shall be held between the appropriate departmental or program officials (including the major professor or academic adviser) and the graduate student to attempt to resolve the matter.
- Informal Conference with the Dean of the Graduate College is optional. If the situation cannot be resolved at the informal conference, either party may bring the problem to the attention of the Dean of the Graduate College. In attempting to resolve the matter, the Dean of the Graduate College will review the case and meet with the parties concerned and attempt to identify alternatives to dismissal.
- In cases where the steps outlined above do not lead to a resolution or acceptable improvement, the DOGE of the academic program shall notify the student in writing

of dismissal. This notification shall include a clear statement of the reasons for dismissal, and the effective date of the dismissal.

Appeal Procedure:

- If dismissal occurs as a result of institutional action, such as dismissal by the Student Conduct Administrator, or the Dean of the Graduate College after a finding of Research Misconduct, the appeal procedures of the specific policy shall apply and the graduate student shall not be able to invoke the appeal procedures below.
- If dismissal is based on failure to demonstrate scholarly or professional competence, the graduate student may appeal to his/her program grievance committee. The procedure is described in the section of this handbook entitled "Grievances Related to Scholarly and Professional Competence."
- If the dismissal is for reasons other than scholarly or professional competence, the student may appeal in writing directly to the Dean of the Graduate College. Depending on the circumstances, the dean may rule directly or may establish an ad hoc Graduate College appeals committee, composed of equal numbers of students and faculty members serving on the Graduate Council (see Appendix A). The ad hoc appeals committee submits its recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate College for action.

9.8 Expectations for Assistantship Appointments

Every graduate assistantship appointment has associated with it a clearly stated expectation of educational duties to be performed. The supervisor has responsibility to see that this obligation is met. A supervisor's judgment that work is unsatisfactory can lead to termination of the appointment following due process as outlined below. Sometimes the duties of a student's assistantship are closely tied to a thesis or dissertation project. In such cases, the distinction between a supervisor and mentor is difficult to make. Students typically are expected to work long hours on their own research/scholarship.

When disputes arise concerning assistantship duties, performance, or working conditions, the student and supervisor will meet and attempt to resolve the issues. Understandings must be formalized in writing. If the parties cannot resolve the disputes, they should bring the matter first to the program director (DOGE) and next to the chair of the department through which the appointment is made. If the DOGE and department chair are unsuccessful in resolving the dispute, the issue may be brought to the Dean of the Graduate College as outlined below.

Graduate assistantship appointments are made for a term not to exceed one fiscal year, although graduate programs may convey an intent for longer-term commitments.

Terms of each appointment are formalized in a Letter of Intent (LOI). Satisfactory performance of the assistantship and academic work will normally make a student eligible for reappointment. However, departments/programs have the authority not to reappoint. Departments/programs have an obligation to provide a written notification as early as possible if a reappointment is not to be made. A student who is not reappointed may ask for review by the Graduate College after having discussed the matter with the appointing department chair. Failure to reappoint is not considered termination and therefore is not subject to the policies given below. Assistantship support for more than seven years is strongly discouraged, and departments or programs may set limits on the number of semesters or years that a student is eligible for assistantship support.

Departments retain the right to reassign graduate assistants to other duties so long as there is no loss of pay or shortening of the term of the original appointment. Due consideration should be given to the effect of reassignment on a graduate assistant's progress as a student.

9.9 Termination of Assistantship Appointments

A graduate assistantship appointment may be terminated for either of two reasons: 1) for cause, or 2) loss of funding. The guidelines and process addressing termination given here apply only to graduate assistantship appointments that have been formalized by an LOI and do not apply to statements of intent for longer-term commitments.

Grounds for Early Termination for Cause Include:

- Failure to maintain minimum registration as a student (see Chapter 2)
- Neglect of duty or incompetence
- Persistent refusal to follow reasonable advice and counsel of faculty supervisor in carrying out assistantship obligations
- Failure to maintain academic standing
- Failure to comply with assistantship responsibilities as set forth in this handbook, departmental/program rules and regulations governing assistantships, or the terms of sponsored research agreements that fund the assistantship
- A finding by a Research Misconduct Investigatory Committee constituted under the University's Research Misconduct Policy
- Personal conduct seriously prejudicial to the University, including violation of the Regents' Uniform Rules of Personal Conduct, state or federal law, Student

Disciplinary Regulations, and General University Regulations discussed in the “Student Life” section of the [Policy Library](#)

Procedure for Termination due to Cause (removal from the payroll cannot be accomplished until the termination procedure has been completed, but interim remedial measures short of removal from the payroll may be implemented on an interim basis):

- *Informal Conference.* The first step in attempting to resolve the problem is an informal meeting between the graduate assistant and his/her immediate supervisor to discuss the performance concerns.
- *Formal Conference.* If performance concerns persist, a formal conference shall be held between the graduate assistant, the immediate supervisor, and the DOGE or designated appointee for the purpose of resolving the matter to the mutual satisfaction of all parties. A summary of this meeting should be provided in writing to all parties.
- *Formal Ruling.* When a mutually satisfactory resolution cannot be reached the department chair of the appointing department or designee shall investigate the issues and provide his or her decision in writing regarding the matter. The graduate assistant must receive at least thirty calendar days’ notice if the appointment is to be terminated.

Appeal Procedure:

If a graduate assistant wishes to challenge the decision of the department/program chair, the termination may be appealed in writing to the Dean of the Graduate College within five calendar days of notification of the results of the chair’s decision (see the allowable grounds for appeal in section 9.11). The Graduate Dean may rule directly or may establish an ad hoc Graduate College Appeals Committee, composed of equal numbers of students and faculty members of the Graduate Council. The ad hoc judiciary must establish whether proper procedure was followed and whether the claims of the department/program have merit. The ad hoc appeals committee submits its recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate College for action.

A graduate research assistant whose appointment is terminated for cause, or who is reassigned, should consult with his or her major professor regarding use of research data gathered prior to termination or reassignment. Active graduate status is not affected by changes in assistantship appointment.

Early Termination due to Loss of Funding:

Graduate assistants may appeal early termination for reason of loss of funding to the Dean of the Graduate College if they believe loss of funding was used as a pretext for

improper termination of the appointment. Review by the Dean of the Graduate College may include a presentation of written arguments and documentation from the graduate assistant and the department. The Dean of the Graduate College shall give a reasonable time to submit such information, and may rule solely on the written arguments and documentation.

If funding has been withdrawn by the sponsor of research from which the graduate assistant is being paid, the assistant shall receive at least thirty calendar days' prior notice of termination. The department shall make a good-faith effort to find alternate funding to maintain a graduate assistant appointment.

9.10 Inability to Perform Duties

Accidents or unanticipated extenuating circumstances may prevent a graduate student from performing assistantship duties. When this is a short-term situation and there is documentation the student will be able to return to duties in a reasonable amount of time, financial assistance can be requested from academic colleges and/or the Graduate College. The intent would be to allow for temporary replacement help without reducing the assistant's stipend and benefit support. If this is a long-term situation, a different procedure for withdrawal should be followed as outlined in Chapter 2.

9.11 Discipline of Graduate Assistants Other than by Termination

Departments/programs may issue reprimands, warnings, or suspensions to graduate assistants for lesser violations of the same grounds for which dismissal may be initiated. Such actions may be grieved as a matter related to scholarly and professional competence using specified procedures described in this handbook.

9.12 Behavioral Expectations

The University strives to provide a safe, harassment-free environment for study and for work. The Violence-Free University Policy applies to graduate students. Students who exhibit violent or threatening behavior, or a student who harasses others, is in violation of this policy and/or the Student Disciplinary Regulations and may be subject to disciplinary action. A student may be placed on interim suspension when it is determined that they present a significant danger to safety or property. Dismissal from the University may result following the required review per policy. Students are also subject to medical withdrawal in accordance with the University Initiated [Withdrawal Policy](#) found in the Catalog.

When a student seeks to transfer between programs, or seeks to be reinstated to active status, the Graduate College has the right to seek and disclose information related to

violent, threatening or disruptive behavior in determining whether to accept or approve the transfer, admission, or reinstatement of a student.