



# **Graduate Assistant Program Handbook**

## **Waldorf University Master's Degree Program**

### **Mission**

Waldorf University seeks to be an engaging community of learning and faith where relationships are formed and opportunities for learning and service abound. Our mission is to educate the whole person emphasizing integrity and equipping students to succeed and to serve the communities where they live and work.

### **As an on-line college**

Waldorf offers a broad range of quality on-line academic programs delivered in an innovative, flexible format while providing a positive experience that impacts the lives of students.

### **As a community that values religious faith**

Waldorf seeks to explore the meaning and depth that religion and spirituality can add to life. The questions religion poses for the living of life and the unique perspective Christianity can give to the living of life are explored with academic rigor. Students are encouraged to develop a deep respect for the role religious devotion can play in giving direction, purpose and a moral foundation to life.

### **As a college engaged with the world**

Waldorf seeks to bring the world to our community by enrolling a significant number of international students. Waldorf actively encourages all students to experience the world through multi-discipline opportunities for travel and study abroad.

### **As a college born of a strong academic heritage**

Waldorf has upheld the Lutheran tradition of excellence in higher education since the college was founded in 1903. This tradition values service to the community, academic excellence, freedom of inquiry, a liberating education, and learning through the exchange of ideas in open conversation.



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## **FOREWARD**

### **WELCOME to Waldorf University!**

It is always a great day to be a Waldorf Warrior!

We are pleased and honored that you have selected Waldorf University for your journey toward your graduate degree. We want to congratulate you on being selected as a Graduate Assistant for the academic year.

As a Graduate Assistant, you will be employed in academically relevant environments in teaching, research, or administrative service throughout our college community. The assistantship experience will enhance and complement your graduate studies here.

This handbook was designed to provide you with important and useful information about your assistantship. It will serve as a quick reference guide to the policies and procedures related to this new experience.

Waldorf University is dedicated to the ideals of exemplary scholarship and high standards of achievement that characterize graduate education and we are proud to offer financial assistance to students who share these goals. It is the purpose of this handbook to provide information that pertains to the academic and administrative processes of providing this financial support.

We extend to you the very best wishes from the administration, faculty and staff of the Graduate School for your success this academic year.



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## INTRODUCTION

Waldorf University is honored to be able to provide financial support to graduate students who desire to advance themselves academically. Waldorf University supports those working on graduate degrees for several reasons.

- // Our goal is to assist all learners reach their maximum potential and be contributing members of society regardless of the career or life role they play.
- // Financial support is awarded to students using two methods:
  - \* Graduate Tuition Scholarships: Provide financial assistance for tuition (instructional fees, where applicable)
  - \* Graduate Stipends: Provide compensation for work associated with and related to Graduate Assistant (GA) positions
- // These efforts assist departments and faculty members in carrying out their academic and professional tasks.

The term, graduate assistant, applies to those students under an agreement supported by Waldorf University funds or external funds administered through the Waldorf University Graduate Assistance program. Graduate Assistance have varied duties, which may include assisting in the classroom for lower level courses, conducting discussion sessions, supervising laboratories, assisting faculty with research, assigned athletic duties, or assisting departments in various ways. Employment demands need to be connected to the Graduate Assistant's program of study.



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## **THE GRADUATE ASSISTANT**

### **Graduate Assistant as Graduate Student**

A Graduate Assistant must juggle a number of roles and at the same time focus on their own degree. Time management and planning are essential for a positive Graduate Assistant experience.

### **Graduate Assistant Orientation**

All new Graduate Assistants should complete the on-line orientation. The orientation will provide the new Graduate Assistant some insight into the demands on their time and the priorities of the Graduate Assistant program. Throughout the academic year, the Graduate Assistant will attend the initial orientation and the monthly seminar sessions focused on creating a successful Graduate Assistant experience. The orientation and seminars will be conducted by the Waldorf University administration, department chairperson, and/or their designee.

Orientation will be held at least two weeks prior to the start of the semester.

### **Graduate Assistant Supervision**

Graduate assistants are supervised in their work assignments by the department in which their work is performed. For research assistants coaching, the supervisor normally is a faculty member or coach. Since the primary purpose of graduate assistantships is to provide graduate students with academically relevant experiences, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to assure that this occurs.

The direct supervisor will meet weekly in a scheduled conference to assess the Graduate Assistant's academic growth and the Graduate Assistant's plan of action to reach academic and work goals. Each session will be documented by the supervisor and maintained regarding topics discussed and commitments for next steps. Upon completion of the Graduate Assistantship all documentation will be maintained in a file housed in the Human Resources Department.

### **An Academic Advisor**

Graduate Assistants shall conference periodically with the Academic Advisor for the Waldorf University Graduate Program. The Graduate Assistant shall keep the Academic Advisor informed about academic progress, current enrollment, and academic concerns/complications. The Graduate Assistant shall meet with the Academic Advisor prior to enrollment each term. The purpose of the meetings is to help create a safe environment for Graduate Assistants to seek advice and voice concerns.



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## APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

- // Graduate assistantship applications may be obtained either in the departments, in the Graduate School, or on-line at [www.waldorf.edu/online/about-us](http://www.waldorf.edu/online/about-us) and click on the Human Resources page.
- // The initial application will be processed by the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs and/or her/his designee.
- // Final selection for graduate assistantship rests with the departments.
- // The Graduate School rules on eligibility create guidelines which provide for stability and consistency across department lines within Waldorf University.

## TERMS AND BENEFITS OF GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

### **Eligibility**

To be eligible to receive a graduate assistantship award, a student must satisfy all the requirements listed below. Individual departments may impose more stringent requirements at their discretion. A student is not eligible to hold an assistantship in an academic department to which they have been denied entry. To be minimally eligible for consideration, a graduate student must:

1. Gain full admission to a graduate degree program.
2. Maintain graduate enrollment as a full-time student (full-time status allows for the learner to take one term off in the sequence of courses terms during a calendar year **AFTER** successful completion of three (3) terms).
3. Maintain a minimum cumulative graduate grade point average of 3.00 and no course grade below a C.
4. Show satisfactory progress toward completing degree objectives, as defined by the department.
5. Perform graduate assistantship duties satisfactorily, as defined by the immediate supervisor or department.
6. Maintain appropriate standards of academic conduct.
7. Honor the terms of the employment agreement and all associated handbooks.
8. Meet oral English proficiency requirements. This requirement apply to all Graduate Assistants who have coaching, recitation, lab instruction or tutorial responsibilities, regardless of whether or not English is the Graduate Assistant's native language.

Completed stipend agreements must be submitted to the Human Resources Department by the deadline, which is generally two weeks before classes begin in a semester or session. If agreements are not submitted to the Human Resources by this deadline, the agreement will not be processed and will be forfeited.



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## **Oral English Proficiency Assessment (for non-native language speakers)**

An applicant's oral English proficiency must be assessed and certified before Graduate Assistant duties can be performed. Graduate Assistants for whom English is the native language may be certified by departmental assessment. Graduate Assistants for whom English is a second language must score 72 or higher on the speaking component of the Internet based TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) (ETS). A copy of the test score must be submitted to the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs with the contract before the contract can be processed.

## **Verification of Employment Eligibility and Identity (for non-citizens) (Form I-9)**

The Immigration and Control Act of 1986 requires all employers to verify each new employee's identity and employment authorization of each new employee (both citizen and non-citizen) hired after November 6, 1986. The I9 Form will be completed with the Human Resources office.

- // Section 1 of the form must be completed no later than the first day of employment, but only after accepting the employment offer.
- // Section 2 is completed by the Employer and the employee is to present original documents as specified on page 9 in the I9 instructions found at <http://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/i-9.pdf>.
- // Anyone unable to present their documents within 3 business days will have their employment terminated. **Please come to campus prepared to present these original documents, copies are not acceptable.**

## **Renewals of Appointments**

Renewal of appointments is not automatic. Reappointments are based on the availability of funds, department determination of satisfactory performance and department needs. Students may apply for reappointment through their respective departments. Students must meet departmental guidelines and deadlines for application. Graduate assistants, who fail to meet eligibility requirements, may be denied renewal.

## **Offers and Acceptances**

1. All efforts will be made to offer Graduate Assistantships within 90 days of the start of the designated effective academic term.
2. The applicant must accept the offer within 2 weeks of the offer.



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## **Resignation/Termination before end of Appointment**

Graduate assistantship appointments are contingent upon and subject to satisfactory performance of assigned duties as determined by the appointing department and academic performance.

**1. Termination before end of appointment.** Appointments may be terminated for cause before their expiration under certain conditions.

- // Appointee fails to perform services satisfactorily or violates laws or Waldorf University policies which in the judgment of the Waldorf University Associate Dean of Graduate Programs affect duties or services performed by the appointee (the fore mentioned may result in immediate termination of the agreement and coursework); or
- // Appointee violates provisions of Agreement/Appointment; or
- // Appointee fails to maintain good academic standing (3.00 minimum GPA); or
- // Appointee earns a course grade below a C; or
- // Appointee is subject to a "for cause disciplinary action;" or
- // Appointee is convicted a crime and/or is in violation of Waldorf University conduct rules; or
- // Funds cease to be available for graduate assistantships.

If termination is a result of a violation of laws or Waldorf University policy, termination may be immediate.

In all other cases, before termination for unsatisfactory performance the Department Chairperson shall be involved in the process. Steps taken will be:

- // graduate assistants must receive from their immediate supervisors' written notice of specific deficiencies in performance, as well as detailed suggestions for improvement,
- // graduate assistants should receive at least two written warnings with adequate opportunities in between to improve,
- // if unacceptable performance continues, and a decision is made to proceed with possible termination, then, in all cases, the Department Chairperson of the appointing department will provide the graduate assistant a pre-termination hearing. The hearing should consist of:
  1. oral or written notice of the reasons for possible termination;
  2. the Graduate Assistant in question shall be allowed an opportunity to present reasons, either in person or in writing, why the termination should not take place;
  3. within 48 hours of the hearing, the Department Chairperson shall notify the Graduate Assistant and the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs of the outcome;
  4. if termination is to take place the termination will be immediate.

## **2. Resignation**

A graduate assistant may resign by voluntary mutual written agreement among the graduate assistant, the supervisor, and the Department Chairperson. Written notification must be submitted by the Department Chairperson to the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs indicating the last working day.



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## **DUTIES OF A WALDORF UNIVERSITY GRADUATE ASSISTANT**

Graduate assistants, with full appointments (nine to twelve months/year as designated per agreement), shall provide no more than 29 hours of service per week as assigned by the designated supervisor. Supervisors are encouraged to complete a "Graduate Assistant Job Description" form spelling out specific expectations of all Graduate Assistants in a particular department. Supervisors and/or Department Chairpersons are required to show a link between the duties of the Graduate Assistant and her/his Graduate degree academic work. The assistantship should be an extension of the academic learning.

Graduate students holding full appointments may, at the discretion of supervisors, be assigned to work during break weeks if this has been noted as a contingency in the agreement. The supervisor will monitor the hours worked to be equitable to (and not to exceed) the total of the 29 hours required per week during the semester(s).

Graduate Assistants with partial Appointments shall provide less than 15 hour of service per week as assigned by the designated supervisor.

## **COMPENSATION**

### **Non-service Fellowships**

A limited number of non-service fellowship awards made available by faculty members from certain external funds (research-type grants above and beyond traditional Waldorf University funding) may not carry a service requirement. Non-service fellowships are restricted to those individuals funded by external funding and limited to the restriction of the external funding source. When the external funding source expires the non-service fellowship ends with no obligation that Waldorf University continue supporting the non-service fellowship.

### **Tuition Remission**

Tuition remission may be part of the Graduate Assistance funding formula.

Note: Students must always be registered as full-time students in the Waldorf University Graduate program to receive any scholarship or Graduate Assistant appointment. Full-time enrollment requires the student be enrolled and complete one graduate course in at least five (5) of the six (6) terms AFTER the completion of the third (3rd) consecutive graduate course. In other words the Graduate Assistant must complete three courses before "taking a term off" and only one term may be missed in the two-year sequence. **Due to the intensity of the course work, Graduate Assistance students are normally limited to no more than one course per term.**

The appointment as a Graduate Assistant may be rescinded if registration drops below these minimums. Graduate assistants holding partial assistantships must also maintain full-time student status and are financially responsible for any additional credit hours.

All Graduate Assistants will maintain a full-time student status whether they are a full graduate assistantship or a partial assistantship.

Students must pay for any graduate credit hours exceeding the courses/term allowed.



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The Graduate Assistant shall be responsible for all other fees on campus or on-line, including retakes, course extensions or additional courses per term or per program.

## **Stipends**

The amount of money available for graduate assistant stipends is determined by the Board of Trustees of Waldorf University and is subject to change from year to year. Stipend levels will be based on an overall total dollar figure divided by the full-time and half-time assistantships. Individual amounts may vary depending upon the demands of the assistantship through consultation between the Graduate Program Director and the respective Department Chairperson.

*Note: The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) usually treats stipends paid to graduate assistants, as taxable income and Waldorf University is obliged to withhold income taxes.*

Payment of stipends will be in accordance with current salary payment practices of the college, but will not take place prior to the completion of the tasks funded by the stipend.

## **Health Insurance**

Graduate assistants are not covered by the Waldorf University employee health insurance. They may, however use the Student Health Service, available to all students. Graduate assistants may purchase health insurance locally.

## **Worker's Compensation**

Graduate assistants are covered by Worker's Compensation.

## **PROCESSING OF ASSISTANTSHIP AND TUITION SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS**

All agreement/appointment forms and scholarship/fellowship forms originate in the requesting department. Signatures should be affixed with a ballpoint pen. These forms constitute legal documents when properly signed by the student, Department Chairperson, and Associate Dean of Graduate Programs.

Agreements are not valid until all parties have signed and dated them. Copies are distributed to Vice President of Academic Affairs, Human Resources, Payroll, the Department Chairperson, Graduate Assistant's supervisor and the recipient.



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## **RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Graduate assistants are subject to the rules and regulations of the Waldorf University Board of Trustees, and the departments within which they hold their awards.

In the performance of their responsibilities Graduate Assistants must:

- // abide by the academic and instructional criteria and policies established by the department in which they hold their appointments,
- // respect the rights and opinions of students
- // serve as a positive role model for underclassmen,
- // hold themselves to a higher academic standard in their own academic undertakings, and
- // uphold the academic standards of Waldorf University.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION AND ACCESSIBILITY POLICY**

All current Waldorf University policies and procedures regarding accessibility or any form of discrimination shall apply and may be found in the Waldorf University catalog or by accessing the Waldorf University website at [waldorf.edu](http://waldorf.edu).

All requirements/rules/policies listed in the Waldorf University staff employee handbook shall apply to the Graduate Assistant and may be accessed on the Waldorf University website at [waldorf.edu](http://waldorf.edu).

Any questions regarding the policy should be addressed to the Equal Employment Opportunity/ Affirmative Action (EEO/AA) Office and Jason Ramaker, 106 South 6th St., Waldorf University, Forest City, Iowa 50436 (641.585.8161).

## **GOOD CONDUCT POLICY**

Waldorf University has expectations for a high level of responsibility and accountability for all members of its staff. Graduate Assistants are held to the same high standard. Graduate Assistants need to be professional, use good judgment and make choices that are considered of good character.

Graduate Assistant guidelines include, but are not limited to:

- // prohibited from providing alcohol or consuming alcohol with Waldorf undergraduate students at any time or location
- // may socialize with undergraduate students in appropriate settings yet maintain an emotional and physical distance when interacting.
- // consensual relationships of a romantic nature between a Graduate Assistant and undergraduate student is prohibited.
- // follow all guidelines set forth in the employee handbook.

## **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

All current Waldorf University policies and procedures regarding any type of grievance shall follow the Waldorf University Grievance Policy as set forth in the Waldorf University catalog. The policies may be found on the Waldorf University website at [waldorf.edu](http://waldorf.edu).



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## The Process Checklist

	1. The Requesting Department completes the Waldorf University Graduate Assistant Job Description.
	2. The Requesting Department request is submitted to the Director of Human Resources.
	3. The Director of Human Resources presents the request to the Waldorf University Budget Committee.
	4. Upon approval by the Waldorf University Budget Committee, the Requesting Department advertises the position.
	5. Applicants for the Graduate Assistantship complete the Waldorf University Graduate Assistant Online Application.
	6. Interview Process
	7. The Graduate Assistantship is offered to a candidate.
	<b>POST HIRING STEPS:</b>
	8. The Waldorf University Graduate Assistant Commitments form AND Graduate Assistant Academic Plan is completed and submitted to the appropriate offices.
	9. All employee documents are completed with the Director of Human Resources or a designee.
	10 The Graduate Assistant completes all orientation requirements.
	11. The Requesting Department Supervisor completes the appropriate journal forms weekly.
	12. The Graduate Assistant completes all academic expectations as set forth in the agreement and the Graduate Assistant Program Handbook.
	13. The Graduate Assistant is an active participant in all academic meetings as scheduled by the Waldorf University Graduate Assistant Advisor.





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## Waldorf University Graduate Assistant Academic Plan 2016-2017

Print or Type:

Name: Last \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Major Degree Program: \_\_\_\_\_ Department Request: \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate Assistantship Status:

\_\_\_ New \_\_\_ Reappointment

Academic Term: FALL SPRING BOTH

Undergraduate Grade Point Average: \_\_\_\_\_ Undergraduate Major: \_\_\_\_\_

List of courses and terms you will be enrolled in Waldorf University Graduate Courses:

Course #	Course Name	Term	Course #	Course Name	Term

ON THE BACK of this application explain in 75 words or less why Waldorf University should appoint you as a Graduate Assistant.

*I am aware that for any appointment to continue I must remain enrolled and in good standing with Waldorf University. I accept the responsibility to be a positive role model for all members of the campus community.*

Applicant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Office use only below this line

Date application is received: \_\_\_\_\_ Decision on appointment: \_\_\_\_\_

Department Chairperson: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Associate Dean of Graduate Programs: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Assigned Supervisor for GA: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# **Graduate Assistant Program Handbook**

## **Waldorf University Graduate Assistantship Commitments 2016-2017**

The Graduate Assistantship should be an extension of the academic learning  
and the overall mission of Waldorf University.

*Our mission is to educate the whole person emphasizing integrity and equipping  
students to succeed and to serve the communities where they live and work.*

*Print or Type.*

Graduate Assistant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate Assistant Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate Assistant's Graduate Program: \_\_\_\_\_

As a Graduate Assistant I will:

- // remain focused on my academic work and recognize my work toward my degree is my top priority,
- // complete all course work on time and submit quality work,
- // be prompt and thorough in all my duties as a Graduate Assistant,
- // seek feedback from my supervisor and Waldorf faculty and staff,
- // submit all required documentation related to my Graduate Assistantship on time,
- // maintain a high quality of ethical and moral behavior in my Graduate Assistantship and academic work,
- // read the Graduate Assistantship handbook and staff employee handbook.

As Supervisor I will :

- // monitor the Graduate Assistant's day-to-day job performance,
- // counsel the student and re-direct them as need,
- // document all work efforts and our meetings,
- // meet at least weekly with the Graduate Assistant to encourage them in their academic work,
- // update the Graduate Program Director of any concerns regarding the Graduate Assistant,
- // complete monthly reviews of the Graduate Assistant's job performance and share it with the Graduate Assistant,
- // follow the Graduate Assistantship handbook.

Graduate Assistant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

An original signature on all documents required. Submit a signed copy to the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs, Business Office, Director of Human Resources and keep a copy for your file







