



Morgridge College of Education

UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

GRADUATE ASSISTANT HANDBOOK

2026-2027

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WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU RECEIVE A GTA/GRA APPOINTMENT

Congratulations! You have been awarded a unique professional opportunity related to your educational and professional goals and one that will contribute greatly to your professional and academic credentials.

YOUR SUPERVISOR/PI WILL:

- Notify MCE Director of Budget and Operations of your appointment and request that the hiring process begin.
- Discuss the details of your GTA/GRA/GSA position at the time of your appointment (i.e. full-time, half-time or quarter-time).

NEXT STEPS CHECKLIST FOR GA:

1. ____ Familiarize yourself with this GA Handbook.
2. ____ Review and sign the GA Contract, which will be provided alongside the handbook.
3. ____ Watch for an email from HireRight and complete the background check. This email will be sent to your DU.Edu email address.
4. ____ Contact i9.ss@du.edu WITHIN 3 DAYS OF HIRE (but no later than September 4, 2026) to complete an I-9 verification.

I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification Forms must be completed prior to or on your first day of work by visiting the Office of Human Resources and Inclusive Community:

Mary Reed Building, 4th Floor, Office 403
Monday – Thursday 10:00 am and 2:00 pm.

For questions regarding I-9 Verifications or to make an appointment, please reach out to the Employment Services Team:

Email: employmentservices@du.edu
Phone: (303) 871-7993

5. ____ Discuss work schedules with your PI or supervisor, as well as performance expectations and standards for success.

STRATEGIES TO ENSURE SUCCESS

1. **Adhere to commitments** – Live up to commitments every time or contact a project director immediately to make other arrangements.
2. **Realize the sensitivity of the work that you represent** – Make sure to maintain the confidentiality of all data and use it only for position-related work.
3. **Treat everyone with respect** – This includes directors, peers, administrative staff, the person on the phone, or anyone who enters any of the workspaces.
4. **Value the time and effort spent by others** – Do not take other members of the team for granted. Be on time to meetings and meet expected deadlines.
5. **Always maintain ethical conduct** – Be honest and refrain from deceitful practices.
6. **Keep personal issues at home** – Refrain from using work time for personal issues.
7. **Demonstrate the core values of professionalism** – Etiquette, punctuality, organization, and dedication to your job, just to name a few.

MCE GRADUATE ASSISTANT POLICY OVERVIEW

TYPES OF GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

The Morgridge College of Education has three types of graduate assistants (GA). GXA is a term used to broadly refer to all graduate assistants, including GTA, GSA, and GRA positions

Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA)

Our GTAs play a crucial role in undergraduate classes and labs. They support professors by tutoring, proctoring exams, leading in-class discussions, evaluating student work, and more. Their partnership with faculty and students creates a cohesive and inclusive learning experience while building their pedagogical skills.

Graduate Service Assistants (GSA)

Working as a GSA involves a range of responsibilities that extend beyond the classroom. Students in GSA positions work alongside departments and fulfill project-based or administrative duties, event coordination, publication or social media work, and other vital University functions. These roles help students polish their professional skills, gain real-world work experience, and connect with the on-campus community.

Graduate Research Associates (GRA)

For those students who gravitate toward investigation and discovery, GRA positions provide a platform to collaborate with DU's faculty and engage in groundbreaking research projects. From working in labs to writing scholarly articles for publication, the GRA roles enhance students' academic pursuits and contribute to DU's reputation for research excellence.

GOALS FOR GA POSITIONS

Graduate assistantships enable the Morgridge College of Education (MCE) to provide financial support for graduate students while advancing the research, teaching, and service mission of the college. Although the tasks involved in each position differ, the values remain consistent across positions:

- To enhance the student experience
- To accomplish a task or complete a project
- To expand the skill set of the student
- To enhance the resume of the student

TIME AND ENROLLMENT COMMITMENTS

MCE GXA Work Hours and Enrollment Requirements					
<u>GXA</u> <u>Appointment</u>	<u>Tuition Waiver</u> <u>Credits/Quarter</u>	<u>Minimum</u> <u>Enrollment</u> <u>each Quarter</u>	<u>Approximate</u> <u>Hours</u> <u>Worked/Week</u>	<u>Total Annual</u> <u>Hours</u>	<u>Total Quarterly</u> <u>Hours</u>
Full time	8	8	20	600	200
.50	4	4	10	300	100
0.25	2	2	5	150	50

GA positions traditionally span the 9-month academic year, effective September 1 through May 31. GAs are expected to be available to work on site, depending on their award, any day that the university is open which may include but is not limited to Interterm between autumn and winter quarters. Specific work schedules are determined by the faculty/staff supervisor and should be discussed prior to formal acceptance by the student.

9-month GA appointments are automatically split into three separate positions, 1 per quarter. These positions correspond to start/end dates and anticipated compensation schedule per term, outlined below:

Term	Position Start Date	Position End Date	Anticipated Compensation Dates
Fall Quarter	09/01/26	11/30/26	Oct 1/Nov 1/Dec 1
Winter Quarter	12/01/26	02/28/27	Jan 1/Feb 1/Mar 1
Spring Quarter	03/01/27	05/31/27	Apr 1/May 1/Jun 1

This schedule is predicated on GXA and Faculty Supervisors/PIs meeting applicable college and university deadlines as prescribed in this handbook. The above start and end dates are system defaults, set university-wide and cannot be adjusted. There are occasional access/account issues with the position changeover from term to term and it is recommended not to save time-sensitive projects for the end of a particular quarter (i.e., fall quarter deadline on 12/1). Spring GA positions will be automatically terminated on 6/1, irrespective of the academic calendar.

GA CONTRACT

This section describes in detail some components of the GA Contract that you will be required to sign once you are appointed to an assistantship position.

ELIGIBILITY

- A. GXA recipients must be enrolled in an academic program in Morgridge College of Education, meet minimum credit hour requirements, and be in good academic standing during the quarters in which they receive their award (programs/departments may stipulate that the recipient must be enrolled as a full-time student).
- B. Should a GXA recipient wish to change his/her major field of study to another school and/or department, the award is NOT transferable.
- C. All GXA recipients must pass a background check and sign the GA Contract to complete the appointment process.
- D. GXA positions and awards are only applicable to the Fall, Winter, and Spring academic quarters.
- E. A graduate student may not hold more than the equivalent of one full-time graduate assistantship at any time within the University.
- F. Students cannot be enrolled in the same class they are the graduate assistant for at the same time.
- G. Only Morgridge College of Education courses can be funded with GXA tuition waivers. Tuition waiver cannot exceed the number of credit hours taken. Continuous enrollment and courses taken outside of degree requirements are not eligible for waiver.
- H. GXA positions are awarded for up to one year at a time and must be reapplied for to continue into the next academic year. A PhD student may hold a GXA position for a maximum of 3 years or 9 quarters; an EdD, EdS or master's student a maximum of 2 years or 6 quarters.

I. Minimum Credit Hour Requirements:

GXA Appointment	Minimum Credit Hours taken per Quarter*	Maximum Credit Waiver per Quarter*
Full Time (1.0 FTE)	8	8
0.75 FTE	6	6
0.5 FTE	4	4
0.25 FTE	2	2

**Continuous Enrollment credits and credits taken outside of degree requirements are not eligible*

- J. International students who receive a GXA must demonstrate fluency in spoken English by scoring a 26 on the speaking section of the TOEFL, or an 8 on the speaking section of the IELTS and/or by passing the DU GTA English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA). International students whose native language is clearly English are exempt from the TSE.

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

In order to remain eligible to receive an assistantship, you must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress. The University of Denver measures Satisfactory Academic Progress by monitoring the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA), the Cumulative Completion Rate (CCR) and the Maximum Time Frame Limit (MTFL) to complete degree requirements. Graduate students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.00 or better. In order to graduate within the maximum time frame (MTF) limit, students must complete and pass a minimum of 66.6% of all courses attempted. Successful completion of a course requires a grade of "C" or above. Students are required to complete all degree requirements within 150% of the minimum credits required to graduate. Ex: A student may attempt a maximum of 135 credits in order to complete a degree that requires 90 credits (90 credits x 150% = 135).

Students on academic probation or suspension are not eligible for a GXA position until that status is resolved. After two consecutive terms below 3.0 GPA a student is not eligible for a GXA position until the GPA is raised to a 3.0 or better.

FINANCIAL DETAILS

- A. GXA positions receive both a tuition waiver and monthly stipend. Tuition waivers can apply to Morgridge tuition charges only. Monthly stipends are paid directly to the student in the form of a paycheck and represent taxable income. Stipend amounts will be outlined in hire documentation.
- B. If you are receiving an MCE Dean's Scholarship award and you receive a GXA position, the Dean's Scholarship award will be reduced by the amount of the assistantship tuition waiver.

EXAMPLE: You have been awarded \$8,000 in Dean's Scholarship and then you receive a 0.25 GTA position.

ORIGINAL AWARD		ADJUSTED FOR GTA		Dean's Scholarship reduced by amount of Assistantship tuition waiver
Dean's Scholarship	\$8,000	Dean's Scholarship	\$ 806	
GTA Waiver		GTA Waiver	\$ 7,194	
GTA Stipend		GTA Stipend	\$ 3,625	
TOTAL RECEIVED	\$8,000	TOTAL RECEIVED	\$ 11,625	

- C. GXA tuition waivers awarded for the academic year are spread evenly over three quarters.

- D. Stipends are paid once per month on the first of the month following your GXA appointment if all required Human Resources paperwork (I-9, W4, background check) has been completed and the online hiring deadline is met. Your supervisor is responsible for notifying MCE Budget and Planning staff of GXA appointments. The GXA is responsible for completing the required documentation for the background check, I-9 and W4 documents and returning the signed contract by the deadline.
- E. Stipend payment schedule:

Academic Term	Action Required of Units	Payroll System Automatically Pays on
Fall	GXA positions hired online & all hiring paperwork complete by Aug 15 th	Oct 1st, Nov 1st, & Dec 1st
Winter	GXA positions hired online & all hiring paperwork complete by Nov 15 th	Jan 1st, Feb 1st, & Mar 1st
Spring	GXA positions hired online & all hiring paperwork complete by Feb 15 th	Apr 1st, May 1st, & Jun 1st

- F. The combination of all tuition waivers and scholarships cannot exceed tuition (prior to assessed fees). Waivers cannot be awarded in cash and will only be applied towards tuition charges.
- G. Full-time GXAs (1.0 FTE) are eligible for the GXA Health Insurance Scholarship which covers the cost of the University of Denver Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) and the Health & Counseling Fee (HCF). Eligibility is determined one time per year, in the fall and is managed by the Office of Graduate Studies. GXA positions must be full-time (1.0 FTE) for the full duration of the academic year to be eligible for SHIP and HCF scholarships. Further details can be found in the [Graduate Policy Manual](#).
- H. Since the fiscal year ends prior to the summer quarter, waivers cannot be carried forward from the spring to the summer quarter.
- I. Waiver hours may not be used for interterm courses, non-credit courses, any other fees or fines, including continuous enrollment, certification fees, dissertation hours alone or credits above program requirements. Additionally, waiver may not be used for any courses outside of the College of Education, unless those courses are required for degree completion.
- J. If the student drops courses for which his/her waiver hours have been used after or during the refund period, the waiver will not be re-awarded for future use.
- K. If a recipient of a GXA position is also eligible for University of Denver employee, spousal or dependent tuition waiver benefits, he/she cannot have both the GXA position and the employee waiver within the same term.
- L. Waiver hours are not taxable income and cannot be used in lieu of stipends as an inducement for departmental or teaching duties.
- M. All stipend money received by a GXA is taxable income. Recipients must have a W-4 form on file with Payroll. The GXA must submit an I-9 form to Human Resources within three business days of hire, re-verify the I-9 when the GXA has been absent for more than one quarter, and resubmit the I-9 after three years.
- N. If a recipient's GXA is renewed for a subsequent academic year, a new GA Contract must be signed. A doctoral student may remain in a GTA position for a maximum of 3 years or 9 quarters, an EdD, EdS or master's student a maximum of 2 years or 6 quarters.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

- *WORK SCHEDULES*

- GXAs may be required to work on site any day that the University is open. GTAs work within the academic period that coincides with the award. GRAs may work during traditional academic break periods and workflows are guided according to the grant funding schedule. You will define your work schedule for each term with your Supervisor/PI. It is expected you will make prior arrangements with them if you will not be working your agreed upon schedule for emergencies or illness.
- Punctuality is expected.
- If you are ill or are going to be late, please email your Supervisor BEFORE your regularly scheduled time to work.

- *COMMUNICATION BY EMAIL*

- Please use your DU student email. If you prefer correspondence on a different email, please have your email forwarded to your DU account.

- *DRUG AND/OR ALCOHOL USE*

- The use of illegal drugs or alcohol during work hours is not permitted and will not be tolerated. If a GTA/GRA is suspected to be under the influence of either while working, they may be asked to leave the work environment and may be subject to immediate dismissal. Marijuana use is not allowed during work hours and even if necessary for medical reasons, you should not be under the influence when you are working in your assistantship position.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Any matters of concern should be addressed with your Supervisor/PI. All attempts should be made to address issues of conflict in a mutually respectful and professional discussion with the Supervisor or PI. The following succession of conflict resolution steps assumes resolution was not reached at the previous stage.

- I. Identify and discuss concerns with Supervisor or PI.
- II. If there are still concerns after discussions with the Supervisor/PI, students should discuss the situation with their Faculty Advisor.
- III. The Faculty Advisor should provide the student with strategies and suggestions for approaching the Supervisor/PI and may offer to attend a meeting between the student and the Supervisor/PI.
- IV. If the matter has not been successfully resolved, the issue should be brought to the Department Chair.
- V. If there has not been successful resolution to the concern, the MCE Dean will be consulted.

JOB SPECIFIC RESOURCES

KATHERINE A. RUFFATTO HALL

Building Hours:

	Student swipe access*
Mon - Fri	6:30 am - 9 pm
Sat	8 am - 9 pm
Sun	10am - 9 pm

**Students can swipe their ID cards to access the building during these times. Ruffatto Hall requires ID swipe access at all times*

Computer Lab Suite 210

Hours: Mon.-Fri. 8 am-9 pm Sat. 8 am-5 pm Sun. Closed

Closed during academic breaks

Hours may change with holidays or staffing schedules. Signs will be posted indicating when there are changes.

TECH SUPPORT FOR MCE

For IT Support Contact **303-871-4700** or submit a ticket at support.du.edu

For Classroom and Event Support, please contact 303-871-3595 or email Classrm-Support@du.edu

COPY CODES AND OFFICE SUPPLIES

All building copiers require a passcode to make photocopies. Please obtain the program or grant specific GTA/GRA copy code from your Supervisor/PI. Copy codes are to be used for job related copies only. Please no personal or school use. All office supplies will be obtained through your Supervisor/PI.

WORK LOCATIONS

Generally, GTAs and GRAs will share the common cubicle workspaces located throughout the second and third floors of Katherine Ruffatto Hall. Some of the departmental workstations are assigned to specific grant funded projects and others are for general departmental usage. Scheduling for these workstations is coordinated by the Supervisors/PIs and Department Chairs. Some administrative GTAs may be working in department offices.