

OUGRADUATECollege



Graduate Assistant Handbook



THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA  
GRADUATE COLLEGE

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## THE GRADUATE COLLEGE EMBLEM & LOGO

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**About the Conception:** The Graduate College logo was designed to reflect the objectives of the Graduate College Staff, Faculty, and Students and is representative of one of the many historic archways around the OU campus.

The Gate's Pillar represents the strength and support provided by the graduate faculty and staff.

The Lamplight on the pillar represents the Beacon that will guide students along their educational journey.

The Arch represents the entrance to knowledge.

The bottom and right sides of the arch-entrance are stylized to represent a **G**. Therefore, the arch as a **G** represents the entrance to Graduate Knowledge.



### GRADUATE GATEWAY EMBLEM BY MS. HADLEY JERMAN

Ms. Jerman graduated from the School of Art at the University of Oklahoma and was an Oklahoma State Regents Scholar and member of OU's Honors College. While pursuing a master's degree in art history, Ms. Jerman was a Robert & Grayce B. Kerr Family Foundation Fellow, an annual award given to a deserving graduate student specializing in art of the American West.



### GRADUATE COLLEGE LOGO BY MS. MIRANDA SOWELL

Ms. Sowell graduated from the School of Art at the University of Oklahoma in 2005 with a B.F.A in Visual Communication. She is now the Visual Communications Design and Student Programs Specialist for the Graduate College.

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## I. WELCOME

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As a graduate assistant, you belong to a unique group within the University of Oklahoma in that you have two basic responsibilities. As a student, you are responsible for fulfilling your own academic goals. As an assistant, you are responsible to the university for carrying out your teaching and/or research obligations. It is the university's intention to provide you with the means to perform your best as both a student and an employee.

This handbook describes the university policies that deal with your role as a graduate assistant. Your academic unit may also have its own policies regarding eligibility, appointment, enrollment, workload, performance review, and reappointment. The requirements of each academic unit are subject to basic university policies. You should consult your graduate liaison for the specific policies of your academic unit.

As a graduate assistant, you play an important role in helping OU meet its goals. We hope that this handbook helps you fulfill that role.

*The provisions herein are current only at the time of publication, and may be changed at any time by appropriate action of the university.*

*Students are cautioned that specific agencies – for example, the Internal Revenue Service, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Payroll Services, and Financial Aid Services – may have different policies, or they may implement the guidelines described here in different ways. Students with specific questions should contact the Graduate College, International Student Services, Payroll Services, Financial Aid Services, and other appropriate offices for complete information.*

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### The University of Oklahoma

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Created by the Oklahoma Territorial Legislature in 1890, the University of Oklahoma is a doctoral degree-granting research university serving the educational, cultural, economic and health care needs of the state, region and nation. The Norman campus serves as home to all of the university's academic programs except health-related fields. Both the Norman and Health Sciences Center colleges offer programs at the Schusterman Center, the site of OU-Tulsa. The OU Health Sciences Center, which is

located in Oklahoma City, is one of the only four comprehensive academic health centers in the nation with seven professional colleges. OU enrolls almost 30,000 students, has more than 2,000 full-time faculty members, and has 20 colleges offering 152 majors at the baccalaureate level, 160 majors at the master's level, 80 majors at the doctoral level, 38 majors at the first professional level, and 18 graduate certificates. The university's annual operating budget is \$1.2 billion. The University of Oklahoma is an equal opportunity institution.

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### Mission

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The mission of the University of Oklahoma is to provide the best possible educational experience for our students through excellence in teaching, research and creative activity, and service to the state and society.

The mission of the Graduate College is to provide leadership and service to enhance the quality of graduate education, research and creative activity.

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## II. GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

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### Definitions

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A *graduate student* is a student who has been admitted to the Graduate College.

A *graduate assistant* is a graduate student appointed to the job title *Graduate Teaching Assistant* or *Graduate Research Assistant*. These are defined according to the emphasis placed on the student employee's teaching or research responsibilities. Appointment and initial stipend are determined on the basis of academic background, prior experience, scholarship, service requirements and general potential.

Throughout this text, graduate teaching assistants and graduate research assistants are referred to as *graduate assistants*.

A *Qualifying Graduate Assistant (QGA)* is a GA who qualifies for a tuition waiver.

## **Graduate Teaching Assistants**

A Graduate Teaching Assistant is a graduate student on stipend whose primary responsibilities support the instructional mission of the university.

Services provided by a teaching assistant may include classroom or laboratory teaching, counseling students, proctoring examinations, grading papers or providing other general assistance in the instruction process.

Graduate teaching assistants may occasionally conduct research as part of their service requirement.

## **Graduate Research Assistants**

A Graduate Research Assistant is a graduate student on stipend whose responsibilities are other than teaching. Graduate Research Assistants do not instruct students.

Services provided by a research assistant may include assisting faculty members in a research or creative activity, serving as an administrative assistant or intern, developing and evaluating instructional materials or curricula, or assuming responsibility for a designated research area.

Research assistants appointed in relation to research or creative activities with external funding may assist faculty members in the completion of contracted research and creative activities; they may be assigned responsibility for the independent completion of parts or all of specific contracts; they may be responsible for preparation of required reports and proposals; and/or they may be responsible for the supervision of other research personnel.

## **Enrollment Requirements**

A student is eligible to hold a graduate assistant (GA) position in any semester if the student is enrolled in that semester.

### **Enrollment Requirements for Fall or Spring GAs:**

A student must be enrolled in a minimum of 5 hours to hold a graduate assistant position in the Fall or Spring.

### **Enrollment Requirements for Summer GAs:**

Enrollment requirements for Summer GAs differ depending on the student's circumstances. Not all Summer GAs need to be enrolled.

A student is eligible to hold a GA position in the Summer if:

- The student is enrolled during the Summer  
*or*
- The student was enrolled during the previous Spring semester  
*or*
- The student is admitted for the coming Fall semester

Although not all Summer GAs need to be enrolled during the Summer, some Summer GAs may need to meet enrollment minimums for other reasons. These include:

- Students wishing to receive financial aid
- International students first attending OU in the Summer and appointed as a GA in the Summer.
- Students in degree programs that require Summer hours
- Students in the last semester of a degree program.

GAs who may be included in one of these groups should check with the appropriate department or university office for the minimum hour requirement.

## **Tuition Waivers**

A Qualifying Graduate Assistant (QGA) is a graduate assistant who qualifies for a tuition waiver. Not all graduate assistants qualify for tuition waivers.

In order to be a QGA, that is, in order to qualify for a tuition waiver in the Fall or Spring semester, a graduate assistant must:

Hold at least a .50 appointment from the first day of class to the last day of final examinations

*and*

Be enrolled in a minimum of 5 hours

### **Fall or Spring Tuition Waivers for Degree Programs starting before Fall 2010**

A QGA in the Fall or Spring semester is eligible for a tuition waiver of up to 7 hours of resident and 9 hours of nonresident tuition per semester.

### **Summer Tuition Waivers for Degree Programs starting before Fall 2010:**

Resident tuition is not waived during the summer unless the student has a qualifying fellowship. Students who have fellowships should contact the Graduate College for complete information.

A nonresident student may qualify for a waiver of up to 4 hours of nonresident tuition if:

The student holds a .50 GA appointment

or

The student was a QGA in the Spring semester. This summer tuition waiver is not dependent upon holding a GA position in the Summer.

### **Fall, Spring, and Summer Tuition Waivers for Degree Programs starting Fall 2010 or later**

In the spring or fall semester, a QGA who began her/his current master's or doctoral degree program in or after the 2010 Fall Semester may be eligible for a waiver of up to the total number of hours remaining toward the degree provided that s/he enrolls in 5 or more credit hours and holds a graduate assistantship total of at least .50 FTE.

A student's eligibility for a waiver in the summer is based on whether s/he held or will hold a qualifying appointment in the preceding spring or following fall semester.

A student's maximum total waiver over the course of a single degree program is the number of hours remaining toward the degree when s/he first receives a tuition waiver. If a student in the final semester of the degree program is only eligible for 1-4 hours, s/he may receive an additional waiver of up to the minimum enrollment required to qualify for a waiver. For complete information about the tuition waiver program for students whose degree programs started Fall 2010 or later, please refer to the Graduate College [Web site](#).

#### **Intersession Tuition Waivers:**

If a QGA does not use all the available tuition waiver amount in a given semester, the remaining amount may be applicable to certain courses in the intersession immediately following the semester. Students should contact the Graduate College for complete information.

#### **Tuition Waivers for Students Appointed to Grants:**

Some grants do not fund tuition waivers. Research assistants appointed to these grants will not be

eligible for tuition waivers. In these cases, the research assistant's stipend may be adjusted by the chair/director or project director to reflect the student's need to pay tuition.

#### **Residency and Tuition Waivers**

Under certain conditions, students may establish state residency after one year on campus. Information on this policy is available from the Office of Admissions and Records, 127 Buchanan Hall.

#### **Financial Aid Requirements**

Graduate Assistantships do not affect enrollment for financial aid purposes. Please see the [Financial Aid website](#) for more information.

## **III. APPOINTMENTS**

Most teaching assistants are funded from the state-allocated education and general budget funds. Most research assistants are funded from funds generated by research or training programs and generally awarded to the University of Oklahoma by institutions or agencies outside the university community (for example, NSF, NIH, DOD, etc.). These distinct funding sources necessitate differences in policy, particularly in regard to eligibility, appointment, performance review and reappointment.

### **GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS**

#### **Appointment**

Teaching appointments are ordinarily made for an academic year, one semester, or the summer term. Academic units should attempt to make these appointments by May 1 for the fall semester and by Dec. 1 for the spring semester.

Because of budgetary and enrollment considerations, some teaching appointments may be made on other dates.

#### **Notification**

Notification of appointment should be in the form of a letter from the academic unit administrator.

The notification should state that the appointment is contingent upon approval by the appropriate budget dean and the provost.

In addition, the notification letter should contain information about:

- the appointment period
- compensation
- expected duties *and*
- the person to whom the graduate assistant is responsible

It may also be appropriate to include information about

- hours of work per week
- enrollment requirements
- tuition waivers
- teaching and research load
- specific duties
- review procedures
- summer employment (if the appointment is an academic year appointment) *and*
- the availability of other financial support

## **English Requirements for Non-Native Speakers**

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Before assuming teaching assistant duties that require contact with students, any graduate student for whom English is not the native language must be certified as proficient in oral, aural and written English.

Certification is obtained from the English Assessment Program, 100 Robertson Hall, (405) 325-1838.

If observation determines that a certified instructor is having serious communication difficulties in the classroom, English language certification may be revoked, which will require that the instructor be removed from the classroom.

Graduate students who wish to improve their English skills may take speaking or writing classes offered by the English Assessment Program.

## **Evaluation**

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Academic units should conduct a periodic review and evaluation of the services rendered by teaching assistants and must communicate—the substance of such reviews to the individuals concerned.

The University Regents require each college to implement a procedure for student evaluation of teaching performance. For teaching assistants, student evaluation forms serve as one of several sources of information in the evaluation process and can provide constructive information for improving performance.

In addition to the required evaluations, graduate assistants are encouraged to develop their own evaluation instruments and administer them periodically.

## **Reappointment**

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Because graduate assistant appointments are term appointments, graduate assistants do not have a right or guarantee of reappointment.

Reappointment is ordinarily based on satisfactory progress in the academic program of study, satisfactory performance as a graduate assistant, other relevant factors determined by the appointing authority, and the availability of continued funding.

By May 1, academic units should try to advise those graduate assistants who apply for reappointment for the next academic year as to the status of their application.

Because graduate assistant appointments are term appointments, graduate assistants may not assume that they will be reappointed merely because no notification of termination at the end of the contract has been received. .

## **GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANTS**

Each project director/principal investigator is responsible for establishing the minimum qualifications for the appointment of graduate research assistants and the criteria by which appointments, reappointments, advancement and evaluation of performance will be made. In some academic units, these responsibilities may be exercised through a formal policy and procedure. In most instances, however, the decisions concerning graduate student employment are made directly by the primary project director.

## **Appointment**

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The starting dates and duration of research appointments may vary according to the availability of funds.

## **Notification**

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Notification of appointment should be in the form of a letter from the principal investigator or academic unit administrator.

The notification should state that the appointment is contingent upon approval by the appropriate budget dean and the provost.

In addition, the notification letter should contain information about:

- the appointment period
- compensation
- expected duties *and*
- the person to whom the graduate assistant is responsible.

It may also be appropriate to include information about

- hours of work per week
- enrollment requirements
- tuition waivers
- research load
- specific duties
- review procedures
- summer employment (if the appointment is an academic year appointment) *and*
- the availability of other financial support.

## **Evaluation**

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Principal investigators are responsible for periodically reviewing and evaluating the services rendered by graduate research assistants and communicating the substance of these reviews to the individuals concerned.

## **Reappointment**

---

Graduate assistant appointments are term appointments; therefore, graduate assistants do not have a right or guarantee of reappointment.

Reappointment is ordinarily based on satisfactory progress in the academic program of study, satisfactory performance as a graduate assistant, other

relevant factors determined by the appointing authority, and the availability of continued funding.

Beyond that, it is necessary to recognize that the faculty project director frequently undertakes a major commitment for completion and submission of specific research or development results. In these instances, the evaluation of a graduate research assistant's performance must be measured against the requirements and expectations of the supporting grant. The project director must consider the effectiveness of the graduate assistant's contribution to the program objectives along with the student's personal academic progress in determining whether to continue, reappoint or terminate a graduate assistant.

Because graduate assistant appointments are term appointments, graduate assistants may not assume that they will be reappointed merely because no notification of termination at the end of the contract has been received.

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## **IV. POLICIES GOVERNING GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS**

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### **Eligibility for Appointments**

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It is the responsibility of the unit employing a graduate assistant to check with the student and with Payroll and Records to determine whether the student is eligible for employment at the university.

### **Limitations on FTE, Workload and Appointments**

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The primary purpose of a graduate assistant appointment is to aid the student in the successful completion of an academic program. For this reason, enrollments and appointments are subject to certain restrictions.

Employment is generally measured as a proportion of *Full Time Equivalent* or FTE status, with 1.0 FTE representing full-time employment or 40 hours per week.

The Graduate College generally limits the FTE of graduate assistantships in order to ensure that students can complete their degrees within appropriate time limits. The standard Qualifying Graduate Assistantship is .50 FTE, which is



equivalent to 20 hours per week. Graduate assistantships totaling .50 FTE or less do not require the permission of the Graduate Dean.

Graduate assistantships totaling .51 to .75 FTE require the permission of the Graduate Dean, who will assure that the appointment does not compromise the student's academic progress. Petitions for appointment totals exceeding .50 FTE should come from the student's academic department and must be approved by the student's adviser or the liaison or chair of the student's home department. Petitions for FTE exceptions should be directed to the Associate Dean of the Graduate College.

Academic units are encouraged to set limitations on the number of semesters a student may hold a graduate assistantship. These limitations should be made available in writing at the time of a student's application, appointment or reappointment.

In general, the Graduate College expects that a graduate assistant will not be appointed for more than the number of semesters required to complete the degree program, assuming six semester hours of enrollment per semester.

## **Notification, Compensation & Taxes**

Graduate assistant stipends above the minimum set by the university are determined by the unique needs of the academic units, the particular responsibilities of the graduate assistants, the availability of funds and the specific priorities of the academic units.

Graduate assistant stipends are generally treated as wages and are, therefore, taxable and subject to federal and state income taxes.

In Fall and Spring, QGAs are exempt from paying FICA taxes. However, GAs must pay FICA taxes if they are enrolled in less than five credit hours during the fall or spring semester, or less than two credit hours during the summer semester. If a GA's enrollment falls below the minimum required in any month, payroll services will automatically change the student's status and withhold FICA taxes. Students should contact the Payroll Office for complete information.

### **Residency**

Under certain conditions, students may establish state residency after one year on campus. Information on this policy is available from the Office of Admissions and Records, 127 Buchanan Hall.

## **Payment Options**

Graduate assistants whose duties conform to a Fall/Spring semester calendar generally may choose the between two monthly distributions of their stipends. They may receive their stipend over nine months with their appointment starting August 16. Or they may choose to have their nine-month stipend spread over a ten-month period with their appointment starting on August 1. The unit employing the graduate student should ascertain the student's preference for a nine or ten-month appointment.

Graduate assistants should check with the appointing unit to determine their payment schedule.

### **Nine-Month Option**

For the nine-month option, the fall semester appointment dates are August 16 through December 31. The spring semester appointment dates are January 1 through May 15.

Academic year appointment salaries are paid as eight full months and two half months (August and May).

Semester salaries are paid as four full months and one half month (August or May).

### **Ten-Month Option**

For the ten-month option, the fall semester appointment dates are August 1 through December 31. The spring appointment dates are January 1 through May 31.

Graduate assistants appointed for the entire academic year are paid in ten equal payments.

Graduate assistants appointed for either the fall or spring semester are paid in five equal payments.

### **Twelve-Month Option**

Graduate assistants whose duties do not necessarily conform to the normal academic semester/year calendars may be appointed on a twelve-month basis with starting and termination dates defining the actual period of employment.

## **Health Insurance**

### **\$50,000 Plan**

The university provides a 100 percent subsidy of the \$50,000 Plan to qualified graduate teaching and graduate research assistants. To qualify, a student must hold a Qualified Graduate Assistantship during the complete period of enrollment under the Plan.

The appointment must be approved and verified by the Graduate College before the subsidy will be processed.

The amount of the subsidy will equal the period of time the student is appointed. A student wanting to enroll for annual coverage whose appointment is only for the fall semester must pay the difference at the time of enrollment, or only enroll for the fall semester.

### **\$1,000,000 Plan**

Students have the option of upgrading to the \$1,000,000 Plan and/or adding dependents to their policy.

The additional cost must be paid at the time of the student's enrollment or through a payroll deduction.

The option of payroll deduction is only available at the beginning of the Plan year during fall open enrollment.

An Appointment Verification form must be signed by both the appointing department, and the student electing the payroll deduction. This form can be obtained from the Student Health Plan Office or the appropriate department.

Payroll deduction is an option only for students appointed annually (August - May). If payroll deduction is chosen, the student will pay annual premiums through the University payroll system in eight equal installments (September - April)

A payroll deduction cannot be cancelled during the Plan year, unless the appointment terminates.

### **Enrollment**

To enroll in the Student Health Plan the student must complete and return an application during the open enrollment period. Applications can be obtained from the Student Health Plan Office or the appointing department.

All graduate assistants are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the terms and limitations of both plans before enrolling. International students and others who are unfamiliar with the American system of health insurance should ask for clarification of the policy terms and limitations and should be sure they understand how to obtain health care under their policy.

For more information, contact the Student Health Plan Office, 222 NEL Building, (405) 325-9196, or visit <http://www.hr.ou.edu/studenthealth/enroll.asp>.

## **Fringe Benefits**

Student employees are considered temporary employees and are not eligible for vacation or other fringe benefits.

## **Participation in Departmental Faculty Meetings and Service on Committees**

The rights of graduate assistants to participate and vote in faculty meetings are subject to limitations specified in the *Faculty Handbook (sec. 2.8.2, Departmental Administration.)*

Policies on graduate assistant participation in department meetings and service on committees are governed by the regulations of individual academic units.

Graduate assistants should be informed of the policies of the academic unit.

## **Absence From Service**

The academic unit may honor, with pay, a reasonable absence for good cause from service responsibilities.

The graduate assistant will notify the academic unit in advance of the absence and, when possible, assist in obtaining a replacement or rearrangement of duties.

Excessive absence, regardless of reason, is cause for termination before the end of the contract.

## **Termination Before End of Contract**

If a graduate assistant's performance is unsatisfactory, the employing unit will inform the graduate assistant.

Except in the case of gross misconduct which warrants immediate suspension in the judgment of the appointing authority, an attempt should be made to help the graduate assistant improve his or her performance before the academic unit begins procedures for termination.

If a graduate assistant is to be terminated prior to the end of the contract period, the academic or research

unit should advise the student in writing of the reasons for the action.

Copies of the notice also should be sent to the dean of the college of the academic unit, the Graduate Dean and the provost.

The reasons for which the termination is requested will normally include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Academic misconduct (as established under the terms of the Academic Misconduct Code)
- Poor academic performance or excessive absences from class
- Misconduct in instructional or research duties
- Unsatisfactory performance in instructional or research duties
- Incapacitation of the graduate assistant for an excessive period of time.

If a graduate student believes that a termination is unwarranted, he or she may file a graduate assistant appeal. However, unless the student has a reasonable expectation of renewal (such as a letter from the appointing authority), non-renewal at the end of the specified term of the appointment may not be appealed.

If a graduate assistant appeal is filed, the graduate assistant will continue in regular duties until the date of the hearing, unless gross misconduct exists, which in the judgment of the appointing authority, warrants immediate suspension.

If a graduate assistant appeal is not filed within the specified period of time, the opportunity for a hearing will be waived and the termination will become effective immediately.

## **Graduate Assistant Appeals**

A graduate assistant may appeal a termination of an assistantship or other employment grievance.

It is recommended that, before filing an appeal, the graduate assistant make an appointment to discuss the matter with the Assistant Dean of the Graduate College.

To initiate the appeal process, the graduate assistant must present a written statement of appeal to the Graduate Dean within 10 working days from the date of the incident causing the grievance. This statement

should describe the action being appealed, the evidence supporting the appeal, and the relief sought.

Decisions made by the Appeals Board will be considered as recommendations to the Provost, who has final responsibility for such employment concerns. The Provost will notify the parties of the final resolution of the dispute.

Any appeal of this decision should be made to the Provost within 10 days.

## **V. GRADUATE ASSISTANT PERFORMANCE & EXPECTATIONS**

### **Graduate Assistant Integrity**

Graduate assistants make a vital contribution to the university at every level. As teaching and research assistants, they carry out the highest levels of intellectual inquiry; as professionals in training, they connect the university to the community and the world. In these roles, graduate assistants represent not only the student body, but the university as whole. Therefore, the university expects graduate assistants to conduct themselves with the highest standards of judgment and behavior in every area.

*As instructors,* graduate assistants adhere to all university policies concerning instruction. They demonstrate respect for students as individuals and adhere to their proper roles as intellectual guides and counselors. They make every reasonable effort to foster honest academic conduct and to ensure that their evaluations of students reflect each student's true performance. They respect the confidential nature of the relationship between instructor and student. They avoid any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students.

Graduate assistants will not receive payment from students for tutoring or help sessions in any course in which they are currently assigned as an instructor, and they will accept the judgment of their department as to other limitations on such activities.

*As researchers,* graduate assistants have a responsibility to ensure the integrity and ethical standards in any research activity in which they are engaged. Graduate assistants will not engage in

research misconduct and will notify a responsible party if they become aware of research misconduct by others.

*As professionals in training*, graduate assistants have a professional obligation to their colleagues and to the university. They show due respect and civility to their associates. They understand that any other employment or enterprise in which they engage for income is secondary to their university duties, and they accept the judgment of their department regarding conflicts of interest, either real or apparent, that may be caused by such outside activities.

## **GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS**

### **Orientation Programs**

The Learning and Teaching Program sponsors an instructional workshop for all teaching assistants during the week before classes begin in the fall semester. The provost and the Deans' Council have mandated this workshop for all teaching assistants who are new to teaching at the university. In addition, there is a mandatory training program for new international teaching assistants held two weeks before fall classes begin. *For more information, contact the Learning and teaching Program in 101 Copeland Hall, 325-2323.*

Requests for waivers from participation in this workshop should be addressed to the Director of the Learning and Teaching Program.

### **Supervision of Graduate Teaching Assistants**

Teaching loads and teaching/research responsibilities should be commensurate with the background and experience of the individual concerned. In addition, new graduate assistants may require a closely supervised apprenticeship program.

Graduate assistant status calls for consultation and guidance from those with more teaching experience and academic preparation. The chair or director of the academic unit should designate one or more persons to supervise all graduate assistants' performances. Supervisory duties include periodic observation of the graduate assistant's teaching and meeting to discuss those observations.

Consultation regarding grading, preparing examinations and other aspects of teaching should occur when necessary. The supervisor also may be called upon to aid graduate assistants in resolving disputes concerning evaluation or misconduct of the graduate assistant's students.

### **Instructional Procedures**

Academic unit policies may differ in regard to the instructional autonomy of teaching assistants. They may range from requiring that teaching assistants follow an outline to allowing the assistants complete control of course content.

### **Limitations on Teaching Assistant Responsibilities**

Graduate assistants cannot be given teaching responsibility for courses in which students are enrolled for graduate credit, including G or †G listed courses.

### **Materials and Work Space**

Each academic unit should make available to each graduate assistant suitable facilities and materials to enable the graduate assistant to carry out his/her teaching responsibilities. Delegation of office space is generally made by the chair/director of the department/school.

### **Course Requirements**

It is expected, as a matter of good teaching practice, that the graduate assistant will provide a general orientation to his/her students. Such an orientation will, in most cases, include the course title and appropriate identifying numbers, information regarding prerequisites, texts, testing, grading, class assignments, academic dishonesty, disability accommodations, and other expectations for the course or laboratory section.

A syllabus containing such information should be published and distributed to students at the beginning of the term.

### **Office Hours**

Graduate assistants should announce and post a schedule of hours when they will be available for student conferences. The office of the academic unit should be notified of these hours.

When possible, special appointments should be available to meet the needs of students whose schedules conflict with posted office hours. Special appointments should be made at alternate locations, if necessary, to accommodate disabled students.

## **Grading**

Responsibility for determining final grades in courses or laboratories taught by graduate assistants usually rests with the assistant.

Exceptions to this policy may be necessary in unusual circumstances.

## **Official Class Lists and Grade Reporting**

Official class lists of students enrolled will be distributed to graduate assistants at the beginning of the term and as the semester progresses in order to reflect changes in enrollment. A final class list designed for reporting grades is distributed at the end of the semester. Accompanying this final list are standard instructions for reporting course grades to the university's Academic Records Office.

## **Makeup Examinations (Other Than Final Due to University-Sponsored Activities)**

The following guidelines have been approved by the Faculty Senate and the UOSA to aid the faculty in determining a policy for make-up examinations (other than final examinations) in cases of absences due to participation in educational extracurricular activities.

Faculty, if given notice two class periods before an examination or quiz (excluding pop quizzes), are encouraged to make every effort to find an accommodation by

- giving a makeup examination, an early examination or a quiz
- changing the examination schedule *or*
- dropping the examination or quiz and increasing the weight of another examination or quiz or other agreed upon approaches acceptable to the instructor and the student.

NOTICE: If the student and the faculty member cannot agree, normal appeal procedures (faculty to director/chair to college dean to senior vice president and provost) are available to the student and can be followed.

## **Academic Misconduct**

If a graduate teaching assistant discovers an incident of alleged academic misconduct in a particular course, the misconduct must be reported in writing to the dean of the college that budgets the course. All notifications must be made within 15 regular class days.

The Academic Misconduct Code in the Student Code contains a detailed description of the policies and procedures for dealing with academic misconduct. The Student Code is available from the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs or on the Web at [http://judicial.ou.edu/images/stories/student\\_code\\_book.pdf](http://judicial.ou.edu/images/stories/student_code_book.pdf)

Further information about academic misconduct is contained in the Student's Guide to Academic Integrity, at [www.ou.edu/provost/integrity](http://www.ou.edu/provost/integrity).

## **Instructional Resources**

### **Learning and Teaching Program**

The Learning and Teaching Program has specialists available to assist with all aspects of teaching. For more information, students can visit the program's Web site or their office in 101 Copeland Hall.

### **Library**

Graduate assistants may put library books on reserve for their students.

### **Secretarial Assistance**

Academic units should consider providing access to departmental copying machines and other assistance for the preparation of work-related materials such as class handouts, study guides, tests, etc.

Graduate assistants should determine the nature and extent of secretarial assistance (if any) by consulting the head of their department or research unit.

### **Computer and Media Services**

Information Technology provides services and assistance to graduate assistants who teach classes listed in the OU Class Schedule.

A variety of computing and networking peripherals are provided by Information Technology to support instructional and research needs. Computer laboratories are located around campus. All graduate students at the University of Oklahoma have access to electronic mail service, digital libraries, high-speed Internet, a central Help Desk, campus software and licensing, and many other benefits.

Services that provide support for graduate teaching assistants include equipment checkout and video, slide, digital and other graphic production. Audio/visual equipment may need to be reserved and must be picked up and returned within a given time period.

For specific information about available equipment, Information Technology can be contacted at 325-HELP (325-4357), or at [needhelp@ou.edu](mailto:needhelp@ou.edu). The IT web site, <https://webapps.ou.edu/it/>, also maintains a listing of the equipment available in individual campus classrooms.

## **GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANTS**

Graduate assistants who have research appointments should consult with the chair or director of the academic unit or the principal investigator of the research project to learn the specific duties and expectations associated with their appointment.

### **Use of Human Subjects in Research**

All research involving human subjects or the use of data generated via human subjects research, which will result in publication or presentation, must be reviewed and approved by the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) prior to subject recruitment and data collection. All human subjects research to be performed by faculty, staff or students of the University of Oklahoma Norman campus, Tulsa campus, or conducted by Cameron University faculty, staff or students must be reviewed by the OU-NC IRB. The primary role of the OU-NC IRB is to determine if the rights and welfare of human subjects who volunteer to participate in research studies are adequately protected and to ensure that adequate informed consent procedures are used. The University of Oklahoma Norman campus policy for the protection of human subjects in research activities and IRB application materials can be accessed at the following: <http://www.ouhsc.edu/irb-norman/>

If you have questions about compliance or the IRB approval process, you may contact the Office of Human Research Participant Protection at (405) 325-8110 or e-mail [irb@ou.edu](mailto:irb@ou.edu).

### **Use of Vertebrate Animals in Research**

All research performed on live vertebrate animals or teaching that uses live vertebrates must be described for review and approval by the University of Oklahoma - Norman Campus, Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (OU-NC IACUC) prior to obtaining animals and data collection. The primary role of the IACUC is to assure compliance with the U.S. Animal Welfare Act and Amendments and to assure that animals receive humane care during procedures in accordance with federal regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare of the Public Health Service (OLAW/PHS).

Information on the OU-NC IACUC can be found on the web site <http://iacuc.ou.edu/>. If you have questions on the IACUC review process, you may contact the Office of Laboratory Animal Resources (405) 325-2609 or visit the web site <http://iacuc.ou.edu>.

### **Patent Policy**

The University of Oklahoma Intellectual Property Policy governs the ownership of certain inventions made by university students, staff, and/or faculty members. The policy provides, in part, that all discoveries and/or inventions, patentable or not patentable, which are made or conceived of while the inventor is a student at the university with substantial use of university facilities not normally made available to students, or are made with funds provided by or through the university (including research funds), are the property of the university. The policy protects and offers substantial benefits to the inventor, while simultaneously protecting the university's interests in the invention. Students and faculty members are expected to be familiar with their rights and obligations under the University Intellectual Property Policy and to promptly report any inventions as outlined in the policy. The policy may be viewed online in section 3.27 of the Faculty Handbook, <http://www.ou.edu/provost/ouncfhhb.pdf>. Please be aware that the University Intellectual Property Policy is subject to revision at any time, and the most current version of the policy will be

available online. Students who make an invention or discovery that is covered under the stated conditions should contact the Intellectual Property Management Office at (405) 325-3800 or via e-mail at [ipmo@ou.edu](mailto:ipmo@ou.edu).

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## VI. UNIVERSITY POLICIES

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### Student Code

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Graduate Assistants are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the University of Oklahoma Student Code. The Student Code includes rules that address the responsibilities and conduct required of Norman Campus students, student groups, organizations, and University-approved or operated living units. The Academic Misconduct Code, sexual harassment policy, and other student-related policies and procedures are also included in the publication. Copies of the Code may be obtained from the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs, Oklahoma Memorial Union, or the University of Oklahoma Student Association, 181 Oklahoma Memorial Union. The Student Code is also available at <http://www.ou.edu/studentcode/OUStudentCode.pdf>.

Integrity in all aspects of scholarship is essential to the University's mission. The Academic Misconduct Code sets forth the rights and responsibilities of all students on the Norman Campus regarding academic integrity, and provides the procedures to be followed in cases of suspected misconduct. Academic misconduct is defined as any act which improperly affects the evaluation of a student's academic performance or achievement. It specifically includes cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, fraud, destruction of property, and bribery or intimidation, as well as assisting others or attempting to engage in such acts. It is the responsibility of each student to be familiar with the definitions, policies and procedures concerning academic misconduct; unfamiliarity with the code alters none of a student's rights or responsibilities there under. The Academic Misconduct Code is printed with the Student Code and is also available at <http://www.ou.edu/provost/integrity/>.

### Student Grievance Policy

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The University has a policy of internal adjudication of student grievances. Specific procedures for many grievances, such as academic appeals and allegations

of discrimination, are set forth in The Student Code of Responsibilities and Conduct for the Norman Campus at <http://www.ou.edu/studentcode/OUStudentCode.pdf>. In cases where University policy designates no specific procedure, grievances regarding academic matters, financial aid, educational records, or payment of tuition and fees should be addressed to the Senior Vice President and Provost; grievances regarding other aspects of student life should be addressed to the Vice President for Student Affairs.

### Sexual Harassment/ Sexual Assault Policy

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The University of Oklahoma explicitly condemns sexual harassment of students, staff and faculty. Sexual Harassment is unlawful and may subject those who engage in it to University sanctions as well as civil and criminal penalties. Since some members of the university community hold positions of authority that may involve the legitimate exercise of power over others, it is their responsibility to be sensitive to that power. The University is committed to providing an environment of study and work free from sexual harassment and to insuring the accessibility of appropriate grievance procedures for addressing all complaints regarding sexual harassment. For more information, contact the University Equal Opportunity Office, 102 Evans Hall, (405) 325-3546; <http://www.ouhsc.edu/eoaa/PoliciesandProcedures.asp>

### Consensual Sexual Relationship Policy

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Professionalism in faculty-student relationships promotes the university's education mission. Professionalism is fostered in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Actions of faculty members and students that harm this atmosphere undermine professionalism and hinder fulfillment of the university's educational mission. Trust and respect are diminished when those in positions of authority abuse, or appear to abuse, their power. Those who abuse, or appear to abuse, their power in such a context violate their duty to the university community.

Amorous relationships between faculty members and students are wrong when the faculty member has professional responsibility for the student. Voluntary consent by the student in such a relationship is suspect, given the fundamentally asymmetric nature of the relationship. Moreover, other students and faculty may be affected by such unprofessional behavior because it places the faculty member in a

position to favor or advance one student's interest at the expense of others, and implicitly makes obtaining benefits contingent on amorous or sexual favors.

Therefore, the university will view it as unethical if faculty members engage in amorous relations with a student enrolled in their classes or subject to their supervision, even when both parties appear to have consented to the relationship.

As used in this policy, the terms "faculty" and "faculty member" mean all those who teach at the university and include graduate students with teaching responsibilities and other instructional personnel.

Within the instruction context, it is considered a serious breach of professional ethics for a member of the faculty to initiate or acquiesce in a sexual relationship with a student who is enrolled in a course being taught by the faculty member or whose academic work (including work as a teaching assistant) is being supervised by the faculty member.

Sexual relationships between faculty members and students occurring outside the instruction context may also lead to difficulties.

To request information or proceed with a grievance concerning consensual sexual relationships, contact the Office of Equal Opportunity, 102 Evans Hall, or by telephone at (405) 325-3546. Complaints alleging a violation of the Consensual Sexual Relationships Policy shall be adjudicated in accordance with the grievance procedures established for complaints in the university's Sexual Harassment Policy.

## **Discrimination Policy**

The university has a policy of internal adjudication in matters relating to alleged discrimination.

Any faculty member, staff member or student, including those on temporary or part-time status, who believes that he or she has been discriminated against because of race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, or disability should contact the Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Office, 102 Evans Hall, or by telephone at (405) 325-3546.

Any person who believes that he or she has been subjected to discrimination in either a work or academic environment should contact the Office of Equal Opportunity, 102 Evans Hall, or by telephone at (405) 325-3546.

## **Racial and Ethnic Harassment Policy**

Agents or employees of the university, acting within the scope of their official duties, shall not treat an individual differently on the basis of race, color or national origin in the context of an employment or educational program or activity without a legitimate nondiscriminatory reason, so as to interfere with or limit the ability of the individual to participate in or benefit from the services, activities or privileges provided by the university. The university shall not subject an individual to different treatment on the basis of race by effectively causing, encouraging, accepting, tolerating or failing to correct a racially hostile environment of which it has notice.

Any person who believes that he or she has been subjected to racial or ethnic harassment in either a work or academic environment should contact the Office of Equal Opportunity, 102 Evans Hall, or by telephone at (405) 325-3546.

## **Student Appeals Concerning English Proficiency of Instructors**

*The following policy in no way abridges the right of a student under Title 14 of the Student Code to appeal unresolved disputes to the appropriate academic appeals board.*

It is the policy of the University of Oklahoma that all who provide instruction at the university shall be proficient in written and spoken English so that they may adequately instruct students. OU has established procedures to ensure that faculty members have proficiency in written and spoken English.

In addition, a student who believes that an instructor is not sufficiently proficient in written, aural or spoken English may file a written formal complaint with the senior vice president and provost. The identity of the complainant(s) shall remain confidential. Anonymous complaints will not be accepted.

The Senior Vice President and Provost shall notify the instructor, the chair or director of the academic unit in which the instructor is employed, and the dean of the Graduate College that a complaint has been received. The identity of the complainant(s) shall remain confidential. If, after consulting with the college and department, the senior vice president and provost determine that a formal inquiry is necessary, he/she shall appoint an independent evaluator to evaluate the English proficiency of the instructor. The



evaluator may visit the class of the instructor named in the complaint, interview the instructor, interview students, or engage in such other activities as necessary to evaluate the instructor in a fair manner. The evaluator shall provide the senior vice president and provost with a written report of his/her findings as to the English proficiency of the instructor and make recommendations of actions that should be taken.

The Senior Vice President and Provost shall notify the complainant(s), the instructor, the chair or director of the academic unit, and the dean of his/her findings as to the validity of the complaint. In the event that the instructor is found not to be sufficiently proficient in English, the senior vice president and provost shall specify actions to be taken by the instructor and/or the academic unit. Such actions may include but are not limited to: (1) reassignment of the instructor to other duties; (2) re-evaluation of the instructor for purposes of hiring, tenure, promotion, salary, or other personnel decisions; (3) appropriate remedial measures to assist the instructor in improving his/her English proficiency; and (4) appropriate remedies for the affected students.

## **Reasonable Accommodation Policy Statement**

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The University of Oklahoma will reasonably accommodate otherwise qualified individuals with a disability unless such accommodation would pose an undue hardship or would result in a fundamental alteration to the nature of the service, program or activity or cause undue financial or administrative burdens. The term "reasonable accommodation" is used in its general sense in this policy to apply to employees, students and visitors.

Requests for reasonable accommodation should be addressed to the Disability Resource Center, Goddard Health Center (south entrance), Room 166, voice 325-3852, or TDD, 325-4173.

The Center accepts requests from students for reasonable accommodation after the student has self-identified as an individual with a disability.

Once the student has provided the Disability Resource Center with appropriate diagnostic information that substantiates the disability, the office will assess the impact of the disability on the student's academic program and record the required academic accommodations in a memo to the instructor. All diagnostic information is confidential and, therefore, memos can only be sent at the student's request.

Not every student with a disability requires consideration beyond that which may be granted to any other student in the class.

For those who do require special consideration, departments need to recognize that both sensitivity and responsiveness to the special needs of the student are critical.

The Disability Resource Center has strongly suggested that the following statement be included in the class syllabus and announced during the first day of classes:

*"Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunities."*

This statement gives the student full responsibility for contacting the instructor to request assistance in arranging academic accommodations.

It also indicates that the instructor is willing to provide the assistance required to meet that student's educational goals.

Any students who respond to this type of announcement should be referred to the Disability Resource Center to make a formal request for accommodation.

Questions about reasonable accommodation should be addressed to the Disability Resource Center, Goddard Health Center, 620 Elm Avenue, Suite 166, (405) 325-3852, TDD (405) 325-4173, FAX (405) 325-4491, or [ods@ou.edu](mailto:ods@ou.edu)

Individuals who have complaints alleging discrimination based upon a disability may file them with the University's Equal Opportunity Officer in accordance with prevailing discrimination grievance procedures of the University.

## **Equal Opportunity Statement**

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This University in compliance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, genetic information, age, religion, disability, political beliefs, or status as a veteran in any of its policies, practices, or procedures.

This includes but is not limited to admissions, employment, financial aid, and educational services.

Individuals are assured protection from harassment, retaliation and discrimination for filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation under all relevant equal opportunity policies and procedures. Complaints of discrimination may be filed with the Office of Equal Opportunity.

All lawfully required documents, including the university's Affirmative Action Plans, are available for inspection in the Office of Equal Opportunity between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. on any working day.

The contact person in that office is the affirmative action officer or a designated staff member.

The Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Office on the Norman campus is located in 102 Evans Hall, Norman, Okla. The office may be reached by telephone at (405) 325-3546.

### **President's Statement of Commitment to Affirmative Action**

The University of Oklahoma, recognizing its obligation to guarantee equal opportunity to all persons in all segments of University life, reaffirms its commitment to the continuation and expansion of positive programs which reinforce and strengthen its affirmative action policies. This commitment stems not only from compliance with federal and state equal opportunity laws but from a desire to ensure social justice and promote campus diversity. The University will continue its policy of fair and equal employment practices for all employees and job applicants without insidious discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, genetic information, age, religion, political affiliation, disability or status as a veteran. The University will maintain a critical and continuing evaluation of its employment policies, programs and practices. Each budget unit bears a responsibility for constructive implementation of this Plan, and whenever possible, to the overall progress toward employment opportunity and participation in all University programs and activities. Our commitment to the concept of affirmative action requires sincere and cooperative efforts throughout all levels of our employment structure. We will continue to strive to reach the goals of fair and equal employment opportunities for all.

## **VII. STUDENT SERVICES**

Graduate assistants may wish to contact these services for their personal benefit. Graduate teaching assistants may wish to refer their students to these services.

### **Financial Aid Programs**

The Office of Financial Aid Services administers financial aid programs and some scholarships at the University of Oklahoma to assist qualified students with financing their education. The Office is located at 1000 Asp Ave., Buchanan Hall, at (405) 325-4521. For more information, visit <http://www.finaid.ou.edu/>.

### **Counseling and Testing**

Counseling and Testing Services offers both personal and group counseling and administers and interprets career interest inventories. The center is located in Goddard Health Center, Room 201, (405) 325-2700.

### **Student Support Services**

The Center for Student Life is dedicated to all students and their achievement of educational goals and enhancement of the quality and involvement in campus life. The office is located in the Oklahoma Memorial Union, Room 370, (405) 325-3163.

### **Veterans Benefits and Support Services**

For information on veterans' programs at OU, VA work-study, tutorial or other support services, contact Veteran Student Services, 234 Buchanan Hall, (405) 325-4308.

### **Health Services**

Goddard Health Center provides outpatient primary care to students and their dependents and promotes health and wellness for the University of Oklahoma community. Goddard Health Center is located at 620 Elm Avenue, at (405) 325-4611.

The health fee paid each semester allows students to receive care at discounted rates at Goddard. Some of

the services offered are office visits, laboratory tests, X-rays, physical therapy, allergy injections and a pharmacy.

OU Health Services provides current and reliable information for faculty, staff and students. Programs and activities include nutrition counseling, fitness assessments, body composition analysis, support groups, vision and hearing screenings, smoking cessation, stress management, and a resource library. For more information call the Health Education and Wellness Center at (405) 325-4611, Ext. 41777.

## **Disability Resource Center**

The Disability Resource Center, located in Goddard Health Center, Room 166, provides help in both architectural and programmatic accessibility to students with disabilities. Services include, but are not limited to, priority enrollment academic assistance, adaptive equipment, interpreters, readers and library assistance. To contact the Office of Disability Services, call (405) 325-3852 (voice) or (405) 325-4173 (TDD).

There is a chapter of the Association of Disabled Students (ADS), which sponsors social events and acts as a support group, at OU. For more information, visit <http://www.ou.edu/student/ads>.

## **International Student Services**

p.m. in 255 Adams Hall before the full Senate meeting.

The GSS offers conference fees and research grants to graduate students, helps allocate funds to all student organizations, and acts on issues that affect graduate education. Each year, GSS raises money for its grant endowment fund.

The Graduate Student Senate approves funding for nearly 100 graduate student organizations. Many of the graduate departments and schools have university-recognized organizations for graduate students. Examples include the Zoology Association of Graduate Students, History of Science Club and the Graduate Music Student Association.

Graduate students from underrepresented groups are also active in such campus-wide organizations as the Black Student Association, Asian American Student Association, Indian American Student Association and Hispanic American Student Association.

The University of Oklahoma International Student Services (OU ISS) office has been providing services to international students for over fifty years. OU ISS assists more than 2,000 international students and their dependents from over 100 countries, providing expert advice and support to every international student. OU ISS works with international students, OU faculty and staff, community members, U.S. federal officials and a variety of government agencies.

OU ISS is located in B.C. Wallace Old Science Hall, Room 224, at: (405) 325-3337. For more information, visit <http://www.ou.edu/iss/home.html>.

## **VIII. STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**

OU students are represented by a bicameral student government with an Undergraduate Congress and a Graduate Student Senate.

The student government has complete control of its \$2.5 million student activity fee budget.

The Graduate Student Senate (GSS) was established in 1987 to bring the graduate student voice to the administration. The senate is composed of two senators from each department. GSS meets every other Sunday at 7 p.m. in 255 Adams Hall during the fall and spring semesters. Committees meet at 6:30

## **IX. USEFUL PUBLICATIONS AND WEB SITES**

### **The University of Oklahoma Graduate College Website**

Available at <http://gradweb.ou.edu>

### **The University of Oklahoma Graduate College Bulletin**

Available from the *Graduate College Office*, 100 Robertson Hall and at

<http://gradweb.ou.edu/Current/gcBulletin/>

### **The University of Oklahoma Student Code**

Available from the *Office of Student Affairs*, Oklahoma Memorial Union, Room 265 and at

<http://judicial.ou.edu/content/view/27/32/> .

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**Scholarships and Financial Aid**

Information available from the *Office of Financial Aid*,  
Oklahoma Memorial Union, Room 265 and at  
<http://www.finaid.ou.edu/>

**Norman Visitors Guide**

Available from the *Norman Chamber of Commerce*, 115  
E. Gray, Norman, OK 73069, (405) 321-7260 and at  
<http://www.normanchamber.com/visitor/index.asp>