

# ASSISTANTSHIP GUIDELINES

## These guidelines apply to UNMC COPH professional degree students serving in assistantship positions.

*This policy applies to MPH, MHA & DrPH students only. MS & PhD students reference the Graduate Studies Catalog.*

COPH professional degree students serving in assistantship positions are engaged in academic programs where their primary role is that of a full-time professional degree student. All COPH professional degree students in these positions are required to maintain full-time status (9 credit hours in Fall and Spring semesters; 3 credit hours in a summer session).# In addition, students are not to hold other regular employment without the permission of the COPH Academic Dean.

Appointments are traditionally assigned an FTE of 0.33-0.49 with a stipend commensurate with the FTE assigned. These appointments are considered as “exempt” from the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) due to the understanding that the **positions are held by students and their education and training are their primary responsibilities**. The exempt status has several implications, including no expectation of timecards and no overtime pay. In addition, students serving in Assistantships do not receive traditional benefits (retirement contribution, health insurance, vacation accrual, etc.). **Nonetheless, in keeping with their emerging professional role, the University has established some expectations and benefits that apply to both the student and the program.**

1. COPH degree students are expected to devote an appropriate level of professional effort to work and study. The total time spent in their assistantship position at UNMC and in their enrolled curriculum will comprise full-time effort. [Note: The work of a professional in the sciences has noticeable variability in intensity. In all successful cases, the “work necessary to get the job done” describes how much time and effort is dedicated to a given project at a given time but are usually balanced by periods of less intense effort].
2. COPH degree students supported by a traditional 0.33-0.49 FTE stipend should average 13 (.33 FTE) to 20 (.49 FTE) hours of effort per week on their assigned projects.
3. COPH degree students will not be expected to work on traditional university holidays unless required by the unique schedule of a research project. (UNMC holidays: New Year’s Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, the day after Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day)
4. COPH degree students are allowed 14 days (regular workdays, M-F) of personal vacation in each calendar year. Students desiring longer break periods should expect to use the allowance accumulated over more than one year, as well as receive appropriate approval from their position supervisor.
5. COPH degree students requesting maternity/paternity leave (including for adoption) are required to get appropriate approval from the Student Affairs Dean. Maternity/paternity leave and other forms of personal leave may require the suspension of the stipend and must be discussed with supervisor before meeting with the Student Affairs Dean. A reasonable expectation for maternity/paternity leave, would be to arrange 8 weeks of extended leave. While stipend may be suspended, supervisors are strongly encouraged to continue stipend support during this period. Pregnant and parenting students have a variety of options and are encouraged to explore their options for accommodations or supports available under Title IX.
6. All students, faculty and staff are expected to adhere to the UNMC Code of Conduct as detailed in the UNMC Catalog. The Code

reflects the professional ethical conduct that should be shown in all relationships and fosters development and maintenance of a supportive climate emphasizing respect and dignity. The Code also points to the special role that teachers, mentors and supervisors play in demonstrating or modeling professional ethical behavior. Finally, it makes it clear that laws and regulations often complement or even comprise elements of the Code.# If any member of the UNMC community has concerns about adherence to the Code of Conduct, they may contact the Human Resources Department, the Chief Student Affairs Officer, the Compliance Officer, the UNMC Ombudsman’s office, or the UNMC Compliance Hot Line at 1-866-568-5430. Reports to the Compliance Hotline may be made anonymously.