Graduate Appointee Training Program

2020–21 Research Application Handbook

Prepared and presented by:
Graduate College
120W Walwood Hall
(269) 387-8212
wmich.edu/grad
WMU Mission and Vision

Mission
Western Michigan University is a learner-centered research university, building intellectual inquiry and discovery into undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs in a way that fosters knowledge and innovation, and transforms wisdom into action. As a public university, WMU provides leadership in teaching, research, learning, and service, and is committed to enhancing the future of our global citizenry.

Vision
Nationally and internationally recognized, the University aspires to distinguish itself as learner centered, discovery driven, and globally engaged.

Learner centered
Western Michigan University is a university where every member of our community is responsive to and responsible for the education of our students. We challenge and engage all members of our community with a university experience that creates skilled, life-long learners.

Discovery driven
Western Michigan University offers experiences that enable discovery, and promote creativity and research. We are committed to pursuing inquiry, disseminating knowledge, and fostering critical thinking that encourage life-long learning. Our scholarship creates new knowledge, forms a basis for innovative solutions, leads to economic development, and makes substantial contributions to society.

Globally engaged
Western Michigan University impacts the globe positively. We are a community of learners committed to human dignity, sustainability, social responsibility, and justice. Our campus embraces a diverse population of students, faculty, and staff who develop learners and leaders who are locally oriented and globally competent, culturally aware, and ready to contribute to world knowledge and discovery.

The synergy of these three pillars enables WMU to be a premier and distinctive university of choice. Western Michigan University offers all students a learning community designed for and dedicated to their success. We are committed to access and affordability, and sustaining an environment in which every student can meet the world head-on and triumph.

University Organization
Western Michigan University is led by its President, who reports to the Board of Trustees. The University consists of the following vice presidential units, each of which is headed by a Vice President:

- Academic Affairs
- Business and Finance
- Development and Alumni Relations
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Government Affairs and University Relations
- Legal Affairs and General Counsel
- Research
- Student Affairs
The Academic Affairs area, headed by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, is further divided into a variety of colleges, departments, schools, institutes, centers, and other units. Colleges are headed by a dean and all degree-granting academic programs are housed in colleges. Western Michigan University has the following colleges:

- Arts and Sciences
- Aviation (undergraduate only)
- Business (Haworth College of)
- Education and Human Development
- Engineering and Applied Sciences
- Fine Arts
- Graduate College
- Health and Human Services
- Lee Honors College (undergraduate only)

The Graduate College
The Graduate College at Western Michigan University (wmich.edu/grad) provides an array of resources and services to assist graduate students and departments that house graduate programs. Headed by a dean and staffed by professional staff members, the Graduate College provides services such as the following:

- Serves as advocate for graduate education and programs across the University and seeks to sustain a high quality of programs. In this role, the Graduate College interacts with other academic colleges, the Graduate Studies Council of the Faculty Senate, Academic Affairs, and offices such as Admissions, Financial Aid, and the Registrar’s office.
- Manages and oversees University policies and procedures related to graduate education and assists departments with consistent implementation of policies and procedures.
- Interacts with other graduate institutions through the Council of Graduate Schools and other organizations to share information and stay current with trends and issues in graduation education.
- Oversees the appointment process for graduate faculty members.
- Oversees and monitors graduate student appointments across the University for student eligibility and department compliance with minimum standards.
- Offers financial assistance to graduate students in the form of grants for research and conference travel expenses as well as some fellowships for graduate study.
- Assists students with thesis/dissertation writing and proposal development.
- Assists departments with recruitment of graduate students.
- Publicizes the scheduling of doctoral dissertation defenses, reviews format of all doctoral dissertations and master’s theses, and holds workshops for formatting of dissertations and theses.
- Schedules and carries out numerous events for graduate students, including new graduate appointee training, graduate student resource fair, annual graduate awards convocation, many workshops of interest to graduate students, etc.
- Provides a home for the Graduate Student Association and works with GSA to address graduate student concerns and develop opportunities for graduate students to get involved.
WMU Online Orientation for Graduate Students
The Graduate College offers an online graduate student orientation course in e-learning. This serves as a resource for information about Western Michigan University and the surrounding community.

This course is not intended to replace traditional in-person orientation programs offered by graduate programs but serves as a way to enhance your experience at WMU. It is our intention to make sure that all incoming students have the opportunity to learn about WMU and the many programs and services available. You will have access to this course as long as you are a student. To access the course, follow these steps:

- Log into GoWMU and click the Elearning tab.
- Find the course “Graduate Student Online Orientation”

Graduate Appointment Eligibility Requirements

Eligibility Requirements: To be eligible to hold any type of graduate appointment (e.g., assistantship, associateship, fellowship), students must have regular admission status in a graduate degree program, remain in good academic standing (3.0 GPA or higher), and meet the enrollment requirement for the term of appointment (see below). Appointments that do not meet these requirements will be cancelled by the Graduate College.

Form I-9: Every student on graduate appointment must complete Form I-9 during the initial academic term of employment through Human Resources to prove eligibility to work in the United States. Begin the process by going online to wmich.edu/hr/formi9 to complete the Employee Verification and Information Section; this must be done on or before your first day on appointment (your hiring department must enter your appointment in the online appointment system before you will be able to do this). No later than the third day of your appointment you must present your original, unexpired documents to the HR office in the Seibert Administration Building for verification.

Enrollment Requirement for Appointees: The minimum enrollment requirement each semester is six (6) graduate credit hours for an assistantship or associateship. In a summer session, three (3) graduate credit hours are required regardless of type of appointment. The enrollment requirement is not prorated for students on less than full-time appointment. Under no circumstances will a student be allowed to hold a graduate appointment when not enrolled during the term of appointment.

Individual departments as well as some scholarship or other special appointments may require an enrollment of more than the minimum number of credit hours and/or additional hours over the Summer I and Summer II sessions. Appointees must be registered in semesters and sessions during which they receive financial support.

All requests for Under-Enrollment, Extended University Programs courses (off-campus or online), and undergraduate courses taken by a graduate appointee must be approved by the Graduate College. The permission forms are located on the Graduate College website wmich.edu/grad/forms and should be submitted no later than the first day of class so that it can be reviewed before the close of drops and adds.
Graduate Appointee Benefits and Privileges

Parking: Graduate appointees are exempt from paying the campus motor vehicle registration fee but must register their vehicle with Parking Services and present their letter of appointment to receive a parking permit. Appointees with a teaching classification shall have the option of a graduate hang tag (good for the entire academic year) or temporary sticker parking permit. Appointees with research or non-teaching classifications shall be given a temporary sticker parking permit, and do not have the option of a hang tag. The temporary sticker parking permit is valid for one academic term at a time only. A new temporary sticker parking permit must be obtained from Parking Services each academic term on appointment, if needed.

Paychecks: The University pays employees on a bi-weekly basis on alternate Tuesdays. Graduate appointees generally receive 9 paychecks in Fall and Spring semesters and 4 or 5 in Summer I and Summer II sessions. The pay schedule for graduate appointees is posted online at wmich.edu/payroll/payroll/pay-schedule.

Please note that Graduate Appointees without an academic year appointment are not issued a check on the first pay date of the year due to the gap between semesters.

Because the University does not issue paper paychecks, graduate appointees must set up direct deposit through the Payroll Office. Direct deposit remains in effect until the Payroll Office is advised otherwise (if you change banks, be sure to change your direct deposit information). Graduate appointees who do not set up direct deposit will automatically be enrolled in the Visa® payroll card program. Instructions for setting up direct deposit are available at: wmich.edu/payroll/payroll/mypay/direct-deposit.

It is the appointee’s responsibility to report any errors in compensation (including lack of payment) to the hiring department. In the event of an underpayment, a correction will be made to provide the appointee with the amount due. In the event of an overpayment, the appointee’s University account will be debited in the amount of the overpayment or a payroll adjustment will be made.

Taxes: Graduate appointees pay regular payroll taxes (federal and state income taxes) on their salary based on tax filing status and number of exemptions. Unless you file a W-4 form with the Payroll office to claim otherwise, all new employees are automatically considered single filers with zero exemptions (see wmich.edu/payroll/payroll/mypay/tax-information).

Graduate appointees do not pay FICA taxes (Social Security and Medicare) unless they are enrolled less than half-time (i.e., fewer than 3 credit hours in Fall or Spring or fewer than 2 credit hours in a summer session) or unless they have an additional instructional or staff position at the University (including part-time or temporary). In the latter case, both you and the department that has hired you as a graduate appointee will be assessed FICA charges, so you must inform that department immediately prior to accepting additional employment at WMU while a graduate appointee. University requirements regarding payment of FICA taxes are here: wmich.edu/payroll/fica-0.

International students need to advise the Payroll Office of their visa status in order to be exempt from paying FICA taxes (Social Security and Medicare). This exemption is not automatic. For more
information, visit wmich.edu/payroll/payroll/mypay/international-employees, where there is a form for international students to claim the FICA exemption.

**Tuition Award:** Graduate appointees are granted a full or partial tuition award (for Fall and Spring, up to 9 hours, and up to 3 hours in Summer I or II). Tuition amounts to be awarded will be specified in the appointment letter and will appear on the student’s WMU account as a tuition award. Students who are granted a tuition award and subsequently withdraw from a class after the refund period and/or resign from the appointment will be required to repay the tuition that was granted as a benefit of the appointment.

Students on partial appointment may receive a tuition award that does not cover full-time enrollment. Full-time enrollment is still required and the student must pay the difference in tuition, unless a request for under enrollment has been approved.

Unused tuition award amounts cannot be carried over to a subsequent term.

Tuition awards will be credited directly to an appointee’s student account. Any overpayment or underpayment due to a change in enrollment will be corrected after the end of the drop/add period through an adjustment to the appointee’s student account.

Tuition award amounts are based on resident or non-resident on-campus rates and will not automatically pay toward undergraduate, online, or Extended University Programs courses (even graduate courses) unless students have secured prior approval for such enrollments from the Graduate College. Students may be responsible for paying what is not covered by the tuition award for these types of courses; for example, rates for EUP (off-campus and online) courses are higher than resident rates for main campus courses and students receiving a resident tuition award will owe additional money for such courses.

**Residency Status:** Beginning with the summer II session in 2020, graduate students who are admitted and enrolled for the first time at WMU will retain the residency status that was determined at the time of their admission to the University. This change aligns the graduate student residency procedure and the undergraduate procedure.

**Tuition and Fees Payment Deferment:** Appointees may defer payment of tuition or fees by signing up for the installment payment plan available through Accounts Receivable. For more information, see wmich.edu/accounts-receivable/payments/university-payment-plan. The $35 fee for this service will be required at the time of enrollment but the fee will be refunded to student accounts upon verification of the graduate appointment. Delinquent accounts are subject to monthly service charges of 1.5% and all University collection procedures, including referral to an external collection agency. All tuition and fees must be paid or arrangements for payment made prior to registration for the next semester/session.

**Please note:** Most appointments do not pay student fees. For a summary of fees, please see here: wmich.edu/registrar/tuition. It is the student’s responsibility to pay these fees by the due date in order to avoid assessment of service charges, collection attempts, or registration holds placed on the student’s account.
**Campus Bookstore:** Graduate appointees will receive a discount on books for their classes and supplies (excluding class rings and sale items) in the term(s) they hold an appointment. To receive this discount, appointees must identify their status as graduate appointees at the service desk before purchases are made.

**Library:** The borrowing period for graduate appointees is one semester. Graduate appointees will be accorded the same privileges and responsibilities as faculty members in the use of library facilities.

**Facilities:** Graduate appointees will be accorded the use of University facilities (e.g., offices, research facilities, etc.) authorized by the director of the facilities on the same basis as faculty. This does not apply to the West Hills Athletic Club.

**Policies That Affect Graduate Appointees as Employees**

Graduate appointees, as University employees, are subject to many of the same workplace policies as other employees. The online *Employee Handbook* and Teaching Assistants Union Agreement govern employee policies. References to each are given where appropriate, and graduate appointees should refer to these for the most current information.

For the full *Employee Handbook*, see: [wmich.edu/hr/policies/handbook](http://wmich.edu/hr/policies/handbook)
For the current TAU contract, see: [wmich.edu/academic-labor-relations/agreements](http://wmich.edu/academic-labor-relations/agreements)

**Absences:** Graduate appointees are expected to carry out their assigned duties during the academic term(s) of appointment at the times agreed upon with their supervisor. As specified in the letter of appointment, appointees are generally required to work a certain number of hours per term, or, if teaching, fulfill certain responsibilities for the assigned class(es). Article 12 of the TAU Agreement provides information regarding leave time [wmich.edu/academic-labor-relations/agreements](http://wmich.edu/academic-labor-relations/agreements).

- **Illness/Medical absences:** Notify your supervisor as soon as possible if you are unable to meet employment obligations due to illness, or in advance whenever possible for planned medical appointments that must be scheduled during your regular work hours. Article 12(1) of the current TAU contract guarantees up to 5 days of medical leave.
- **Jury Duty/Court Testimony:** Notify your supervisor as soon as possible if you are unable to meet employment obligations due to a jury duty summons or court testimony subpoena. See Article 12(2) of the current TAU contract.
- **Bereavement:** Notify your supervisor as soon as possible if you are unable to meet employment obligations. Article 12(4) of the current TAU contract grants up to 5 days of bereavement leave.

**Holidays and Closures:** The University holiday schedule includes the following holidays when the University is closed: New Year's Day; Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (third Monday in January); Memorial Day (late May); Independence Day (July 4); Labor Day (early September); Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday (late November); and Christmas Day. Spirit Day (the Friday before the beginning of Spring recess) is an academic holiday and no classes are held, but the University is open regular hours. In addition, there is a winter closure period between Christmas and New Year's Day when the University is officially closed.
If the University will be closed due to severe weather or emergency, this information will be posted prominently on the University home page (wmich.edu) and will also be available on the WMU Hotline at (269) 387-1001, as well as being reported to local media.

**University Timesheets:** Some University departments will require their graduate appointees—particularly research application and research discovery assistants—to complete a timesheet each pay period (every two weeks). Hours worked, as well as any absences, should be reported on the timesheet.

**Work-Related Accident or Injury:** If you experience a job-related or on-duty accident or injury, the procedures noted at wmich.edu/hr/handbook-safety should be followed. Work-related illnesses or safety hazards should also be reported to your supervisor.

**Worker's Compensation:** The Workers’ Compensation program is administered by Human Resources. See wmich.edu/hr/handbook-safety for more information.

**Re-appointment:** An appointee’s letter of appointment specifies the length of the student’s appointment, which may be for one academic term only or for up to a full academic year at a time. Departments are encouraged to inform current appointees about subsequent appointments in a timely fashion, but re-appointment to the same or a similar position is never guaranteed, regardless of the appointee’s performance in the position.

**Resignation or Termination:** Should a graduate appointment be terminated or the appointee find it necessary to resign while an academic term is in progress, the appointee could be responsible for paying some portion or possibly all of the tuition award paid on the student’s behalf, depending on the circumstances, including whether or not the student must withdraw from classes.

**Simultaneous Additional Employment (inside):** Graduate appointees are expected to balance their appointment duties with their academic work and any additional interests, including other employment. While other employment in addition to a graduate appointment is not prohibited (although the number of hours of weekly work is restricted to 25 while on appointment), in general any such employment greater than 5 hours per week can have an adverse effect on the appointee’s ability to carry out the appointment responsibilities and devote enough time to academic work. If outside responsibilities interfere with an appointee’s ability to effectively carry out the appointment responsibilities or to make adequate academic progress, the appointment could be terminated for poor performance or the appointee not re-appointed.

**Tobacco-Free Campus Policy:** Effective September 1, 2014, the use of tobacco products is only permitted in enclosed personal vehicles. The use of tobacco products is not permitted indoors or outdoors on any University property. Tobacco products are defined to include the following: cigarettes, electronic-cigarettes, cigars, bidis, snuff, snus, water pipes, pipes, hookahs, chew and any other non-combustible tobacco products. The full policy is provided at wmich.edu/tobaccofree.

**Drug-free Workplace:** The Drug-free Workplace policy, given at wmich.edu/hr/handbook-conduct covers restrictions on controlled substances on University property. The term “controlled substance” refers to all illegal drugs and to legal drugs used without a physician’s order. It does not prohibit taking prescription medication under the direction of a physician.
**Sexual Harassment Policy:** Sexual harassment complaints are handled by the Office of Institutional Equity. Sexual harassment will not be tolerated behavior at Western Michigan University. It is expected that each member of the University community will consider him/herself responsible for the proper observance of this policy.

See the sexual misconduct policy statement at [wmich.edu/equity/sexualmisconduct](wmich.edu/equity/sexualmisconduct) for definitions of sexual harassment and the complaint procedure, as well as information about WMU’s consensual sexual relations policy. The Office of Institutional Equity ([wmich.edu/equity](wmich.edu/equity)) also covers Affirmative Action, rights of persons with handicapping conditions, disabled veterans, equal opportunity practices, and human rights.

**Consensual Sexual Relations Policy:** From the Western Michigan University Office of Institutional Equity:

In their relationships, members of the University community are expected to be aware of their professional responsibilities and avoid apparent or actual conflict of interest, favoritism, or bias. The relationships may constitute sexual harassment when one of the individuals is in a position to evaluate or otherwise influence the education, employment, housing, or participation in a University activity of the other. The subtle yet powerful element of coercion that may exist in such relationships is a legitimate concern of the University. Such relationships give rise to a conflict of interest and are potentially exploitative. Moreover, such relationships may affect the environment for other students, administrators, faculty or staff members, or the manner in which they are treated.

An administrator, faculty, or staff member should not make sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other communications of a sexual nature to a person if he or she exercises direct influence over a person's activities within the University. If a sexual relationship develops, the administrator, faculty, or staff member must take steps to eliminate any current or potential conflict of interest and distance him- or herself from decisions involving the other person. Failure to eliminate a conflict shall constitute misconduct.

Further, administrators, faculty, and staff should be aware that any romantic involvement with students or subordinates may require formal action against them if a complaint is filed. Because of the asymmetrical nature of such relationships, an administrator, faculty or staff member’s assertion that a relationship was consensual in defense of a complaint of sexual harassment is subject to doubt and will be thoroughly investigated.

**Stress Management and Conflict Resolution Resources**

Graduate appointees who need assistance with academic, work-related, or personal issues have numerous places to go for help, including:

- **University Ombudsman** ([wmich.edu/ombudsman](wmich.edu/ombudsman)) — An intervention agent and impartial person who helps students, faculty, and staff resolve academic and non-academic concerns. The Ombudsman listens to you and discusses your question or concern; provides you with information that answers your question or helps you locate someone who can assist you; explains
the University’s policies and procedures and how they may affect you; follows up with you and others at the University to make sure your concern is resolved; and recommends changes in the institution that will make it more responsive to every member of the community. The basic principles of the University Ombudsman are independence, impartiality, informality, and confidentiality. The Ombudsman is authorized to make thorough investigations and has access to most University offices and records, reports, and other documents. No person shall suffer any penalty for seeking assistance from the Ombudsman.

- **Office of Institutional Equity** ([wmich.edu/equity](http://wmich.edu/equity)) — Oversees and administers the University’s Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity programs and policies, the Americans with Disabilities Act and related accommodations, and also addresses issues of equality and justice for all members of the University as consistent with the University’s Non-discrimination Policy. Western Michigan University is committed to an environment which encourages fair, humane, and beneficial treatment of all faculty, staff, and students. In accordance with that fundamental objective, the University has a continuing commitment to assure equal opportunity and to oppose discrimination because of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, handicap, height, weight, or marital status.

- **Campus Employee Dispute Resolution Services** ([wmich.edu/disputeresolution](http://wmich.edu/disputeresolution)) - Offers free confidential mediation and community conferencing services that assist faculty and staff (including GAs) in finding mutually agreeable solutions to interpersonal disputes with other individuals in the workplace.

- **Counseling Services** ([wmich.edu/healthcenter/counseling](http://wmich.edu/healthcenter/counseling)) — Offers low-cost one-on-one personal counseling to assist individuals in better understanding themselves and the emotional conflicts that may interfere with their everyday lives as students, to help them become more aware of alternative means of coping with conflicts and stress, and to aid them in developing more healthy, satisfying, and fulfilling lifestyles.

**Use of University Facilities and Resources**

As a WMU graduate assistant, you will have access to numerous resources and facilities within your academic and/or hiring department. These may include University telephones, computer equipment, copy machines, fax machines, and the like. Your department should advise you on how to responsibly use this equipment. Please keep in mind the following:

**Copy machines:** Departments often assign access codes to graduate students for using department copy machines. Personal copying should not be done on department copy machines unless there is a procedure in place for reimbursing the department for such costs. Teaching assistants who need to make copies for their classes should inquire about procedures through their department.

**Phones and fax machines:** Avoid using University phones for personal business, even for local calls. Such calls are best made on your personal cell phone.

**Computer equipment:** Some departments allow graduate students to check out computer equipment such as laptop computers, projectors, etc., for use in teaching or other activities. Be sure to follow your department’s procedures for checking out equipment. For any University computer equipment which you may use in your department, avoid thinking of it as “yours” even if you have exclusive use of it. Do not download inappropriate, illegal, or unregistered software or files to any University computer. All computers should be properly protected from viruses, malware, etc. as noted in the anti-virus policy at
In general, be respectful of the University’s resources and seek the guidance of your department if you are not sure what rights you have in regard to the use of department equipment.

**Campus Safety and Security**

Like campuses all over the nation, Western Michigan University has made campus safety and security top priorities and responded with intense scrutiny of its resources and procedures for responding to immediate security threats. As a result, the University has implemented numerous procedures for notifying the campus community of threats and for protecting the safety and security of all campus citizens. Everyone in the campus community has a responsibility to be aware of potential threats to campus security and to follow these important procedures that will minimize such threats.

Find WMU’s emergency procedures here: [wmich.edu/emergencymanagement/emergency-procedures](http://wmich.edu/emergencymanagement/emergency-procedures)

Western Michigan University has a 24/7/365 Department of Public Safety (DPS) with Patrol, Detective, and Community Policing divisions. The WMU DPS can be contacted using any one of the following procedures:

- calling (269) 387-5555 from any phone any time
- calling 118 from any campus blue light emergency call box or elevator phone

Please note: Calling 911 from a cell phone on campus will reach Kalamazoo County emergency dispatch, rather than WMU DPS.

**Campus-wide Emergencies:** In the event of a campus-wide emergency, WMU Public Safety and the University’s emergency response team will determine what methods will be used to alert the campus community. These methods may include use of police and weather alert radios, the WMU Hotline (269) 387-1001, emergency email to campus offices or the entire campus community, posting a message on the University home page and/or the University telephone system, notifying local media to advise persons to stay off campus, etc. Should you be advised of a campus emergency, please follow all instructions for responding to the emergency, especially to stay off campus if so advised.

There are many local police jurisdictions that can be called for assistance with a campus emergency, including the Kalamazoo County Sheriff’s Department, the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety, and other departments such as Kalamazoo Township and the City of Portage. Kalamazoo also has two regional hospitals within 10 minutes of campus (Bronson Healthcare and Ascension Borgess), both of which boast Level I trauma centers.

**WMU Alert System:** All members of the WMU community may register a telephone number (cell, office, or home) through the GoWMU portal for “WMU Alert,” operated by Rave Mobile Safety. If an extreme emergency is identified (including but not limited to severe weather, terrorism, shootings, hazardous materials incidents), the system employs preprogrammed text or voice messages that will deliver information to any currently enrolled WMU student or active WMU employee via a cell phone or a landline. Anyone who has registered the number of a text-capable phone in WMU Alert
will receive messages about emergency situations in text format. Landlines or cell phones without text capability will receive messages as voice alerts. WMU urges all enrolled students and active employees to activate their WMU Alert account by following these steps:

- Log into GoWMU.
- Click on the yellow and red WMU Alert triangle.
- Enter the preferred phone number.
- Indicate preference for text or voice messages—or both.
- Click submit.

**Building Security:** Many campus buildings are open to the public only during University business hours (8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays except during holidays). Other buildings, such as the Bernhard Center, Student Recreation Center, the library, and many classroom buildings, are open in the evenings and on weekends. Public Safety and Custodial Services are responsible for locking and unlocking building doors at the appropriate times. If a building is not open at the usual time, please call the WMU Department of Public Safety (269-387-5555). Please do not leave building doors propped open at any time. (If you must let someone who has business being there into a building, have him or her notify you upon arrival rather than propping open a door.)

Also do not prop open security doors within buildings. Such doors are usually identified as security doors and are essential to securing areas within buildings and to contain a fire if one should occur.

Graduate assistants are often entrusted with outside door keys or swipe cards to campus buildings where they have responsibilities, as well as keys/cards to specific rooms and areas of the building. University keys and access codes are never to be duplicated or given to other individuals without the permission of the building coordinator.

Since the campus is a public place, sometimes persons who have no affiliation with WMU wander into or loiter in campus buildings. If you encounter someone in a building who seems lost or to have no business there, do not take it upon yourself to determine their business being in the building. If a department office in the building is open, report the person to that office and ask for assistance. If it is after hours or there are few people in the building, leave the building or retreat to a safe location to call WMU Public Safety (269-387-5555 or 911 from a campus phone) for assistance in dealing with the person. (If you can get to an elevator quickly, they can be locked from inside and contain a police call box.) Let the campus security professional make the determination about whether or not the person is suspicious or dangerous—do not take this upon yourself.

**After hours Assistance**
The department of public safety offers Vehicle Escorts and Walking Escorts as after hour services for students on campus. Call 269-387-5555 or visit [wmudps.wmich.edu/safe-ride.php](http://wmudps.wmich.edu/safe-ride.php) for hours of operation.

**Police Call Boxes:** Outdoor call boxes for contacting Public Safety are distributed around campus in parking lots and near buildings. They have a phone handset and a rotating blue light on top that flashes when the box is activated. Once the box is activated, the location is connected to Public Safety’s 911 line and the light will continue to flash until turned off by Public Safety. These call boxes can be used whenever you have a concern for which you need to contact Public Safety. All campus elevators also contain direct phone contact to Public Safety.
**Responding to Threats to Personal Security:** Anytime you are on campus and perceive a threat to the security of yourself or others, you should immediately contact WMU Public Safety (269-387-5555 or 911, or by using a campus call box). At the same time, you must take action to protect your own security. If possible, retreat to a room that can be locked where you can call for help. Another safe location is the nearest elevator—the elevator can be locked from inside and you can use the police call box to communicate with WMU Public Safety. (Get in the habit of locating the red stop button when you are in campus elevators so that if you ever need it, you will know exactly where it is.)

**What should you do if you have reason to believe someone at WMU (e.g., a classmate, a student in a class you teach) is a threat to himself or to others?** Campus security threats are sometimes precipitated by mental health crises in individuals. Campus mental health professionals are trained to identify these kinds of issues in persons with whom they have contact. Other individuals on campus who don’t have specific mental health training may also have concerns about the mental stability of persons they encounter in the campus setting. If someone you know at WMU has made threats against others or you believe an individual poses a possible danger to himself or others, you should immediately report your concerns to the WMU Department of Public Safety. They will investigate the potential threat and help determine what interventions may be necessary. Don’t take it upon yourself to assess such possible threats, and don’t assume that someone else will do something about it or that your concerns are not valid. Public Safety will listen to your concerns and take appropriate action. The Division of Student Affairs has more information on recognizing a student in distress and how to report a concern at [wmich.edu/studentaffairs/concern](http://wmich.edu/studentaffairs/concern).

**Confidentiality/Disclosure of Student Records**

Western Michigan University is bound by federal law to comply with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). Maintaining confidentiality of educational records is the responsibility of all users whether the individuals are faculty, staff, or students. According to FERPA, an education record, with limited exception, is a record which is maintained by the institution, directly related to the student, and from which a student can be identified. As graduate assistants, whether or not you are teaching you may be asked to handle student records, such as grades, as part of your assistantship responsibilities. It is important that you understand the limits of confidentiality in regard to student records (including your own records).

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act affords students certain rights with respect to their educational records. These include the right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s educational records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosures without consent.

Disclosure without consent is permitted when the information consists solely of “directory information.” Directory information may be published or released by University faculty and staff at their discretion. Unless a student specifically directs otherwise by requesting confidentiality of his personally identifiable information, WMU designates all of the following categories of information about its students as “Directory Information”:
- Name
- Address
- Telephone number
- WMU E-mail address
- Curriculum and major field of study
- Dates of attendance
- Enrollment status (full/part-time)
- Degrees/awards received
- Most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of athletes

A student has the right to request that directory information not be disclosed without the student’s consent. If a student exercises this right, it will mean that no directory information pertaining to the student will be published or otherwise released to third parties without the student’s consent, a court order, or a subpoena.

Any student wishing to exercise the right of withholding some or all categories of personally identifiable information must inform the Registrar’s Office in writing by not later than the fifth day of the semester or session. See wmich.edu/registrar/policies/ferpa.

The annual printed campus directory is published late in the Fall semester, and anyone who wishes to withhold their information from publication must make the request by the Fall deadline. A student’s notification to withhold information will remain in effect until the student requests in writing that the confidentiality hold be revoked. A student who exercises this right of withholding all categories of personally identifiable information will have a “confidentiality flag” placed on his student record in the Banner student records system. This means no information can be released about the student without his or her consent.

Confidentiality Procedures: Please observe the following procedures in order to protect student records:

Grades should never be posted by a student’s name or any portion of the student identification number (WIN). This includes the posting of grades to a non-confidential Web site. There are ways that grades can be posted securely, such as to use code words or randomly assigned numbers that only the instructor and individual student know, and to post the list non-alphabetically. Semester/session and mid-term grades are typically available to students through their GoWMU account within a few hours of the final course grade submission deadline. Since access requires the use of the student’s Bronco NetID and password, midterm and final course grades can be viewed securely. The E-learning system also allows instructors to release grade information securely to students and control how much is shared. For more information access wmich.edu/elearning/instructors and wmich.edu/elearning/students.

Graded papers or tests should not be left unattended in publicly accessible places, nor should students be allowed to sort through them in order to retrieve their own work. In office settings, paper containing personal information about students beyond directory information (particularly WIN numbers, financial data, grades, and other sensitive information) should be kept in a secure location. Such records should not be discarded in wastebaskets or recycle bins but must be shredded.
The Registrar is the University officer charged with ensuring compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. More information on FERPA is available at: wmich.edu/registrar/policies/ferpa.

Western Michigan University Libraries

University Libraries recognize that WMU graduate students engage in significant research and teaching while at WMU. The libraries are committed to providing resources and services that enhance your academic experience as both a researcher and an instructor at WMU.

Get to know your library liaison: WMU librarians are available to assist you whether in person or by phone, text, email, or online chat. Each academic department has an assigned liaison librarian whom you can contact about topics ranging from general inquiries to arranging in-depth research consultations. Your library liaison is the point person for many services available to you in your role as researcher as well as instructor. For example your liaison can assist with any of the following:

- Overview of services or introduction to resources (print, electronic, multimedia) available for your field
- Scheduling an in-depth research consultation
- Arranging hands-on library instruction for a class
- Recommending items you’d like the library to purchase or requesting a library workshop or service
- Find your library liaison at wmich.edu/library/subject-librarians

WMU Libraries collections and facilities:

- Collections include millions of print items as well as electronic books and databases, streaming video, DVDs, CDs, and maps.
- Off-campus access to databases, electronic journals, streaming video, and other online resources is available via Bronco Net ID.
- University Libraries consist of Waldo Library and several branches. Waldo Library houses collections in humanities, social sciences, science/technology, business, maps, government documents and special collections (includes medieval collection, rare books, women’s poetry) and is the university’s main library.
- Branch Libraries include:
  - Swain Education Library (Sangren Hall)
  - Maybee Music and Dance Library (Dalton Center)
  - Archives and Regional History (Zhang Legacy Collections Center)

Course reserves: WMU Libraries offer a reserve service for materials you would like set aside for your class. You can place physical or electronic materials on reserve for use by your students. More information about setting up reserves for your classes, including copyright guidelines, can be found at wmich.edu/library/reserves.

Library instruction services:

University Libraries provide a variety of instructional support services including course-related instruction, one-on-one consultations, virtual and self-guided tours, handouts, and tutorials. Librarians can work with you to develop research assignments that help students learn how to locate, evaluate,
and effectively use information for their subject. Librarians can help you develop assignments using print collections, primary source materials, statistical information, etc. More information about Library Instruction Services is available at wmich.edu/library/services/graduate.

**Borrowing books and other materials:**
- Books from WMU libraries may be checked out by graduate students for one semester. You may borrow up to 100 items from the general collections. See summary of library services for graduate students at wmich.edu/library/services/graduate.
- Present your Bronco Card whenever you wish to borrow library items.
- Items may be renewed online or in person.
- DVDs and videotapes from the Instructional Video Collection may be borrowed for seven (7) days.
- For information on borrowing other types of materials, as well as further information on borrowing and renewal policies see wmich.edu/library/borrow.

**Interlibrary loan:** The interlibrary loan service allows you to borrow items that are not in the WMU Libraries collections. Requests are placed through the interlibrary loan system by creating an account with your Bronco Net ID and password. Journal articles and book chapters are generally delivered electronically. Books, microfilm, CDs, DVDs, etc. can be picked up at Waldo Library. For more information about interlibrary loan services and to sign up for an account see wmich.edu/library/borrow.

**Recommend new books, journal subscriptions, etc.:** The libraries welcome your suggestions for new materials to add to the collections: books, electronic resources, journal subscriptions, media materials, etc. To recommend items for purchase you may either contact your library liaison or use one of the forms at wmich.edu/library/new-item.

**Reference Manager Software:** The Mendeley Desktop and Zotero citation management tools allow students to manage, read, share, annotate and cite research papers. Learn more at libguides.wmich.edu/citing/tools.

**Writing style guides:** The Libraries website provides “quick guides” as well as more extensive help with several of the more popular writing style systems: APA, Chicago, MLA, etc. These can be found at libguides.wmich.edu/citing.

**Western Michigan University’s Website**
Western Michigan University’s website contains a wealth of information regarding University operations. You are encouraged to fully explore this valuable resource to learn how it may assist you in your tasks. The University main page is located at wmich.edu.

One useful feature on the website is “People Search” (under “Find People” at the top of WMU’s home page). People Search allows you to do a name search for University employees and students. Information returned in a search includes classification (faculty, staff, graduate student, undergraduate student), and campus address, phone information, and email address for faculty and staff. Email addresses are not given for students.
Office Work Environment: Your Role and Responsibilities

Your appointment letter/contract stipulates your hours of work per week, e.g., 20 hours per week for a full graduate appointment. Specific schedules will be negotiated with your supervisor each term with the goal being to accommodate both your class schedule and the unit’s needs.

Student employees typically follow the academic calendar for their assigned work weeks. Academic departments will be open during final examination weeks. Graduate appointees are generally expected to work during final exam week, up to the cumulative number of hours expected for the term (300 hours for a full-time appointment in a semester). Your schedule for that week should be reviewed with your supervisor in case there are any conflicts with your final exam schedule.

Discuss any required changes from the agreed-upon schedule with your supervisor well in advance (at least a 3-day notice). Do not schedule a doctor’s or other appointments during your scheduled work hours unless unavoidable. If such an appointment is necessary, discuss it with your supervisor well in advance to minimize any disruption to the office.

Consider the implications for your office when you call in sick. On those occasions when you must take sick leave, call your supervisor well before your scheduled start time; leave a message for the supervisor that includes a specific reason for your absence. Hours that are missed due to illness or outside appointments must be rescheduled; excessive “sick” time or tardiness may result in a review of your appointment.

Your primary activities are helping administrative staff and students. These activities must take precedence over any personal work, homework, or studying. You should remain busy performing assigned tasks unless otherwise approved by your supervisor. Activities that interfere with assigned work, such as Web surfing and checking email or social media, should be done on personal time.

Keep your supervisor aware of your current contact information, including local phone numbers, address, and email address, and communicate any changes promptly so that you can be reached if needed.

Your Work Area
While on duty, please stay in your designated location, or close enough so that office staff do not have to search the halls for you. Additionally, whenever you will be away from your work area, notify your supervisor.

Since your work area may be used for many purposes or by other employees and students, keep your area clean. Food should be kept in break areas only.

Keep inter-office voices to a minimum level. Do not yell or raise your voice in the office. If you are trying to get another individual’s attention, please quietly approach them.

Professional Office Behavior
Be on time. A little early is better than a minute late. If you are late, the time missed should be made up at the end of your shift or by shortening a break. (Lunch breaks are not paid work time.)
Be ready to start when your shift starts. That means that you are at your work area and you do not leave unless your shift is over.

Be aware of the effects of your actions on your co-workers. If you are late, ill-prepared, or not where you are supposed to be, then you are not meeting your job responsibilities and someone else has to do more as a result.

Do not call in at the last minute. You should make prior arrangements (three days’ notice, if possible) for schedule changes.

Do not expect your supervisor or other office staff to call you to find out where you are. You must take on the responsibility of having a job. If you will be late, notify your office with a reason as soon as you know this and give an estimated time of arrival.

Check in with your supervisor when you come to work and when you leave.

Alert your supervisor when you have completed a task or project and check for additional work. Ask if there are tasks you should have in reserve for times when work may be slow, such as working through computer tutorials to improve your software skills or exploring the university’s web site.

**Dress Code**
You are employed in a para-professional capacity and will need to establish authority and respect with our student population, their parents, other visitors, and University personnel. Therefore, your appearance should not detract from your professional image. Concerning office attire, if it is appropriate for the beach, a party, cleaning house, weeding the garden, etc., it is probably not appropriate for the office. Make sure your attire reflects the appropriate level of professionalism.

While you are not required to wear WMU clothing when at work, on certain days you may be encouraged to wear clothing with WMU insignia. At no time during your workday is it appropriate for you to wear clothing that promotes another post-secondary institution.

**Office Telephone Skills**
As a research application assistant at Western Michigan University, you may find yourself placing and receiving phone calls as part of your duties. You should be aware that at all times you are serving as a representative of both Western Michigan University and your specific department while providing information and services to callers. As a graduate assistant, you may or may not have your own phone in the office in which you will be working. If you have access to a phone, you may be sharing it with other students or graduate assistants, and you may also be sharing a voice mail box. Thus it is imperative that you adopt professional habits and use courtesy in using departmental telephones.

**Placing Calls**
Before placing a business call, be prepared to leave a voice message. Because you have a good chance of reaching a machine instead of a person, you need to plan the message you intend to leave. Voice mail systems rely on you to provide the critical information in a way that allows the intended receiver to understand it.

Whenever you place a call, be prepared to leave a message in which you:
• **State your name clearly.** If you are calling someone for the first time or someone you do not know reasonably well, speak at a reasonable pace and spell at least your last name. That helps ensure that the receiver knows your name and affords him or her sufficient time to write it down.

• **State the name of your organization.** Especially if the receiver is not already familiar with you and your organization, speak more slowly and with greater care than you would in a face-to-face conversation. If the name of your organization contains unusual words, spell those a listener might have difficulty understanding or spelling.

• **State your phone number.** While it might seem obvious that messages left on answering machines and voice mail systems should contain the number of the person leaving the message, many do not. Unless you and the person you are calling know each other well, leave your phone number so that the other person will not have to look it up. Do not expect the call’s recipient to already have your phone number or look for it on caller ID. If there is time to do so, state the number twice and state it slowly enough for the message recipient to write it down.

• **State the day and time of your call.** Although most voice mail systems now automatically record this information, many systems require the user to go through extra steps to retrieve it. Your including that information saves the receiver from having to retrieve it.

• **State clearly the purpose of your call.** Remember that the idea of voice mail is to reduce “telephone tag.” A simple “Call me” does not provide the other person with sufficient information for him or her to take action on the basis of your phone call.

• If you are not available when the other party returns your call, that message will probably be something like “This is Mary returning your call.” Unless the message is so confidential that you are unable to mention the topic, at least provide the purpose of the call so that the receiver can prepare for returning the call. Whenever possible, tell the receiver exactly why you are calling so that he or she can have the information for you when returning the call or when you call back.

• **Provide the call recipient with the best times to return the call.** Ask, when it is appropriate, for the recipient to return your call, and state the best times. If it would be more appropriate for you to call back, tell the receiver specifically that you will do that and say when. Give the receiver the option of returning your call if he or she would prefer to do that.

• **Clarify who is to do what next.** If you want the recipient to return your call, say so; if you intend to call back, say so. If the listener should take specific action based on your message, say so: “Please fax the insurance records for John Smith to me at 555/555-1000 before 5:00 p.m. today. That's 555/555-1000 before 5:00 p.m. today. I would appreciate it.”

**Receiving Calls**

Callers will evaluate you and your organization based on the way you answer the telephone and your telephone manners in general. When you answer the phone, make your greeting appropriate for your office and organization. In most cases, that means stating your name, department, and organization. If others initially answer your telephone so that all calls reaching your phone will have already been answered by at least one person, then stating your name will be sufficient.
Being prepared for a phone call means being prepared to take notes. One of the problems with oral communication in general is that messages may be quickly forgotten. Be prepared to record the essentials of important telephone calls:

- The name and organization of the person calling.
- His or her phone number (including the country and area codes when different from your own) and the extension.
- The day and time of the call, noting any differences in time zones.
- The subject of the message.
- Specific agreements about who will be responsible for doing what, including subsequent phone calls.

For critical information—such as telephone numbers, identification numbers, spellings of names, and specific courses of action—repeat or rephrase what the caller has said, making sure to incorporate any corrections in your notes.

Voice Mail
If you are responsible for your own voice mail box on a University phone, the following guidelines will help make your use of the voice mail system more effective:

- **Record an appropriate greeting.** A professional greeting is both courteous and brief. If you plan to be in your office, your greeting can simply state that you are either on the phone or away from your desk and will return the call. Ask the caller to leave his or her name, organization, phone number, and the best time to call.
- If you are going to be out of town or otherwise unable to return calls for an extended period, use the “Extended Absence” option to tell callers how long you will be gone and how to contact you during your absence or how to contact an assistant or associate who can answer questions and make decisions on your behalf.
- **Return calls.** When callers leave a message requesting a return call, failure to return the call is discourteous in most cases. The only exceptions to this rule are sales messages. When someone wants to sell you something, he or she should be the one to return the call.
- **Avoid hiding behind voice mail.** Most voice mail systems allow you to have the system answer all incoming calls. Most systems will allow you to place a message in someone else's voice mailbox without ringing his or her phone. While you may need to use these features on occasion, excessive use of these features will eventually be resented by others. Answer your phone when you are there; talk directly to others when time permits.

Phone and voicemail instructions are listed online at [wmich.edu/helpdesk/selfhelp/phones](http://wmich.edu/helpdesk/selfhelp/phones).

Need More Help? The Technology Help Desk is located in room 2034 of the University Computing Center (UCC). Call them at 269-387-HELP, Option 2.

Cell Phone Etiquette at Work
It may be hard to remember such a time, but through most of recorded history the world of business operated quite effectively without constant cell phone use. By following basic rules of good cell phone etiquette, you'll not only be ahead of the curve, you will enhance your professional standing at work by displaying considerate behavior. To avoid cell phone distractions in your office, consider the following generally accepted rules of good cell phone behavior:
- Turn your ringer OFF or set to “vibrate.”
- Let all but emergency calls go to voice mail.
- If you absolutely must use your cell phone, find a private, quiet place to make your call. Maintain a buffer zone of at least ten feet from others while you’re using your cell phone. While at work, make every attempt to expand basic etiquette and find locations that do not infringe on co-workers trying to perform their jobs. (Remember, when leaving your work area you should notify a supervisor or co-worker.)
- Don’t bring your cell phone to meetings unless it is turned off and out of sight. If you are attending a meeting, you are paying attention to the business there. Should an important call be expected, put your cell phone on “vibrate” and bring it with you. It is far better to leave your cell phone at your desk to avoid any “interruption temptation.”
- Do not text anyone while you are at work, unless the texting is for professional or work-related purposes.

Electronic Communication Writing Style and Etiquette

The following section addresses the differences in writing style and etiquette that result from the greater speed, accessibility, and permanence of electronic communication. Guidelines are presented to help make it useful and productive for you.

Use “To:,” “Cc:,” and “Bcc:” Fields Appropriately
- Your message is addressed to one or more persons whose addresses will be given in the “To:” field.
- Use the “Cc:” (“carbon” copy) field to enter addresses for persons to whom the message is not addressed but who should be kept informed on the topic.
- The “Bcc:” (blind “carbon” copy, also blind courtesy copy) field has two uses and should be used with caution:
  1. “Bcc:” can be used to confidentially copy someone on a message without the knowledge of the recipients in the “To:” or “Cc:” fields; these individuals will not see the “Bcc:” field or the recipients listed there. Note that this usage allows individuals to be discreetly or surreptitiously informed of the message contents but there are risks in not informing the message recipients of these additional recipients, so exercise caution in using this field.
  2. “Bcc:” allows for a message to be sent to a long list of recipients (a mass email, for instance) who do not need to know who the other recipients are. This maintains the privacy of the recipients and makes them less vulnerable to becoming a victim of spam email. In this usage, you may put your own address in the “To:” field (although this step can be skipped) and the addresses of all the intended recipients in the “Bcc:” field. This protects the recipients from having their email address sent to a large group of people they don’t know.

“Reply” vs. “Reply All”

When replying to a message that had multiple recipients, you will need to decide whether to respond only to the sender of the message (“Reply”) or to all recipients listed in the “To:” and “Cc:” fields (“Reply All”). (Any recipients who were in the “Bcc:” field will be unknown to you and will not receive your reply for either option.)
**Use Short, Descriptive Titles**
The subject line of an electronic message enables a person with limited amount of time to decide the relative importance of your message. As a courtesy to others, indicate what the message is about before they take the time to read it.

**Use the Appropriate Degree of Formality**
Electronic communication tends to lead to a writing style much less formal than that used in paper documents. However, electronic messages are just as permanent as paper documents and may be read by more individuals. Take time to make sure your electronic communication is professional to the highest degree. Eliminate spelling errors, use complete words and proper punctuation (not “text-speak”), and make sure that the message is easy to read and understand. Avoid over-familiarity, addressing someone with a formal title (Dr., Mr., Ms., etc.) unless you are directed otherwise.

**Summarize What You are Responding To**
When writing a response, summarize the parts of a message to which you are responding. Summarization is best when appropriate quotes from the original message are included. Avoid including the entire previous message and especially an entire trail of correspondence.

**Keep Paragraphs and Messages Short and to the Point**
Make your messages concise but not cryptic. Shorter paragraphs have more impact and are more likely to be read by busy people. Most people can grasp only about seven ideas at once. This means ideas in a paragraph, major sections, etc.

**Format Messages for Easy Reading**
White space is not wasted space. It greatly improves clarity. A blank line only adds a byte to the message length, so don’t be stingy. A well-designed message helps make your meaning clearer. Emails in all caps are difficult to read and should be avoided.

**Be Careful with Humor and Sarcasm**
Without the voice inflections and body language of personal communications, it is easy for a remark meant to be funny or witty to be misinterpreted. Subtle humor tends to get lost in electronic communication, so take steps to make sure that people realize you are trying to be funny.

**Be Careful with Expressions of Anger**
Again, because electronic communication has the informal properties of conversation without the corresponding benefits of voice inflection and body language, messages are sometimes misconstrued and may generate unexpected angry responses. The ability to respond immediately to a message often leads to a hasty response.

If a message generates negative emotions, you should set it aside and reread it later. Or, you might ask for feedback on its content from a colleague. Take time to calmly respond to the message from the stance that there may be a misunderstanding or misinterpretation. Ask for clarification on inflammatory statements.

Do not send a message that may haunt you at a later date. If you are concerned about the tone or content of a message you are about to send, save it in the “Drafts” email folder and review it again later after you have had time to reflect on what you are saying.
**Be Careful What You Say About Others**

Think twice before you post personal information about yourself or others. Your message gets circulated, and it could quite possibly end up in the electronic mailbox of your boss, your friend’s boss, your girlfriend’s brother’s best friend, etc. Information posted on the internet or sent in an email can come back to haunt you or the person you are talking about.

**Signatures**

Please keep your signatures short. Two or three lines are usually plenty. Long signatures are frowned upon. Do not include drawings, pictures, maps, or other graphics in your signature.

**WMU Email Rules** [wmich.edu/it/rules/email]

**Purpose**

The purpose of this email policy is to establish rules for the appropriate use of Western Michigan University’s email accounts.

**Scope**

The use of email via University computing resources is a privilege, not a right, and is subject to limitation and/or revocation. In addition to these email rules, the use of electronic communication is subject to all University policies, procedures, rules, directives, and the law (collectively “rules”).

These rules apply to:

- All email systems and services provided are owned by the University;
- All users, holders, and uses of University email services and computing resources; and
- All University email records in the possession of University faculty, staff, or students or other email users of email services provided by the University.

These rules apply equally to transactional information (such as email headers, summaries, and addresses) associated with email records as it does to the contents of those records.

**Policy Statement(s)**

**User Identity**

All email systems must have unique user-IDs and associated passwords to isolate the mail of different users. Misrepresenting, obscuring, suppressing, or replacing a user’s identity on an email system is forbidden. The user name, email address, organizational affiliation, and related information included with email or postings must reflect the actual originator of the mail or postings.

**No Guaranteed Message Privacy**

Western Michigan University cannot guarantee that email will be private. Email can be forwarded, intercepted, printed, and stored by others. Generally, WMU’s email systems are not encrypted. WMU respects the rights of its employees; however, WMU is also responsible for servicing and protecting its email networks. Although mail is not routinely monitored, the University may monitor or access email if the University suspects or is advised of possible breaches of security, harassment, or other violations of other University policies, rules, regulations, directives, or law, or evidence exists which demonstrates to the University that email contains information, data, or other intellectual property that belongs to another person. Only the President, the Vice President for Information Technology, or the Vice President for Legal Affairs and General Counsel may authorize access to email under these rules and that authorization shall be in writing.
Where feasible and practical, the person whose email is being accessed will be given notice of such access in advance. However, where, in the judgment of the President, Vice President for Information Technology, or Vice President for Legal Affairs and General Counsel, such notice would be contrary to the University’s interest, such notice will not be provided. Any person whose email is accessed without advance notice will be notified that his or her email account has been accessed as soon after such access as is practically feasible, unless compelling or legal reasons approved by the Office of the Vice President for Legal Affairs and General Counsel dictate otherwise. Supervisors who want to access a subordinate’s email must contact the Office of the Vice President for Legal Affairs and General Counsel in advance. Yearly, the Office of the Vice President for Legal Affairs and General Counsel will report to the Faculty Senate the number of times authorization to access email has occurred.

Some system administrators have access to email by way of automated systems, such as undeliverable email, and may have to access email for routine maintenance of systems and for specific systems problems. Such administrators will take precautions to ensure that they view only those portions of email necessary to perform their duties. System administrators accessing legally protected or confidential information or records shall not disclose, copy, or otherwise disseminate any other information or records unless authorized by the Vice President for Information Technology or the Vice President for Legal Affairs and General Counsel.

Other than as provided for in this paragraph, employees may not access the email of another employee or student in the absence of the consent of the person whose email is being accessed. The improper access of the email of another shall be subject to appropriate discipline and shall be reported to the Vice President for Information Technology and CIO.

In addition, email prepared by public employees using University resources may be subject to disclosure under state and federal law and may constitute documents that are subject to disclosure in administrative or legal actions.

Contents of Email
Email is treated as any other form of communication and all University policies, rules, handbooks, contracts, and directives, including sanctions, apply to the content and use of email including, but not limited to, the University sexual harassment policy, the anti-discrimination policy, and the policy pertaining to workplace threats and violence.

Purging Email
Email systems are not intended for archival storage. Employees are responsible for periodically purging email from their personal storage areas. The University reserves its right to limit capacity on individual accounts for archival storage and other University purposes.

Justification
WMU’s email systems are provided for the support of the University’s mission, including education, business, and research. Personal use may be permissible if, in the determination of the University, it does not interfere with the University’s mission or preempt normal business/educational activity, does not impede employee productivity, does not interfere with or negatively impact any other person’s or entity’s rights and work/learning environment, does not conflict with any rule or law, and does not consume more than a trivial amount of resources.
Notwithstanding the above described acceptable trivial personal use, unless authorized in advance by the University, employees are not permitted to use WMU’s email or resources for personal commercial or business activities, personal charitable endeavors, illegal political or other activities, to send or forward chain mail, or for any other purpose or activity prohibited by the rule(s) or law.

**Enforcement**

These rules shall apply except where conflicting provisions of a duly authorized collective bargaining agreement or other contract expressly provide otherwise. Individuals who violate these rules may have their email privileges revoked and shall be subject to sanctions, disciplinary action, and/or other legal action.

**WMU Mass Email Policy** [wmich.edu/policies/mass-email]

If your responsibilities include sending mass email messages, you should become familiar with the WMU mass email policy that provides rules and guidance for the use of mass email to disseminate information within and beyond the Western Michigan University community. There are important standards and restrictions that aim to ensure that mass emails are accessible, concise, consistent and coordinated and to avoid the loss of productivity from processing unwanted emails. Please review the policy for details.

In brief, the rules for mass emails include the following:

1. No spam: Sending unsolicited mass email—commonly known as spam—is prohibited.
2. Sender must use a WMU email address: The From: address must be a valid email address at wmich.edu or another domain owned by the University and registered through the Office of University Relations (for example, millerauditorium.com). Use of an address at a domain not owned by the University (such as gmail.com) to distribute mass email is prohibited.
3. Sender must provide contact information: The body text of the message must include contact information for the person, office or group that sent it. Minimally, the contact information must include a phone number and a valid email address at a domain owned by the University.
4. Recipients must be addressed using a mailing list: All recipient addresses must be concealed through the use of a mailing list (see section below, Rules for mailing lists). If a software limitation precludes the use of a mailing list, the BCC: field may be used to conceal the recipients' addresses instead; otherwise, use of the BCC: field to address mass email is prohibited.
5. Message must be clear and concise: The message must include a subject line that is relevant to the message's content, and the body text must be clear, concise and no longer than 500 words in length. Additional information, if needed, should be provided via a Web link in the text.
6. No attachments: Accompanying files, if any, must be provided via a Web link in the body text of the message, not attached to the message itself.
7. Message must be accessible: The message must be composed in either plain-text or multipart plain-text/HTML. All information conveyed by the message must be in the text, not embedded in images or other elements that are inaccessible by text-to-speech software. Any images in the message must include "alt" text describing the image for low-vision readers.

8. Recipients must be allowed to unsubscribe: Unless it has been classified as essential under the provisions of the Essential Communications policy (wmich.edu/policies/mass-email), the message must include a valid option to unsubscribe from future mailings. This option must be clearly visible in the body text of the message, and requests to unsubscribe must be processed and honored within five business days.

Any use of a mailing list for mass email is subject to the following provisions:

1. Creation, use and ownership of mailing lists: Faculty, staff and students may request a mailing list as described in the Office of Information Technology's "Mailing Lists" policy. The owner of any list that is used to send mass email is responsible for ensuring that such use complies with this policy.

List owners should be aware that some mailing lists at the University may not provide a mechanism to unsubscribe (see 8 above). If membership in a list is managed manually, messages sent to the list must include simple instructions for requesting removal, and the owner must ensure that the list's membership is updated accordingly. If it is not possible to remove an address from a list, then that list may only be used according to the provisions of the Essential Communications policy (wmich.edu/web/policies/email).

2. Use of broad distribution mailing lists: Mailing lists addressing all faculty, all staff or all students—as well as other broad categories, such as "all administrators" or "all chairs and directors"—are managed by the Office of University Relations. Because the recipients of these lists cannot unsubscribe, messages to these lists are subject to the provisions of the policy for Essential communications below. If the sender does not have direct access to a list, a request should be submitted to the Office of University Relations, which will send the message on the requestor's behalf if it qualifies as an essential communication.

3. Use of mailing lists by collective bargaining units and professional organizations: Collective bargaining units and professional organizations—such as AAUP, APA and PSSO—may request the creation of a mailing list containing the email addresses of eligible members of their group in accordance with the Office of Information Technology's "Mailing Lists" policy. Any message to such a list must include a valid option to unsubscribe (see 8 above), and unsubscribed addresses may not be re-added to the list unless either (a) the recipient's membership status in the organization changes or (b) the recipient specifically asks to be re-added.

4. Use of external mass email services: Any use of an external mass email service—such as Exact Target, Constant Contact, Vertical Response, HubSpot or MailChimp—must fully comply with this policy and must provide recipients with a legitimate option to unsubscribe from future mailings. Units choosing to make use of such services should be aware that the University's anti-spam filters may prevent delivery of these messages to wmich.edu addresses.
5. Acquisition of email addresses: A mailing list containing email addresses acquired through sources external to the University may only be used to send mass email if the recipients were clearly informed before providing their email addresses that they were opting in to receive messages from third-parties.

6. Access to Email Addresses for Research: Access to WMU email addresses for survey research requires the approval of the chief information officer of the University and is limited to WMU students, faculty and staff only. In most cases, such access also requires the approval of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. Individuals should read and fully understand the University's "Rules on Use of Mass Email for Research" (wmich.edu/web/policies/email) and "Data Collection Through Surveys Policy" (wmich.edu/datagovernance/policies/surveypolicy) before submitting a request to the chief information officer.

Other Information on Essential Communication and Enforcement
Official email messages that are classified as essential communication are exempt from the quotas. Official messages are those authorized by the president of the University, senior academic officer, senior business officer, senior student affairs officer, chief information officer, or by University Relations, which serves as the clearinghouse for mass email messages. To reduce the number of separate mass email messages sent to faculty and staff, the Office of University Relations will regularly distribute a mass email compilation of campus announcements titled "WMU Today." In addition, the University's intranet portal, GoWMU, may be used to broadcast messages to students, faculty, staff and others. Senders are encouraged to consider using one of these channels before requesting a separate mass emailing. See wmich.edu/policies/mass-email for more information.

Tips on Learning to Use Frequently Used Software
As a research application assistant, you have access to the Faculty Technology Center, which offers resources and services; see wmich.edu/facultytechnology/resources.

Microsoft Office
Most computers at WMU are now running Microsoft Office 2016 or Office 365. The Microsoft Office suite contains programs for word processing (Word), spreadsheets (Excel), database management (Access), presentations (PowerPoint), and email (Outlook). It is likely you may use any or all of these programs for your graduate assistant duties, perhaps to do more sophisticated and complicated tasks than you are used to doing.

Training for these individual programs through Microsoft tutorials is described below. All tutorials can be found at: support.office.com.

Microsoft Word
Microsoft Word is probably the most widely-used software program in the world. Still, in day-to-day word processing, most people use only a fraction of the features available in this program. By taking advantage of tutorials, you can quickly learn to create more sophisticated documents. Some of the
topics you can learn about in online tutorials that will be useful in your graduate assistant work include how to:

- Use headers and footers to add page numbers and other information, and tailor headers and footers to fit the various sections of your document, such as a cover page, front matter, and chapter pages
- Set up all kinds of indents (such as hanging indents) and tabs (including leader dot tabs)
- Set up bulleted, numbers, and multilevel lists
- Use the paragraph menu to control such things as indents, space around paragraphs, and keeping selected text together (so headings don’t end up at the bottom of a page)
- Insert a table into a document, add formatting, and edit its structure
- Use the styles sheet to set up different format types (headings, indented text, etc.)
- Use the table of contents feature to quickly build a table of contents for your document and then keep it up-to-date.
- Use the mail merge feature to create personalized letters in a mass mailing.

Many people still use MS Word as little more than a glorified typewriter. Common problems in documents include using the spacebar instead of setting up tabs to align items, typing two spaces between sentences (no longer standard practice), and hard-coding information (such as page numbers) that should be in headers and footers.

**Excel**
Microsoft Excel is both a spreadsheet program and a simple data management program. It can also be used to create a variety of charts and graphs. Some topics that you may especially want to learn about in the tutorials include how to:

- Use sorting and filtering to quickly arrange your worksheet data to find the answers that you need by using enhanced filtering and sorting (including sorting by color and other factors).
- Use formula functions to calculate and automatically update values
- Use charting tools to easily create and modify professional-looking charts and graphs that communicate information effectively
- Share charts between Excel, Word, and PowerPoint

As with MS Word, many people’s skills in Excel are very rudimentary, so one skill that is very useful to have in Excel is knowing how to format the content of cells. For instance, without special formatting (specifically use of the “text” format which preserves exactly what is typed in the cell), Western Identification Numbers (WINs) may not display correctly in Excel because they can begin with the number zero, and any initial zeroes will be dropped in the general display format. For other uses, you may need to format cells to display numerical data used in calculations.

**PowerPoint**
With PowerPoint you create presentations that allow you to combine text and visuals on a series of “slides” that are presented on a projection screen. The availability of a variety of background templates, slide transition choices, and ability to incorporate animation and multi-media elements can be intoxicating to some users, resulting in presentations where the material can be lost in the complexity of the presentation. Consider these “Seven Deadly Sins” of PowerPoint presentations:
1. Slide Transitions and Sound Effects
   Leave the fade-ins, fade-outs, wipes, blinds, dissolves, checkerboards, cuts, covers and splits to Hollywood filmmakers. Even “builds” (lines of text appearing each time you click the mouse) can be distracting. Focus on your message, not the technology.

2. Standard Clipart
   PowerPoint is now so widely used the clipart included with it has become a “visual cliché.” It shows a lack of creativity and a tired adherence to a standard form. First, make certain that you need graphics to enhance your message. If you do, use your own scanned photographs or better-quality graphics from companies such as PhotoDisc (gettyimages.com/collections/photodisc). Screen captures can add realism when presenting information about a Website or computer program. A popular screen capture programs that is available as shareware for Windows and Macintosh is Snagit (techsmith.com).

3. Presentation Templates
   WMU-themed templates are available at wmich.edu/visualidentity/downloads. You can also create your own distinctive look. Look online or pick up a good book on Web graphics and apply the same principles to your slides. Be aware that some templates often contain distracting backgrounds and poor color combinations.

4. Text-Heavy Slides
   Projected slides are a good medium for depicting an idea graphically or providing an overview. They are, however, a poor medium for detail and reading. Avoid paragraphs, quotations, and even complete sentences. Limit your slides to five lines of text and use words and phrases to make your points. The audience will be able to digest and retain key points more easily. Don’t use your slides as speaker’s notes or to simply project an outline of your presentation.

5. Font Size
   Presenters often scan a table or graphic directly from their existing print corporate material and include it in their slide show presentations. The results are almost always sub-optimal. Print visuals are usually too small, too detailed and too textual for an effective visual presentation. In a slideshow, aim for a minimum of 24 point font. Make certain all elements of any particular slide are large enough to be easily seen.

6. Reading
   An oral presentation should focus on interactive speaking and listening, not reading by the speaker or the audience. One of your goals as a presenter is to capture and hold the audience’s attention. The demands of spoken and written language differ significantly. Spoken language is shorter, less formal and more direct. Reading text ruins a presentation. If you distribute materials before your presentation, your audience will be reading the handouts rather than listening to you. Often, parts of an effective presentation depend on creating suspense to engage the audience. If the audience can read everything you’re going to say, that element is lost.

7. Faith in Technology
   You never know when an equipment malfunction or incompatible interfaces will force you to give your presentation on another computer. Be prepared by having a back-up of your
presentation either on a USB flash drive or in Office 365 OneDrive. In the worst-case scenario, if none of the technology works, you should still be able to give an excellent presentation if you focus on the message. Always familiarize yourself with the presentation, practice it, and be ready to engage the audience regardless of the technology that is available.

The Microsoft tutorials on PowerPoint will teach you how to prepare a presentation from start to finish, including how to change the standard slide designs, create custom layouts, and hone your presentation skills.

Other Software Programs

Adobe Acrobat is a very useful program that allows you to create an almost universally usable PDF file from documents in a wide variety of programs. Acrobat comes in two versions. A free Reader program (adobe.com) allows you to view and print PDF documents, as well as to fill in fillable forms. The full-function version, called Acrobat Professional, allows you to do more with PDF files, including creating fillable forms, cropping pages to adjust margins, rearranging pages in a document, adding comments, etc. Acrobat’s support center (helpx.adobe.com/acrobat) has a variety of free tutorial videos available. At this site you will find tutorials that will teach you how to:

If part of your assistantship duties include maintaining or creating web pages for your University department, these must be in compliance with University standards. More information is available at wmich.edu/web/standards and wmich.edu/web/content. The use of elements of WMU’s visual identity is described in a publication produced by the Office of Marketing and Strategic Communications at wmich.edu/visualidentity. Any questions about design of University web pages should be directed to the Office of Marketing and Strategic Communications.

Other less-widely used programs may be essential to your research application assistantship duties. If so, your supervisor will provide you with information and resources for use.

Good luck and have a great experience!