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At USM, we believe that graduate assistantships should provide opportunities for individuals to develop the skills necessary for students to become part of a community of scholars and professionals. Graduate assistantships serve several purposes: to enhance students’ professional and scholarly development, to support faculty scholarship and teaching, to assist with university priorities, and to provide financial support for students.

Assistantships are awarded through academic programs and other USM departments. Resources for such positions are limited at USM and are carefully allocated to the most qualified students. It is a privilege to receive such funding and much is expected from its recipients.

This handbook has been created to address common questions and concerns of our graduate assistants. Please familiarize yourself with these policies and procedures to gain the maximum benefit of your assistantship experience.
An assistantship is an appointment as a student employee, which offers a financial payment to a graduate student for part-time work in research, administration, or teaching. There are three categories of assistantships at USM: Graduate Assistant, Graduate Research Assistant, and Graduate Teaching Assistant.

**Graduate Assistant**
Graduate assistants are appointed to perform various types of duties other than those related directly to teaching or research. Most commonly, these duties relate to administrative functions for the college and/or department. These include, but are not limited to, activities such as academic and student advising, recruiting, event planning, and data management. “Graduate Assistant” is also an umbrella term used by the Office of Graduate Studies to refer to students in all assistantships.

**Graduate Research Assistant**
Graduate research assistants perform duties in support of college, departmental, or faculty research, which may or may not relate directly to the student’s thesis or program of study. Research assistantships may be financed through funds from gifts, grants, contracts, state appropriations designated for research, or through an academic program’s resources.

**Graduate Teaching Assistant**
Graduate teaching assistants work under the direct supervision of regular faculty members and are assigned duties related directly to instruction. These include activities such as assisting in the preparation of lectures, assignments, and exams, leading discussion sections, conducting laboratory exercises, holding office hours and review sessions, grading papers, and keeping class records. In consultation with the supervisor, the teaching assistant works to gain teaching skills and an increased understanding of the discipline.
As a graduate assistant, you must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 and enroll in 6 graduate credits or more in each semester that you are employed as a GA. You must be matriculated in a graduate degree program at USM, in good academic standing, and be making acceptable progress towards your degree.

Students who withdraw from the university, are dismissed from their degree program, or are released from their graduate assistant position due to inadequate performance, will forfeit their assistantship. If the status change occurs during a semester, the graduate assistant may be required to reimburse the University for any unearned salary and tuition benefit associate with that semester.

Graduate assistantships are funded in one of several ways:

- Your academic program hires you through funds provided by the Office of Graduate Studies.
- Your academic program hires you with program resources.
- You are funded by a non-academic department that uses their own funding.
- You are hired with funds specified for graduate assistant work in a grant or contract.
All graduate assistant hires (regardless of funding source) are subject to the following minimum stipend requirements:

- Full-time (20 hrs/week) $9,000 per academic year ($1,000/month)
- 1/2 time (10 hrs/week) $4,500 per academic year ($500/month)

These stipends are based on 15 weeks of work during each semester.

GA positions funded by the Office of Graduate Studies are required to include tuition assistance as well as a monthly stipend. For other assistantships, the tuition benefit is optional.

The Office of Graduate Studies will report any awarded tuition assistance to the student accounts office and the financial aid office. Your financial aid package may be adjusted when the tuition assistance is reported. It is recommended that you contact the financial aid office when you receive notice of tuition assistance to discuss the possible impact on your financial aid award.
The term of a graduate assistantship is usually the 30-week period that school is in session from September through May. An assistantship that requires the student to work during break weeks must be on record with the Office of Graduate Studies and must include additional compensation beyond the minimum stipend rates.

Some assistantships are available during the 15-week summer term. To be eligible, the student must be enrolled in six graduate credits over the course of the summer semester. The minimum stipend rates apply to summer session.

As a continuing graduate student, you may be offered continuation of your assistantship for a second academic year. Graduate assistants should discuss the opportunity for a continuation of the assistantship with their supervisor early in the spring semester of their first year. Reappointments will be considered during the program’s annual deliberations regarding student support for the following year. Typically, Master’s degree candidates are limited to two years of GA funding and doctoral students receive funding for up to four years.

Please note: The University does not guarantee an appointment as a Graduate Assistant will be renewed at the end of its designated term. Although appointments are often renewed, the University cannot promise and there can be no expectancy that a graduate assistantship will be continued over an extended period of time. A department may decide not to reappoint a GA on the basis of performance, lack of progress toward degree, budgetary constraints, or lack of need for the position. Where external funding is lost, the position may be terminated at the end of the current appointment, but not earlier.
Students will receive a graduate assistant offer from the Office of Graduate Studies. The award letter will provide the name of your supervisor, state the length of the assistantship, indicate your compensation, and specify the type of assistantship (teaching, research, or other). You may also receive a letter about your award from your academic program.

In order to secure your position, you must return your acceptance form by the specified deadline. Upon receipt of your acceptance form, the Office of Graduate Studies will send you a packet of materials to fill out and submit before you are allowed to begin work as a graduate assistant. The forms packet includes:

- Human Resources Individual Data Sheet
- Federal W-4 Form
- State W-4 Form
- Direct Deposit Form
- Equal Employment Opportunity Survey
- Confidentiality Form
- I-9 Form

You will be asked to complete all of the forms (except the bottom portion of the I-9) on your own before meeting with someone in the Office of Graduate Studies or other authorized university personnel. Original copies of the required documents for the I-9 must be witnessed by the university staff member assisting you with the submission of your forms. Note that the I-9 requires a passport or a driver’s license with a social security card or birth certificate. You must also provide a voided check for direct deposit.
International students need to follow these additional instructions to become qualified to work as a GA.

- Meet with the Office of International Programs to obtain a Certification of On-Campus Employment Eligibility letter. You will need to bring your I-20, Passport, Visa, I-94, or other appropriate immigration documents.

- Apply for a social security card with the U.S. Social Security Office. Instructions will be available at the Office of International Programs. You must be in the United States for ten days before you can apply for your social security card.

- Meet with the Payroll office to complete tax treaty form 8233 and related paperwork. You will need your social security card or a receipt indicating that you have applied for a social security card before you meet with payroll.

International students are limited to twenty hours of work per week when school is in session. You may work up to 40 hours per week during school vacations. These total hours are the sum of all jobs worked on campus.

More details about these work policies can be found on the Office of International Programs Website: [http://www.usm.maine.edu/international/](http://www.usm.maine.edu/international/)
The recipient of an assistantship is both a student and an employee. As a student, you are expected to maintain a high level of academic performance and to develop professional skills through regular meetings with your supervisor/mentor. As an employee, you should expect to meet the specified job obligations outlined by your supervisor and to receive in-service training. While the responsibilities of the graduate assistant may be greater than those of other students, the opportunities for professional development are proportionately greater.

Graduate studies and assistantship work should reinforce one another whenever possible. Research projects, for example, should be of interest to you and should be useful in completing course or program requirements. Teaching or tutoring should enhance your own mastery of subject content and give you insight into effective pedagogy. To achieve these kinds of integration, the supervisor-mentor relationship is crucial. Careful planning and monitoring are hallmarks of truly successful graduate assistant experiences in which the relationship is beneficial to you, your supervisor, and the university.

General work expectations may vary depending on the department or program in which a graduate assistant serves. You should familiarize yourself with the work policies for graduate assistants and other employees within your respective work groups.
Tasks Not Appropriate for a Graduate Assistant
Reception work, routine office tasks, and similar duties that do not add value to your graduate educational experience should not be the sole content of your job requirements. Only assignments that enhance or complement your learning should be routinely prescribed by the supervisor. As with any job, you may be called upon to occasionally contribute to efforts outside of your job area. If you feel that you are consistently not working on projects that are appropriate for an assistantship, you should speak with your supervisor. If such issues are not resolved, you should contact the Office of Graduate Studies.

Work Schedule
Customarily, graduate assistants are expected to work only during the weeks/days that USM is in session throughout the academic year from September through May. Weekly work schedules are to be negotiated between the supervisor and the graduate assistant at the start of each semester. As salaried professionals, GAs are paid the same monthly salary, regardless of the number of USM scheduled holidays or other school breaks in a particular month. If a student is normally scheduled to work on a day when their employing USM facility is closed for a holiday but school is still in session, the student will not be required to work and will be paid for that day as usual. The same rule applies to unexpected official university closures.

Any alternative to the above work schedule must be negotiated in writing by the supervisor and the graduate assistant. Such agreements must be on file with the Office of Graduate Studies.

Record Keeping
Graduate assistants are considered professional employees at the university; you are not required to electronically submit your hours worked nor is your supervisor required to formally approve your time. GAs should track work time in a personal log and make it available to the supervisor or the Office of Graduate Studies if requested.

GA Exit Survey
GAs will be asked to complete an exit survey at the end of their appointment. The data will be used by the Office of Graduate Studies to evaluate and improve the graduate assistant experience. Exit surveys will ensure alignment between position descriptions and duties performed.

Breaks
All university employees are entitled to work breaks under certain conditions. If you work for a period of four concurrent hours, you are entitled to one paid 15-minute break. If you work for a period of six concurrent hours, you are entitled to a 30 minute UNPAID break. If you consistently do not wish to take the 30-minute break, you should request the waiver form from the Office of Graduate Studies and submit it to your supervisor for approval.
**Unpaid Time**
GAs are not compensated for lunch breaks, vacation time, sick time, leaves of absence, health insurance, bereavement pay, family medical leave, time off for military duty, or jury duty.

**Work Commitments**
Academics should be the focus of graduate students. For this reason, the Office of Graduate Studies recommends that graduate assistantship positions require no more than twenty hours per week and that students do not hold more than one position unless it is two ten hour positions. If you are offered positions totaling more than twenty hours per week and wish to accept the work, you must request permission in writing from the Office of Graduate Studies.

**Training**
Your supervisor or another appropriate person within your employing department should offer orientation and training for your graduate assistantship. Specific expectations of your job performance should be explained in detail before you begin work.

**Harassment Training**
You must complete the online training program provided by USM’s Human Resources department: [www.bernsteinshur.com](http://www.bernsteinshur.com)

Click on the “training” link at the very top of the home page.

When prompted, enter the appropriate User Name and Password:
User Name: usm_employee
Password: blue

When prompted, enter your full name – first and last.
After the training has ended, be sure to click on the “button” to confirm that you have viewed the training.

**Computer Ergonomic Training**
Your employing division should provide you with an ergonomically safe workstation and VDT training if you work on a computer for four or more hours per day.

**Resignations**
A graduate assistant who resigns prior to the end of his/her appointment is liable, on a pro-rated basis, for payment of all tuition and fees applicable to the semester in which the resignation takes place. Requests for exceptions to this policy may be made to the Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies. Call the Office of Graduate Studies at (207) 780-4877 for assistance.
It is the hope of the University that graduate assistants will find the conditions of their assistantships to be satisfactory and the experience gained to be rewarding. However, if a student has a problem or complaint regarding the graduate assistantship the student must:

- Speak first with his/her immediate supervisor. If the problem is not resolved, the GA must contact the Office of Graduate Studies at 780-4877 for help in filing a formal written compliant.
- In all cases in which the GA feels unable to speak with the supervisor, department, or college about the specific problem because of the nature of the problem or fear of repercussions, the GA must seek assistance in resolving the matter from the Office of Graduate Studies at 780-4877.

Most problems related to assistantships are resolved through informal consultation. However, if a satisfactory resolution has not been achieved following informal consideration by the GA and his/her supervisor, the GA may initiate a formal grievance by sending a letter of complaint to the Dean of Graduate Studies. The letter must clearly state the nature of the complaint/grievance and outline the steps already taken to resolve it. The letter must be copied to the supervisor of the GA. To be considered, the letter must be received by the Dean within 30 calendar days from the action involved or from the GA having reasonable knowledge of it. Under exceptional circumstances, that deadline may be extended at the discretion of the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Upon receipt of the letter the Dean of Graduate Studies will solicit a written response from the supervisor and may offer to meet with the GA and the supervisor, either individually or together, before reaching a decision. The Dean shall consult with any other persons as the Dean believes may be knowledgeable about the matter. The Dean shall endeavor to convey a written decision and, where appropriate, the remedy, to the GA and the supervisor within 10 working days of receipt of the letter. The decision of the Dean shall be final in all matters pertaining to the review.

All graduate students hired into an assistantship must be provided with an appointment letter specifying the date(s) of appointment, performance expectations, compensation, registration requirements, and any other pertinent information. This letter acts as the contract between the university and the student and is issued by the Office of Graduate Studies.

GAs must be provided with a brief job description that outlines the job responsibilities and expectations. This job description should accompany the appointment letter. Templates for GA job descriptions can be found at [http://usm.maine.edu/grad/graduate-faculty-and-staff-forms-page](http://usm.maine.edu/grad/graduate-faculty-and-staff-forms-page).
Substandard performance must be well documented and files relating to the substandard performance must be kept in the departmental office and copied to the Office of Graduate Studies.

The supervisor must meet with the GA to discuss the perceived deficiencies. At that time the GA should be provided with specific objectives which will help the individual meet the performance level expected in the position. The GA must be informed of the needed improvements to be made within a particular period of time. There is no set time limitation in the case of substandard performance; however, a two-to-three week conditional period is suggested as an appropriate period of time for an individual to improve performance. The GA should also be informed that failure to improve performance level will result in termination of the appointment.

After this meeting, the supervisor must provide the GA with a written account of the meeting. The follow-up correspondence should include the date, time, and place of the meeting; the deficiencies as stated in the meeting; and the student's response. This letter must be copied to the Office of Graduate Studies. During the conditional period for improvement, the supervisor must be available for advice and guidance to help the GA raise his or her level of performance to the acceptable standard.

If the supervisor concludes that the GA did not meet the objectives for improving performance, the supervisor may start the process of dismissal. Please see the dismissal policy for information on how to proceed.

At the end of each appointment, supervisors will complete a performance evaluation for each graduate assistant and review the evaluation form with the GA. Both the supervisor and the GA will sign the form and submit it to the Office of Graduate Studies. In cases where corrective measures must be taken to remedy deficiencies, recommended action to solve the problem(s) will be included in the performance evaluation. Failure to submit a performance evaluation may delay the hiring of any future graduate assistants.

Forms for the evaluations will be provided by the Office of Graduate Studies.
Students who fail to perform their assigned graduate assistant responsibilities satisfactorily may have their assistantship terminated upon departmental recommendation and review by the Office of Graduate Studies.

Students who fail to meet the academic standards required for degree progress or who fail to meet any one of the eligibility requirements stated in the GA appointment letter, may be denied permission to retain their GA award or to be considered for reappointment.

During the academic year, in rare and unusual circumstances, it may be necessary to dismiss a GA from his/her employment. Supervisors will determine if behavior and work performance require disciplinary action.

Graduate assistants cannot be terminated without due process. If a student is not performing up to expectations, the supervisor must first notify the student in writing about his/her concerns. See performance issues section for more information on this process. The supervisor and the GA should develop a performance improvement plan, with specific directions and a time frame for re-evaluating the student's performance as outlined in the section on performance issues.

If the GA and the supervisor are not able to agree on a performance improvement plan, the supervisor should contact the Office of Graduate Studies to request a form for dismissal of GA. This must be reviewed and approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies who may ask to meet with the student before approving dismissal. Appeals to dismissal may be made to the Provost of the University.

Possible reasons for dismissal include but are not limited to:
- Failure to perform tasks as assigned
- Failure to abide by appointment conditions
- Failure to make satisfactory research progress
- Failure to maintain minimum registration requirements
- Personal conduct that is seriously prejudicial to the university, including violation of the Code of Student Ethics, state or federal law, and general university regulations

In cases of gross error of judgment, violation of University of Southern Maine policies including falsification in the application process, and/or criminal behavior, the supervisor may terminate the GA immediately, providing the GA first has been given an opportunity to respond to the charges.

Please note:
The University does not guarantee an appointment as a Graduate Assistant will be renewed at the end of its designated term. Although appointments are often renewed, the University cannot promise and there can be no expectancy that a graduate assistantship will be continued over an extended period of time.

A department may decide not to reappoint a GA on the basis of performance, lack of progress toward degree, budgetary constraints, or lack of need for the position. Where external funding is lost, the position may be terminated at the end of the current appointment, but not earlier.
If you will have access to confidential data in your job, you may be required to sign a confidentiality statement before beginning work.

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

As a member of the University of Southern Maine workforce, I may be provided with access to personal, private or confidential data or information concerning faculty, staff, students, patients, or others associated with the University, as well as any confidential information regarding University business. All such information will be referred to here as “confidential” information.

I will use my access to confidential information for the sole purpose of conducting legitimate University business and understand that the use of confidential information for personal or other inappropriate purposes is prohibited. I will maintain in strictest confidence the information to which I have access. I will not:

a. Access or attempt to access information that I am not authorized to access;
b. Make unauthorized use of any confidential information to which I have access;
c. Seek personal benefit, permit or otherwise enable others to benefit personally from any confidential information to which I have access;
d. Disclose the contents of any record or report or otherwise provide confidential information to any person who is unauthorized to view such information.

I further understand that my access to confidential information is often facilitated by electronic information systems. In the interest of maintaining the integrity of these systems and of ensuring the privacy and security and proper use of University resources, I will avoid sharing my passwords to such systems and I will otherwise keep my passwords secure. If any emergency or other legitimate circumstance requires me to share a password, I will immediately reset it once the situation is resolved.

I will also maintain, process, and store confidential information in a secure way and will ensure that confidential information is shredded or otherwise disposed of in a secure and complete fashion.

I understand that this statement and additional guidance relating to securing information can be found within the USM Division of Human Resources Confidentiality Policy. I also understand that student education records are specifically protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and I will seek guidance from the Registrar’s Office if I am unsure about appropriate disclosure of such information. I further understand that certain departments or units within the University perform health care or health plan functions and are bound by privacy and security related policies and procedures created under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). I understand that if I am unsure about whether HIPAA applies, I will ask my supervisor.

Finally, I understand that failure to follow the USM Division of Human Resources Confidentiality Policy concerning the proper use and security of confidential information may result in disciplinary action.

Date: _______________________________  Employee Signature: __________________________
Direct deposit is required for all employees of the university. Graduate Assistants receive a monthly stipend based on the terms of your appointment letter. Payments are made on the last business day of each month during the term of employment.

**Viewing/Updating Payroll Information**

Graduate assistant payroll information may be accessed through the MaineStreet portal: http://mainestreet.maine.edu

Log in to MaineStreet using your standard student username and password.

After signing in, click on Employee Self-Service:

Once you are in the Employee Self-Service section of MaineStreet, you will have access to update your mailing address, phone numbers, emergency contact information and other personal information:

You will also be able to view current and prior paychecks, adjust tax withholdings, and change direct deposit information:
The USM Police Department is the department responsible for law enforcement, security and emergency response at the University of Southern Maine on the Gorham and Portland campuses. The primary office of USM Police is located on the Gorham campus at 28 Husky Drive. There is a branch office on the Portland campus in the Sullivan Gym. The USM Police Department is staffed by certified, professional police officers. The Department investigates all reports of criminal action and is ready to respond immediately to initiate whatever action is necessary to resolve emergencies. While the USM Police investigate reports that occur at Lewiston/Auburn College, emergency police assistance is handled by the Lewiston Police Department. Students, faculty and staff are strongly encouraged to report criminal actions or other emergencies by notifying the USM Police Department or the Lewiston Police Department immediately.

**Reporting Emergencies or Crimes**

**Gorham and Portland Campuses:** To report a crime or emergency, members of these campus communities should call the USM Police Department at:
From university phones: 911
From off-campus or cell phone: 780-5211.
These numbers are staffed 24 hours a day by full-time and certified communications officers.

**Lewiston/Auburn College:**
To report an emergency call the Lewiston Police Department at 911
To report a crime USM Police should be called at 780-5211

**Exterior Campus Emergency Telephones**
Blue light emergency phones will dial immediately into the USM Police Department when the receiver is lifted. These emergency phones are located on the USM campuses for safety and security. When the receiver is lifted, the USM Police Department immediately receives the location of the caller.

Free on-campus public telephones are located in the lobbies or public areas of most Gorham and Portland campus buildings. Using these telephones, the USM Police Department may be contacted by dialing 911 for emergencies or 5211 for non-emergencies.

**Sexual Assault Policy:**
http://www.usm.maine.edu/ocs/assaultpolicy.html

**Harassing Phone Calls**
If you receive a harassing or obscene telephone call, record the date and time of the call and report the incident to the USM Police Department (x5211). Voice mail messages should not be deleted until they can be listened to, forwarded or recorded. The USM Police Department should be notified as soon as possible since messages that have been listened to automatically delete after ten days. The USM Police Department will then notify Telecommunications to determine the course of action to be taken. Remember, the best way to halt harassing calls is to hang up!

**Emergency/Storm Hotline Numbers:**
Portland and Gorham: 207-780-4800 or TTY: 780-5034
Lewiston Auburn College: 753-6595
These phone numbers provides updated cancellation information due to an emergency or inclement weather.

Or sign up for free text alerts for campus emergencies, storm cancellations, and parking bans:
http://www.usm.maine.edu/usmalert/

For complete campus safety information, visit: http://www.usm.maine.edu/police/safetyreport.html
If you are injured while engaged in your assigned GA duties, you are covered by USM’S Workers’ Compensation plan. For your protection, and to comply with the Workers’ Compensation Act, you are required to immediately report the injury to your supervisor or the next appropriate person in the place of work. The supervisor will provide assistance in immediately seeking the appropriate medical attention for the injury. The Supervisor or GA should also contact the Benefits Office at 780-5199 as soon as possible.

**PORTLAND GA’S**
For non-life threatening injuries, contact Bayside Employee Health at 780-6631 for treatment. For more serious injuries, contact the University Police at 911 from a university phone or 780-5211 from a cell phone or from off-campus.

**GORHAM GA’S**
For non-life threatening injuries, contact Bayside Employee Health at 780-6631 for treatment. For more serious injuries, contact the University Police at 911 from a university phone or 780-5211 from a cell phone or from off-campus.

**LEWISTON GA’S**
For non-life threatening injuries, contact WorkMed Occupational Health Services at 753-3080 for treatment.
For more serious injuries, contact Lewiston Police at 911.

**ALL CAMPUSES**
As soon as possible, the employee and supervisor must complete the Injury Report form and follow the instructions at the top of the form.
Business Related Travel
As a student employee, you may be required to travel for university business. Permission to travel and reimbursement for expenses associated with travel must be pre-approved by your supervisor. Procedures for making travel arrangements, documenting expenses, and submitting expenses for reimbursement are detailed by USM policy in this document: Funding for all travel must be paid by your employing department.


Use of Own Vehicle
With prior approval, you may use your own car for university business and receive mileage reimbursement. However, the university will not provide any relief in the event of a motor vehicle accident while you are on company business. Liability rests solely with you.

Use of University Vehicles
The university has some vehicles available through Facilities Management. Your department may be able to secure one of these vehicles for your travel.

Use of Rental Vehicles
With permission from your supervisor, you may be able to be reimbursed for a rental vehicle that you pay for with your own credit card.

Traffic Violations
You will be responsible for all traffic violations and fines incurred while on university business.

Intellectual Property
The University of Maine System Statement of Policy Governing Patents and Copyrights details the principles of the ownerships of intellectual property as it applies to research and scholarly work created by USM students and employees. The purpose of this policy is to provide incentives and protections to encourage the discovery of new knowledge and its application and transfer for the public benefit.

Typically, USM maintains ownership of some works including those created:
- as an assigned university duty.
- for the University’s use.
- with the significant use of university resources.

The University does not claim ownership of:
- instructional materials
- traditional works of scholarship including publications, journal articles, and books.

For specific questions about the work you may be involved with through your assistantship, refer to the system policy. It may be viewed in its entirety at:
www.maine.edu/pdf/intprop.pdf

If you are concerned about the intellectual property rights of work that you are creating in your assistantship, consult with your supervisor for clarification.
Acceptable Use of Computers and Technology at USM

If you are authorized to use USM computing equipment as part of your assigned responsibilities, you should familiarize yourself with the following policies:

Preamble
The University of Southern Maine (USM) endeavors to develop and provide access to collections, services, facilities, equipment, and programs which meet the information and educational needs of the University community, and to advance the research, instruction, and service missions of the University.

In fulfillment of this purpose, and in response to advances in technology and the changing needs of the community, USM supports open access to information resources, including the Internet, to the greatest extent possible. In return, the University expects users of information resources to be aware of and act in compliance with all relevant federal and state laws, local ordinances, and University policies. It further expects its users to be familiar and to behave consistently with the several general principles which together constitute appropriate, responsible, and ethical behavior in an academic environment, particularly in regard to the use of the University's information resources. Those principles include: Freedom of Expression, Respect for Privacy, Respect for Property Rights, Respect for Personal and Cultural Differences, Freedom from Harassment, Respect for and Compliance with Intellectual Property Rights and Copyright Law.

The University affirms that it will be a partner with users in promoting education and understanding of the appropriate, efficient, and successful use of information resources.

Responsibilities
All users of University of Southern Maine information resources are expected to behave responsibly, legally, and ethically in their use of electronic resources. To that end, it is the responsibility of those users to:

- honor all state and federal laws, copyright provisions, Board of Trustees policies, and software licensing agreements to which the institution is a party;
- be aware of and comply with University and the University's agencies' procedures and regulations for accessing and operating computer and related hardware, software, and other information resources;
- cooperate with legitimate requests by University staff;
- take precautions to protect accounts and passwords by selecting obscure passwords, changing them frequently, and not sharing such information or the use of the accounts with others;
- download information from computers to disk whenever possible, photocopy multiple copies, and otherwise limit printing to what is directly needed in order to conserve paper and to make the most efficient use of resources;
- properly logoff or logout whenever leaving a computer in an area which is accessible to others; treat others with dignity and respect; respect the privacy and confidentiality rights of others, including their files and accounts; use USM's information resources only for purposes which are legal and consistent with the University's mission.

Consistent with the above, unacceptable uses and behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- damaging or attempting to alter computer equipment;
- violating, or attempting to violate, computer system security;
- violating, or attempting to violate, software license agreements;
- incurring unauthorized or unreasonable costs for the University;
- accessing files, data, or passwords of others without authorization;
- disrupting or monitoring electronic communications without authorization;
- harassing other computer users or University staff;
- violating the privacy of others;
- libeling or slandering others;
- using any University workstation for any illegal purpose;
- copying or distributing copyright-protected material without legal right or authorization;
- intentionally and unnecessarily exposing others to material they may find personally unsuitable.

Results of Inappropriate Behavior
It is important to recognize that inappropriate behavior has an adverse effect on the work of others, on the ability of University staff to provide good service, and/or on information resources themselves. Thus it is expected that users of information resources at USM will be constructively responsive to others' complaints, and receptive to University staff's reasonable requests for changes in behavior or action.
University staff will attempt to resolve differences and problems among information users by asking for the cooperation of those involved, and for compliance with University policies.

The University will pursue infractions or misconduct that cannot be resolved informally with the general means it has available to it within the University and with law enforcement, as appropriate.

Serious infractions or misconduct may result in temporary or permanent loss of access privileges.

**Guiding Principles**

The University of Southern Maine supports the democratic principle of freedom of access to information for every citizen. The University endorses: the American Library Association (ALA)'s Library Bill of Rights; ALA's Access to Electronic Information, Services, and Networks: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, adopted by ALA in 1996; and the EDUCOM Guide to the Ethical and Legal Use of Software.

The University does not attempt to limit access to, or otherwise protect, users of information resources from any particular materials available in any format, beyond the choices it makes in selecting materials or providing electronic links to information sources of particular merit.

USM does not monitor, and has no control over, information accessible through the Internet. The University disclaims any warranty for any information found on the Internet as to its accuracy, authority, timeliness, usefulness, or fitness for a particular purpose. Likewise, the University disclaims any control over, or knowledge about, changes in content to the sources for which it has established links, or for the content of sources accessed through secondary links.

Use of the Internet and all other information resources will be managed in a manner consistent with other USM service policies. This includes: the University's Student Conduct Code; the USM Library's Rules and Expectations of Appropriate Conduct (rev. March, 1998); and the UMS Sexual Harassment Policy.

The Internet contains much information that is personally, academically, professionally, and culturally enriching. It also provides material that may be factually incorrect, offensive, disturbing to some individuals, and/or illegal. Moreover, the Internet may not be an adequate substitute for many other kinds of information resources which may be limited by copyright or other restrictions to local use. Users of information resources are encouraged to ask a librarian for assistance in finding the best sources for their research.

While the University is committed to serving the general public to the greatest extent possible, it reserves the right to give priority in service to the USM campus community (students, faculty, and staff), especially in the case of a high level of demand for limited equipment and materials. This may include limiting the amount of time patrons may have to use certain information resources and supporting equipment. Moreover, access to some information resources must be limited to campus patrons, notably in cases of licensing or other contractual agreements with vendors.

This information may also be found online: [http://usm.maine.edu/computing/policies/acceptableuse.jsp](http://usm.maine.edu/computing/policies/acceptableuse.jsp)
Institutional Review Board (IRB)
- The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research is responsible for reviewing activities determined to be research with human subjects. The start of any research (including the recruitment of subjects) that has not been previously reviewed and approved by the ORIO and/or the IRB is prohibited.
- Please consult with the ORIO for information and guidance on what activities may constitute research with human subjects and the applicable policies and procedure.

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)
- Any research, teaching, or testing activity that involves any live vertebrate animals must be reviewed and approved by the IACUC before the activity may begin.

Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC)
- Any research, teaching, or testing activity that involves any of the following must be reviewed and approved by the IBC before the activity may begin:
  - Recombinant DNA,
  - Human or Animal Blood, Body Fluids, Tissues, or other Biological Samples
  - Infectious agents, or
  - Select Agents as defined by the USDA and HHS

Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)
- NIH requires that all trainees, fellows, participants, and scholars receiving support through any NIH training, career development award (individual or institutional), research education grant, and dissertation research grant must receive instruction in RCR.
- NSF requires that students (undergraduates and graduates) and postdoctoral researchers who receive NSF funds (support from salary and/or stipends to conduct research on NSF grants) will obtain RCR training.
- ORIO offers a compliant RCR four-hour class once a semester.

Export Control
- If your Research Agreement contains an explicit export control clause;
- Involves IP/Technology that may be subject to federal regulations or
- Involves nations that are on the Department of State lists

Students must seek applicable IRB, IACUC or IBC review for covered activities before work can begin. If you are unsure if your project qualifies as a covered activity you are strongly encouraged to consult ORIO staff.

Please refer to the website for more information: [http://usm.maine.edu/orio](http://usm.maine.edu/orio)

Please contact us!
Office of Research Integrity and Outreach
7 Chamberlain Avenue
Portland Campus
usmorio@usm.maine.edu
(207) 780-4517
If you are working on multiple projects, ask your supervisor to prioritize the projects if you are unsure of the order of importance.

Project deadlines and expected interim progress stages on projects should be clear and mutually understood. If a deadline seems unreasonable, let your supervisor know.

There are times when you may be asked to put in extra hours to meet a deadline. These should be rare and you should be given time off to compensate for the extra time worked.

Be flexible. Things happen, concepts change and deadlines approach quickly. Be willing to help out whenever you can, but do not overcommit your time.

Set up weekly or bi-weekly appointments with your supervisors to discuss your work. This is a good time to get feedback on things that are going well, things that are not going so well, and how things can be improved. Communication is key to a successful working relationship.

If you have problems with your projects or any other aspects of being a GA, do not hesitate to speak with your supervisor or the Office of Graduate Studies.
The University of Southern Maine shall not discriminate on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, transgender status or gender expression, national origin or citizenship status, age, disability, or veteran's status in employment, education, and all other areas of the University. The University provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities upon request. Questions and complaints about discrimination in any area of the University should be directed to the executive director, Office of Campus Diversity and Equity, 780-5094, TTY 780-5646.

OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

P.O. Box 9300
Portland, ME 04104-9300

Campus Address:
124 Wishcamper
(34 Bedford Street)
Portland Campus

Phone (207) 780-4877
Fax (207) 780-4969

www.usm.maine.edu/grad

FOR MORE INFORMATION: