

# **Graduate Appointee Training Program**

## **2026-2027 Research Application Handbook**



***WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY***

Graduate College

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## 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. Each unit will have a customized training program based on the needs of the unit.

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 website.

## **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.

**Phone and voicemail instructions are available in goWMU. Phone services for WMU are now web based with Webex calling.**

[go.wmich.edu/s/article/Phone-Services-App](http://go.wmich.edu/s/article/Phone-Services-App)

**Need more help?** The Technology Help Desk is located on the second floor of the University Computing Center (UCC). Call them at 269-387-4357 (269-387-HELP) or email them at [helpdesk@wmich.edu](mailto:helpdesk@wmich.edu).

## Cell Phone Etiquette at Work

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.**
- **Keep the use of your phone to a minimum during work hours, including texting and phone calls.**
- **If you 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."