



ALKIMI UNIVERSITY
Merrow Falls · Founded 1891

Graduate Student & TA Handbook

The Graduate School · Policies for graduate students and teaching assistants

EDITION
2026–27 Edition

EFFECTIVE
Effective August 1, 2026

FOR
Master's and doctoral students, graduate assistants

MAINTAINED BY
The Graduate School

FICTIONAL INSTITUTION — DEMONSTRATION DOCUMENT

Alkimi University is a fictional institution created by Alkimi AI to demonstrate its products. It does not admit students, grant degrees, employ faculty, or accept payments. All people, places, policies, and figures in this document are invented.

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Contents

About this handbook	3
1 The Graduate School	4
1.1 Welcome and Mission of the Graduate School	4
1.2 Graduate School Leadership and Contact Directory	4
1.3 Graduate School Governance and the Graduate Council	4
2 Enrollment and Registration	5
2.1 Full-Time and Part-Time Enrollment Status	5
2.2 Continuous Enrollment Policy and Maintenance of Status	5
2.3 Leave of Absence and Medical Leave	6
2.4 Registration Deadlines, Course Drops, and Withdrawals	6
2.5 Course Overloads, Auditing, and Undergraduate Coursework	6
3 Academic Standards	7
3.1 Minimum Cumulative GPA and Academic Good Standing (3.0 Rule)	7
3.2 Graduate Grading System and Qualifying Course Grades	7
3.3 Incomplete Grades and Course Repeat Policy	7
3.4 Academic Warning, Probation, and Dismissal	8
3.5 Time Limits for Degree Completion	8
3.6 Academic Appeals and Grievance Procedures	9
4 Advising and Committees	10
4.1 Selection of Faculty Advisor and Major Professor	10
4.2 Master's Supervisory Committee Composition	10
4.3 Doctoral Dissertation Committee Composition and Outside Members	10
4.4 Procedures for Changing Faculty Advisors or Committee Members	11
4.5 Advisor-Advisee Expectations and Annual Progress Reviews	11
5 Degree Milestones and Deadlines	12
5.1 Master's Degree Milestones: Thesis vs. Non-Thesis Options	12
5.2 Doctoral Diagnostic and Qualifying Examinations	12
5.3 Admission to Doctoral Candidacy	12
5.4 The Dissertation Prospectus and Proposal Defense	13
5.5 The Doctoral Dissertation Defense and Public Oral Examination	13
5.6 Thesis and Dissertation Format Review and ProQuest Submission	14
5.7 Deadlines for May 2027 Degree Conferral	14
6 Graduate Assistantships	15
6.1 Assistantship Categories: TA, RA, and GA	15
6.2 Assistantship Stipend Rates, Payment Schedules, and Tax Withholding	15
6.3 Full Tuition Waivers and Mandatory Fee Coverage	15
6.4 Workload Limits (The 20-Hour Rule)	16
6.5 Appointment Letters, Onboarding, and Terms of Employment	16
6.6 Performance Evaluation, Reappointment, and Termination	16
6.7 Outside Employment Policy and Conflict of Commitment	17
7 Teaching Assistant Responsibilities	18
7.1 Mandatory Graduate Teaching Assistant Orientation	18
7.2 FERPA Compliance and Student Educational Records	18
7.3 Supervised Grading, Grading Rubrics, and Timely Feedback	18

7.4 Holding Office Hours and Student Communication	19
7.5 Academic Integrity Reporting Through the Instructor of Record	19
7.6 Generative Artificial Intelligence in Teaching Assistant Duties	20
7.7 Title IX Mandatory Reporting Obligations	20
7.8 Prohibited Conduct and TA Authority Boundaries	20
8 Research Integrity and Compliance	22
8.1 Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) and CITI Training	22
8.2 Institutional Review Board (IRB) Protocols and Deadlines	22
8.3 Authorship Guidelines, Intellectual Property, and Credit	22
8.4 Research Data Management, Storage, and Retention Policy	23
9 Funding, Travel, and Awards	24
9.1 Graduate Student Travel Grants	24
9.2 Doctoral Dissertation Fellowships and Alkimi Research Grants	24
9.3 External Fellowship Application Support and Incentives	24
9.4 Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL) Graduate Teaching Certificates	25
10 Graduate Student Wellbeing and Support	26
10.1 Hollis Health & Counseling Center and 24/7 Mental Health Support	26
10.2 Graduate Student Health Insurance Plan and Subsidy	26
10.3 Graduate Student Parental Accommodation Policy	26
10.4 Graduate Student Ombuds and Informal Dispute Resolution	27
10.5 Housing, Childcare, and Commuter Resources	27
11 Graduation	28
11.1 Filing the Intent to Graduate and Degree Audits	28
11.2 Final Clearance and Graduation Deadlines for May 2027	28
11.3 Commencement and Doctoral Hooding Ceremony	28
11.4 Academic Regalia, Diplomas, and Transcripts	29

ALKIMI UNIVERSITY

About this handbook

This handbook is the official policy and governance publication of The Graduate School at Alkimi University for the 2026–27 academic year. It codifies the academic standards, degree milestone regulations, assistantship guidelines, and instructional expectations governing master’s and doctoral education across all academic colleges and professional schools.

Target Audience and Scope: This handbook applies to all enrolled graduate students, including master’s degree candidates (MA, MS, MAT, MAcc, MSN, MPH, MBA), doctoral candidates (PhD, DNP, EdD), and graduate assistants holding Teaching Assistant (TA), Research Assistant (RA), or Graduate Assistant (GA) appointments. It serves as the primary policy contract between graduate students, faculty mentors, graduate program directors, and the university administration.

How to Cite This Document: Policies, milestones, and assistantship requirements in this handbook should be cited by publication title and specific section number, such as *Graduate Handbook* §3.1 or *Graduate Handbook* §7.3.

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Contact: The Graduate School · Founders Hall 240 · (555) 555-0138 · gradschool@university.alkimi.ai

CHAPTER 1

The Graduate School

§1.1 Welcome and Mission of the Graduate School

Welcome to advanced scholarly and professional study at Alkimi University. The Graduate School coordinates post-baccalaureate academic programs, cultivates interdisciplinary research inquiry, administers competitive fellowships and graduate assistantships, and champions intellectual rigor across five distinct academic divisions: the College of Arts & Sciences, the School of Business, the School of Engineering & Computing, the School of Nursing & Health Sciences, and the School of Education. Under Dean Victor Huang, The Graduate School upholds rigorous academic standards, ethical compliance, and professional mentoring preparing graduates for leadership in academia, government, research laboratories, healthcare, and industry.

§1.2 Graduate School Leadership and Contact Directory

The Graduate School centralizes administrative oversight for graduate admissions, academic progress tracking, assistantship contracts, dissertation formatting reviews, and degree conferral. The main office in Founders Hall 240 is open Monday–Friday 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Office / Role	Officer / Room	Contact Information
Dean of the Graduate School	Dr. Victor Huang · Founders Hall 240	vhuang@university.alkimi.ai · (555) 555-0138
Associate Dean of Graduate Studies	Dr. Evelyn Vance · Founders Hall 242	evance@university.alkimi.ai · (555) 555-0138
Graduate Records & Degree Audit	Marcus Lind · Founders Hall 246	gradrecords@university.alkimi.ai · (555) 555-0138
Graduate Student Ombuds	Dr. Kenneth Morales · Whitcombe 410	gradombuds@university.alkimi.ai · (555) 555-0182
Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL)	Dr. Marcus Lee · Whitcombe 3rd Fl	ctl@university.alkimi.ai · (555) 555-0172
Office of Research & Sponsored Projects	Dr. Caroline Ashworth · Meridian 150	research@university.alkimi.ai · (555) 555-0132
Office of Title IX & Equal Opportunity	Angela Moreno · Harlan Hall 310	titleix@university.alkimi.ai · (555) 555-0166

Contact: The Graduate School · Founders Hall 240 · (555) 555-0138 · gradschool@university.alkimi.ai

§1.3 Graduate School Governance and the Graduate Council

Academic policies, new degree proposals, graduate curriculum modifications, and graduate faculty credentialing are governed by the **Graduate Council**. Chaired by Dean Victor Huang, the Council includes elected faculty representatives from each academic school, the Registrar, the Associate Provost for Research, and two voting graduate student delegates appointed by the Graduate Student Association (GSA). The Council convenes on the second Wednesday of each month from September through May at 3:00 p.m. in the Faculty Senate Chamber (Founders Hall 225). Proposals are due 14 days prior to the meeting.

Contact: The Graduate School · Founders Hall 240 · (555) 555-0138 · gradschool@university.alkimi.ai

CHAPTER 2

Enrollment and Registration

§2.1 Full-Time and Part-Time Enrollment Status

Graduate enrollment status determines financial aid eligibility, visa compliance for international students (F-1), loan deferment status, and assistantship appointment validity.

- **Full-Time Graduate Status (Standard):** For graduate students not holding a formal assistantship appointment, full-time enrollment is defined as registration for a minimum of **9 semester credit hours** during a regular semester (Fall or Spring).
- **Full-Time Graduate Status for Graduate Assistants:** Graduate students holding an active 20-hour-per-week assistantship appointment (Teaching Assistant, Research Assistant, or Graduate Assistant) are considered full-time when registered for a minimum of **6 semester credit hours**. Because of the substantial pedagogical and investigative responsibilities associated with graduate assistantships, 6 credits constitutes an intensive, full-time scholarly commitment.
- **Doctoral Dissertation Status (Full-Time Equivalent):** Doctoral candidates who have passed their comprehensive qualifying examinations and have been formally admitted to candidacy (§5.3) are certified as full-time students when enrolled in **1 credit hour** of Doctoral Dissertation Continuing Enrollment (e.g., PSYC 699 or CS 699).
- **Part-Time Graduate Status:** Registration for 1 to 8 semester credit hours (or 1 to 5 credit hours for funded graduate assistants) constitutes part-time status. Part-time students pay graduate tuition on a per-credit basis (\$1,450 per credit hour for standard programs; \$1,580 per credit hour for MBA coursework).

Contact: Office of the Registrar · Alkimi One Stop, Harlan Hall 120 · (555) 555-0160 · registrar@university.alkimi.ai

§2.2 Continuous Enrollment Policy and Maintenance of Status

All students matriculated in master's or doctoral degree programs at Alkimi University are required to maintain **continuous enrollment** every Fall and Spring semester from initial entry until all degree requirements are certified and the degree is conferred.

1. **Active Course Registration:** Continuous enrollment is maintained by enrolling in at least 1 credit of graduate-level coursework, master's thesis research (e.g., BIO 599), or doctoral dissertation research each regular semester.
2. **Summer Enrollment:** Summer enrollment is not required to maintain continuous status unless the student holds an active summer graduate assistantship, utilizes university research laboratory facilities, takes qualifying examinations, or anticipates August degree conferral.
3. **Failure to Maintain Continuous Enrollment:** A graduate student who fails to register for courses or an approved continuing research placeholder by the census date of any Fall or Spring semester without an authorized Leave of Absence is deemed to have voluntarily withdrawn from Alkimi University.
4. **Readmission after Lapse:** A student whose continuous enrollment has lapsed must formally petition for readmission to The Graduate School and pay a \$75 reinstatement fee. Readmission requires the endorsement of the department graduate program director and the approval of Dean Victor Huang. Readmitted students are held to the catalog degree requirements in effect at the time of readmission.

Contact: The Graduate School · Founders Hall 240 · (555) 555-0138 · gradschool@university.alkimi.ai

§2.3 Leave of Absence and Medical Leave

Graduate students facing extenuating personal, medical, professional, or military circumstances may apply for an authorized Leave of Absence (LOA).

- **Standard Leave of Absence:** Granted for up to two consecutive regular semesters. Applications must be approved via AlkimiHub prior to the first day of classes for the semester of leave (August 26, 2026 for Fall; January 19, 2027 for Spring). An approved LOA suspends the time-to-degree clock (§3.5). While on leave, students do not hold assistantships, cannot access laboratories, and cannot sit for milestone examinations.
- **Medical Leave of Absence:** Granted for severe physical or mental health conditions with documentation from a licensed provider submitted to Hollis Health & Counseling Center. Return requires a clearance letter submitted 30 days prior to the semester of return.

Contact: The Graduate School · Founders Hall 240 · (555) 555-0138 · gradschool@university.alkimi.ai

§2.4 Registration Deadlines, Course Drops, and Withdrawals

Graduate students must observe published deadlines for enrollment adjustments:

Registration Action	Fall 2026 Semester Deadline	Spring 2027 Semester Deadline
Tuition and Fees Payment Due	Friday, August 14, 2026	Friday, January 8, 2027
Classes Begin	Wednesday, August 26, 2026	Tuesday, January 19, 2027
Add Course / Change Sections	Wednesday, September 2, 2026	Tuesday, January 26, 2027
Census Date / Drop without “W” (100% refund)	Wednesday, September 9, 2026	Tuesday, February 2, 2027
50% Tuition Refund Deadline	Wednesday, September 16, 2026	Tuesday, February 9, 2027
25% Tuition Refund Deadline (No refunds after)	Wednesday, September 23, 2026	Tuesday, February 16, 2027
Course Withdrawal with “W” Grade	Friday, November 6, 2026	Thursday, April 1, 2027
Final Grades Due (12:00 p.m. noon)	Monday, December 21, 2026	Tuesday, May 18, 2027

Courses dropped on or before census date leave no transcript record. Drops between census and withdrawal deadline result in a “W”, which does not impact GPA but affects SAP. Dropping below 6 credits for assistants forfeits the assistantship and tuition waiver.

Contact: Office of the Registrar · Alkimi One Stop, Harlan Hall 120 · (555) 555-0160 · registrar@university.alkimi.ai

§2.5 Course Overloads, Auditing, and Undergraduate Coursework

- **Course Overloads:** Maximum standard registration is 12 credits (9 credits for assistants). Enrolling in 13–15 credits requires a 3.500 GPA and authorization from the program director and Graduate Dean. Over 15 credits is prohibited.
- **Auditing Courses:** Permitted with instructor approval; carries no credit and does not satisfy assistantship enrollment. Full per-credit tuition applies. Cannot be converted to credit after census.
- **Undergraduate Coursework:** Deficiency prerequisites (below 500) do not satisfy graduate degree requirements and do not factor into the graduate GPA.

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CHAPTER 3

Academic Standards

§3.1 Minimum Cumulative GPA and Academic Good Standing (3.0 Rule)

Academic excellence is the foundational prerequisite of graduate education at Alkimi University. To remain in academic good standing and qualify for degree conferral, all master's and doctoral students must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of **3.000 (B average)** on a 4.000 scale across all graduate-level courses completed in residence.

A cumulative GPA below 3.000 represents unsatisfactory academic progress and results in immediate academic sanctions, loss of assistantship eligibility, and potential dismissal as set forth in §3.4.

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§3.2 Graduate Grading System and Qualifying Course Grades

Graduate course performance is evaluated under the following quality point system:

Letter Grade	Quality Points	Percentage Range	Graduate Degree Applicability
A	4.0	93–100%	Mastery; full degree credit awarded
A-	3.7	90–92%	Excellent; full degree credit awarded
B+	3.3	87–89%	Very good; full degree credit awarded
B	3.0	83–86%	Satisfactory graduate attainment; degree credit
B-	2.7	80–82%	Marginal graduate attainment; degree credit
C+	2.3	77–79%	Deficient; program approval required for credit
C	2.0	73–76%	Deficient; program approval required for credit
C-	1.7	70–72%	Deficient; program approval required for credit
D+ / D	1.3 / 1.0	60–69%	Failing; zero degree credit; factored into GPA
F	0.0	Below 60%	Total failure; zero credit; factored into GPA
S / U	N/A	Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory	Used for thesis/dissertation research only

Qualifying Grades for Degree Credit: Grades of “A”, “A-”, “B+”, “B”, and “B-” fully count toward the credit hour requirements of all graduate degrees. Grades of “C+”, “C”, and “C-” yield course credit only if explicitly approved by the student’s graduate program director; however, no more than two grades in the C range (maximum 6 credits) may be applied toward any master’s or doctoral degree. Grades of “D+”, “D”, and “F” cannot be applied toward any graduate credential, although the zero quality points are calculated directly into the cumulative GPA.

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§3.3 Incomplete Grades and Course Repeat Policy

Incomplete Grades (“I”): An Incomplete is granted only when documented, severe medical illness or personal emergency prevents a student who is currently passing the course from completing the final project or examination.

- **Written Incomplete Contract:** The student and instructor must execute a formal Incomplete Contract specifying remaining work and the final submission deadline.

- **Resolution Window:** All remaining coursework must be submitted to the instructor no later than the end of the subsequent regular semester.
- **Conversion to F:** An unresolved Incomplete automatically converts to a permanent grade of “F” on the official transcript on the final day of classes of the subsequent regular semester. Graduate assistants with an active Incomplete cannot be reappointed for subsequent academic years without a dean’s waiver.

Course Repeat Policy: A graduate student who earns a grade of “B-” or lower in a required core course may repeat that course once with the written consent of their department chair and the Graduate Dean. Both course registrations and grades remain visible on the official transcript; however, only the second grade earned is calculated in the cumulative graduate GPA. A graduate student may repeat no more than two total courses during their post-baccalaureate tenure at Alkimi University.

Contact: The Graduate School · Founders Hall 240 · (555) 555-0138 · gradschool@university.alkimi.ai

§3.4 Academic Warning, Probation, and Dismissal

- **Academic Warning:** Any graduate student whose semester GPA falls below 3.000, while their cumulative GPA remains at or above 3.000, receives an official letter of Academic Warning from The Graduate School.
- **Academic Probation:** Any graduate student whose **cumulative GPA falls below 3.000** at the close of any regular semester is immediately placed on **Academic Probation**.
 - A student on probation is restricted to enrolling in no more than 6 semester credit hours.
 - The student must draft a formal Academic Recovery Plan with their faculty advisor within two weeks of grade posting.
 - **Assistantship Ineligibility:** Students on academic probation cannot be awarded or reappointed to graduate teaching or research assistantships.
- **Academic Dismissal:** A graduate student on academic probation is granted exactly one regular semester (Fall or Spring) to raise their cumulative GPA to 3.000 or higher. If, at the end of the probationary semester, the student’s cumulative GPA remains below 3.000, the student is **academically dismissed** from The Graduate School.
- Dismissal is executed administratively by Dean Victor Huang upon certification by the University Registrar. Academically dismissed students are barred from enrollment in any graduate program at Alkimi University for a minimum of two calendar years.

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§3.5 Time Limits for Degree Completion

To guarantee that earned credentials reflect contemporary scholarship, theoretical developments, and technological methodologies, The Graduate School enforces strict statutory time limits for post-baccalaureate degree completion:

- **Master’s Degree Time Limit:** All requirements for a master’s degree (MA, MS, MAT, MAcc, MSN, MPH, MBA)—including coursework, comprehensive examinations, internships, and thesis defense—must be completed within **five (5) calendar years** from the date of initial matriculation.
- **Doctoral Degree Time Limit:** All requirements for a doctoral degree (PhD, DNP, EdD)—including diagnostic exams, qualifying exams, admission to candidacy, prospectus defense, dissertation research, public defense, and electronic submission—must be completed within **eight (8) calendar years** from initial doctoral matriculation. Students entering a doctoral program with an approved master’s degree must finish within **seven (7) calendar years**.
- **Time Limit Extensions:** Under exceptional, documented circumstances (prolonged illness, laboratory facility disaster, birth or adoption of a child), a student may submit a formal Petition for

Extension of Time. The petition must include a revised milestone timeline, endorsement from the dissertation committee, and approval from the department chair. The Graduate Council reviews extensions, which cannot exceed one calendar year.

Contact: The Graduate School · Founders Hall 240 · (555) 555-0138 · gradschool@university.alkimi.ai

§3.6 Academic Appeals and Grievance Procedures

A graduate student who believes an academic evaluation, milestone determination, or dismissal was arbitrary, discriminatory, or executed in violation of established procedural guidelines may initiate an academic appeal:

1. **Step 1: Informal Conference:** Within 10 business days of the contested action, the student must request an informal meeting with the faculty member or committee chair.
2. **Step 2: Departmental Appeal:** If informal dialogue does not resolve the matter, the student submits a formal written petition with documentation to the Department Chair within 15 business days of the initial action. The Chair renders a written determination within 10 business days.
3. **Step 3: College Dean Review:** The student may appeal the Chair's decision to the Dean of the respective academic college within 10 business days.
4. **Step 4: Graduate School Hearing Board:** If procedural irregularity or bias remains contested, the student may appeal to Dean Victor Huang within 10 business days of the college dean's decision. Dean Huang convenes a three-person panel of the Graduate Council Hearing Board (two graduate faculty, one doctoral student). The Board conducts a formal hearing and issues a final, binding institutional recommendation to Provost Samuel Adebayo.

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CHAPTER 4

Advising and Committees

§4.1 Selection of Faculty Advisor and Major Professor

Every matriculated graduate student is assigned an initial academic advisor by their graduate program director upon entry.

- **Master's Students:** Must formalize their permanent faculty advisor or major professor before completing 12 semester credit hours. For thesis students, the advisor chairs the supervisory committee and oversees the investigative research.
- **Doctoral Students:** Often enter with a prospective faculty mentor, but must formally execute a Major Professor Appointment Agreement before the conclusion of their second semester of doctoral enrollment. The major professor must hold regular Graduate Faculty status at Alkimi University and possess an active research agenda aligned with the student's doctoral specializations.

Contact: The Graduate School · Founders Hall 240 · (555) 555-0138 · gradschool@university.alkimi.ai

§4.2 Master's Supervisory Committee Composition

For master's programs requiring a thesis or formal research portfolio, a Supervisory Committee must be constituted at least one full semester prior to the anticipated thesis defense:

- **Composition:** The committee must consist of at least **three (3) full-time faculty members**.
- **Chair:** The major professor serves as Committee Chair and must be a tenured or tenure-track member of the student's degree department.
- **Departmental Member:** At least one additional member must hold faculty appointment in the student's home department.
- **External / Cognate Member:** The third member may be selected from outside the home department or from an allied professional discipline, bringing methodological or interdisciplinary breadth.
- **Approval:** The formal Committee Appointment Form must be signed by all members, the department chair, and approved by The Graduate School.

Contact: The Graduate School · Founders Hall 240 · (555) 555-0138 · gradschool@university.alkimi.ai

§4.3 Doctoral Dissertation Committee Composition and Outside Members

The Doctoral Dissertation Committee oversees qualifying examinations, dissertation prospectus approval, investigative research oversight, and the final oral defense.

Doctoral Committee Mandates:

1. **Total Membership:** The committee must consist of a minimum of **four (4) voting members**, all holding earned doctorates or terminal degrees in their field.
2. **Committee Chair:** The major professor must hold tenured or tenure-track Graduate Faculty status within the candidate's degree-granting department. Co-chairs are permitted where interdisciplinary co-mentorship is appropriate.
3. **Departmental Faculty:** At least two members (including the Chair) must hold primary faculty appointments within the candidate's degree department.
4. **Cognate Faculty:** At least one member must represent an allied discipline outside the primary department.

5. **The Dean's Outside Representative (External Reader):** The committee must include exactly one outside member from outside the candidate's degree department or an approved scholar from an external accredited research institution. The Outside Representative is appointed by Dean Victor Huang to ensure institutional consistency, academic fairness, and adherence to Graduate School standards.

Committees must be formally filed with The Graduate School at least six months prior to the scheduled dissertation defense.

Contact: The Graduate School · Founders Hall 240 · (555) 555-0138 · gradschool@university.alkimi.ai

§4.4 Procedures for Changing Faculty Advisors or Committee Members

Recognizing that academic research trajectories, intellectual alignments, or personal working relationships may evolve, The Graduate School maintains an orderly, non-punitive process for reconstituting advisors and committee members:

1. **Consultation with Graduate Program Director:** Before initiating a formal change, the student should consult confidentially with their department Graduate Program Director or the Graduate Student Ombuds (Whitcombe 410, gradombuds@university.alkimi.ai) to assess alternatives and funding ramifications.
2. **Identifying a New Advisor:** The student is responsible for identifying a willing prospective faculty advisor. Faculty members are under no institutional obligation to accept a student whose research interests diverge from their laboratory priorities.
3. **Reconstitution Petition:** The student completes the Committee Reconstitution Form in Alkim-iHub, signed by the outgoing advisor, the incoming advisor, the department chair, and the Graduate Dean. If signing by the outgoing advisor is precluded due to personal conflict or medical unavailability, the department chair signs on their behalf.
4. **Funding Continuance:** If the student was supported by an RA grant awarded directly to the previous advisor's research project, funding terminates upon departure from that laboratory. The department makes good-faith efforts to identify open TA positions, but assistantship funding is not guaranteed across advisor transitions.

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§4.5 Advisor-Advisee Expectations and Annual Progress Reviews

Productive graduate mentorship relies on clear communication, transparency, and professional mutual accountability.

- **Advisor-Advisee Compact:** Within the first month of faculty advisor appointment, the student and advisor must review and sign the *Graduate Mentoring Compact*, establishing laboratory work schedules, expected publication timelines, intellectual property ownership, and feedback turnaround expectations (standard turnaround is 15 business days for chapter drafts).
- **Annual Progress Review:** Every doctoral student and thesis-track master's student must undergo an Annual Progress Review prior to **May 1** of each academic year. The review assesses coursework completion, milestone timelines, research productivity, and teaching evaluations. A copy signed by the student, advisor, and department chair is archived in The Graduate School. A rating of "Unsatisfactory Progress" places the student on a six-month remediation plan; two consecutive unsatisfactory ratings constitute grounds for academic dismissal.

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CHAPTER 5

Degree Milestones and Deadlines

§5.1 Master's Degree Milestones: Thesis vs. Non-Thesis Options

Master's degree candidates complete their studies through one of two institutional pathways:

Master's Thesis Pathway:

- Requires 30 to 36 semester credit hours, including 6 credits of Master's Thesis Research (e.g., BIO 599).
- The candidate must author an original scholarly thesis embodying empirical, theoretical, or archival research conforming to Graduate School format rules.
- Requires a formal oral defense before the three-member Supervisory Committee (§4.2). The defense includes a 45-minute public presentation followed by a closed examination. Unanimous or majority (2 of 3) approval is required to pass.

Master's Non-Thesis / Comprehensive Examination Pathway:

- Requires 33 to 36 semester credit hours of structured graduate coursework.
- Candidates must pass a written Comprehensive Examination or complete an approved applied Capstone Project Portfolio during their final semester of study.
- If a student fails the Comprehensive Examination, they are permitted one re-examination no earlier than 30 calendar days and no later than the subsequent regular semester. A second failure results in immediate dismissal.

Contact: The Graduate School · Founders Hall 240 · (555) 555-0138 · gradschool@university.alkimi.ai

§5.2 Doctoral Diagnostic and Qualifying Examinations

Doctoral programs at Alkimi University enforce two sequential benchmark examinations:

1. **Doctoral Diagnostic Assessment (First-Year Exam):** Administered at the end of the second semester of doctoral enrollment, the diagnostic assessment evaluates baseline disciplinary competency, methodological analytical readiness, and potential for advanced doctoral scholarship. Students who demonstrate deficiencies must complete designated remedial coursework before proceeding.
2. **Doctoral Qualifying Examination (Comprehensive Exam):** Administered after completing all required formal didactic coursework (typically during the third year of study).
 - **Structure:** Consists of both a written examination (spanning multiple days and specialized subfields) and a rigorous two-to-three-hour oral defense before the Dissertation Committee.
 - **Outcome:** Graded as Pass, Conditional Pass (requiring specific revisions or additional written questions within 30 days), or Fail.
 - **Re-examination:** A student who fails the qualifying exam may retake the examination once, no sooner than three months and no later than six months following the initial failure. A second failure results in permanent dismissal from the doctoral program.

Contact: The Graduate School · Founders Hall 240 · (555) 555-0138 · gradschool@university.alkimi.ai

§5.3 Admission to Doctoral Candidacy

Admission to Doctoral Candidacy marks the transition from didactic coursework student to independent doctoral researcher. To achieve formal candidacy, the student must satisfy all of the following requirements:

1. Completion of all required didactic doctoral coursework with a cumulative GPA of 3.000 or higher.
2. Resolution of all incomplete (“I”) grades.
3. Successful completion of the Doctoral Qualifying Examination (both written and oral).
4. Fulfillment of departmental foreign language or advanced quantitative methodology proficiencies.
5. Formal recommendation by the Dissertation Committee and Department Chair.

The department submits the *Application for Admission to Candidacy* to The Graduate School. Upon approval by Dean Victor Huang, the student advances to “Candidate” status (often designated ABD, All But Dissertation) and is eligible to register for 1-credit full-time dissertation continuing enrollment (§2.1).

Contact: The Graduate School · Founders Hall 240 · (555) 555-0138 · gradschool@university.alkimi.ai

§5.4 The Dissertation Prospectus and Proposal Defense

Within six months of advancing to doctoral candidacy, the candidate must prepare and defend a comprehensive **Dissertation Prospectus** (Proposal):

- The prospectus outlines the central research questions, theoretical framework, extensive literature review, empirical or human-subjects methodology, preliminary data, anticipated contributions, and investigative timeline.
- The candidate conducts a formal oral defense of the prospectus before the Dissertation Committee.
- Approval of the prospectus represents a formal academic compact: if the candidate executes the research described in the approved proposal and analyzes findings rigorously, the resulting manuscript will be accepted for final defense.
- A signed copy of the Prospectus Approval Form, accompanied by IRB or IACUC approval protocols if applicable, is filed with The Graduate School.

Contact: The Graduate School · Founders Hall 240 · (555) 555-0138 · gradschool@university.alkimi.ai

§5.5 The Doctoral Dissertation Defense and Public Oral Examination

The doctoral dissertation defense represents the capstone intellectual achievement of the PhD, DNP, or EdD degree:

1. **Scheduling:** The defense must be formally scheduled with The Graduate School at least **15 business days in advance**. The Graduate School publishes a public announcement across campus media.
2. **Manuscript Distribution:** A complete, defensible draft of the dissertation must be delivered to all committee members at least **10 business days** prior to the defense date.
3. **Format:** The defense consists of two distinct segments:
 - **Public Oral Presentation:** A 45-to-50-minute public lecture summarizing research methodology, findings, and contributions, followed by open questions from attendees.
 - **Closed Committee Examination:** A comprehensive closed-door cross-examination by the Dissertation Committee probing methodological validity, theoretical rigor, and scholarly mastery.
4. **Voting:** Passing the defense requires the affirmative vote of at least four committee members, including the Chair and the Dean’s Outside Representative. Outcomes include: Pass with No Revisions, Pass with Minor Revisions, Pass with Major Revisions, or Fail. Revisions must be verified by the Chair before final submission.

Contact: The Graduate School · Founders Hall 240 · (555) 555-0138 · gradschool@university.alkimi.ai

§5.6 Thesis and Dissertation Format Review and ProQuest Submission

All completed master's theses and doctoral dissertations must adhere strictly to the *Alkimi University Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Guidelines*:

1. **Preliminary Format Review:** Candidates submit an electronic PDF copy of their defense-approved manuscript to Marcus Lind, Graduate Records Officer, for a preliminary formatting inspection. Margins (1.0 inch all around), pagination, preliminary pages, table formatting, and citation consistency are verified.
2. **ProQuest / UMI Submission:** Following final committee sign-off and formatting clearance, the candidate uploads the definitive PDF manuscript to the Alkimi University ProQuest ETD (Electronic Theses and Dissertations) repository.
3. **Embargo Options:** Authors may elect an optional 6-month, 1-year, or 2-year publishing embargo to protect patentable discoveries or pending peer-reviewed journal publications, subject to Graduate Dean approval.
4. **Survey of Earned Doctorates:** All PhD graduates must complete the national Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) prior to final degree clearance.

Contact: The Graduate School · Founders Hall 240 · (555) 555-0138 · gradrecords@university.alkimi.ai

§5.7 Deadlines for May 2027 Degree Conferral

To participate in University Commencement and the Doctoral Hooding Ceremony on May 14–15, 2027, candidates must satisfy all milestone deadlines precisely:

Spring 2027 Degree Conferral Deadlines

- **Monday, February 15, 2027:** Deadline to submit the online *Intent to Graduate* form via AlkimiHub.
- **Friday, March 12, 2027:** Deadline to submit draft manuscript for preliminary Graduate School format review.
- **Friday, April 2, 2027:** Final deadline to hold master's thesis or doctoral dissertation oral defense.
- **Friday, April 16, 2027:** Final deadline to upload defended, revised, and committee-approved manuscript to ProQuest ETD and complete all graduation clearance paperwork.
- **Friday, April 30, 2027:** Final financial and library clearance certified by the Bursar and Whitcombe Library.
- **Friday, May 14, 2027:** Doctoral Hooding Ceremony (3:00 p.m., Founders Hall Auditorium).
- **Saturday, May 15, 2027:** Alkimi University Commencement Ceremony (10:00 a.m., Kestrel Fieldhouse).
- **Tuesday, May 18, 2027:** Final semester course grades due in AlkimiHub (12:00 p.m. noon).

Failure to meet the April 16, 2027 submission deadline automatically defers degree conferral to Summer (August 2027) and requires registration for 1 credit of continuing enrollment.

Contact: The Graduate School · Founders Hall 240 · (555) 555-0138 · gradschool@university.alkimi.ai

CHAPTER 6

Graduate Assistantships

§6.1 Assistantship Categories: TA, RA, and GA

Graduate assistantships at Alkimi University are competitive merit-based appointments providing funded graduate students with financial stipends, tuition waivers, and structured professional apprenticeships:

1. **Teaching Assistants (TA):** Appointed to assist faculty in undergraduate instructional delivery. Responsibilities include leading discussion sections, directing wet-bench laboratory experiments, grading homework and examinations under faculty supervision, holding office hours, and facilitating review sessions. TAs work under the direct supervision of the designated instructor of record.
2. **Research Assistants (RA):** Appointed to perform specialized research activities directly aligned with sponsored grants, laboratory experiments, archival data collection, or faculty scholarly inquiries. RAs work under the direct supervision of a principal investigator (PI).
3. **Graduate Assistants (GA):** Appointed to provide professional administrative or analytical support within academic or campus service units (such as The Graduate School, Academic Advising, or Whitcombe Library).

Contact: The Graduate School · Founders Hall 240 · (555) 555-0138 · gradschool@university.alkimi.ai

§6.2 Assistantship Stipend Rates, Payment Schedules, and Tax Withholding

Graduate assistantship stipends are established by The Graduate School to provide competitive living support:

Appointment Level	9-Month Academic Year Stipend	12-Month Annualized Stipend
Master's Assistant (TA / RA / GA)	\$21,000 (\$10,500 / semester)	\$28,000 (\$2,333 / month)
Doctoral Assistant (Pre-Candidacy)	\$26,000 (\$13,000 / semester)	\$34,667 (\$2,889 / month)
Doctoral Candidate (Post-Candidacy)	\$28,000 (\$14,000 / semester)	\$37,333 (\$3,111 / month)

- **Payment Schedule:** Graduate assistants are paid semi-monthly on the 15th and last business day of each month via direct deposit through University Payroll. Fall appointments run from August 16 through December 31; Spring appointments run from January 1 through May 15.
- **Tax Withholding:** In accordance with Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations, graduate assistantship stipends are treated as taxable compensation for services rendered and are subject to federal and state income tax withholding (Form W-2). However, enrolled graduate assistants registered for at least 6 credits are exempt from FICA (Social Security and Medicare) taxes under the student FICA exception.

Contact: Human Resources & Payroll · Harlan Hall 400 · (555) 555-0185 · hr@university.alkimi.ai

§6.3 Full Tuition Waivers and Mandatory Fee Coverage

A standard full-time graduate assistantship (20 hours per week) includes an extensive financial award:

- **Tuition Remission:** 100% tuition waiver covering up to **12 graduate credit hours per semester** during the Fall and Spring terms. At the standard graduate tuition rate of \$1,450 per credit hour, this waiver represents a direct financial benefit of up to \$17,400 per semester (\$34,800 per academic year).
- **Mandatory Fees:** The Graduate School covers 100% of the standard mandatory graduate student fees (\$300 per semester), covering technology and academic services.
- **Health Insurance Subsidy:** Full graduate assistants enrolled in the university student health insurance plan receive a **100% institutional premium subsidy**, fully covering the annual \$2,950 insurance cost.
- **Excluded Costs:** Course course-pack materials, personal textbooks, late registration fees, parking permits (\$210–\$320), and transcript fees are not covered by the assistantship waiver.

Contact: The Graduate School · Founders Hall 240 · (555) 555-0138 · gradschool@university.alkimi.ai

§6.4 Workload Limits (The 20-Hour Rule)

Graduate assistantships are designed as professional training experiences that complement, rather than obstruct, timely degree completion.

The 20-Hour Rule: Full graduate assistantship appointments are strictly capped at an average of **twenty (20) hours per week** during the academic semester.

- This 20-hour ceiling represents the total cumulative work commitment across all university appointments combined (including any secondary hourly employment, tutoring, or residence life positions).
- Supervisors may not mandate, demand, or tacitly expect assistants to exceed 20 hours per week.
- During scheduled university recesses when classes are not in session (Fall Break, Thanksgiving Break, Spring Break, and Winter Intercession), graduate assistants may be appointed for up to 40 hours per week with prior departmental authorization.

Contact: The Graduate School · Founders Hall 240 · (555) 555-0138 · gradschool@university.alkimi.ai

§6.5 Appointment Letters, Onboarding, and Terms of Employment

1. **Official Appointment Letter:** All graduate assistantship offers are formalized through an official electronic Letter of Appointment issued by The Graduate School. The letter specifies the appointment title, hiring department, direct faculty supervisor, stipend rate, bi-weekly hours, tuition waiver terms, and start/end dates.
2. **Acceptance:** Students must sign and return their appointment letter through AlkimiHub within 10 business days of issuance.
3. **Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9):** All newly appointed assistants must complete federal Form I-9 verification in person at the Office of Human Resources (Harlan Hall 400) on or before their first day of work, presenting acceptable unexpired identity and employment authorization documents.

Contact: Human Resources · Harlan Hall 400 · (555) 555-0185 · hr@university.alkimi.ai

§6.6 Performance Evaluation, Reappointment, and Termination

- **Semester Performance Evaluation:** Every graduate assistant is evaluated at the conclusion of each semester by their supervising faculty instructor or PI using the standardized *Graduate Assistant Evaluation Instrument*. Evaluations assess punctuality, instructional quality, grading accuracy, laboratory diligence, and professional ethics.
- **Reappointment Criteria:** Assistantship appointments are made on a semester or academic-year basis. Reappointment is contingent upon: (1) satisfactory performance in assistantship duties; (2)

maintenance of academic good standing (cumulative GPA 3.000 or higher); (3) compliance with university codes of conduct; and (4) ongoing availability of departmental or grant funding.

- **Early Termination:** An assistantship may be terminated prior to the contract expiration date for severe neglect of duties, academic dishonesty, conduct code violations, or failure to maintain enrollment. Prior to termination, the department must provide written notice detailing deficiencies and allow the student 5 business days to respond. Terminated assistants forfeit their stipend and may become liable for pro-rated tuition charges.

Contact: The Graduate School · Founders Hall 240 · (555) 555-0138 · gradschool@university.alkimi.ai

§6.7 Outside Employment Policy and Conflict of Commitment

Because a full graduate assistantship combined with full-time graduate enrollment represents a total weekly commitment of 40 to 50 hours, graduate assistants are strongly discouraged from engaging in outside employment.

- **Outside Employment Permission:** A graduate assistant who wishes to engage in additional employment outside Alkimi University (or non-assistantship campus employment exceeding 5 hours per week) must submit a formal *Request for Outside Professional Activity* prior to commencing employment.
- **Required Approvals:** The request must be approved in writing by the student's major professor, the department chair, and Dean Victor Huang.
- **Approval Conditions:** Outside employment is approved only if it clearly advances the student's professional career goals and does not conflict with scheduled assistantship duties, laboratory responsibilities, or academic milestone progression. Unauthorized outside employment constitutes grounds for immediate termination of the assistantship appointment.

Contact: The Graduate School · Founders Hall 240 · (555) 555-0138 · gradschool@university.alkimi.ai

CHAPTER 7

Teaching Assistant Responsibilities

§7.1 Mandatory Graduate Teaching Assistant Orientation

All newly appointed Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) must attend and complete the mandatory **University Graduate Teaching Assistant Orientation** conducted jointly by The Graduate School and the Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL).

GTA Orientation Dates for Academic Year 2026–27

- **Monday, August 17, 2026 (9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.):** Plenary pedagogical training in Founders Hall Auditorium: syllabus communication, active learning strategies, inclusive classroom facilitation, Canvas LMS management, and grading mechanics.
- **Tuesday, August 18, 2026 (9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.):** Legal compliance and safety workshops: FERPA regulations, Title IX mandatory reporter responsibilities, classroom de-escalation, laboratory chemical hygiene (for STEM TAs in Meridian 150), and academic integrity enforcement.

Completion of GTA Orientation is a statutory prerequisite for appointment; failure to attend results in immediate revocation of the teaching assistantship contract. Returning TAs must complete an annual online pedagogical refresher module in the Alkimi Learning Portal by August 24, 2026.

Contact: Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL) · Whitcombe Library 3rd Floor · (555) 555-0172 · ctl@university.alkimi.ai

§7.2 FERPA Compliance and Student Educational Records

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), all teaching assistants are legally designated as school officials with a legitimate educational interest in the students they instruct.

Mandatory FERPA Rules for TAs:

1. **Mandatory Training:** TAs must complete the university's online FERPA certification module before gaining grading access in Canvas.
2. **Grade Confidentiality:** TAs may never post grades publicly (in hallways, online, or on public message boards) using student names, AlkimiIDs, or partial Social Security numbers. Grades must be entered directly and securely into the Canvas gradebook.
3. **Returning Student Work:** Graded examinations, laboratory reports, and essays may not be left in public hallway pickup boxes or unattended bins where other students can view scores. Graded work must be returned individually in class or during private office hours.
4. **Third-Party Inquiries:** TAs are legally prohibited from discussing a student's grades, academic standing, classroom attendance, or conduct with anyone other than the instructor of record, including parents, guardians, spouses, or roommates. Inquiries from parents must be referred immediately to the Office of the Registrar.

Contact: Office of the Registrar · Alkimi One Stop, Harlan Hall 120 · (555) 555-0160 · registrar@university.alkimi.ai

§7.3 Supervised Grading, Grading Rubrics, and Timely Feedback

TAs play a critical role in student assessment, but instructional authority resides exclusively with the faculty instructor of record:

- **Standardized Rubrics:** TAs must evaluate student assignments and examinations strictly in accordance with objective grading rubrics, scoring keys, and benchmarks established by the course instructor.
- **Calibrated Grading:** For multi-section courses with multiple TAs, instructors must conduct calibration grading sessions to ensure consistent evaluation across sections.
- **Turnaround Timeline:** Graded assignments, laboratory reports, and quizzes must be evaluated and returned to undergraduate students within **seven (7) calendar days** of submission, enabling students to incorporate feedback into subsequent coursework.
- **Grade Disputes:** If an undergraduate student contests an assignment grade evaluated by a TA, the TA should explain the rubric application clearly. If the student remains dissatisfied, the TA must promptly refer the student and all grading records to the faculty instructor of record for a final determination. TAs cannot unilaterally alter course grading criteria.

Contact: Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL) · Whitcombe Library 3rd Floor · (555) 555-0172 · ctl@university.alkimi.ai

§7.4 Holding Office Hours and Student Communication

- **Office Hour Requirement:** Every teaching assistant assigned to a course must hold a minimum of **two (2) scheduled office hours per week** for each course section they support.
- **Modality and Scheduling:** Office hours must be conducted in an approved campus academic space (departmental TA office or study center) across at least two distinct days of the week. At least one weekly office hour must be offered virtually via university-licensed Zoom to accommodate commuting students.
- **Syllabus Listing:** Office hour times, physical locations, and virtual meeting links must be published in the course syllabus on Canvas by the first day of classes.
- **Official Electronic Communication:** TAs must communicate with students exclusively through official university email (@university.alkimi.ai) or Canvas messages. TAs may not communicate with undergraduate students about course matters via personal email, SMS text messaging, or personal social media channels.

Contact: Academic Advising Center · Lovell Hall 101 · (555) 555-0158 · advising@university.alkimi.ai

§7.5 Academic Integrity Reporting Through the Instructor of Record

Teaching assistants are frequently the first to encounter suspected undergraduate academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, exam cheating, or unpermitted use of generative artificial intelligence:

Required Protocol for TAs:

1. **Document Evidence:** When a TA suspects an integrity violation, they must carefully preserve all relevant physical or digital evidence (e.g., student submission, plagiarized source URL, comparison drafts, time logs).
2. **Report to Instructor within 24 Hours:** TAs do **not** confront the student with accusations, negotiate penalties, or assign sanctions independently. The TA must report the suspected infraction and transmit all evidence to the faculty instructor of record within **24 hours** of discovery.
3. **Faculty Resolution or AIB Hearing:** The faculty instructor of record holds legal authority to resolve the matter through a Faculty Resolution Agreement or file a formal report with Dr. Ruth Fenwick, Director of the Office of Academic Integrity (Lovell Hall 315, (555) 555-0163, integrity@university.alkimi.ai), within the required 10 business days.
4. **Confidentiality:** TAs must maintain absolute confidentiality and may not discuss suspected violations with other students, other TAs, or unauthorized faculty.

Contact: Office of Academic Integrity · Lovell Hall 315 · (555) 555-0163 · integrity@university.alkimi.ai

§7.6 Generative Artificial Intelligence in Teaching Assistant Duties

Teaching assistants must navigate generative artificial intelligence (AI) in strict accordance with the university's generative AI policy and the specific syllabus designation of their assigned course:

- **Syllabus AI Level Alignment:** Every course at Alkimi University designates an AI Level: Level 1 (AI prohibited for graded work), Level 2 (AI permitted with disclosure for specified tasks), or Level 3 (AI permitted broadly with disclosure). TAs must understand and rigorously uphold the AI level established by the instructor of record. A TA cannot grant permission to use AI tools if the instructor has designated Level 1.
- **AI Detection Scores:** TAs are cautioned that automated AI detection tools produce false positives. In accordance with university policy, an AI detection score may never serve as the sole evidence for an academic dishonesty report.
- **TAs' Own AI Use:** TAs may use university-approved AI tools (such as Alkimi) for administrative productivity (e.g., drafting practice quiz questions, generating rubric outlines, or formatting discussion prompts), provided that the instructor of record approves. TAs may **not** use AI tools to automatically grade or assign final scores to student subjective essays without human evaluation.
- **Data Security:** Student coursework containing confidential student information (FERPA records) must never be entered into public, unauthorized commercial AI platforms.

Contact: Office of Academic Integrity · Lovell Hall 315 · (555) 555-0163 · integrity@university.alkimi.ai

§7.7 Title IX Mandatory Reporting Obligations

Under federal Title IX legislation and university policy, all Graduate Teaching Assistants and Graduate Assistants are designated as **Mandatory Reporters** (Responsible Employees).

- If any student discloses an incident of sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, or gender discrimination (or if a TA observes such an incident), the TA **must** report all details to Title IX Coordinator Angela Moreno within **24 hours** at (555) 555-0166, titleix@university.alkimi.ai, or Harlan Hall 310.
- **Informing the Student:** The TA must inform the student: *“As a teaching assistant, I am required to share this information with the Title IX Coordinator so the university can offer support and resources. If you prefer to speak confidentially, I can connect you with Hollis Health & Counseling Center.”*
- **Confidential Resources:** TAs cannot promise confidentiality. Confidential resources on campus are limited to licensed clinicians at Hollis Health & Counseling Center ((555) 555-0190), university chaplains, and the CARE Advocate.

Contact: Office of Title IX and Equal Opportunity · Harlan Hall 310 · (555) 555-0166 · titleix@university.alkimi.ai

§7.8 Prohibited Conduct and TA Authority Boundaries

To ensure educational integrity and maintain professional boundaries, teaching assistants are strictly prohibited from:

1. **Independent Course Authority:** TAs may not design the course syllabus independently, select textbooks, alter exam dates, or determine final course grades. Final grades must be assigned by the faculty instructor of record.
2. **Amorous or Sexual Relationships:** TAs are strictly prohibited from entering into romantic or sexual relationships with any undergraduate student enrolled in a course, lab, or recitation section they teach, grade, or evaluate. Any pre-existing relationship must be disclosed immediately to the department chair for reassignment.

3. **Grading Relatives or Friends:** TAs may not evaluate assignments submitted by immediate family members, close friends, or roommates. Such conflicts of interest must be referred to the instructor of record.
4. **Unannounced Major Exams:** TAs may not administer pop quizzes or exams worth more than 5% of the course grade without prior instructor written authorization.
5. **Private Paid Tutoring:** TAs may not accept financial compensation, gifts, or private tutoring fees from any student enrolled in any section of the course to which the TA is assigned.

Violations of authority boundaries result in immediate termination of the assistantship and possible disciplinary dismissal from The Graduate School.

Contact: The Graduate School · Founders Hall 240 · (555) 555-0138 · gradschool@university.alkimi.ai

CHAPTER 8

Research Integrity and Compliance

§8.1 Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) and CITI Training

Integrity in scientific, humanistic, and empirical inquiry is an indispensable expectation for all graduate scholars at Alkimi University.

- **Mandatory CITI RCR Certification:** All graduate students engaged in research, supported by research assistantships, or matriculated in thesis or doctoral programs must complete the online Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) course within their first semester of enrollment.
- **Core Modules:** The RCR curriculum covers data acquisition and management, research misconduct (falsification, fabrication, plagiarism), collaborative research ethics, peer review, authorship standards, conflict of interest, and mentor-trainee responsibilities.
- **Renewal:** RCR certification is valid for three years and must be renewed prior to dissertation defense. Verification certificates are archived in the student's Graduate School file.

Contact: Office of Research · Meridian Science Center 150 · (555) 555-0132 · research@university.alkimi.ai

§8.2 Institutional Review Board (IRB) Protocols and Deadlines

All research investigations involving human participants—including surveys, interviews, behavioral observations, physiological measurements, or secondary analysis of identifiable private data—must receive formal approval from the **Institutional Review Board (IRB)** prior to commencing participant recruitment or data collection.

- **IRB Governance:** Chaired by Dr. Harold Jenkins (Professor of Psychology), the IRB convenes monthly to review research protocols.
- **Submission Windows:** Full-board review submissions must be uploaded through the AlkimiHub Research Portal at least **21 calendar days** prior to the scheduled monthly meeting (second Thursday of each month).
- **Review Categories:** Protocols are categorized as Exempt (minimal risk, institutional review typically within 10 business days), Expedited (minimal risk conforming to federal categories, review within 15 business days), or Full Board (greater than minimal risk, reviewed at monthly meeting).
- **Strict Prohibition:** Collecting human data prior to receiving formal written IRB approval constitutes serious research misconduct. Data gathered without prior IRB approval cannot be used in a master's thesis, doctoral dissertation, or publication.

Contact: Institutional Review Board (IRB) · Meridian Science Center 150 · (555) 555-0132 · hjenkins@university.alkimi.ai

§8.3 Authorship Guidelines, Intellectual Property, and Credit

Authorship of scholarly papers, conference proceedings, and technological discoveries must reflect genuine intellectual and creative contributions.

- **Authorship Criteria:** To qualify as an author, an individual must have made substantial contributions to: (1) conception and design, or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation; (2) drafting or critically revising the manuscript; and (3) final approval of the version to be published. Acquisition of funding, collection of routine data, or general laboratory supervision alone does not justify authorship.

- **Graduate Student Protection:** Faculty mentors may not usurp first authorship on papers derived primarily from a graduate student's thesis or dissertation research, provided the student drafts the manuscript within a reasonable agreed timeframe (typically 12 months post-defense).
- **Intellectual Property:** Ownership of patentable discoveries developed at Alkimi University follows the university's Intellectual Property Policy. Inventions developed using significant university resources are jointly owned by the inventor and the university, with royalty revenues shared in accordance with established faculty-student inventor formulas.

Contact: Office of Research · Meridian Science Center 150 · (555) 555-0132 · cashworth@university.alkimi.ai

§8.4 Research Data Management, Storage, and Retention Policy

Sound scientific practice necessitates transparent, secure, and enduring management of original research data.

- **Data Storage Mandate:** All primary research data, laboratory notebooks, electronic spreadsheets, sequencing files, and code repositories generated in university facilities must be stored on university-approved secure cloud storage systems (Alkimi Cloud 5 TB storage) or designated laboratory local servers backed up daily.
- **Data Retention Window:** In accordance with university research policy and federal sponsor mandates, all raw research data, protocols, and analytical code must be retained for a minimum of **five (5) calendar years** following the date of degree conferral or publication of findings.
- **Data Ownership:** Because research conducted at Alkimi University is sponsored by public grants, contracts, or institutional resources, original research records remain the property of Alkimi University. Departing graduate students are entitled to take a complete copy of their research data, but original primary laboratory records must remain with the principal investigator.

Contact: Office of Research · Meridian Science Center 150 · (555) 555-0132 · research@university.alkimi.ai

CHAPTER 9

Funding, Travel, and Awards

§9.1 Graduate Student Travel Grants

The Graduate School, in partnership with the Graduate Student Association (GSA), administers competitive **Graduate Student Travel Grants** supporting students presenting original scholarly research at recognized regional, national, or international academic conferences.

Grant Category	Maximum Award Amount	Application Submission Windows
Domestic Conference Presentation	Up to \$800 per award	Fall: October 15 · Spring: March 1
International Conference Presentation	Up to \$1,500 per award	Fall: October 15 · Spring: March 1
Virtual Conference Registration	Up to \$250 per award	Rolling review throughout year

- **Eligibility:** Applicants must be active, degree-seeking master's or doctoral students in good academic standing (GPA 3.000 or higher) and must be primary or co-presenter of an accepted paper, poster, or panel.
- **Matching Requirement:** Travel grants require a minimum 25% matching fund commitment from the student's department, college, or faculty advisor's research grant.
- **Reimbursement:** Receipts must be submitted through AlkimiHub Travel within 30 calendar days of conference conclusion.

Contact: The Graduate School · Founders Hall 240 · (555) 555-0138 · gradschool@university.alkimi.ai

§9.2 Doctoral Dissertation Fellowships and Alkimi Research Grants

To support doctoral candidates during their final year of dissertation writing, The Graduate School awards prestigious internal fellowships:

1. Doctoral Dissertation Completion Fellowship:

- **Award:** Provides a full semester of non-teaching stipend support (\$16,000) plus a 1-credit tuition waiver, enabling advanced doctoral candidates to focus exclusively on manuscript completion and defense.
- **Eligibility:** Candidates must have successfully defended their prospectus (\$5.4) and demonstrate that degree conferral will occur by the end of the award semester.
- **Application Deadline:** November 1 for Spring award; April 1 for Fall award.

2. Alkimi Graduate Summer Research Fellowships:

- **Award:** \$6,000 summer research stipends awarded to outstanding master's and pre-candidacy doctoral students conducting summer pilot studies, archival investigations, or preliminary data collection.
- **Application Deadline:** February 15 annually.

Contact: The Graduate School · Founders Hall 240 · (555) 555-0138 · gradschool@university.alkimi.ai

§9.3 External Fellowship Application Support and Incentives

The Graduate School actively assists graduate students in applying for prestigious external competitive fellowships, including National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowships (NSF-GRFP), National Institutes of Health F31 awards, Ford Foundation Fellowships, and Fulbright Fellowships.

- **Grant Writing Workshops:** Offered each September and February by the Center for Teaching & Learning and the Office of Research.
- **Incentive Award:** Any doctoral student who submits a competitive external fellowship application exceeding \$20,000 receives a \$500 Dean's Research Incentive Grant credited to their research travel account.
- **Top-Up Policy:** Students who win major external awards that pay less than the standard university assistantship stipend rate receive institutional "top-up" funding to match the full university stipend and health insurance subsidy.

Contact: Office of Research · Meridian Science Center 150 · (555) 555-0132 · cashworth@university.alkimi.ai

§9.4 Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL) Graduate Teaching Certificates

Graduate Teaching Assistants seeking to develop documented pedagogical credentials for academic job markets may complete structured teaching certificates administered by the Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL):

- **Certificate in College Teaching (Level 1):** Requires completion of GTA Orientation, four pedagogical workshops, two peer teaching observations, and a student mid-semester feedback consultation.
- **Advanced Certificate in Course Design & Pedagogy (Level 2):** Requires Level 1 completion, an independent syllabus design project, development of a comprehensive Teaching Philosophy Statement, and a mentored teaching practicum evaluated by CTL faculty.
- Certificates are recognized on the official university co-curricular transcript and certified by Director Marcus Lee.

Contact: Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL) · Whitcombe Library 3rd Floor · (555) 555-0172 · ctl@university.alkimi.ai

CHAPTER 10

Graduate Student Wellbeing and Support

§10.1 Hollis Health & Counseling Center and 24/7 Mental Health Support

Graduate study involves rigorous intellectual, emotional, and financial demands. Alkimi University provides comprehensive healthcare and clinical psychological counseling to support graduate student wellness:

- **Hollis Health & Counseling Center:** Located at the Hollis Center building, medical clinicians provide primary medical care, immunization management, gynecological services, and routine laboratory diagnostics Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Medical visits with staff physicians and nurse practitioners are free for enrolled graduate students.
- **Mental Health Counseling:** Clinicians offer free, short-term individual psychotherapy, group counseling sessions (including specialized graduate student support groups), stress reduction biofeedback, and psychiatric medication consultations.
- **24/7 Crisis Lifeline:** Immediate, confidential psychological crisis intervention is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year by calling **(555) 555-0199**.

Contact: Hollis Health & Counseling Center · Hollis Center Building · (555) 555-0190 · health@university.alkimi.ai

§10.2 Graduate Student Health Insurance Plan and Subsidy

Health insurance coverage is mandatory for all full-time graduate students at Alkimi University:

- **Student Health Insurance Plan:** Administered through a comprehensive healthcare network, the policy provides nationwide medical, prescription drug, preventative, and mental health coverage for an annual premium of **\$2,950** (covering August 15, 2026 through August 14, 2027).
- **Assistantship Subsidy:** Fully funded Graduate Teaching Assistants, Research Assistants, and Graduate Assistants receive a **100% university health insurance premium subsidy** as part of their assistantship appointment contract (§6.3).
- **Insurance Waiver:** Students covered under a comparable parent, spouse, or employer health insurance policy may submit an insurance waiver through AlkimiHub no later than **September 15, 2026** (Fall) or **February 1, 2027** (Spring). Once verified, the \$2,950 premium is credited to the student account.

Contact: Student Accounts (Bursar) · Alkimi One Stop, Harlan Hall 120 · (555) 555-0165 · studentaccounts@university.alkimi.ai

§10.3 Graduate Student Parental Accommodation Policy

Alkimi University is committed to supporting graduate students who become parents during their post-baccalaureate studies:

- **Paid Accommodation Period:** A graduate student holding an active assistantship (TA, RA, or GA) who becomes a parent through childbirth, adoption, or foster placement is entitled to **eight (8) consecutive weeks of paid parental accommodation**.
- **Stipend and Tuition Protection:** During the 8-week accommodation period, the student continues to receive their full assistantship stipend, 100% tuition waiver, and health insurance subsidy without being required to perform teaching or research assistant duties.

- **Academic Clock Extension:** The student's academic milestone deadlines (qualifying exams, prospectus defense, time-to-degree limits) are automatically extended by one full regular semester upon filing the Parental Accommodation Form with The Graduate School.
- **Filing Notice:** Whenever possible, applications should be submitted to The Graduate School at least 60 calendar days prior to the anticipated birth or adoption date.

Contact: The Graduate School · Founders Hall 240 · (555) 555-0138 · gradschool@university.alkimi.ai

§10.4 Graduate Student Ombuds and Informal Dispute Resolution

The **Office of the Graduate Student Ombuds** provides a confidential, independent, impartial, and informal resource for graduate students experiencing academic disagreements, advisor friction, authorship disputes, or administrative concerns.

- **Ombuds Officer:** Dr. Kenneth Morales serves as Graduate Student Ombuds (Whitcombe Library 410, phone: (555) 555-0182, email: gradombuds@university.alkimi.ai).
- **Confidentiality and Neutrality:** Conversations with the Ombuds are strictly confidential and do not initiate a formal university grievance or record. The Ombuds helps students identify options, clarify university policies, prepare for difficult supervisory conversations, and facilitate voluntary informal mediation.
- **Notice Exclusion:** Consulting the Ombuds does not constitute formal legal or administrative notice to Alkimi University regarding claims of harassment or discrimination (formal Title IX reports must be directed to Angela Moreno as outlined in §7.7). (Note: For faculty, staff, and university-wide workplace concerns, the University Ombuds Office is located in Lovell Hall 202, (555) 555-0187, ombuds@university.alkimi.ai).

Contact: Graduate Student Ombuds · Whitcombe Library 410 · (555) 555-0182 · gradombuds@university.alkimi.ai

§10.5 Housing, Childcare, and Commuter Resources

- **Graduate Student Housing:** A limited number of university-managed one- and two-bedroom furnished apartments are reserved for graduate students in Summit Apartments. Applications open March 1 for Fall occupancy.
- **Campus Childcare:** The Alkimi Early Learning Center, located adjacent to campus, provides licensed infant, toddler, and preschool childcare with priority subsidized tuition slots for full-time graduate students.
- **Commuter Parking and Shuttle:** Commuter graduate students may purchase annual Lot C1–C4 parking permits for \$210 (or evening permits after 4:00 p.m. for \$90) from Parking & Transportation (Brightwater Commons 110, (555) 555-0148, parking@university.alkimi.ai). The free Gold Line Shuttle runs every 15 minutes between downtown Merrow Falls, Summit Apartments, and Brightwater Commons.

Contact: Residence Life and Housing · Brightwater Commons 140 · (555) 555-0147 · housing@university.alkimi.ai

CHAPTER 11

Graduation

§11.1 Filing the Intent to Graduate and Degree Audits

Graduation from Alkimi University is not automatic upon completing course units; every master's and doctoral student must formally apply for degree conferral:

1. **Filing the Intent to Graduate:** Candidates submit the electronic *Intent to Graduate* application via AlkimiHub:
 - **Fall 2026 Graduation Deadline:** October 1, 2026.
 - **Spring 2027 Graduation Deadline:** February 15, 2027.
 - **Summer 2027 Graduation Deadline:** June 15, 2027.
2. **Degree Audit Certification:** Marcus Lind in The Graduate School conducts a comprehensive Degree Audit verifying credit hours, cumulative GPA 3.000 or higher with no unauthorized C grades, resolution of all Incompletes, and compliance with statutory time limits (\$3.5).
3. **Application Fee:** A non-refundable \$50 graduation application and diploma fee is charged upon filing.

Contact: The Graduate School · Founders Hall 240 · (555) 555-0138 · gradrecords@university.alkimi.ai

§11.2 Final Clearance and Graduation Deadlines for May 2027

Candidates planning to graduate at the May 15, 2027 Commencement must complete all clearance steps by the established deadlines:

Clearance Milestone	May 2027 Strict Deadline	Responsible Administrative Office
Intent to Graduate Application	Monday, February 15, 2027	The Graduate School · Founders 240
Preliminary Format Draft Submission	Friday, March 12, 2027	Graduate Records · Founders 246
Oral Defense Completion	Friday, April 2, 2027	Academic Department / Committee
ProQuest ETD Final Upload	Friday, April 16, 2027	The Graduate School & ProQuest
Financial Balance Clearance	Friday, April 30, 2027	Student Accounts · Harlan Hall 120
Library Returns & Clearance	Friday, April 30, 2027	Whitcombe Library Circulation Desk
Doctoral Hooding Ceremony	Friday, May 14, 2027 (3:00 p.m.)	Founders Hall Auditorium
Commencement Ceremony	Saturday, May 15, 2027 (10:00 a.m.)	Kestrel Fieldhouse

Failure to satisfy the April 16 ProQuest submission deadline automatically moves degree conferral to August 2027.

Contact: The Graduate School · Founders Hall 240 · (555) 555-0138 · gradschool@university.alkimi.ai

§11.3 Commencement and Doctoral Hooding Ceremony

Alkimi University celebrates advanced degree recipients during two distinct ceremonial events:

- **Doctoral Hooding Ceremony:** Friday, May 14, 2027 at 3:00 p.m. in the Founders Hall Auditorium. Reserved exclusively for PhD, DNP, and EdD doctoral candidates. Candidates are formally invested

with their doctoral hood by their Major Professor and Dean Victor Huang, followed by the Dean's Reception on the Founders Hall Terrace at 4:30 p.m.

- **University Commencement:** Saturday, May 15, 2027 at 10:00 a.m. in the Kestrel Fieldhouse. Master's and doctoral graduates participate in the grand academic procession led by President Evelyn Marsh and Provost Samuel Adebayo.

Contact: The Graduate School · Founders Hall 240 · (555) 555-0138 · gradschool@university.alkimi.ai

§11.4 Academic Regalia, Diplomas, and Transcripts

- **Academic Regalia:** Graduating candidates must order official Alkimi University regalia from the University Bookstore (Whitcombe Library 1st Floor) by **March 20, 2027**. Regalia features midnight indigo gowns, velvet master's hoods, and doctoral tams with gold tassels.
- **Diplomas:** Printed diplomas are mailed via certified mail within six to eight weeks following degree conferral, displaying the student's legal name, degree title, major, and graduation date.
- **Official Transcripts:** Degree notations are posted to electronic transcripts within 10 business days of final grade processing and requested via the Registrar.
- **Financial Holds:** Diplomas and official transcripts will not be released to any student with an outstanding financial balance exceeding \$500 or unreturned library materials.

Contact: Office of the Registrar · Alkimi One Stop, Harlan Hall 120 · (555) 555-0160 · registrar@university.alkimi.ai