Graduate Assistantship Program Guide

Jacksonville State University

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Revised
Spring 2010
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*GA Applications are located online at [www.jsu.edu/depart/graduate/forms.htm](http://www.jsu.edu/depart/graduate/forms.htm).*
PURPOSE OF GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP PROGRAM

The objectives of the Graduate Assistantship Program are to provide professional experiences which complement graduate instruction and research while contributing financial assistance to students pursuing graduate degrees. The assistantship program is designed to aid in the successful completion of the degree pursued and to enhance career opportunities through applied professional experiences. The program is administered by the Associate Dean of the College of Graduate Studies.

EMPLOYING A GRADUATE ASSISTANT (SUMMARY)

1. Submit a Vacancy Posting to the College of Graduate Studies. (The vacancy will be posted for five (5) working days prior to hiring).

2. Email the name(s) and student number(s) of the student(s) you wish to hire, and the two banner budget numbers you wish to use for the GA Acknowledgment form. One number is for the stipend and one is for the scholarship. Make sure you have transferred enough money into each budget number to cover the semester prior to returning the signed contract(s). The Fall semesters are handled differently.

3. The College of Graduate Studies will process the GA Acknowledgment form and send it to the hiring department for the student to fill out and sign. The budget manager also needs to sign this document.
4. The student is required to fill out and sign the GA Acknowledgment form. The hiring department budget manager will also sign the GA Acknowledgment form. The hiring department will then return the signed GA Acknowledgment form to the College of Graduate Studies. The College of Graduate Studies will complete the process with the Financial Aid Office and Human Resources.

5. Once the Graduate Assistant has signed the GA Acknowledgment form he/she will go to the Human Resources Office with their valid driver’s license, social security card, and a voided check (for direct deposit purposes).

6. Each semester, after midterm, the College of Graduate Studies will send to each department an evaluation form for every Graduate Assistant the department has employed during the semester. The supervisor will complete the evaluation, discuss the evaluation with the Graduate Assistant and have the student sign the evaluation. The department will return the evaluation to the College of Graduate Studies by the due date indicated on the back of the evaluation form. This form must be returned before a particular GA can be hired for an additional semester.

**APPLYING FOR A GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP POSITION**

To apply for a Graduate Assistantship you must submit the following:

1. **Graduate Assistantship application.** Located online at [www.jsu.edu/depart/graduate/forms.htm](http://www.jsu.edu/depart/graduate/forms.htm). Each semester you must resubmit a new GA application to remain eligible.

2. **Resume.** Email it to vansandt@jsu.edu or mail it to:
   
   Jacksonville State University
   College of Graduate Studies
   Graduate Assistantship
   700 Pelham Road North
   Jacksonville, AL 36265-1602
3. **Three letters of recommendation.** For the Graduate Assistantship Program we will make copies of these from the student’s graduate admissions file.

4. **Official transcripts.** For the Graduate Assistantship Program we will make copies of these from the student’s graduate admissions file.

**COMPLIANCE**

Jacksonville State University (JSU) is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. The University has filed with the Federal Government an Assurance of Compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. The University does not discriminate on the basis of disability, and no qualified person shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity which receives or benefits from federal assistance.

**ELIGIBILITY**

To qualify for a graduate assistantship appointment, a student must satisfy the following eligibility requirements:

1. Must be classified as a graduate student at JSU;
2. Must not be on academic probation;
3. Must be registered for at least six (6) graduate semester credit hours during a regular semester or at least six (6) graduate semester credit hours during the summer.
An exception to this requirement will be made by the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies, or the Dean’s designee, under the following conditions:

A. If a student is classified as a graduate student and is required to take undergraduate courses for the Graduate degree (fundation courses for the MBA degree, undergraduate deficiencies in education or foundation courses for Computer Systems and Software Design program), either a minimum of nine (9) undergraduate hours or a minimum of three (3) graduate hours and six (6) undergraduate hours must be taken to qualify for a graduate assistantship.

B. If a student has made satisfactory progress toward obtaining the graduate degree and needs fewer than six (6) graduate hours to complete the degree, the student may be considered for an assistantship.

C. If a student does not intend to work as an assistant for the entire summer, the student is required to still take six (6) semester hours during the semesters they are enrolled.

4. Must not be holding another campus job;

5. A graduate assistant is prohibited from accepting, receiving, or being credited for other forms tuition scholarships from the university. Scholarships from a source outside of the university will not be prohibited;

6. It should be noted that the graduate assistantship tuition scholarship may impact on other types, (i.e. Federal programs of financial assistance). **The graduate assistant will be responsible for determining if there is any impact on eligibility of other financial aid programs.**
7. If an international graduate student, he/she must be certified by the Director of the International House Program/Foreign Student Advisor to perform duties and receive compensation.

**APPOINTMENT**

The Dean of the appropriate college in consultation with the Department Head, determines the availability of, and approves graduate assistant positions.

Following approval of positions, the graduate assistant positions will be posted online at [www.jsu.edu/depart/graduate/gtavac.htm](http://www.jsu.edu/depart/graduate/gtavac.htm) by the office of the Associate Dean, College of Graduate Studies. Any funds needed for advertising will be the responsibility of the department in which the graduate assistant position is assigned. Advertisements of vacancies will include the position title, location of the assignment, appointment period, duties, qualifications, compensation, deadline for application, requested documents, and contact person(s).

The online advertisements for vacancies must be posted for a minimum of five (5) working days prior to hiring.

Applicant files will be reviewed and interviews held by the department wishing to hire. Selection will be made by the department. The College of Graduate Studies will notify selected applicants of the award of the graduate assistantship, with instructions as to the process for accepting the position.
PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT

Graduate assistants are appointed on a one or two semester basis. In some cases, this appointment may include one or more of the three summer terms.

The awarding of an assistantship does not imply future employment.

A graduate student making satisfactory progress toward a degree will be eligible for an assistantship for twenty-four months. Exceptions to this time limit may be made on an individual basis upon the request of the respective department and approval by the Associate Dean of the College of Graduate Studies.

APPLICATION

Each graduate assistant candidate must complete an application for appointment. This application shall include educational background, types of skills possessed, and previous experience. Additional documents may be required of applicants.

Following review of potential candidates, departments may interview preferences. These interviews will be coordinated by the individual department. It is understood that an interview is not a guarantee of award.

The awarding of an assistantship does not imply future awards.

Considerations for assignment shall include funding availability, job availability, and job performance.

Each selected graduate assistant shall receive an acknowledgment form which includes a job description, responsibilities, minimum course load, amount
of stipend and tuition scholarship, length/days of appointment, workload, name and position of a supervisor.

Graduate assistants must sign and adhere to acknowledgment forms which are filed in the office of the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies, with a copy to the supervisor. In addition, each graduate assistant must supply documents (at a minimum, the individual’s valid driver’s license, social security card, and a voided check) necessary to be placed on university payroll. These documents must be provided to the Office of Human Resources, not later than the fifteenth day of the month in which employment begins. Beginning with employment for May 2006, all student employees (undergraduate and graduate) must report to the Office of Human Resources with their contracts or financial aid work authorizations. The Office of Human Resources will collect tax forms and I-9’s on student employees, and will maintain student files, summarize payroll information and forward this to the Payroll Office.

Each graduate assistant shall be assigned a supervisor who shall be responsible for assigning tasks, supervising, and evaluating the job performance of the graduate assistant. In addition, the supervisor shall be responsible for monitoring completion of time sheets and assuring their return to the Payroll Office by the requested date.

**STIPEND AND WORKLOAD**

Compensation for graduate assistantships is determined by the Vice
President for Academic and Student Affairs. Graduate assistants’ acknowledgements specify stipends based on the anticipated workload equal to twenty (20) hours per week. Graduate assistants are prohibited from accepting, receiving, or being credited for other forms of university tuition scholarship.

**Tuition scholarships for a maximum of six (6) graduate semester hours are awarded to graduate assistants in addition to a monthly stipend.**

**EVALUATION**

Evaluation is a crucial part of the assistantship program. Supervision and performance reviews should be an ongoing process of communication between the graduate assistant and the supervisor.

At least one formal evaluation of all graduate assistants in each department or unit will occur each semester. The Graduate Office will provide the “Graduate Assistant Evaluation” form to each department or unit. Upon completion of the evaluation, the supervisor will review the results of the evaluation with the graduate assistant. The evaluation form will be forwarded to the Associate Dean of the College of Graduate Studies. In addition, informal evaluations and observations should be conducted each semester. These evaluations supply additional feedback to the graduate assistant and make the evaluation a supportive process that helps the graduate assistant to identify strengths and weaknesses and to plan for improvement.
TERMINATION

A graduate assistant award may be terminated prior to the end of the appointment period for any of the following reasons:

1. The student is no longer enrolled in the College of Graduate Studies.

2. The student is registered for fewer than six (6) graduate semester credit hours during a regular semester or fewer than six (6) graduate semester hours during the summer.

3. The student’s performance is determined to be unsatisfactory by the employing academic department.

The Office of the College of Graduate Studies must be notified in writing upon termination of any assistant.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The graduate assistant will be notified in writing of all decisions that affect his or her status as an assistant. This includes advance notifications of evaluation procedures and a summary of the evaluation by the assigned department.

It is important to resolve, as early as possible, any disagreement which may arise between assistants and supervisors. Should a problem arise in the work assignment, the graduate assistant has the right to initiate a grievance or to appeal a decision through the specified channels.

The student shall first inform the supervisor of the problem and, if necessary, appeal to the Department Head or the supervisor of the department.
Head. If the matter cannot be resolved in an informal manner, the following formal grievance procedure is to be followed:

1. If the grievance is not resolved in discussion with the immediate supervisor, a formal, written complaint is filed with the Department Head within five (5) working days after the conference described above. The Department Head must give a written decision on the grievance, within five (5) working days after receipt of the complaint.

2. If the grievance is not resolved by this decision, a written appeal may be filed with the Associate Dean of the College of Graduate Studies not later than ten (10) working days of receipt of the Department Head’s decision on the grievance. A Grievance Committee, composed of members of the Graduate Council, will be convened to hear any grievance.