Graduate Assistantship Program Guide

Jacksonville State University

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*GA Applications are available using the Online Employment System at [https://jobs.jsu.edu/hr/](https://jobs.jsu.edu/hr/).
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 Dean/Associate Dean of the College of Graduate Studies.

In this Graduate Assistantship Guide, areas or departments that hire graduate assistants will be referred to as “Units”.

EMPLOYING A GRADUATE ASSISTANT
(SUMMARY)

Vacancy Postings:
1. The College of Graduate Studies will send an email notice to units to begin submitting upcoming Graduate Assistantship postings.
2. Units will submit the Graduate Assistantship posting through JSU’s Online Employment System (PeopleAdmin) to the College of Graduate Studies for review and approval.
3. The posting will be approved, and forwarded to the Office of Human Resources unless changes in the posting need to be made, at which time it will be returned to the unit for revision. Once revisions are made, the unit will resubmit the posting to the College of Graduate Studies.
4. The Graduate Assistantship posting will be forwarded to the Office of Human Resources once approved.

Request to Hire:
Individual units review applications, interview applicants and make the final decision regarding vacancies in their unit. Units will submit a Hiring Proposal through PeopleAdmin. The Hiring Proposal is sent directly to the College of Graduate Studies for review. Once the applicant’s GPA and registration are approved, then the Hiring Proposal is sent to the Office of Human Resources. This information is submitted to Student Financial Services.
The College of Graduate Studies does not provide funding for the Graduate Assistantship Program. Funding is provided by each individual unit. Units must have sufficient funds in both of the required account numbers prior to submitting a Hiring Proposal.

The fall semester requires units to have one-fourth of the tuition and one-fourth of the stipend in each of the appropriate accounts from the current budget for each Graduate Assistant they wish to hire. After the new budget, available on October 1, units will be responsible for submitting the balance of tuition and stipend for each Graduate Assistant into the appropriate account numbers.

Graduate Assistantship Acknowledgment:
Once the applicant’s GPA and registration are approved, then the Hiring Proposal is sent to the Office of Human Resources. The College of Graduate Studies will complete the Graduate Assistantship Acknowledgment form. The completed form will be sent to the hiring unit.

The student is required to complete and sign the Graduate Assistantship Acknowledgment form. The hiring units’ budget manager will also sign the Graduate Assistant Acknowledgment form. After the form is signed by both the student and the budget manager, the form is returned to the College of Graduate Studies for approval and processing. The hiring unit is responsible for continued monitoring regarding eligibility of each Graduate Assistant within their unit.

The Graduate Assistantship Acknowledgment will be approved by the Dean/Associate Dean of the College of Graduate Studies. Once approved, the Graduate Assistantship Acknowledgment will be submitted to the Office of Human Resources.

Office of Human Resources:
Once the Graduate Assistant has signed the Graduate Assistantship Acknowledgment form he/she will report to the Office of Human Resources, Room 329, Bibb Graves Hall. The Graduate Assistant will need to have their valid driver’s license, social security card, and a voided check (for direct deposit purposes). These documents must be provided to the Office of Human Resources prior to the date employment begins.
APPLYING FOR A GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP
POSITION

Each graduate assistant candidate must complete an online Graduate Assistantship application for appointment. The graduate assistantship application is available on the Online Student Employment site at: https://jobs.jsu.edu/hr/. Each semester students must submit a new Graduate Assistantship Application to remain eligible. Applicants must attach any required and/or optional documents, such as a resume and transcripts, to the Graduate Assistantship Application. Following review of potential candidates, units may interview preferences. These interviews will be coordinated by the individual units. 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 which includes a job description, responsibilities, minimum course load, amount of stipend and tuition remission, dates of appointment, workload, name and position of a supervisor.

Graduate assistants must sign and adhere to acknowledgment forms filed in the College of Graduate Studies, and with a copy to the unit supervisor. In addition, each graduate assistant must supply documents (at a minimum, the individual’s valid driver’s license, original social security card, and a voided check) necessary to be placed on university payroll. **It is the sole responsibility of the graduate assistant to provide these documents to the Office of Human Resources prior to the date employment begins.**

The Office of Human Resources will collect tax forms, I-9’s on student employees, and direct deposit information from each graduate assistant. The Office of Human Resources will also maintain student files, summarize payroll information and forward the acknowledgment to the Payroll Office.

Each graduate assistant shall be assigned a supervisor who will be responsible for identifying tasks, supervising, and evaluating the job performance of the graduate assistant. In addition, the supervisor will be responsible for monitoring completion of time sheets and assuring their return to the Comptroller’s Office by the requested date.
To apply for a Graduate Assistantship you must submit the following:

1. **Graduate Assistantship application.** The graduate assistantship application is available on the Online Student Employment at: [https://jobs.jsu.edu/hr/](https://jobs.jsu.edu/hr/). Each semester students must submit a new Graduate Assistantship Application to remain eligible.

2. **Resume.** Students will attach a current resume to their Graduate Assistantship Application.

3. **Official transcripts.** Students will attach transcripts to their Graduate Assistantship Application.

4. **Additional documents.** Other documents may be required, or requested, by a unit while the student is submitting the Graduate Assistantship Application.

**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 and enrolled in a degree program;
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 for the period of May through the last summer term.
   An exception to this requirement will be made by the Dean/Associate Dean of the College of Graduate Studies,
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 (foundation courses for the MBA degree, undergraduate deficiencies in education or foundation courses for Computer Systems and Software Design program or any other graduate program), 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 all summer terms, the student must take either three (3) graduate hours for each summer term worked, or a total of six (6) semester hours over the summer terms.

4. Must not be holding another campus job;

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

6. It should be noted that the graduate assistantship tuition scholarship may affect the amount of federal financial aid for which students are eligible;

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 to perform duties and receive compensation.
(NOTE: Students who enroll in online graduate courses will be required to pay the difference of tuition above graduate traditional tuition.)

APPOINTMENT

The Dean/Director of the appropriate college/area, in consultation with the Unit, determines the availability of, and approves graduate assistant positions.

Following approval of positions from the Unit and the Dean/Associate Dean, College of Graduate Studies, graduate assistantship positions will be posted online at https://jobs.jsu.edu/hr/.

The applicant’s files will be reviewed and interviews held by the units wishing to hire. Selection(s) will be made by the unit, with the approval of the Dean/Associate Dean of the College of Graduate Studies.

Units must have sufficient funds in both of the required account numbers prior to submitting a Hiring Proposal.

PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT

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

The awarding of an assistantship does not imply future employment.

A graduate student making satisfactory academic progress toward a degree will be eligible for a graduate assistantship for twenty-four months. Exceptions to this time limit may be made on an individual basis upon the request of the respective unit and approval by the Dean/Associate Dean of the College of Graduate Studies. The hiring units are responsible for monitoring the twenty-four month limit.

STIPEND AND WORKLOAD

Compensation for graduate assistantships is determined by the Provost/Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs. Graduate assistants' acknowledgments 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 assistance.

**Tuition remission for a maximum of six (6) graduate semester hours are awarded to graduate assistants in addition to a monthly stipend. Students registering for online courses are responsible for paying the difference between the traditional tuition rate and the online tuition rate by the due date.**

**EVALUATION**

The evaluation process 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 unit will occur each semester. Each semester the College of Graduate Studies will provide the “Graduate Assistant Evaluation” form to each unit for each graduate assistant the unit has employed during the semester. The evaluation is complete after being signed by both the supervisor and the graduate assistant. Upon completion of the evaluation, the supervisor will review the results of the evaluation with the graduate assistant. The completed evaluation will be returned to the College of Graduate Studies by the due date indicated on the back of the evaluation form. **If hiring units do not complete the evaluations and submit them to the College of Graduate Studies, then they will not be permitted to hire graduate assistants for subsequent semesters.**

**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 less than six (6) graduate semester credit hours during a regular semester or at least six (6) graduate semester hours for the period of May through the last summer term.
3. The student’s performance is determined to be unsatisfactory by the employing academic unit.
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 by the assigned unit. This includes advance notifications of evaluation procedures and a summary of the evaluation by the assigned unit.

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 Unit Supervisor of the unit of the problem and, attempt to resolve the grievance in an informal manner. 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 Unit Director/Head within five (5) working days after the conference described above. The Unit Director/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 Dean/Associate Dean of the College of Graduate Studies no later than ten (10) working days of receipt of the Unit Director/Department Head’s decision on the grievance. The final decision lies with the Dean/Associate Dean of the College of Graduate Studies.