

Franklin Pierce University Graduate Assistant Guide

Human Resources Department
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The Franklin Pierce University Graduate Assistantship Program provides a tuition benefit, along with a stipend, to a select number of graduate students each year. The students have access to a high quality graduate education, and the University is able to make use of the talent and professional background the student brings to the University. An assistantship is awarded primarily to provide assistance to complete the Masters or Doctoral degree program in an affordable way as well as assisting the University in critical functions. The contribution made by participants in the Graduate Assistantship Program makes a significant impact to Franklin Pierce University.

The University is very aware that it is a difficult balancing act to pursue a graduate degree while assisting in teaching, administrative, or research work. It is our hope that this *Guide* will provide information and helpful advice about how to make sure you get the most out of your assistantship. I hope you enjoy your time here at Franklin Pierce and wish you all the best.

Janette Merideth
Director of Human Resources

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Graduate Assistant Basics

Graduate students play a vital role at Franklin Pierce University, functioning both as students and professionals, enhancing their education by playing this important dual role. This guide will identify a number of the professional and academic issues a Graduate Assistant may encounter while enrolled in graduate studies and employed as a Graduate Assistant with the University.

This guide has been written to clarify and explore frequently asked questions about assistantship duties and workloads, the importance of professional development, and other concerns commonly experienced by those just starting out in their scholarly endeavors. These concerns include definition of duties, information about workload, terms of assistantships, employment-renewal information, and explanation of payment, tuition waivers and employee benefits.

In recognition of the multiple duties that graduate students perform as beginning scholars, coaches, researchers, business office assistants, and teachers, this handbook aims to clarify the rights and responsibilities of the Graduate Assistant while at Franklin Pierce University. In this unique position, as both student and employee of Franklin Pierce University, the Graduate Assistant is protected by Franklin Pierce University, as well as by state and federal laws.

All Graduate Assistants are required to attend Graduate Assistant Orientation to introduce Graduate Assistants to the program of study, supervisor, and facilities. Each Graduate Assistant should have already received the letter offering the assistantship and a Position Description.

There are several designations as a Graduate Assistant (GA) detailed below. For the sake of brevity and conciseness, sometimes the term "Graduate Assistant" in this document is used generically. There are different types, terms, qualifications, requirements, and expectations for each role a Graduate Assistant may assume and that role will help identify what pertains to the award and, consequently, your rights and responsibilities.

Graduate Assistantship - Definition

A Graduate Assistantship is an appointment as a student employee, which offers a financial payment to a graduate student for part-time work in teaching, administration, or research. Appointments are normally on a the basis of working twenty (20), fifteen (15), or ten (10) hours per week during the period beginning July 1 and ending June 30 of the following year.

A Masters level assistantship will receive the benefit of a tuition waiver (scholarship?) for up to 8 graduate level courses waived for their first year in the program. Should the assistant continue the program into the second year, they will be granted an additional tuition waiver for up to 5 courses to complete their degree requirements. The total awarded classes over the two years will not exceed 13 courses.

A Doctorate level assistantship will be eligible for fifty percent (50%) reduction of their tuition cost waived (scholarship?) for each year they participate in the assistantship. The total award will not exceed sixty (60) courses over a four year period.

Categories of Graduate Assistants

There are several categories of assistantships. You have been assigned an assistantship in a particular category. The descriptions below indicate what is expected of you and what you can expect of your department, program, or office.

Graduate Assistant (GA) The term Graduate Assistant refers generally to all graduate students enrolled at the University who are appointed to perform various types of duties to assist a faculty or staff member in the areas of administration and research, or to serve in some instructional capacity.

Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) Graduate Research Assistants perform duties in support of University research, which may or may not relate directly to the student's thesis or dissertation. Research may include library research, computer programming and analysis, fieldwork, laboratory experiments, scientific investigations, writing and editing material, and averaging and assigning grades. A student appointed as a GRA works under the direct supervision of the administrator of the research contract, who often may be his/her major professor.

Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) Graduate Teaching Assistants work under the direct supervision of regular faculty members and may be assigned to duties related directly to classroom or lab instruction. These include such activities as assisting in the preparation of lectures, leading discussion sections, conducting laboratory exercises, grading papers, holding student conferences, and keeping class records. Assistants may not be given primary teaching and/or evaluation responsibilities, nor should they be given duties to support faculty research or those basically clerical in nature. In consultation with the supervisor, the GTA works to gain teaching skills and an increased understanding of the discipline.

Requesting a Graduate Assistant

Departments wishing to fill a Graduate Assistant position must submit a GA Request Form to the Director of Human Resources no later than January 1 of each year for the following fiscal year. Please indicate on the request form if your department currently has a GA assigned and if it is expected that the same GA will return in the following year. The Director of Human Resources will compile all requests and present them to the Vice President of Finance and Administration, who will present the compiled requests to the Senior Staff for approval.

Notification Process

Notification of position approval will come from Human Resources. Human Resources will notify the student (if currently in place) and the Supervisor if the position is approved. If the position is vacant, the vacancy will be posted on the Human Resources employment page and HR will accept applications from interested students. Human Resources will also inform applicants of all requirements of the GA program. The recruitment process for vacant GA positions will follow the University's current recruitment policy regarding hiring.

A copy of the Graduate Assistant Request Form is available on the Human Resources website. Approved positions will remain in effect until the end of the fiscal year. All departments and supervisors must reapply for Graduate Assistant positions annually.

Eligibility

Candidates for the Graduate Assistant Program must be students who have been accepted and will matriculate in a Franklin Pierce University Graduate Program. Once hired, the Graduate Assistant will receive a tuition scholarship and a stipend (note: wording scholarship?).

Room and board and other educational related costs are not covered by the assistantship. There is no on-site housing available.

To receive (or continue to receive) an assistantship, the graduate student must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Acceptance in a Franklin Pierce University graduate degree program;
- Although Franklin Pierce University expects every graduate student to strive for academic excellence, at a minimum, all graduate students must be in good academic standing as stated in the Franklin Pierce University's Academic Catalog. The Academic Standards Committee will evaluate all graduate students who have academic issues at the close of each term.
- Each Graduate Assistant must agree to allow their grades to be shared with their Supervisor, the departmental Vice President as well as the Director of Human Resources.
- The Graduate Assistant is required to take a full-time course load
- If a Graduate Assistant is enrolled in the last semester of his/her program of study, the number of registered semester hours may be less than the full-time requirement.
- Graduate Assistants must comply with all University Policies and Procedures as directed in the Administrative Manual located on the Human Resources Web site and CGPS enrollment requirements to retain their assistantship

Academic Good Standing

All Graduate Assistants must maintain good academic standing with an overall graduate **and** degree program GPA of 3.00 or higher each term. Inability to maintain good academic standing with the University may result in academic dismissal. If a Graduate Assistant's overall GPA falls below 3.00, they will automatically be placed on academic probation. Students on academic probation are eligible to maintain their Graduate Assistantship for one additional semester. Graduate Assistants who advance to the next level of academic probation will be ineligible to maintain or renew a Graduate Assistantship. Students who have earned academic warning or are in a non-degree status may not hold Graduate Assistantships.

A conditionally admitted student whose graduate GPA falls below 3.0 at any time during the conditional status will not be allowed to hold a graduate teaching position until such time as the GPA has increased to 3.0 or higher. Exceptions to this policy will be made only in very rare circumstances on a case-by-case basis, with final approval made by the Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies or his/her designee.

Reappointment

Each position for a Graduate Assistant will be posted each year. All current Graduate Assistants must reapply for the position as every position is subject to budget approval annually. A Graduate Assistant application must be submitted to Human Resources no later than April 1st for the following Academic year stating the wish to continue with the Graduate Assistant program. Each year the Graduate Assistant will also need to complete the Tuition Benefit Form and submit it to Human Resources prior to May 30th.

Graduate Assistant Working Hours

As student employees, Graduate Assistants are balancing professional development through the work experience with progress toward their degree in academic experiences, through course work, theses, or dissertations. To encourage that balance, Graduate Assistants may not exceed 20 hours of work per week without specific approval of the Human Resources Director. The number of hours worked will be added to the course hours in which the student is enrollment, not to exceed 0.75 FTE.

An important part of each Graduate Assistant's work assignment is the opportunity for professional development that it offers. Such development, plus variations in departmental, needs may result in differences in the number of hours worked per week as necessary for carrying out assignments. Thus, weekly work assignments, when specified, are stated as averages. The normal number of hours for conducting an assignment should be mutually understood by you and your immediate supervisor.

Additional Outside Employment

The Franklin Pierce University has an obligation to facilitate your progress in your degree program. It will be very difficult for you to make adequate and timely progress toward your degree while holding several jobs. Therefore, you are strongly discouraged from seeking additional employment outside Franklin Pierce University. Graduate Assistants are not allowed to hold an additional voluntary or paid position with the University outside their role as a Graduate Assistant.

Length of a Graduate Assistantship

The maximum number of years that a graduate student can be appointed to an assistantship is two years for a master's degree seeking student or three years for a doctoral degree seeking student.

Graduate Assistant Compensation

Each Graduate Assistantship is approved with a specific dollar amount established for the period of time, typically July 1 to June 30. The amount is divided evenly over twelve (12) monthly pay periods. If the student withdraws from the graduate program, payment of the monthly stipend will end. Direct deposit is available and recommended for Graduate Assistants.

Benefits

Insurance: Graduate Assistant positions are not eligible to participate in the University's insurance benefit package. Graduate Assistants may qualify for Student Insurance and should contact the Residential Life Office in Rindge for more information. Depending on the age of the student, they may also be covered under their parent's health insurance programs.

Meal Benefit: When in Rindge, all Graduate Assistants are offered one meal per work day at the subsidized employee rate. If the Graduate Assistant wishes to eat more meals on campus they would be eligible for the discounted employee rate. See the Meal Policy in the Administrative Manual.

Tuition: Positions classified within the Graduate Assistant Program offer either half or full tuition waivers.

- ☞ A Masters level assistantship will receive the benefit of up to 8 graduate level courses waived for their first year in the program. Should the assistant continue the program into the second year, they will be granted an additional 5 courses to complete their degree requirements. The total awarded classes in the two years shall not exceed 13 courses.
- ☞ A Doctorate level assistantship will be eligible for 50% of their tuition waived for each year they participate in the assistantship. The total awarded classes shall not exceed 60 courses over a four year period.

Should the Graduate Assistant wish to take more classes than offered through this program, the total cost of the course will be the student's responsibility. Should the Graduate Assistant drop a class after the official add/drop period, that class will count towards your yearly benefit eligible total.

Leave of Absence

Graduate Assistants are not eligible for paid leave. If time off is necessary from the assistantship, the student is responsible to make arrangements with his/her supervisor and/or graduate director. It is imperative that the supervisor/graduate director approves the course of action prior to the leave, including times to make-up hours. Although some time off may need to be taken in the case of an emergency, advance notification is preferred.

Students should contact the Registrar's office to drop or withdraw from a course while participating in the Graduate Assistant program. If the class is dropped after add/drop period, the course will count towards the benefit total.

Conflict Resolution

Please report or discuss any problems related to your assignment, such as work hours, duties assigned, pay, work conditions, etc., to your immediate supervisor. If the problem has not been resolved, bring the problem to the attention of the supervisor. If the problem has not been resolved to your satisfaction you also have the right to speak with the Director of Human Resources.

Harassment Prevention (including Sexual Harassment)

Franklin Pierce University is committed to maintaining a positive and productive work and learning environment where all members of the community are respected and are free from unlawful discrimination. Such discrimination includes sexual harassment that may render the educational and working environment hostile, intimidating, or offensive. The misuse of power and authority subverts the mission of the University and may threaten careers, educational experiences, and the well-being of faculty, staff and students. Therefore, the University will not tolerate the harassment of any or by any, faculty member, staff member, student, or visitor on the basis of any characteristic that is protected under Federal law. Please refer to the Administrative Manual and the policy on Sexual and other Unlawful Harassment.

Background Check for Employment

As of Fall 2013, all Graduate Assistants are required to submit to a background check for any criminal history. Information obtained is kept strictly private and confidential.

End of Year Paper

As one of the requirements as a Graduate Assistant, you are expected to complete a **250** word paper and submit a copy to the following individuals:

Dean of the College of Graduate and Professional Studies
Franklin Pierce University
670 North Commercial Street, Suite 301
Manchester, NH 03101

Janette Merideth, Director of Human Resources
Franklin Pierce University
40 University Drive
Rindge, NH 03461

The paper will be due on or before March 1st of each year. If you do not submit the paper in a timely manner, you may not be eligible to re-apply for a Graduate Assistant position in the future.

The purpose of the paper is to reflect on your year as a Graduate Assistant and to address how the assistantship has impacted or contributed to your overall graduate education. Select two of the tasks that you were asked to work on or complete during the year and write a brief commentary on them. Include information on the appropriateness of the skill level, what you have learned from the task and if you had completed the task (and if not, why).

Your paper should be creative yet succinct in providing your reflections. Please use 8½ x 11" white paper, double space, with your name and contact information in the upper right hand corner. You may include attachments to support and supplement your paper. Questions can be directed to Jan Merideth at meridethj@franklinpiece.edu. And yes, grammar, punctuation and spelling will be considered.

Forms to Use

When Applying for

Or

Reapplying for

Graduate Assistantship

Application for Graduate Assistantship

Name:

First Name

Initial

Last Name

Address:

Street

City

State

Zip

Mailing (if different)

Phone Number:

Home

Cell

Email:

In case of emergency:

Name

Phone Number

Relationship

Franklin Pierce Graduate Degree:

Have you been admitted to Franklin Pierce's Graduate School? Yes No

Which program have you applied to? Master's degree Doctorate degree

MBA MEd MPAS MSN MSITM DPT

Date of acceptance/admittance to program? _____

Expected Grad Assistant start date? _____

If not yet enrolled/accepted, explain: _____

Education:

College/University Attended	Major	Dates Attended	Degree	GPA Average

Employment Experience:

Employer Name	Position Held / Type of Work	Dates Employed

Graduate Position / Department

	<input type="checkbox"/> First choice
	<input type="checkbox"/> Second choice
	<input type="checkbox"/> Third choice

Applications will not be accepted without all sections of this form completed, signature of applicant and an attached resume (no more than one page).

I certify that the above information that I have supplied in this application (and accompanying résumé) is correct and accurate. I understand that any false statement, omission, or misrepresentation on this application is sufficient cause to disqualify my application. I acknowledge that I will pursue my studies, work my assigned hours as appointed, and assist my assigned division/department in any way deemed necessary.

Signature

Date

HR Use Only: Hire date: _____

Department: _____

