

Graduate Assistant Handbook

Welcome

Franklin Pierce University Graduate Assistantship Program provides a tuition benefit, along with a stipend, to a select number of full-time graduate students each year. The students have access to a subsidized high quality graduate education, and the University is able to make use of the talent within its own ranks. An assistantship is awarded primarily to help you complete your degree program in an affordable way as well as assisting the University in critical functions. It is important for you to know that your contribution will make a significant impact to Franklin Pierce University.

We are very aware that it is a difficult balancing act to pursue a graduate degree while assisting in teaching, administrative, or research work. We hope that this *Handbook* will answer many of your questions and offer some 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 best of luck with your classes.

Sharon Burke
Director of Human Resources

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Basic facts, regulations, and expectations

Graduate students play a vital role at Franklin Pierce University. This handbook will identify a number of the professional and academic issues you may encounter in your graduate studies and in your employment with the University.

The goal is 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 your rights and responsibilities at Franklin Pierce University. In your unique position—as both student and employee of Franklin Pierce University—you are protected by Franklin Pierce University, as well as by state and federal laws.

You will be required to attend our Graduate Assistant Orientation that introduces you to your program of study, supervisor, and facilities. You will already have received your letter offering an assistantship and a notification of your duties (Position Description). Your offer of employment is contingent on your successful admission to one of our graduate programs.

At the University we have three types of Graduate Assistants: graduate clerical assistant (GCA), a graduate research assistant (GRA) or a graduate teaching assistant (GTA). For the sake of brevity and conciseness, sometimes the term “Graduate Assistant” in this document is used generically. As you will learn, there are different types, terms, qualifications, requirements, and expectations. Be sure to identify what pertains to your award and, consequently, your rights and responsibilities.

What is an assistantship?

An 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.

What are the different types of assistantships?

There are three different 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 Clerical Assistant (GCA). Graduate Assistants are appointed to perform various types of duties other than those related directly to teaching or research. Most commonly, GA duties relate to administrative functions of the university.
- Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA). Masters level position. Graduate Teaching Assistants work under the direct supervision of regular faculty members and may be assigned only to duties related directly to instruction. These include such activities as assisting in the preparation of lectures, leading discussion sections, conducting laboratory exercises, grading papers, 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.

- Graduate Research Assistant (GRA). Doctorate level position. Graduate Research Assistants perform duties in support of university research, which may or may not relate directly to the student's thesis or dissertation. 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. GRA's may also provide classroom lectures at the request of the Professor but cannot be assigned primary teaching responsibilities.

Requesting a Graduate Assistant/Notification Process

No later than December 1st of each year, Departments wishing to fill or re-hire a Graduate Assistant position must provide the following materials to the Director of Human Resources:

1. Requisition to Hire (REQ) Form. This must be done each year and are only appointed on a Fiscal Year basis. (July 1st – June 30th)
 - a. Indicate if the position is a re-hire or a new position
 - i. All re-hire requests need to state if the current incumbent will be returning for an additional year.
 - ii. Indicate stipend requested:
 1. \$8,000
 2. \$6,000
 3. \$4,000
2. A brief narrative describing why the position is needed and what the value the position will provide to the Department and ultimately the students we serve.
 - a. For current positions, if the stipend requested is more/less than the current year's awarded position, please disclose this in the narrative.
3. Incomplete requests will not be forwarded to Senior Staff for consideration.

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 of position approvals by the Senior Staff are typically decided in March. Human Resources will notify the supervisors, Financial Aid and CGPS administration of all position vacancies for the upcoming academic year as soon as decisions are made.

Once a supervisor has been notified they have been granted a 1-year Assistant, he/she needs to contact HR to discuss the recruitment process.

1. To re-hire a current GA, an email to the HR Director requesting a reappointment is all that is necessary.
2. Any newly vacant positions will require a complete GA Employment Application and proof of graduate school acceptance.
 - a. The recruitment process for vacant GA positions will follow the University's current recruitment policy regarding hiring. All offers of employment are contingent on the candidate's successful admission and progress to one of our graduate programs.

All required forms are available on the HR Website by clicking on the GA link.

Eligibility

Candidates for the Graduate Assistant Program must be students who have been accepted and will matriculate in a Franklin Pierce University Graduate Program. To receive (or continue to receive) an assistantship, the graduate student must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Acceptance in a graduate degree program;
- All Franklin Pierce Graduate Assistants 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.
- 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.

Are there any special requirements for this position?

Yes, one of the requirements for your graduate assistantship, you will be required to complete a five page paper and submit it to the Tom Sabbagh, Dean for the College of Graduate and Professional Studies and Sharon Burke, Director of the Human Resources Department. Paper's will be due on or before:

- April 25 of each year for New Hampshire GA's
- February 14 of each year for Arizona DPT GA's.

If you do not submit the paper in a timely manner, you will not be allowed to apply for a graduate assistantship in the future.

What must I do to be reappointed as an assistant?

Each year the Graduate Assistants must reapply for the position as every position is subject to budget approval annually. Any current GA who wishes to be reappointed must submit to Human Resources, no later than February 1st for the following Academic year, a GA Reappointment Application, an updated resume and a new tuition benefit form. These forms are all located on the HR Website under the Graduate Assistant link.

How much do I work each week?

As student employees, Graduate Assistants are balancing professional development through the work experience with progress toward their degree in academic experiences, such as courses, theses, or dissertations.

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.

Can I hold another job in addition to my assistantship?

Graduate Assistants are not allowed to hold an additional voluntary or paid position with the University outside their role as a Graduate Assistant.

It is important that Graduate Assistants understand that 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.

How long can I hold my assistantship?

The maximum number of years that a graduate student can be appointed to an assistantship is two years for a master's student, three years for a doctoral student. Graduate Assistants that wish to continue beyond their Masters Degree's and have been accepted into a Doctorate program with Franklin Pierce may continue with this program.

What if I need a leave of absence because of health, family, or other personal issues?

The university does not provide for paid leave of absence for Graduate Assistants. If you need to take time off from your assistantship, it is your responsibility to make arrangements with your supervisor and/or graduate director. It is imperative that your supervisor/graduate director approves your course of action prior to your leave. Although some time off may need to be taken in the case of an emergency, you are encouraged, when possible, to consult in advance with your supervisor/graduate director about any absences you know will occur.

Should you wish to drop/withdraw from a course while in the Graduate Assistant program, you would need to follow the procedures set forth by the Registrar's office. If the class is dropped after add/drop, this course will count towards your benefit total.

What if I have a complaint about my supervisor or department about the work required of me?

If you feel that you have a legitimate complaint about any aspect of carrying out your assignments (work hours, duties assigned, pay, work conditions, etc.), you have a right to pursue several channels to resolve the conflict. If possible, you should speak first with your immediate supervisor and if the problem has not been resolved then with his/her supervisor. If you have not had the problem resolved to your satisfaction you also have the right to speak with the Director of Human Resources.

What do I need to know about sexual harassment?

Franklin Pierce seeks to maintain a learning and work environment free from unlawful discrimination, including sexual harassment that may render the educational and working environment hostile, intimidating, and offensive. In its misuse of power and authority, it subverts the mission of the University and may threaten the careers, educational experiences, and 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 sex.

Please refer to the Administrative Manual, Sexual and other Unlawful Harassment policy located on the HR Website.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

Compensation:

All graduate appointments are provided with a stipend for work performed. Stipends are awarded on a fiscal year basis which runs from July 1st through June 30th of any given year.

- Graduate Research and Graduate Teacher Assistant appointments are exempt positions and are paid on a monthly basis.
- Graduate Clerical Assistant (office/clerical) appointments are non-exempt appointments and are paid on a bi-weekly basis.

All stipends awarded are based on 12-months of employment. Graduate Assistants who do not work in any given month, will not receive compensation for that month.

Only the Director of Human Resources has the authority to make an offer of employment. All offers of employment will be granted to the Graduate Assistant in writing.

Tuition Waiver:

All Graduate Assistants are eligible for tuition waiver during each academic year they work.

- Term 1: August – November - If you begin your employment in July or August you are eligible for tuition waiver beginning Term 1.
- Term 2: November – February If you begin your employment in September - November you are eligible for tuition waiver beginning Term 2.
- Term 3: March – May If you begin your employment in March - April you are eligible for tuition waiver beginning Term 3.
- Term 4: May – August If you begin your employment in March - April you are eligible for tuition waiver beginning Term 4.

All tuition waiver benefits shall end (at the end of the semester) during the last month in which work is performed for the University.

Graduate Assistants enrolled in our Masters (MBA, MED, MSITM, MSSIFM) programs will receive a tuition waiver not to exceed the number of courses needed to attain their degree. This benefit shall waive 100% of the cost of the course.

Graduate Assistants enrolled in our Masters of Physician Assistant, Doctorate of Physical Therapy and Doctor of Arts 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 three 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 benefit total.

Only graduate level courses are waived; undergraduate courses are not eligible for the tuition waiver.

Housing.

Room and board and other educational related expenses are not covered by the assistantship. Based on Rindge enrollment, the University may have on-site housing available within this program. The cost of the room, if available, is not part of the Graduate Assistant program. For more information you would need to contact the Residential Life office at: 899-4176

Often Graduate Assistants apply for the opportunity for housing remission with local boarding schools and or service agency's in-lieu of providing limited employment services. A listing of providers who may be able to offer opportunities will be listed on the HR Website.

Insurance. All of the Graduate Assistant positions are part time positions which do not qualify for the University's insurance benefit package.

College of Graduate and Professional Studies Students studying at any of our campuses, including Rindge, typically possess adequate Health Insurance. However, for those who do not, the University has arranged with a New Hampshire Insurance agent to provide accident and sickness insurance directly to our students. This plan is optional. Because this is not a supplemental policy and because graduate students are in a different risk pool than traditional undergraduate students, the policy has been developed with higher limits (\$50,000 total benefit). Graduate students who are involved in practical experience off the campus are often required to have health insurance. This coverage has been designed to meet these requirements. Students who enroll are provided with a card that serves as proof of insurance. The CGPS Accident and Sickness plan is a 12 month plan, and is available for all enrolled students at CGPS. Spousal and dependent coverage is also available at an additional fee. Please contact NAHGA, Inc. at 1-800-920-4456, ext. 101 for information about enrolling your dependents.

If enrolling in the plan, the student should first visit the University web site to study the plan, benefits and limitations at: http://www.franklinpierce.edu/studentlife/stservices/health_services.htm

Coverage for the Accident and Sickness plan begins on August 15 and ends on August 14 of the following year. The policy is written for the entire year, but students starting early or late (having a gap in coverage) may request a bridge plan. Details are available from the insurance agent at 1-800-920-4456, ext. 101.

Meal benefit.

When in Rindge, all Graduate Assistants are eligible to participate in the Employee's Meal Benefit. Please refer to the Meal Benefit policy located on the HR Website under Administrative Policy Link.



**Human Resources Department
Graduate Assistant Reflections**

As one of the requirements for your graduate assistantship, you will be required to complete a five page paper and submit it to both:

Dean of the College of Graduate and Professional Studies
Franklin Pierce University
5 Chenell Drive
Concord, NH 03301

Sharon Burke, Director
Human Resources Department
Franklin Pierce University
40 University Drive
Rindge, NH 03461

The paper will be due on or before April 25 of each year. If you do not submit the paper in a timely manner, you will not be allowed to apply for a graduate assistantship in the future.

The purpose of the paper is to assess the manner in which each student met the educational, leadership or research objectives of the assistantship. In writing your paper, please reflect on the following objectives, choosing at least five objectives that were met by the assistantship. Please attach artifacts to this paper which supplement your reflections. A list of examples of artifacts follows the objectives.

Objectives:

Educational:

1. To assist faculty and coaches in meeting the educational or performance goals of a class or team
2. To structure learning experiences for maximum student learning and performance
3. To engage in evaluating student performance
4. To provide individual tutoring or practice for students
5. To develop a network of colleagues in higher education

Leadership:

1. To facilitate student and faculty activities
2. To foster an atmosphere of higher learning in all activities
3. To contribute to the community
4. To identify strengths and weaknesses in yourself
5. To balance teaching, service and inquiry in the assistantship

Research:

1. To assist faculty members in the collection of data
2. To master research software applications
3. To run analyses of data
4. To contribute to literature searches
5. To edit manuscripts
6. To produce manuscripts
7. To publish

Samples of Artifacts (to attach to paper):

1. List of labs/practices run by GA
2. Letters of commendation for work
3. Publications (even in draft form) showing GA as one of authors
4. Summary of research data collected and input by GA
5. List of leadership activities/meetings/individual sessions led by GA
6. Materials produced for students (newsletters, posters, online pieces, etc)
7. Pictures of events/activities/games of relevance to specific objectives
8. List of community activities in support of objectives

Be creative in providing artifacts that support your reflections on the objectives.

Please Note: This paper will be kept in your graduate and in your personnel files, so it cannot exceed 8 ½ by 11 inch size so if you have oversized items that support your reflections, please take a picture of them or reduce them in some way to attach to your paper.