Jefferson
(Philadelphia University + Thomas Jefferson University)

East Falls Campus
Graduate Assistantship Program

Program Description,
Guidelines & Requirements

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Philadelphia University
Graduate Assistantship Program

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1. University Graduate Assistantship Program Overview

Through the Graduate Assistantship Program, the University awards a limited number of annual Graduate Assistantships to new applicants on the basis of exceptional scholastic achievement; outstanding professional promise; and competence for service in the departments of the University. The financial need of applicants may be an additional consideration.

The Provost’s Office administers the University’s Graduate Assistantship Program. Graduate assistantship appointments and reappointments are made by the Office of Graduate Admissions and the Provost’s Office, in consultation with respective graduate program directors and the Deans of the Colleges.

2. University Graduate Assistantship Program Goals

The objectives of the University Graduate Assistantship Program are to provide professional experiences that complement graduate instruction and research while contributing financial assistance to exceptional students who are pursuing graduate degrees at Philadelphia University.

This Assistantship Program is designed to aid in the successful completion of the degree pursued and to enhance career opportunities through applied professional experiences. All graduate assistant duties are designed to foster student training and graduate-level learning experiences.

3. Program Eligibility

The eligibility requirements are described to provide graduate student applicants with an understanding of the usual conditions for awarding assistantships.

Applicants to graduate programs are eligible to apply. Applicants must:

- have been admitted fully and without academic provision.
- have an excellent academic record having achieved a grade point average of at least 3.25 on a 4.0 scale in their undergraduate and/or previous graduate program.

The application deadline is March 1st.

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1 Administrative offices or academic programs may also have Assistantships through foundation grants, government grants or contracts. Responsible parties will work closely with Graduate Admissions and Financial Aid on the award process. All hiring and rehiring must be coordinated with Human Resources. The criteria for these Assistantships are published in the advertisement of the opportunity.
4. Length of Appointment

a) Initial Appointment

A graduate student selected for an Assistantship may be appointed for up to two semesters or semester equivalents.

b) Reappointment

A graduate student may be reappointed for up to two additional semesters or semester equivalents.

5. Initial Application and Reappointment Process

a) Initial Appointment Process

Prospective students must submit the Application for Graduate Assistantship by March 1. The Application is located on the Graduate Financial Aid web page: http://philau.edu/financialaid/Graduate/Assistantships.html

The Provost’s Office generates award letters by late March.

Awardees must sign, date, and return their Graduate Assistantship Award Letter to the Provost’s Office. A signature indicates both acceptance of the award and an understanding of the Guidelines for Graduate Assistantships (available online at: www.philau.edu/gradstudent/).

The Provost’s Office forwards signed award letters to Human Resources, Financial Aid and the Bursar’s Office.

Typically, Graduate Assistantships are awarded for two semesters, or one academic year.

b) Reappointment Process

A Graduate Assistant may be reappointed when the following conditions permit:

a) University:
   • Institutional aid or grant funds are available;

b) Student recipient:
   • In good academic standing;\(^2\)
   • Registered for 9 or more graduate credits;
   • Maintained a grade point average of 3.25 or better;
   • Satisfactorily performed his/her teaching, research or administrative duties;
   • Completed the requisite self-evaluation at the end of each semester; and
   • Received a positive evaluation and a recommendation from the faculty work supervisor.

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\(^2\) Undergraduate courses and audited courses are not counted towards the enrollment requirement.
b) Reappointment Process continued

By the last day of classes, the Provost’s Office must receive the following materials from the Associate Dean:

1) Graduate Assistants’ self-evaluations
2) Graduate Assistant Supervisors’ evaluations
3) The Dean/Associate Dean’s recommendations regarding reappointment

The Associate Dean at each College oversees the assembly of and reviews these materials. S/he notifies the Provost’s Office of the outcomes and his/her recommendations.

The Provost’s Office checks students’ final grades and considers the submitted materials and the Dean’s recommendation. In mid to late May, the Provost’s Office generates reappointment letters or notice of non-renewal letters.

Graduate students must sign, date and return the reappointment letter to the Provost’s Office. A signature indicates both acceptance of the award and an understanding of the program requirements as stated here.

The Provost’s Office forwards signed reappointment letters to Human Resources, Financial Aid, and the Bursar’s Office.

It is the awardee’s responsibility to notify Human Resources if banking information has changed.

6. Parameters

a) Types of Awards

1. Full Assistantship Awards

A full graduate assistantship covers up to 18 graduate and graduate-foundation credits per academic year and pays a stipend. In exchange, graduate students on a full Graduate Assistantship will work 10 hours per week in a qualifying capacity.

2. Pro-Rated Assistantship Awards

The University may also make pro-rated awards, e.g. half Graduate Assistantships, as they are available. In addition to lower tuition remission, the per-week work assignment is lower for pro-rated awards.

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3 Assistantship benefits can be applied to the winter and summer DM&M terms since traditional academic cycles do not exist for that program.
b) Expectations of Recipients

Graduate Assistants are expected to meet the following program requirements.

1. Make a commitment to graduate study.
2. Maintain a strong academic record (cumulative GPA of 3.25 or better).
3. Remain within the expected time-to-degree for the academic program.
4. Perform the assignments made by the supervisor within the allowable hours of work.
5. May not have other campus jobs under any other employment category by the University, such as adjunct faculty or part-time staff. Graduate Assistants are students.
6. Respect the University’s Academic Policies and Procedures.

Students are responsible for following all of the Academic Policies and Procedures described in the Course Catalog (www.philau.edu/catalog), for understanding the degree requirements of their respective programs, for meeting the Assistantship eligibility criteria and program requirements, and for taking the initiative in ascertaining that all have been fulfilled.

7. Complete End-of Semester Reports

At the end of each semester, Graduate Assistants (GAs) must submit a one-page report to the Provost’s Office. It should summarize the work assigned and accomplished over the semester. The student should write a brief self-reflection on the educational experience associated with the assignments. As previously stated, Graduate Assistantships will not be renewed until both the student’s and the supervisor’s reports are received by the Associate Dean.

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4 Students may have additional student jobs when their financial aid packages permit. Other work restrictions may also apply. Students should confer with Student Employment.
c) Terms of Awards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Full Graduate Assistantship</th>
<th>Half Graduate Assistant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work Commitment:</td>
<td>10 hours per week</td>
<td>5 hours per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Appointment:</td>
<td>Fall and Spring semesters(^5)</td>
<td>Fall and Spring semesters(^5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistantship dates:</td>
<td>Second week of classes through the last day of classes in the traditional semester.</td>
<td>Second week of classes through the last day of classes in the traditional semester.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Thanksgiving and spring break weeks are excluded.</td>
<td>The Thanksgiving and spring break weeks are excluded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stipend:</td>
<td>- Paid bi-weekly through the duration of the contract. - Paid through student payroll.</td>
<td>- Paid bi-weekly through the duration of the contract. - Paid through student payroll.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Employment:</td>
<td>- A full Graduate Assistantship is a primary assignment for the recipient. - Full-time Graduate Assistants may not have an additional on-campus job and shall not be engaged in significant employment outside of the University.</td>
<td>- Part-time Graduate Assistants may not hold multiple on-campus student employment opportunities that, when combined, exceed 10 hours of work per week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition Scholarship:</td>
<td>Up to 18 graduate credit hours per academic year; posted directly to the student’s account.</td>
<td>Up to 9 graduate credit hours per academic year; posted directly to student’s account.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>Enrolled in 9 or more graduate credits each semester.</td>
<td>Enrolled in 9 or more graduate credits each semester.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other fees related to enrollment:</td>
<td>The tuition remission offsets only the tuition portion of enrollment costs. Other fees related to enrollment are not remitted and are the responsibility of the student.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

\(^5\) Assistantship benefits can be applied to the winter and summer DM&M terms since traditional academic cycles do not exist for that program.
d) Summer Prerequisites / Bridge Courses

Some graduate programs require summer prerequisite or bridge/foundation coursework to inform Fall content. These summer credits are not integrated into the Graduate Assistantship benefits. Therefore, students will need to finance these credits using traditional graduate payment and/or other financial aid methods.

e) Semesters with less than 9 credits

Some graduate programs require course sequencing that limits credits counts to less than 9 credits a term, e.g. MS IDM. The Assistantship provides up to 18 credits per Fall/Spring allowing these students to make up for the deficiency in the Fall before or Spring after. Tuition remission may not be carried over to another academic year. GA guidelines regarding hours of work per week and stipend pay shall remain the same per semester.

f) Programs with less than 36 credits

For programs with less than 36 credits, the Graduate Assistantship guidelines regarding hours per week and stipend pay remain the same for those with 36 credits and more. Should an assistantship be renewed for a second year, the Graduate Assistant will duplicate Year 1 work guidelines despite having fewer than 18 credits remaining in the program.

g) Programs with fewer than four (4) semesters

Awards to Graduate Assistants in one-year and three-semester programs will be consistent with the Graduate Assistantship Program guidelines regarding tuition remission and stipend. The hours of work and pay shall remain the same per semester or semester equivalent.

Graduate Assistantship tuition remission and stipend may be used during summer, when summer session is a required semester in the curriculum.

Graduate Assistantship tuition remission may only be used for degree completion, not for additional electives outside of the program curriculum.

h) Graduate Assistants’ Affiliation with the University

Enrolled in at least nine (9) credits, Graduate Assistants are considered full-time students.

Although assigned to teaching, research or strategic administrative projects, Graduate Assistants are regarded by the University as students. As such, Graduate Assistants do not accrue paid sick leave, annual leave or holiday leave or other employee benefits.

Graduate Assistants may not be employed under any other employment category by the University, such as adjunct faculty or part-time staff.
7. Other Considerations

a) Human Resources

New Hires must complete new hire forms before they are placed on the student payroll. These forms may be completed electronically. When Graduate Assistants arrive on campus, they should visit the Human Resources Office to complete the Form I-9.

It is a Graduate Assistant’s responsibility to notify Human Resources of any changes in their banking.

b) Student Accounts and the Bursar’s Office

The Provost’s Office notifies the Bursar of all awards.

Tuition remission is applied to a recipient’s student account via the Bursar’s Office.

Questions about Student Accounts should be directed to the Bursar.

c) Financial Aid

The Provost’s Office notifies the Financial Aid Office of all awards.

When tuition scholarship is included in the graduate assistantship, this award may impact the student's eligibility for federal programs of financial assistance.

Students are responsible for understanding and checking with the Office of Financial Aid regarding the impacts.

d) International Students and campus employment

A student visa that permits on-campus work for compensation is required.

- For international students entering the USA to attend Philadelphia University, an I-20 and F-1 visa are necessary and required.
- For international students currently in the USA at the time of application, the students must obtain a visa status which permits work on-campus for compensation. (e.g. F-1 status). A “change of status” application/procedure may be possible, but if it cannot be adjudicated by the start of the semester then the assistantship award may be forfeited. Travel abroad and re-entry may also be an option.

Upon coming to campus, international students must first visit the Office of International Student Programs to complete SEVIS paperwork. Next, international students visit the Human Resources Office to complete new hire paperwork. Lastly, international students must apply for a social security number and card.

Contact the Office of International and Exchange Student Programs for assistance or information.
8. Faculty Requests for a Graduate Assistant

Faculty may request a Graduate Assistant by completing the Graduate Assistant Request Form found on the Provost’s Office web page: http://www.philau.edu/provost/Grants/GraduateAssistantships.html.

All requests received by the published spring deadline are considered by a review committee according to the scoring rubric published on the Form. The review committee makes award recommendations to the Executive Deans.

Once a faculty member receives a Graduate Assistant, it is his/her responsibility to monitor weekly hours, according to the guidelines of the program. S/he is also required to submit end-of-semester evaluations of their Graduate Assistants.

Graduate Assistantships will not be reviewed for reappointment until both the student’s and supervisor’s reports, respectively, are received by the Associate Dean.

9. Placements and Assignments

Graduate Assistants may be placed in the following positions:

- Research Assistant
- Teaching Assistant
- Laboratory or Studio Assistant
- Project-based assignment

Placements will be conducted by the Provost’s Office and the Executive Deans’ Offices using applicant information provided on their cover letters, resumes, personal statements, and statements of qualifications.

Specific work assignments and scheduling are determined by the department, program or administrative unit to which the graduate student is assigned.

10. Termination of or Resignation from a Graduate Assistantship

a) Termination

A Graduate Assistantship 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 a graduate program.
2. The student is Academically Suspended from the University.
3. The student’s performance is determined to be unsatisfactory by the employing academic unit.

The College and the Provost’s Office will notify Human Resources and the University Bursar regarding the termination of any Graduate Assistantship.
b) Resignation from an Assistantship

When a student with a graduate assistantship wishes to withdraw after the start of classes, the University follows the Withdrawal Policy, as published by the Student Accounts Office (http://www.philau.edu/studentaccounts/resources/withdrawPolicy.html) for tuition billing purposes. The student will be paid for any work s/he has performed and will be billed for any prorated tuition due, per the Policy, and will be credited for a commensurate share of the Graduate Assistantship.

Graduate Assistants who resign prior to the last day to add a course, but remain enrolled in the University, will be re-billed for a pro-rated tuition for that semester and the balance must be paid in full.

Graduate Assistants who resign and leave the University will receive stipend payment for work completed up to the separation date.

To resign an Assistantship, a student must submit a resignation letter, indicating his/her last day of work, to the appropriate administrator in the appointing unit. The appointing unit will forward a copy of the letter to the Provost’s Office, which will notify the appropriate campus office(s) (Human Resources and University Bursar, etc.) to immediately process the resignation from the Assistantship.

c) Reduction in Assistantship Award

When a student with a graduate assistantship wishes to reduce the assistantship award, e.g. from a full to a prorated award, the University follows the Add/Drop Policy in the Course Catalog (http://www.philau.edu/catalog/UniversityAcadPolicyProcedures/UgradStudentAcademicPandP/index.html#DropAdd) and re-bills the student for prorated tuition, effective the date of the change. The student will be paid for any work s/he has performed to date and the position and weekly hours will be adjusted effective the date of the change.

To reduce an Assistantship, a student must submit a letter requesting the reduction to the appropriate administrator in the appointing unit. The appointing unit will forward a copy of the letter to the Provost’s Office, which will notify the appropriate campus office(s) (Human Resources and University Bursar, etc.) to immediately process the reduction in award.

d) Withdrawal from the University

When a student with a graduate assistantship wishes to withdraw from the University after the start of classes, the University follows the Withdrawal Policy published in the Course Catalog (http://www.philau.edu/catalog/UniversityAcadPolicyProcedures/UgradStudentAcademicPandP/index.html#Withdraw) and the billing policy published by the Student Accounts Office (http://www.philau.edu/studentaccounts/resources/withdrawPolicy.html). The student will be paid for any work s/he has performed and will be billed for any prorated tuition due, per the Policy, and will be credited for a commensurate share of the Graduate Assistantship.

To withdraw from the University, a student must follow the University’s Withdrawal Policy with the University Registrar.
11. Change of Graduate Program

Graduate Assistantships are recruitment tools for priority graduate programs. If a student changes his/her graduate program after initial acceptance to a graduate assistantship, the University reserves the right to change the award.

To change a graduate program without any changes to a student’s award, the student must complete the “Change of Graduate Program Request Form” (http://www.philau.edu/learning/Advising/advisingforms.html) no later than the last day to add within the first semester of the Assistantship.

When a student changes his/her graduate program either after the last day to add within the initial semester or effective a subsequent semester and as a result loses graduate credits paid for with the Graduate Assistantship, the University reserves the right to bill the student for those credits.

12. Grievance Procedures

A Graduate Assistant who has a personnel matter should contact the College’s Associate Dean to discuss the circumstances and the necessary course of action.

Faculty supervisors of Graduate Assistants who have supervisory or job performance issues, should contact the College’s Associate Dean to discuss the circumstances and necessary course of action.

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