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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 of the College of Graduate Studies and Continuing Education.

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 assistant 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 graduate semester credit hours during a regular semester or at least six graduate semester credit hours for the period May term through Summer II term.

An exception to this requirement may be made by the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies and Continuing Education, 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, 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 all three 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 three 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 university tuition scholarships.

6. It should be noted that the graduate assistantship tuition scholarship may impact on other types, i.e. Federal, programs of financial assistance. **It is the student’s responsibility to determine 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 advertised by the office of the Associate Dean, College of Graduate Studies and Continuing Education. 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).

Advertisements for vacancies must be posted for a minimum of five (5) working days.
Applicant files will be reviewed and interviews held. Selection will be made by the department, with the approval of the Associate Dean, College of Graduate Studies and Continuing Education. The College of Graduate Studies and Continuing Education 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 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 and Continuing Education, with a copy to the
supervisor. In addition, each graduate assistant must supply
documents (at a minimum, the individual’s social security card and a
picture ID) necessary to be placed on university payroll. These
documents must be provided to the Comptroller’s Office, not later
than the fifteenth day of the month in which employment begins.

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 Comptroller's 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'
acknowledgments specify stipends based on an 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. If a graduate assistant resigns the
Assistantship or is terminated, the salary will be prorated through the
last day of employment.
Tuition scholarships for a maximum of six (6) graduate semester hours are awarded to graduate assistants in addition to a monthly stipend. If a graduate assistant resigns the Assistantship, withdraws from school, or if the number of hours the student is taking falls below the required minimum number for eligibility to hold an assistantship, the student will be responsible for repaying tuition on a prorated basis for that semester.

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 graduate semester credit hours during a regular semester or at least six graduate semester credit hours for the period May term through Summer II term.

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.

Any student receiving tuition scholarship who withdraws or is registered for fewer than six graduate semester credit hours will be responsible for repaying tuition on a prorated basis for that semester.
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 notification 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.