

Guidelines for Graduate Assistantships

A limited number of graduate assistantships are available to qualified incoming graduate students. Assistantships are awarded on a competitive basis and made at the sole discretion of the university. Prospective students must apply for a graduate assistantship at the time of application to Philadelphia University. Assistantship application deadlines are March 1 for the fall semester and October 1 for the spring semester.

Types of Graduate Assistantships

Traditional Graduate Assistantship – Traditional assistantships are awarded for the academic year and are renewable for a maximum of four semesters (fall and spring). The assistantship begins on the first day of classes and runs through the last day of final examinations. Specific dates are included in the appointment letter.

As of January 2009, 22 positions are available and they are located across campus within various administrative offices, laboratories, and the Gutman Library. Students awarded assistantships receive tuition remission for nine graduate credits in each of the fall and spring semesters and a stipend. There are no traditional graduate assistantships in the summer.

Graduate Research Assistantship – Research assistantships are externally-funded assistantships which provide the opportunity for qualified graduate students to participate in research projects under faculty supervision. Funds come from a variety of sources, but many are from U.S. federal agencies sponsoring research, which may require annual review and which are not automatically renewed by the funding agency. The research assistantships are subject to continued outside funding.

The assistantships typically begin in September and continue through the end of April. Specific dates are included in the appointment letter. These assistantships provide tuition remission for nine graduate credits in each of the fall and spring semesters and a monthly stipend that is determined at the beginning of each research project. Students holding these assistantships may be eligible to work on research projects over the summer for which they will be compensated. No tuition remission is available for the summer. Project-specific limitations may apply and project-specific qualifications may be required and requested at the time of application.

Graduate assistantships are renewable for a maximum of four semesters (fall and spring), pending continued funding.

Applicants are evaluated on a number of criteria, but these are merit-based awards, so the criteria with the most 'weight' include undergraduate grade point average (GPA), scores on standardized exams (TOEFL, GMAT, GRE, for example) if applicable, strength of recommendation letters and a number of other criteria. The goals of the institution and programs, research and other skills, and staffing needs are also considered in the evaluation process.

Evaluation of applications begins the day after the deadline (October 2 for incoming student in spring semesters and March 2) and continues until all assistantships are awarded. This means that those who submitted completed applications by the deadline will be given priority. Successful candidates may be notified as early as five weeks after the deadline.

This program is for new, incoming students only. Current students who are already enrolled in a program are encouraged to seek other types of financial support. For other types of financial aid, please seek the advice of your program director, the graduate dean, and the director of the Financial Aid Office. The Graduate Financial Aid and the Graduate Student Resources web pages also provide advice and information about other sources of financial aid.

Required Graduate Assistantship Application Materials

Appointment to a graduate assistantship is competitive and based on the following (all of which is to be submitted at the same time/as a complete package, other than material sent from official sources):

1. Completed Graduate Assistantship Application.
2. Official undergraduate transcript (English version).
3. Entrance examination scores: GMAT, GRE, or other as required by the applicant's program.
4. English proficiency examination score (non-U.S. citizens).
5. Resume and/or personal statement
6. Two professional references.

Additional criteria, such as specific computer skills or demonstrated research experience may be required. Applicants may also be asked to interview with the prospective supervisor in the office in which assistantship is offered. When evaluating applicants, all criteria are considered and the expectation is that a candidate is exceptional in one or more areas

(undergraduate GPA, entrance examination score, research skills, etc.) Students with below a 3.25 undergraduate GPA, or who score below a 500 on the GMAT or below 1070 on the GRE exams, or if more than 5 foundation courses are needed, will generally not be considered for an award. Awards are competitive and made at the sole discretion of the university. **Incomplete applications may not be accepted.**

Compensation

Compensation is for the academic year, unless specified otherwise in the appointment letter. Graduate assistants must be enrolled for nine graduate credits each semester (fall and spring). Compensation includes:

1. Tuition remission for nine graduate credits each fall and spring term. An amount equivalent to nine graduate credits is credited to the graduate student's account at the beginning of each semester (in 2008-2009, that was equivalent to \$13,428 per academic year; or \$6,714 per semester). Tuition and fees above and beyond this amount are the responsibility of the student. Students must maintain enrollment in a minimum of nine credits to remain eligible for the assistantship.
2. Semester stipend or monthly stipend depending upon type of assistantship (in 2008-2009, \$2,575 per academic year; or \$1,287.50 per semester for assistantships. Stipends for research assistantships are typically substantially higher.) The actual stipend amount is listed in the appointment letter for each graduate assistantship.

Full-time students are also eligible for student health insurance plan.

Renewal of Graduate Assistantships

Assistantships will be renewed on an annual basis, up to a maximum of two years (four semesters, excluding summers) per student, based on school/department needs, satisfactory performance and funding availability. Continuation of the assistantship is contingent upon a satisfactory performance review performed each semester by the immediate supervisor. Students must maintain a minimum cumulative graduate GPA of 3.25 (excluding foundation courses and undergraduate prerequisites) while holding either type of graduate assistantship. As noted above, renewal of graduate research assistantships is subject to continued external funding.

Graduate Assistantship Responsibilities

1. Enrollment as an entering full-time student (nine credit hours in fall and spring terms – 18 total credit hours annually).
2. Work assignment of twenty (20) hours per week. Specific hours will be determined by the assistantship supervisor.
3. Successful completion of administrative and/or research functions as outlined in the position description for each graduate assistantship.
4. Submission of monthly activity reports. These are due on the 15th of the month (October, November and December in fall semesters, and February, March and April in the spring semesters) and should be submitted electronically to the Graduate Dean.

Procedures for Awarding Graduate Assistantships

Shortly after the application deadline for graduate assistantships, the Office of Graduate Admissions compiles a list of incoming graduate students who meet the qualifications for a graduate assistantship. Graduate program directors recommend students from their programs for assistantship positions – either traditional graduate assistantships or graduate research assistantships. The graduate dean extends assistantship offers to those incoming students who are recommended by their respective program directors. Students who accept the assistantship offer are then placed into one of the available assistantships. Supervisors of graduate assistantships may interview students before a final placement is made.

A formal appointment letter outlining the terms of the assistantship is signed by the President of Philadelphia University and sent to the student. Students must sign and return this appointment letter to the graduate dean in order to receive tuition remission and stipend. The student's signature on this appointment letter signifies receipt and acceptance of the *Guidelines for Graduate Assistantships* document (this document).

When new graduate students arrive on campus, they must go to the Business Office in Archer Hall to complete necessary paperwork. International students must meet with the Director of International Student Programs and must bring their passports with them when completing the paperwork.

Graduate Assistantships and Internship

Graduate students who hold graduate assistantships or graduate research assistantships must seek approval to complete an internship experience. Since graduate assistants must maintain a full-time credit load of nine credits and must work 20 hours per week in their assistantship positions, participation in an internship experience may not be advisable or feasible. If approval is granted for graduate assistants to participate in an internship, the internship experience must not exceed 12 hours per week. In addition, it is strongly recommended that students register for the internship experience as part of their required nine hours of course registration for the semester rather than as an additional three credits or a total of 12 credit hours for the semester. (Students enrolled in programs that include a required internship must agree to fulfill the internship requirement during the summer. In these cases, there is no restriction on the number of hours of work per week.)

The approval process must begin in the semester prior to the semester during which the internship is anticipated. An approval form is available from the Internship Office and must be completed prior to registration for internship. The following people must approve a internship placement (in this order): the graduate assistant's supervisor or principal investigator; the dean of the school in which the graduate assistant is enrolled; the dean of the school in which the graduate assistant is assigned (if applicable); the director of the internship program; and the graduate dean. As internship placement will not be made until and unless all approvals have been obtained. The applicant is also expected to prepare a statement describing how the internship supports the student's career goals. The applicant must provide contact information and details about the firm, the supervisor, a complete job description, and a statement from the employer that work requirements will not exceed 12 hours per week. These are to accompany the application made to the graduate dean.

Graduate Assistantships and Academic Integrity

Graduate assistantships are reserved for those graduate students who meet minimum eligibility standards. Students must qualify for graduate assistantships by demonstrating superior academic credentials, including superior undergraduate achievement and standardized test scores. In addition, they must maintain minimum grade point averages of 3.25 (excluding foundation courses and undergraduate prerequisites) to continue in their assistantship assignments. Further, it is assumed that

graduate assistants will demonstrate academic integrity in their graduate study and research activities.

All graduate students, including graduate assistants, are responsible for understanding and following the guidelines of Philadelphia University's Academic Integrity. Graduate assistants who are found to be in violation of the Academic Integrity policy, either by the action of individual faculty members or by action of the Student Conduct Committee, are at risk of having their assistantships terminated. In cases where a graduate assistant has been found in violation of the Academic Integrity policy, the graduate dean will determine whether or not the circumstances of the incident in question warrant the termination of the graduate assistantship.

On rare occasions, an assistantship may be awarded to a graduate student after the student has been enrolled at the University. In these cases, the assistantship will be awarded for one semester.

If the student has been found in violation of the Academic Integrity policy, either by action of an individual faculty member or by action of the Student Conduct Committee, that student will be ineligible for assignment to a graduate assistantship.

Students enrolled in programs with a required internship or similar obligation must agree to perform the internship during the summer months only.

Students enrolled in programs that are predominantly online or distance must develop a work contract with the student's program director and the assistantship position supervisor. The work contract must be submitted to the program director at least one month prior to the beginning of the assistantship. The work contract must contain an explanation of the responsibilities and describe how the students would fulfill approximately 600 hours of work per semester (20 hours per week over 15 weeks is the general contract duration). The award will be contingent upon acceptance of the work contract by the Graduate dean.

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