

Graduate Assistant Handbook 2009 - 2010

**Office of Graduate Admissions &
Enrollment Services**



Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to introduce you as a Graduate Assistant to the William Paterson University academic community. Additionally, it is designed to inform you of your rights and responsibilities as a graduate student.

This document is a reference guide for Graduate Assistants and their supervisors. It should be used to answer commonly asked questions and facilitate student adjustment to the University academic and work environments. We hope it is useful to you in the transition to graduate education and the graduate experience.

For specific policies and procedures, please refer to the Graduate Catalog, visit our website at www.wpunj.edu, or call the Office of Graduate Admissions at (973) 720-3641.

We hope you find this booklet helpful and useful.

Sincerely,

Tinu Adeniran
Editor
Assistant Director of
Graduate Admissions

Helpful Contacts

Office of Graduate Admissions (973) 720-3641
<http://ww2.wpunj.edu/admissn/gradf/graduate/>

Coordinator of Graduate Assistantships (973) 720-2764
adenirant@wpunj.edu

Human Resources (973) 720-2605
<http://ww2.wpunj.edu/adminsrv/hr/Newhr/>

Payroll Department (973) 720-2885
<http://ww2.wpunj.edu/adminsrv/hr/Newhr/payroll.htm>

Bursar (973) 720-2876
<http://ww2.wpunj.edu/adminsrv/business/bursar/default.cfm>

Hospitality Services (ID's) (973) 720-2671
<http://ww2.wpunj.edu/studentcenter/>

Parking & Transportation Services (Decal) (973) 720-2780
<http://ww2.wpunj.edu/police/>

Registrar (973) 720-3074
<http://ww2.wpunj.edu/adminsrv/registra/>

Financial Aid (973) 720-2022
<http://ww2.wpunj.edu/finaid/fastaff.htm>

The Office of Graduate Admissions Raubinger Hall, Room 139

Staff

Danielle Liautaud *Director of Graduate Admissions*
(973) 720-3579
liauttaudd@wpunj.edu

Tinu Adeniran *Assistant Director of Graduate Admissions
and Graduate Assistantship Coordinator*
(973) 720-2764
adenirant@wpunj.edu

Liana Fornarotto *Assistant Director
of Graduate Admissions*
(973) 720-3578
fornarottol@wpunj.edu

Christina Aiello *Assistant Director
of Graduate Admissions*
(973) 720-2506
aielloc@wpunj.edu

Dr. Nina Jemmott *Associate V.P. & Dean of Graduate Studies
and Research*
(973) 720-3093
jemmottn@wpunj.edu

Office Hours

Monday	8:30am - 4:30pm*
Tuesday	8:30am - 4:30pm*
Wednesday	8:30am - 4:30pm*
Thursday	8:30am - 4:30pm*
Friday	8:30am - 4:30pm*

* Late nights (open until 6pm, two days a week) vary each semester.

** Summer hours: Monday – Thursday 8:00am – 5:15pm. The office is closed on Fridays.

Table of Contents

What is a Graduate Assistantship?.....	1
Requirements.....	1
How to Apply for a Graduate Assistantship.....	2
Selection Process.....	2
Appointment.....	3
Initial Appointment / Placement.....	3
Reappointment.....	3
Time Limits.....	3
Change in Appointment/Placement.....	3
Award Package.....	4
Stipend.....	4
Tuition Waiver.....	4
Eligibility.....	4
Tax Responsibility.....	4
Cancellation of Award.....	5
Billing if Award is Cancelled.....	5
Resignation.....	5
Academic Policies.....	5
Academic Progress.....	6
Academic Probation.....	6
Incomplete Grades.....	6
Leave of Absence.....	6
Orientations.....	7
Graduate Assistant.....	7
Graduate Students.....	7
Program of Study.....	7
Enrollment Services.....	7
E-mail Accounts.....	7
E-mail Usage.....	8
Identification Card.....	8
Parking.....	8
Payroll.....	9
Time Sheets.....	9
Work Policies.....	9
Attendance.....	9
Semester Breaks/Holidays.....	10
Confidential and Sensitive Information.....	10
Other Employment.....	11
Supervisor.....	11
Performance Assessment.....	11
Sexual Harassment Policy.....	12
Grievance Policy.....	13
Graduate Student Organization.....	14
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).....	14

What is a Graduate Assistantship?

A graduate assistantship is an academic award of a stipend and waiver of tuition and fees. Graduate Assistants are students who are matriculated and enrolled full-time in a graduate program. Graduate Assistants work on campus a total of 20 hours per week. Graduate assistants receive a stipend of \$6,000 and a waiver of tuition and fees for the extent of the appointment.

Requirements

Graduate Assistantships are awarded competitively on the basis of qualifications. In order to be eligible for a graduate assistantship, you must:

- Be accepted into or enrolled in a William Paterson graduate program, (i.e. teaching certification, endorsement or master's degree)
- Have completed and filed a graduate assistantship application by April 1;
- Have an undergraduate gpa of at least 3.0;
- Have official college transcripts;
- Have a minimum of two letters of recommendation;
- Have a copy of your resume; and
- Have a statement about your career goals.

Some graduate programs also require you to have an acceptable standardized test score (i.e. GRE, GMAT or MAT), a teaching certificate and/or portfolio.

International students from non-English speaking countries must submit TOEFL scores.

How to Apply for a Graduate Assistantship

You can submit an application for a graduate assistantship at the same time as the admissions application or after you are accepted into a graduate program. However, all graduate assistantship applications must be filed by April 1. You must complete a graduate assistantship application, attach a resume, two letters of recommendation and a statement about your career goals to the Office of Graduate Admissions. The Office of Graduate Admissions will make copies and attach your transcript(s) and/or standardized test score(s) to your application.

Selection Process

Upon acceptance into a graduate degree, your graduate assistantship application will be placed in a binder for interested departments to review. After the departments have reviewed the graduate assistantship applications and supporting documents, candidates are selected for an interview. Upon completion of all interviews, the department selects the person to fill their graduate assistant position(s) and submits an appointment recommendation to the Office of Graduate Admissions.

The Office of Graduate Admissions submits the recommendations for approval to the University administration that includes the Associate Vice President and Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, the Provost and the Board of Trustees. After all approvals are made, you will receive a letter from the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research notifying you of your placement. An award is not final until you have received official notification.

Appointment

Initial Appointment/Placement

You are appointed to work closely with an assigned faculty, staff or administrator in a variety of settings. Under the direction of a supervisor, you will be expected to assist in carrying out the goals and mission of the unit. You must work 20 hours per week in your appointed department. Work generally begins on September 1 or date of assignment and ends on June 30 each academic year.

Reappointment

For reappointment, you must submit a new application. This process includes the graduate assistantship application and a letter of recommendation from the department in which you are employed. If you are seeking an appointment to a different department, you must complete the graduate assistantship application and submit two new letters of recommendation and a statement about your career goals. These documents must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Admissions by April 1.

Time limits

Most assistantships when the program of study is completed, generally from 1-2 years. Extensions beyond the program credit limit needs written approval from the Associate Vice President & Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. The renewal of an appointment is based upon program completion, confirmation of need, performance, a request submitted by the dean of the college in which you are enrolled and yearly budget allocations. Therefore, you are not guaranteed an appointment every academic year beyond the initial commitment of one year.

Change in Appointment/Placement

You will be expected to maintain your placement for the duration of your assistantship. For exceptions, please contact the Office of Graduate Admission & Enrollment Services.

Award Package

Stipend

You are awarded a service-based stipend of \$6,000 per academic year for which you must render service to the University for 20 hours per week in the appointed department.

Tuition Waiver

You are awarded a scholarship (waiver of tuition and fees) for the Fall semester, Spring semester and 1 Summer Session. You may be awarded a tuition waiver for Summer classes if funding is available or if you are reappointed and the GA award did not previously cover your Summer classes.

Eligibility

1) Student Teaching/Internship/Practicum: Registration for Student Teaching, Internship and Practicum that are full-time are not funded through the Graduate Assistantship program, and under current eligibility guidelines.

2) Undergraduate Courses: Undergraduate courses are not covered by the assistantship. If for any reason you must take an undergraduate course(s), as approved by your Graduate Program Director, you will be billed for tuition and fees for that course(s) at the graduate tuition rate. (In addition, undergraduate courses may not be used to satisfy graduate degree requirements.) Careful advisement during the course of study is encouraged.

Tax Responsibility

Based on U.S. Tax requirements, the value of your tuition waiver is considered an additional form of compensation, and as such may be taxable. The amount of taxes withheld from your wages depends upon your filing status on the W-4 form.

Cancellation of Award

During any academic term, an assistantship may be cancelled for any of the following reasons:

- Violation of University Policy and unsatisfactory academic performance.
- Less than full-time status in any graduate program
- Withdrawal from graduate studies
- Resignation or dismissal from an appointment.

Billing if Award is Cancelled

If your graduate assistantship is terminated during an academic term, then the tuition award will be cancelled. You will be billed and must pay for the semester's tuition and fees and the stipend will be suspended at that point.

Resignation

If you choose to resign from your appointment, you must submit a letter of resignation to your supervisor. Upon receipt of the letter, the supervisor completes the Human Resource Action Form (HRAF) to cancel the stipend and tuition remission, effective the day of resignation. You may be required to pay all or part of your tuition and fees.

Academic Policies

Please refer to the Graduate Catalog for all policies that pertain to matriculation and enrollment at the graduate level. These policies supercede all others.

Academic Progress

You are required to maintain good academic standing at all times. You must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 and maintain full-time matriculation in a graduate program for the duration of the appointment (minimum of 9 credits per semester or the equivalent of full time). You cannot earn the grade of “C” in more than 2 courses.

Academic Probation

If your GPA falls below a 3.0, you will be placed on academic probation and your graduate assistantship will be cancelled. At that time, your registration will be restricted to 6 credits or less. If your GPA remains below 3.0 after completion of the 6 credits, you are subject to dismissal from the University.

Incomplete Grades

A course grade IN indicates that you have not completed all of the work required in a course. Unless the work is completed within 30 days immediately following the end of the semester, the IN grade will automatically change to F, and you will be placed on academic probation.

Leave of Absence

If you need to take a leave of absence from the University, you must complete and submit the Application for a Leave of Absence with The Office of the Registrar. You must resign from your assistantship as indicated in this manual (p. 5). Please be advised that that your tuition waiver and stipend will be cancelled effective the date of the Leave of Absence. You can obtain this Form either from our web site at ww2.wpunj.edu/admissn/gradf/graduate/forms.htm, or Office of the Registrar in College Hall.

Orientations

Graduate Assistants

You are expected to attend an orientation program specifically designed for graduate assistants. This orientation is required because policies specific to graduate assistants are reviewed. Representatives from other offices who are involved in the award process will provide you with useful and helpful information. This orientation is hosted by the Office of Graduate Admissions & Enrollment Services.

Graduate Students

You are expected to attend an orientation for all graduate students your first semester. This orientation is useful to all new students. University policies are reviewed and outlined. You will meet other graduate students and program directors, and have your questions and concerns addressed. This orientation is hosted by the Graduate Admissions & Enrollment Services.

Program of Study

You may be expected to attend the orientation established by your program of study (major). This orientation will help you become familiar with your college faculty and your major, departmental policies and course of study.

Enrollment Services

E-mail Accounts

All WPU students are automatically assigned e-mail accounts. Your e-mail address consists of your last name and first initial (example: adenirant@student.wpunj.edu). If you experience difficulty accessing and using your WPU e-mail account, please contact Brian Fanning at ext. 2421 or (fanningb@wpunj.edu) for help.

E-mail Usage

The Office of Graduate Admissions utilizes the WPU student e-mail system to contact you regarding any updates or changes in policies or procedures or general information. It is recommended that you review your e-mail periodically. The use of personal email account is not recommended.

Identification Card

As a graduate assistant, you are issued an employee identification card from WPU Hospitality Services located in the Student Center. You must be registered for classes and present the official graduate assistantship offer letter to a Hospitality Services representative. Upon review, the representative will take your photograph and immediately issue the identification card. The ID card is used like an ATM card on campus, however, you cannot withdraw money with the card. You can apply money to the card to use vending machines, photocopiers, to checkout library books, purchase food in the cafeteria and items at the bookstore.

Parking

You are eligible for a parking decal from WPU Parking & Transportation Services located in the public safety building. To register your vehicle and obtain a parking decal, please complete the online form and submit it. To gain access to the online registration form, please go to the following link: https://webapps.wpunj.edu/misc/campus_police/. You must abide by reserved parking signs to avoid being ticketed or towed.

Payroll

Your stipend is processed through the University payroll department. The stipend is taxed in accordance with state and federal regulations. In order for your stipend to be processed, the payroll department must have evidence of eligibility to work in the United States such as a visa, social security card or original U.S. birth certificate. Additionally, you must complete W-2 and I-9 forms. Attach a copy of your passport or driver's license to the I-9 form. All of these documents are required and must be submitted to the payroll department prior to starting work.

Time Sheets

Bi-weekly time sheets must be submitted electronically and are due the week before pay periods. Time sheets are on-line at <http://ww2.wpunj.edu/employeeservices/wpuonline.cfm>. When using this web site, click on on-line time sheets and follow the instruction.

Work Policies**Attendance**

Your daily schedule is to be arranged with your immediate supervisor. You are expected to report regularly to your work assignment. If you plan on being absent from work for any reason you must notify your supervisor immediately. You must make arrangements with your supervisor to reconcile time missed from work or your pay may be affected. Approval of absences and time reconciliation is at the discretion of the supervisor.

Semester Breaks/Holidays

You are expected to maintain a 20 hour work week for the duration of your assistantship. You are not required to work during holidays or when classes are not in session. Moreover, you are not required to work during semester breaks: Winter Break (between the end of fall and the beginning of spring semesters) and Spring Break. You will not be expected to make up administrative hours for time not worked when classes are not in session. (Note Exception: You are required to continue to work in your assigned department after classes end in May of each semester through the end of your contract period, June 30.)

Confidential and Sensitive Information

Maintaining the confidentiality of information and access is paramount. The William Paterson University Employee Handbook policy on the misuse of confidential information is as follows: “Confidential” information is intended for the sole use of person or persons to whom it is directed. If you are an intended recipient of this information, the dissemination, distribution, copying or use of the information or its contents is strictly prohibited. Violations of this procedure may lead to corrective action up to and including termination of employment.”

(<http://ww2.wpunj.edu/adminsrv/hr/Newhr/EmployeeHandbook.htm#IIP>)

University policy, as per the Employee Handbook on computing and sensitive information, is as follows: “Employees can be held responsible for all activity in their assigned account. Inappropriate use or unauthorized dissemination of confidential data is considered a serious offense and violates University policy as well as federal law. Conduct which involves the use of computing and information resources in an inappropriate manner may result in revocation of computing usage privileges and is subject to disciplinary action as defined for specific employee categories by existing policies, statutes, rules, regulations, employment contracts, and labor agreements. Such conduct may also be subject to criminal or civil legal action.”

(<http://ww2.wpunj.edu/adminsrv/hr/Newhr/EmployeeHandbook.htm#IIP>)

The University is not tolerant of those who are non-compliant with this policy. An example of misusing confidential and/or sensitive information is a graduate assistant giving information or access codes for Banner to a friend or family member. Another example of non-compliance is if a graduate assistant purposely enters incorrect information on a document or in Banner to benefit self or others.

Other Employment

Graduate Assistants may not accept any other employment on campus without the written approval from the Associate V.P. & Dean of Graduate Studies and Research.

Supervisor

Upon the awarding of your graduate assistantship, you will be appointed to work in a University office. Within the appointed office, you will have a supervisor who will determine your daily work schedule and assignments. Annually, your supervisor will evaluate your job performance and will review the evaluation with you.

Performance Assessment: During the course of each academic year, an assessment is made of overall performance. The assessment is conducted by the supervisor of the area of placement. Aspects of the assessment includes: attendance; promptness; interpersonal interactions and timely completion of assignments. The results of the performance assessment are discussed by the supervisor of the placement and the Graduate Assistant. The assessment is used for performance improvement and feedback. The actual form may be found online at <http://www.wpunj.edu/graduate>.

Sexual Harassment Policy

Sexual harassment encompasses any sexual attention that is unwanted. Sexual harassment can be verbal, visual, or physical. It can range from repeated unwelcome sexual flirtation and inappropriate gender-based put-downs of individuals or groups of people to physical abuses, such as sexual assault or rape. Whether particular verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct constitutes harassment in violation of this policy will depend upon all of the circumstances involved, the context in which the conduct occurred, and the frequency, severity, and pattern of the conduct.

The University recognizes that even the possibility of harassment is destructive to individuals, to groups and to the community. While sexual harassment most often takes place in situations where there is a power differential between the persons involved, the University recognizes that sexual harassment may occur between persons of the same status. Sexual harassment may also occur between persons of the same sex. Sexual harassment contaminates teacher/student and supervisor/subordinate relationships as well as those among student peers and faculty or staff colleagues. When, through fear of reprisal, a student, staff members, or faculty member submits or is pressured to submit to unwanted sexual attention, the entire community is undermined.

The University as per the Employee Handbook, will not tolerate behavior among members of the community which creates an unacceptable working or educational environment, and it will initiate appropriate sanctions against the offender.

Sexual harassment includes but is not limited to:

Gender Harassment: generalized gender-based remarks and behavior;

Seductive Behavior: inappropriate, unwanted, and offensive physical or verbal sexual advances;

Sexual Coercion: coercion of sexual activity by threat of punishment; **Sexual Assault:** gross sexual imposition, like touching, fondling, grabbing, or assault.

For general policy purposes, sexual harassment may be described as unwelcome sexual advances, requests to engage in sexual conduct, and other physical and expressive behavior of a sexual nature.

ww2.wpunj.edu/StudentServices/policytemplate.cfm?plink=/policies/POLPROC/sexualha.htm

Grievance Policy

If you have a grievance (regarding work hours or work responsibilities, etc), you must first discuss and attempt to resolve the concerns with your immediate supervisor.

If an impasse is reached, then you must submit a letter to the Office of Graduate Admissions explaining the situation and any attempts to resolve the issue. The Office of Graduate Admissions may request additional information from all parties involved. Furthermore, the Office of Graduate Admissions may request to meet with all individuals involved to achieve a resolution. If a resolution does not occur, the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research will be contacted to facilitate a resolution. Refer to student handbook, graduate catalog and academic policies at all times.

Graduate Student Organization (GSO)

The GSO provides information about graduate education to graduate students, promotes intellectual, cultural and social growth activities, and creates a forum for graduate students to discuss their ideas and concerns. As a graduate assistant, you are expected to be an active member of the GSO by attending meetings, functions and supporting the goals of the organization. For more information contact Tinu Adeniran at ext. 2764 or adenirant@wpunj.edu.

FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

1. Q: What happens if I get a bill for payment of tuition?
A: Contact the Bursar's Office. Give copy of your award letter to the Bursar's Office for verification of assistantship.
2. Q: When do I register?
A: Once you are admitted to the University, we strongly suggest that you meet with your academic advisor to create your course schedule and for assistance with the registration process. You must maintain full-time enrollment throughout your graduate program and in order to maintain the assistantship.
3. Q: Do I work during semester breaks or on holidays?
A. You are not required to work during the holidays or when classes are cancelled.
4. Q: What happens if I cannot maintain a 3.0.gpa?
A: If your GPA falls below a 3.0, you will be placed on academic probation and your assistantship will be cancelled.
5. Q: What are the kinds of assistantships available?
A: A graduate assistantship is an academic award of a stipend and waiver of tuition and fees.