



MEMORANDUM

TO: President John Thrasher
Provost Sally McRorie
Vice President Amy Hecht
Vice President Tom Jennings
Vice President Gary Ostrander
Vice President Janet Kistner
Deans, Directors, Department Heads, & HR Representatives

FROM: Renisha Gibbs, Associate Vice President and Finance & Administration Chief of Staff
Michael Lake, Chief Budget Officer, University Budgets
Mark Riley, Dean, The Graduate School

THRU: Kyle C. Clark, Vice President for Finance & Administration

SUBJECT: 2018-2019 Graduate Assistant Stipend Increases and Contract Administration

DATE: August 24, 2018

This memorandum reflects provisions and instructions pertaining to the administration of 2018-2019 stipend increases and health insurance subsidy increases for graduate assistants and serves as a reminder for contract administration items pertaining to graduate assistants. This information is in accordance with 2018-2021 FSU-BOT/GAU Collective Bargaining Successor Agreement (CBA) ratified by GAU on August 21, 2018.

Competitive Pay Adjustment (Effective September 7, 2018)

- Effective September 7, 2018, a 1.85% competitive pay adjustment will be added to the pay of eligible graduate assistants, prorated by FTE and appointment period. This increase will be reflected in the September 28, 2018, paycheck.
- Graduate assistants must be employed by FSU and be in active payroll status on the effective date of the increase in order to be eligible.
- No action is needed by the department/program to implement the stipend increases. However, it is the responsibility of the respective department to notify Rebecca Peterson (rpeterson@fsu.edu) in the Office of Human Resources, in writing, by September 7, 2018, of any graduate assistant who should not receive an increase due to ineligibility. Ineligibility will only apply to graduate assistants who are funded by contracts and grants, when such salary increases are either not permitted by the terms of the contract or grant, or adequate funds are not available for this purpose in the contract and grant.

Minimum Stipend Increase (Effective September 21, 2018)

- Effective September 21, 2018, the new minimum stipend will be \$15,000 for graduate assistants on a 0.50 FTE academic year appointment (19.5 pay periods) or prorated to that value in accordance with a minimum of \$19.23 an hour. Any graduate assistant who is below the new minimum stipend as of September 21, 2018, will receive an increase in their stipend up to the new minimum. This increase, if applicable, will be reflected in the October 12, 2018, paycheck.
- Graduate assistants must be employed by FSU and be in active payroll status on the effective date of the increase in order to be eligible. Additionally, the minimum stipend increase will not apply to any graduate assistant whose stipend is at or above the minimum as of the effective date of the increase.
- No action is needed by the department/program to implement the minimum stipend. However, it is the responsibility of the respective department to notify Rebecca Peterson (rpeterson@fsu.edu) in the Office of Human Resources, in writing, by September 7, 2018, of any graduate assistant who should not receive an increase due to ineligibility. Ineligibility will only apply to graduate assistants who are funded by contract and grants when such salary increases are either not permitted by the terms of the contract or grant, or adequate funds are not available for this purpose in the contract and grant.

Health Insurance Subsidy

- The University has increased the total amount provided to graduate assistants for health insurance subsidies for the 2018-2019 academic year. Graduate assistants are eligible to receive health insurance subsidies if they have first enrolled in the qualifying insurance policy offered by the Health and Wellness Center and have a qualifying appointment.
- To qualify, graduate assistants must be employed from at least the first day of classes through the last day of finals in a given semester on at least a 0.25 FTE appointment. Additionally, the graduate assistant must be enrolled in at least 9 credit hours during the fall and spring semesters.
- Domestic student health insurance subsidy amounts:
 - \$1,883/year for graduate assistants on at least a 0.50 FTE appointment for fall and spring
 - \$1,233/year for graduate assistants on at least a 0.25 FTE appointment for fall and spring
 - \$1,433/year for graduate assistants on at least a 0.25 FTE appointment for either the fall or spring and on a 0.50 FTE appointment for the other semester
- International student health insurance subsidy amounts:
 - \$1,920/year for graduate assistants on at least a 0.50 FTE appointment for fall and spring
 - \$1,270/year for graduate assistants on at least a 0.25 FTE appointment for fall and spring
 - \$1,470/year for graduate assistants on a least a 0.25 FTE appointment for either the fall or spring and on a 0.50 FTE appointment for the other semester

Funding for the Stipend/Health Insurance Subsidy Increases

E&G Funded Employees. The increases for these employees (OMNI fund codes 110, 121, 210 and 211) will be funded by the University.

E&G Carryforward Funded Employees. The increases for these employees (OMNI fund code 126, 140, 240 and 241) will be funded from the department's Carryforward resources.

Non-E&G Funded Employees. Eligible graduate assistants whose stipends are funded from auxiliary, student activities, technology fee, and other non-E&G funds should receive the increases, provided resources are available within said funds. Departments should notify the Budget Office in writing of any non-E&G budgets that will not have said funds for the increases as soon as possible.

Other Contract Administration Requirements

Future Appointments and Current Appointment Periods

All new graduate assistant appointments are required to meet the minimum stipend rate of \$15,000 for a 0.50 FTE academic year appointment (19.5 pay periods). For graduate assistants on a shorter appointment than the academic year appointment period, or appointed at a lower FTE, the minimum hourly rate must be at least \$19.23 in order to be in compliance with the minimum stipend rate. The hourly rate will be used by the Office of Human Resources to monitor compliance with the minimum stipend. However, departments/programs shall not use appointment dates to avoid granting benefits to eligible graduate assistants, including the minimum stipend amount, stipend increases, tuition waivers, or health insurance subsidies. At a minimum, departments/programs should start appointments by the first day of classes and end the appointment on the last day of finals. If a department/program has a legitimate need to use appointment dates for a shorter length of time than specified above, the department/program must notify The Graduate School and the Office of Human Resources.

Workloads

Teaching and research are an integral part of the requirements for obtaining a graduate degree at Florida State University. Students appointed on assistantships have a primary relationship with the University as a student and are to be pursuing their studies full-time, in addition to carrying out their work as a graduate assistant. Per the CBA, graduate assistants cannot be appointed at a total combined FTE (for all FSU appointments) exceeding 0.75 FTE. Furthermore, any department planning to appoint a graduate assistant in an additional employment capacity that will result in a total combined FTE greater than 0.50 FTE, should consider limiting the length of the additional appointment so that academic progress is not hindered.

Appointment Letters

Appointment letters are required for every graduate assistant appointment, including all re-appointments. Article 2, Appointments and Terminations, of the CBA requires the following:

- Appointments may not exceed one calendar year.
- Programs cannot use appointment dates to avoid granting benefits to eligible graduate assistants. At a minimum, appointment dates should start by the first day of classes and run through the last day of finals.
- If a department has a legitimate need to start an appointment after the first day of classes or end the appointment before the last day of finals, the department is required to notify The Graduate School.

- Notice of Appointments: Programs must issue appointment letters in a timely manner according to the following schedule:
 - A. Fall/Spring Appointments: At least 30 days before the first day of classes.
 - B. Summer Appointments: At least 21 days before the start of the applicable summer term.

For the minimum elements required to be included in the appointment letter, please see the [Appointment Letter Checklist](#).

Should you have any questions, please contact Renisha Gibbs or Michael Lake.

Thank you.

RG/rp

Cc:	Michael Barrett	Paul Harlacher
	David Coburn	Rebecca Peterson
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