

**Pittsburgh Theological Seminary  
Financial Aid Office**



**Graduate Assistantship**  
**Program**

**For Supervisors and Students**

**Last Updated:** July, 2024



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A large, faint, stylized graphic of a building with a cross on top, rendered in light purple and light blue colors, is positioned in the background behind the table of contents.



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## Graduate Assistantship Program at PTS

### **Formation at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary**

The PTS Mission and Vision Statement situates us as an institution of higher education within the faith tradition of the Christian church. We seek to form and equip students for well-known modes of Christian ministry as well as invite them into habits and practices that will help them discern and nurture future forms of Christian ministry and community yet undefined. As such, PTS takes seriously the fast-changing religious landscape in the United States, and seeks to come alongside students as they try to faithfully find their place therein. The seminary therefore strives to be a formative scholarly community, one in which we invite one another into lifegiving and transformative practices that stir our imagination and shape our desires as we seek to participate fully in God's work in the world.

(Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. *Formation at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 2023.)

### **The Graduate Assistantship Program**

The Graduate Assistantship Program at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary aims to provide students with another method of formation while enrolled. The program provides part-time jobs available both on-campus and in a hybrid capacity for students. All positions are part of the PTS need-based financial aid program. Students must qualify financially by filing a need-based aid application and any other forms required by institutional policies. When the financial aid process is completed, students will receive an Aid Offer from the Financial Aid Office advising them whether or not they are qualified to participate in the program. Students must accept or deny the award on the offer.

### **The Application and Hiring Process**

Once qualified, the Associate Director of Financial Aid will email the student with information regarding the program and open positions that may be of interest. Further information and time to meet with supervisors in the program will be made during the first few weeks of classes.

The student can visit the Graduate Assistantship page at [https://my.pts.edu/ICS/Students/Graduate\\_Assistant\\_Jobs.jnz](https://my.pts.edu/ICS/Students/Graduate_Assistant_Jobs.jnz) for a list of available jobs. He/She/They can click on each department's name for the job description, pay rate, and remote work eligibility. The student will apply directly from that screen.

When a supervisor has a job opening, he/she/they should contact the Financial Aid Office. The Job Posting page is updated as needed. Students can also check the financial aid bulletin board for new job listings.

The student's application will be forwarded to the Financial Aid Office. The student's eligibility for the Graduate Assistantship program will be verified and the application will be forwarded to the appropriate departmental supervisor. Incomplete applications will not be forwarded.



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There are three parts to complete:

1. Financial aid paperwork
2. Position application
3. Payroll documentation.

A student can NOT work until all steps have been completed.

Because a student qualifies for graduate assistant and has completed the payroll forms, does not mean he/she/they will receive a job.

The student's application will then be forwarded to the supervisor. The supervisor will contact the student if he/she/they requires an in-person or telephone interview.

Supervisors may hire a student directly as long as they qualify financially. It is at the supervisor's discretion whether to seek a referral from the Financial Aid Office's web-site but the Financial Aid Office must verify each student's eligibility. However, completion of the financial aid application does not guarantee a position.

After the interview, the supervisor must notify the Financial Aid Office utilizing the Hiring Form. If hired, the student must complete the payroll documentation and provide the necessary forms of identification to the Business Office.

### **Apply Each Year**

Students are not required to apply for their position each year, unless they are required to complete the Financial Aid application again. Supervisors will indicate on the Appraisal form if they wish to retain the student for the following year. The student will be notified and will be allowed to accept or decline the position.

### **International Students**

As part of the Seminary's international student aid package, international students are awarded a Graduate Assistant award as well. International students must also complete the required paperwork in order to work on campus before they are able to begin work. This process includes: 1) obtaining a social security card, and 2) opening a bank account.



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## Qualifications for the PTS Graduate Assistantship Program

1. **ALL** financial aid forms must be submitted; PTS Financial Aid Application, other documents requested by Financial Aid Office
2. Returning students *may* be required to complete the forms each year.
3. Students must be enrolled **full-time** students in Pittsburgh Theological Seminary classes.
4. Returning Students must meet Satisfactory Academic Progress guidelines for need-based aid.
5. All payroll forms must be completed before the start of work and necessary identification submitted to the Business Office.

### Pittsburgh Theological Seminary Nondiscrimination Policy

The Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, as an educational institution and as an employer, values equality of opportunity, human dignity and racial/ethnic and cultural diversity. Accordingly, the Seminary prohibits and will not engage in discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, disability, or status as a disabled veteran or a veteran of the Vietnam era. Furthermore, the school will continue to take affirmative steps to support and advance these values consistent with the school's mission. This policy applies to admissions, employment, access to and treatment in school programs and activities. This is a commitment made by the Seminary and is in accordance with federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

## Graduate Assistantship Program Guidelines

### Student Responsibilities and Policies

#### Employment at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

The Pittsburgh Theological Seminary's student employment policy prefers that students work only one job. If the job does not provide enough hours to meet the allotment, the supervisor has the authority to allow the student to work in another department of the Seminary. The student must meet with the Associate Director of Financial Aid to verify openings and available hours.



## **Graduate Assistantship and Financial Aid**

Since a graduate assistantship is financial aid, the money earned cannot be in excess of a student's demonstrated need (see below). If a student works over the allotted amount, loans or grant awards may be forfeited at the end of the academic year. When other funding is returned, the student could owe the Seminary additional money.

**Demonstrated Need = Cost of Attendance – Tuition Grant Index Number** (obtained from PTS Financial Aid Application) – **Estimated Financial Assistance** (grants, scholarships, loans, etc).

*Example:* Sarah is attending PTS as a full-time, MDiv student. Her Cost of Attendance is \$38,000/year. Her Tuition Grant Index Number is 5,500. She received a Tuition Grant for \$7,000, a merit scholarship for \$5,000, a Housing Grant for \$2,000, and a Graduate Assistant award for \$4,000. Her Demonstrated Need is still \$20,000.

## **Wages**

Students earn \$12.00 per hour for all graduate assistantship positions except the Maintenance Department. Maintenance workers earn \$13.00 per hour.

Unlike grants or loans, Graduate Assistantship earnings are not deducted from the Seminary's invoice; rather the student receives a bi-monthly paycheck according to the number of hours worked.

## **Hours**

The amount of hours a student receives is dependent upon his/her/their financial need. If more than the allotted hours are worked, it could adversely affect his/her financial aid. The allotted work time for each student is ten hours per week. In certain circumstances, students are permitted to work up to 15 hours per week. Requests must be submitted in writing to be approved by the Associate Director of Financial Aid. Variables that can affect the increased hours may be the amount of the student's loan, other PTS aid, and outside grants/scholarships.

*Example:* Clara is working as a Graduate Assistant in the Advancement Office. Her supervisor could utilize her for a few more hours a week to assist on a special project. Her supervisor makes the request of the Financial Aid Office. The Financial Aid Office will determine if there are any funds remaining for the Graduate Assistant program to be awarded for the year. If there are, they will check to see if the student still has any remaining Demonstrated Need. If they do, the Financial Aid Office will award more hours to that student.

## **Paychecks**

Paychecks will be distributed twice each month. The student will submit hours directly into the payroll system (Paycom). Each supervisor must approve the hours. The Business Office will issue an



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electronic timeline each month. Students may not log into work more than five (5) minutes prior to start of shift.

### **Dress Code**

The student worker should consult with the supervisor for questions or concerns regarding appropriate attire for the specific position or department. The supervisor will inform and enforce adherence to dress requirements. Inappropriate attire can be a reason for discharge from the work support program.

### **Academics**

Education comes first. If a student needs more time to study, and less time to work, contact the supervisor immediately. It is important for the student to ask for help to make arrangements to solve this problem.

### **Work Schedule/Attendance**

The student is responsible to arrange his/her/they work schedule with the supervisor as soon as he/she registers. It is imperative that a student report to work as scheduled. If the student is unable to report to work, the supervisor must be contacted as soon as possible. **Failure to report to work for is cause for dismissal.**

Graduate Assistants are able to work from the beginning of the fall semester to the end of May. This is based upon not going over their allotted number of hours. Exceptions may be considered for when a student can start working are allowed. Typical exceptions are related to if/when a student moves to campus and/or if that student is working with an office that directly relates to new students' arrival to campus. An exception can also be made if the supervisor/office requires work during the summer term.

### **Confidentiality Agreement**

As an institution of higher education, the Seminary is required to adhere to FERPA (Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act) guidelines. Students who participate in the Graduate Assistant Program must also observe FERPA regulations regarding student records.

While working at the Seminary, graduate assistant students may inadvertently see or overhear information that is confidential in nature. It is their duty to maintain confidentiality. For that reason, some graduate assistants will be required to read and sign a confidentiality agreement. The Supervisor is responsible to discuss and maintain the signed document with his/her department (do not forward to the Financial Aid Office).



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## **General Requirements**

A graduate assistant is required to treat the supervisor, staff, and faculty with courtesy and respect. He/she/they is required to carry out assignments and duties in a professional manner. Flexibility is a requirement because a student may be asked to assist in another office, with the supervisor's approval. A student is not permitted to use Seminary supplies, such as paper or pens, for personal projects. Unauthorized use of the supplies or the computer during work hours can be grounds for dismissal. No one is permitted to use the computer for personal communication such as e-mail, social media, browsing the internet, Facebook or other similar applications unless approved by the supervisor. Cell phone usage during scheduled working hours is also based upon supervisor approval.

## **Resigning**

If a graduate assistant decides to leave their current placement, they are required to meet with and/or inform their direct supervisor. They may also meet with the Associate Director of Financial Aid if they desire. *Notification must be provided to the supervisor at least two weeks prior to the graduate assistant's planned end date.* This will ensure the supervisor can adequately transition your job duties. Advance notice of an intent to resign is appreciated and will be noted favorably should you ever wish to reapply for a different Graduate Assistant position with the Seminary. At the sole discretion of the supervisor, the supervisor may make any resignation effective immediately.

You will be required to surrender any and all tools, equipment, documents and records, or other items for your position. You will also be required to provide all passwords (if necessary).

## **Applying For A New Position**

If a student is not brought back to their position, or chooses not to return to their position, the next semester or the following year, any new supervisor may discuss employment of the student with their previous supervisor and/or the Associate Director of Financial Aid. Student Appraisals may not be shared with future potential supervisors though.

## **Ethics & How We Treat Others** *(adapted from PTS Employee Handbook)*

**COURTESY & RESPCT:** The Seminary educates persons for ministry and believes that a part of that education is modeling proper behavior at all levels of the Seminary's life and work. Therefore, all Graduate Assistants are expected to treat each member of the Seminary community and all visitors to the Seminary with courtesy and respect. The Seminary expects all of its employees always to be courteous and considerate in their dealings with others, including Graduate Assistants. Comments and actions that demean, belittle, threaten, or in any way fail to respect the dignity of another person will not be tolerated and will lead to serious discipline up to and including immediate termination of the graduate assistant position. This policy shall apply not just within the Seminary property or at Seminary-sponsored events, but also to any communications and actions in which the other party





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reasonably believes that the person is speaking for or representing the Seminary and actions and communications that have the effect of harming the Seminary's reputation.

COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS: The Seminary's reputation is built on excellence in all that we undertake. To maintain this reputation requires the active participation of every employee, including Graduate Assistants. Each Graduate Assistant must be sensitive to the importance of providing courteous treatment in all working relationships. You are expected to treat every visitor with the utmost respect and courtesy. You should never argue or act in a disrespectful manner toward a visitor. Please make every effort to be prompt in following up on visitor requests or questions

## Supervisor Policies and Procedures

### Hiring

Job openings are posted on the PTS web-site. Students submit an application on-line which will be forwarded to the supervisor along with a "Hire/Not Hire Form." The supervisor may choose to contact the applicant.

Once a decision is made, the completed "Hire/Not Hire Form" is returned to the Financial Aid Office. If the supervisor chooses not to hire the student, they should check "Not Hire", and sign. If they choose to hire a student, return the Referral Form with "Hired" check and sign. **It is the Financial Aid Office's responsibility to let the student know if they were selected for the position.** The supervisor should advise the student where and when to report upon arriving on campus though.

Upon receipt of the Not Hired Form, the Financial Aid Office will notify the student that he/she/they is permitted to apply for another position.

The supervisor may bypass the hiring process and choose to find his/her/their own graduate assistant students. Verify eligibility through the Financial Aid Office as all students must meet the financial aid requirements

### Time Records

Payroll dates are published at the beginning of every month by the Business Office and forwarded to all supervisors. The student will log in and record the hours-worked. The supervisor must approve the hours for a paycheck to be generated.

### Confidentially Agreement

A supervisor may choose to have the student read and sign a Confidentiality Agreement. Each department maintains its own file with the completed agreements. Supervisors should instruct their



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graduate assistant(s) as to their specific job responsibilities and what is expected of them. Breaching the signed Confidentiality Agreement can be a reason for dismissal.

### **Working for More than One Department**

Students are permitted to work in multiple departments. They may NOT work more than their awarded amount. A student who earns over his/her award could lose grant or loan funds. Hours for different departments are recorded separately and verified by each supervisor.

*Example:* Conner's cost of attendance is \$36,500/year. Between grants and scholarships he received from the Seminary as well as outside organizations, Conner has received the full \$36,500 in awards. However, Conner and his supervisor did not monitor his hours closely and he worked over his allotted \$4,000 in Graduate Assistant funds. Whatever Conner earned over the \$36,500 will now need to be returned to one of the organizations.

### **Extra Help**

If extra help is needed, supervisors should arrange for temporary help by contacting other Graduate Assistant supervisors.

### **Appraisals**

Supervisors must complete a Graduate Assistant Performance Appraisal at the end of the academic year. A copy of the appraisal should be given to the student, as well as, kept by the supervisor. A sample can be found in the appendices. **Supervisors are REQUIRED to meet and discuss the appraisal with their Graduate Assistants.**

### **Terminate/Exiting Students**

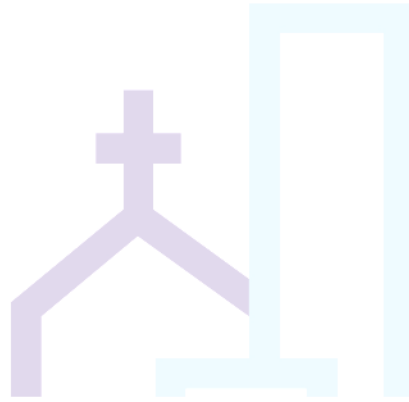
To terminate a student, provide the causes for dismissal in writing to the student and the Associate Director of Financial Aid. The Appraisal Form may be utilized for dismissals. Complete by e-mail, in-person, or telephone.

If a student will not be returning due to the student's own choice, a withdrawal or graduation, the supervisor should notify the Associate Director of Financial Aid; if the student has not. The on-line job posting will be updated.

During the spring semester, supervisors will receive a form which requests projected needs for the following school year. Upon return to the Financial Aid Department, this allows the graduate assistantship system to be updated and new job openings posted.



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## Graduate Assistant Program Appraisal

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Academic Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

### Interpersonal Skills

	Always					Never				
1. Interactions with peers promote the department's goals	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
2. Interactions with supervisors promote the department's goals	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
3. Verbal communications are clear and business-like	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
4. Written communications are clear and business-like	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1

### Work Performance

1. Work ethic and attitude promote the department's goals	5	4	3	2	1
2. Completed tasks in a timely manner	5	4	3	2	1
3. Completed tasks as required and did them well	5	4	3	2	1

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### Overall Evaluation

Do you plan to hire this student next year? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Would you recommend this student to another department? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

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### Additional Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



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## Student Confidentially Agreement

The student graduate assistant positions are considered employees of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. These positions may have occasion to access individual student information from various records and data files. For security and confidentiality of records and/or data files, the Seminary has a policy of administering and maintaining student records in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended (FERPA). As an employee, each student holds a position of trust relative to maintaining the security and confidentiality of these records and must recognize the responsibility entrusted to them.

Because conduct on or off the job may threaten the security and confidentiality of these records in any form, each employee is expected to adhere to the following:

1. No one may copy or permit unauthorized use of any information in files maintained, stored or processed at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.
2. No one is permitted to seek personal benefit or allow others to benefit personally by knowledge of any confidential information which has come to them by virtue of work assignment.
3. No one is to exhibit or divulge the contents of any record or report to any person except in the conduct of a work assignment.
4. No one may knowingly include in any record or report a false, inaccurate or misleading entry.
5. No official record or report, or copy thereof, may be removed from the office where it is maintained except in the performance of a person's duties.
6. No one is to act in conspiracy with another to violate any part of this code.
7. Any knowledge of a violation of this code must immediately be reported to a supervisor.

The student worker understands that failure to abide by the above contract is grounds for immediate dismissal from the work position, and may further subject the student to disciplinary action.

I have read and will comply with the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary Graduate Assistant Confidentiality Agreement.

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**Supervisor Signature**

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**Date**

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**Student Signature**

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**Date**



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## RECEIPT OF GRADUATE ASSISTANT PROGRAM HANDBOOK 2024-2025

This is to acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Seminary's Graduate Assistantship Program Handbook and understand that it sets forth the terms and conditions of my participation in the program as well as the duties, responsibilities and obligations of my involvement in the program with the Seminary. I understand and agree that it is my responsibility to read the GAP Handbook and to abide by the rules, policies and standards set forth in the GAP Handbook.

I also acknowledge that my participation in the program is not for a specified period of time and can be terminated at any time for any reason, with or without cause or notice, by me or by the Seminary. I acknowledge that no oral or written statements or representations regarding my participation can alter the foregoing.

I also acknowledge that, the Seminary reserves the right to revise, delete and add to the provisions of this GAP Handbook. All such revisions, deletions or additions must be in writing and must be signed by an officer of the Seminary. No oral statements or representations can change the provisions of this GAP Handbook. I also acknowledge that terms and conditions of participation in the program may be modified at the sole discretion of the Seminary, with or without cause or notice, at any time. No implied contract concerning any employment-related decision, term of employment or condition of employment can be established by any other statement, conduct, policy or practice.

I understand that the foregoing agreement concerning my participation and the Seminary's right to determine and modify the terms and conditions of the program is the sole and entire agreement between me and the Seminary concerning the duration of my participation, the circumstances under which my participation may be terminated and the circumstances under which the terms and conditions of my participation may change. I further understand that this agreement supersedes all prior agreements, understandings and representations concerning my participation in the Graduate Assistant Program with the Seminary.

If I have questions regarding the content or interpretation of this GAP Handbook, I will bring them to the attention of the Associate Director of Financial Aid.

Please sign and return this acknowledgement to the Financial Aid Office within ten (10) business days of your receipt of this

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_