
The Plain-Language Project

Article 23



ARTICLE 23

STIPENDS

23.1 Minimum Stipend. The minimum stipend shall be as follows:

A. Rates. Effective August 7, 2020, each graduate assistant on a 0.50 FTE academic year appointment will be guaranteed a minimum stipend of \$15,600, or prorated to that value in accordance with Article 23.1 (B) with a minimum of \$20.00 per hour. Each graduate assistant on a 0.25 FTE academic year appointment will be guaranteed the listed minimum stipend of \$7,800, or prorated to that value in accordance with Article 23.1 (B) with a minimum of \$20.00 per hour.

B. Stipend Rates shall be prorated by FTE and appointment period.

C. Competitive Pay Adjustment.

(1) For Fiscal Year 2020-2021, each eligible graduate assistant with at least a 0.50 FTE will receive a one-time, non-recurring performance bonus in the amount of \$750, less applicable taxes and deductions. Each eligible graduate assistant with an appointment between 0.25 FTE and 0.49 FTE will receive a one-time, non-recurring performance bonus in the amount of \$375, less applicable taxes and deductions. The bonuses will be effective November 27, 2020.

(2) Graduate assistants with multiple appointments will receive a bonus as outlined in 23.1 (C) (1), for each appointment, not to exceed a total bonus amount of \$750 per graduate assistant.

(3) Graduate assistants must be employed by the University in active payroll status on the effective date of the bonus in order to be eligible.

Article 23 Stipends

This article lays out minimum stipend amounts for the graduate assistants at FSU. It also includes things like raises, bonuses, dates for pay, some appointment length language (though the majority of that is governed by Article 2), and anything else related to how you get paid and how much.

23.1 Minimum Stipend

Minimum Stipend. The minimum stipend shall be as follows:

This section will lay out the minimum stipend. The “minimum stipend” is the minimum rate at which a graduate assistant can get paid for an academic year. However, in addition to having an academic year amount in the contract, it also breaks down into an hourly amount. Since not everyone is on academic year appointments, this hourly number can be used to calculate your stipend--but the hourly rate is SET by the “minimum stipend”, which presumes 780 hours of work/academic year (at 0.5 FTE, or 20 hours a week, that’s 39 weeks).

23.1 A Rates

Rates. Effective August 7, 2020, each graduate assistant on a 0.50 FTE academic year appointment will be guaranteed a minimum stipend of \$15,600, or prorated to that value in accordance with Article 23.1 (B) with a minimum of \$20.00 per hour. Each graduate assistant on a 0.25 FTE academic year appointment will be guaranteed the listed minimum stipend of \$7,800, or prorated to that value in accordance with Article 23.1 (B) with a minimum of \$20.00 per hour.

Rates. Starting on August 7, 2020, any graduate assistant on a 0.5 FTE (that's 20 work hours per week) academic year appointment is guaranteed the minimum stipend of \$15,600. An "academic year" appointment is 780 hours per year, or 39 weeks at 20 hours per week. This splits up into 19.5 weeks/semester (although sometimes spring semester is longer than fall semester, &c.). An "academic year" is Fall and Spring semesters ONLY--it does NOT include Summer but DOES include winter break.

23.1 A Rates (con't)

...or prorated to that value in accordance with Article 23.1 (B) with a minimum of \$20.00 per hour.

However, not everybody is on academic year appointments. Since the academic year begins a couple weeks before the first day of classes every semester, some departments choose to start paying their graduate assistants on the first day of classes, or a few days before, and not for the full academic year. Therefore these graduate assistants do NOT have to get paid at least the minimum stipend in WHOLE, but rather a “prorated” rate calculated using the minimum stipend. See 23.1 B for further explanation on prorating.

23.1 A Rates (con't)

Each graduate assistant on a 0.25 FTE academic year appointment will be guaranteed the listed minimum stipend of \$7,800, or prorated to that value in accordance with Article 23.1 (B) with a minimum of \$20.00 per hour.

Then, just kind of restating the above in another way, if the minimum stipend is \$15,600 at a 0.5 FTE (20 hours per week) for an academic year, then if you're appointed at 0.25 FTE (10 hours per week) your minimum stipend for an academic year is half that, or \$7,800. This is also subject to that "prorating" thing--see next article, 23.1 B. What this all works out to at any hourly rate is \$20.00/hour. You get this by taking \$15,600 and dividing it by the amount of hours in an academic year at 0.5 FTE, which is 780 (20 hours per week times 39 weeks in an academic year = 780).

23.1 B

Stipend Rates shall be prorated by FTE and appointment period.

Stipend rates can be “prorated” by how many hours per week you’re hired to work and/or how many weeks and days you’re hired for.

“Proration” = when you take some total amount of pay--say, \$15,600--and a rate of pay--say, \$20.00 an hour--and then add or subtract from the total amount of pay based on how much more or less you worked above or below the amount you were hired for.

At FSU, the minimum stipend is set for an “academic year” appointment. That’s presuming you’ll work 39 weeks over Fall and Spring semester at 20 hours per week. But let’s say your department only hires you for 37 weeks, because it doesn’t start your appointment until first day of classes (the 39 weeks of the academic year has a start date about two weeks BEFORE classes begin in both Fall and Spring). Then you’ll have to be “prorated” DOWN from \$15,600. At \$20 an hour and 20 hours a week, that would be \$800 LESS than the minimum stipend \$15,600, or \$14,800.

23.1 C Competitive Pay Adjustment

Competitive Pay Adjustment.

This is a fancy word for raises or bonuses.

23.1 C (I)

(1) For Fiscal Year 2020-2021, each eligible graduate assistant with at least a 0.50 FTE will receive a one-time, non-recurring performance bonus in the amount of \$750, less applicable taxes and deductions. Each eligible graduate assistant with an appointment between 0.25 FTE and 0.49 FTE will receive a one-time, non-recurring performance bonus in the amount of \$375, less applicable taxes and deductions. The bonuses will be effective November 27, 2020.

For the financial year (just a technical thing) 2020-2021, each “eligible” (see 23.1 C (3)) graduate assistant who is at 0.5 FTE (20 hours per week) will get a one-off bonus of \$750 (less tax). Any “eligible” graduate assistant who is employed less than that, between 0.25 FTE (10 hours per week) to 0.49 FTE (19.6 hours per week) will get a one-off bonus of \$375 (less tax). The bonuses start processing through payroll on November 27th, 2020 (there’s around a 3-4 week delay, so this didn’t hit until the 12/18 paycheck).

23.1 C (2)

(2) Graduate assistants with multiple appointments will receive a bonus as outlined in 23.1 (C) (1), for each appointment, not to exceed a total bonus amount of \$750 per graduate assistant.

If you're on more than one appointment, you'll get a bonus for each appointment according to the scaling laid out in 23.1C(1). BUT, the max you can get is the \$750 amount (so basically, if you're somehow on 3 appointments at 0.25 FTE each, tough luck, you're only getting \$750, not \$1,125).

23.1 C (3)

(3) Graduate assistants must be employed by the University in active payroll status on the effective date of the bonus in order to be eligible.

Here's where we get to what “eligible” means. To be “eligible” for this bonus, you have to a) be employed by FSU, b) be getting paid by FSU on the DAY of the bonus. In other words, if you were on an appointment with FSU in the Fall semester but it ended before November 27th, AKA the “effective” date of the bonus, you didn't get the bonus. However, the vast majority of graduate assistants were covered by this.

23.2

Graduate assistants on contracts or grants shall receive salary increases equivalent to similar graduate assistants on regular funding, provided that such salary increases are permitted by the terms of the contract or grant and adequate funds are available for this purpose in the contract or grant.

If you're a graduate assistant on a contract or grant, you're not covered specifically by all the stuff in 23.1, since grants may have separate rules about your pay--including bonuses/pay raises. BUT, if you're on a contract or grant you will get a pay raise equivalent to your peers, as long as a) your grant/contract allows this, and b) your grant/contract has the money for it.

23.2 (con't)

Nothing contained herein shall prevent employees whose salaries are funded by grant agencies or auxiliary funds from being allotted raises higher than those provided in this Agreement. Distribution of increases for graduate assistants on contracts or grants shall be in compliance with all applicable federal rules and regulations.

In addition, if your grant/contract wants to, they can totally give you a raise/bonus **HIGHER** than the ones your peers are getting in 23.1. They just can't break any laws or federal rules while doing it.

23.3 Initial Payment

Initial Payment. Employees shall receive their first paycheck based on their effective date of appointment and according to the payroll calendar schedule established by Human Resources. Appointments with an effective start date in a pay period will be processed for the next pay cycle so long as all appointment paperwork is received by Human Resources by the associated paperwork deadline.

Your first paycheck comes based on your “effective” date of appointment--basically about two weeks after you start your appointment. It’s also based on the payroll calendar, which is set by Human Resources and applies equally to everyone employed by FSU, not just graduate assistants (you can find this online at <https://controller.vpfa.fsu.edu/services/payroll/pay-period-calendars>). If your effective start date is within a certain pay period, then you’ll get paid for it on the next payroll date. BUT, that’s dependent upon your supervisor/department/&c. getting all your onboarding paperwork to HR on time. There are specific paperwork deadlines your department/supervisor should know.

23.4 Departmental Discretion to Provide Stipend Increases

Departmental Discretion to Provide Stipend Increases.
Nothing contained herein shall prevent departments from paying stipends higher than the minimum specified above or from providing stipend increases during the term of this collective bargaining agreement.

Your department can pay you whatever they want **HIGHER** than the minimum stipend--the minimum stipend serves as a floor, not as a ceiling. Your department is also free to increase your stipend however much they want whenever they want.

23.4 A

Departments that provide stipend increases beyond those contained in this article, shall have a written policy on the eligibility requirements and effective dates for such increases in their departmental Graduate Handbook.

If your department IS one of the ones giving raises or stipends higher than what's in this contract, they need to have a policy written out in their departmental Graduate Handbook that specifies all the stuff that was just specified in this Article. Eligibility requirements, effective dates, all that.

23.4 B

Departments that draft a new policy, or make changes to an existing policy required by 23.4A shall notify Faculty Relations in the Office of Human Resources of the proposed changes and provide at least one semester's notice of the change in policy to affected graduate assistants.

If your department changes how much they're paying their graduate assistants or any part of that payment policy in their handbook (eligibility, effective date, &c.), they need to tell Faculty Relations in the Office of Human Resources about what they're doing. And they have to tell any graduate assistants affected by their new policy/new pay rate/whatever at **LEAST** a whole **SEMESTER** in advance.

23.4 C

Notwithstanding any changes made to such policies, graduate assistants may elect to be subject to the policy in effect on their original date of hire.

If your department changes their payment amounts/policy/dates, any of that stuff, you can choose to have whatever policy was in place when you were **ORIGINALLY** hired. So if your department originally said your raise would go into effect the first week of the semester, but then they don't apply your raise until the first week of classes (2 weeks later!), you can say you want to be covered by what they originally said.