

## Guide to Graduate Student Appointments

(Revised July, 2023)

This document defines **Graduate Student** at the University of Pennsylvania and is a guide for business administrators on the current taxability of payments to the students. All individuals with the appointments listed on this document must receive letters of appointment that define the length of the appointment, the level of funding, and the service expected. Please note this guidance refers only to Base Earnings and Period Activity Pay generated for Graduate students. Taxability/object code assignments for other payments such as one-time payments for housing allowances or awards follow University guidelines. For additional guidance, refer to the [Graduate Student Stipend Structure in Workday](#) tip sheet.

### Graduate Student Appointments

The following appointments are limited to persons registered for full-time study in the graduate or professional programs of the University of Pennsylvania. Service-related appointments are for one year or less; however, they may be renewed if the renewal is consistent with limits placed on the length of service for the rank. Service-related appointments do not on average require more than 20 hours of teaching or research services per week.

**Teaching Assistant** - A Teaching Assistant is a full-time Penn graduate student enrolled in a degree program who teaches or guides students under the direction of a faculty member. The teaching assistant's **duties are not a requirement for the degree**. (Note: Undergraduates are not eligible for Teaching Assistant appointments. Any undergraduates providing teaching support to a faculty member should be coded as student workers or as work study.)

The monthly-paid stipend is subject to applicable federal, state and local taxes. In addition, as a full-time graduate student, a Teaching Assistant's stipend is exempt from FICA/Medicare tax. This exemption will not be available during school breaks of six weeks or longer when the student is not engaged in study on an at least half-time basis. The earnings (Grad Fellow-In Class or Grad Fellow-Out Class) / Object Code assigned are assigned by system depending on FICA/Medicare exemption status. (1)

The following information should be entered into Workday for Teaching Assistants:

Job Profile	Job Profile Description	Object Code (assigned by Workday)
217004	Teaching Assistant	5040 / 5049

**Teaching Fellow** – A Teaching Fellow is a full-time Penn graduate student enrolled in a degree program who teaches or guides students under the direction of a faculty member where the teaching or guidance of students is directly related to the area in which their degree is to be conferred, and where **equivalent teaching is required of all candidates as a condition for receiving such a degree**. (Note: This category is for PhD students who are teaching to fulfill a requirement of their degree program.)

The monthly-paid stipend is subject to applicable federal and local taxes. In addition, as a “full-time” graduate student, a Teaching Fellow's stipend is exempt from FICA/Medicare tax. This exemption will not be available during school breaks of six weeks or longer if the student is not engaged in study on an at least half-time basis.

The following information should be entered into Workday for Teaching Fellows:

Job Class	Job Profile Description	Object Code (assigned by Workday)
217003	Teaching Fellow	5048

**Research Assistant** – A Research Assistant is a full-time Penn graduate student who performs research under the direction of an investigator or a faculty member. The research, even if carried out in the home department, is not a requirement for the degree. (Note: Undergraduates are not eligible for Research Assistant appointments. Any undergraduates performing research under the direction of an investigator or a faculty member should be coded as student workers or as work study.)

A Research Assistant's monthly-paid stipend is subject to applicable federal, state and local taxes. In addition, as a full-time graduate student, a Research Assistant's stipend is exempt from FICA/Medicare tax. This exemption will not be available during school breaks of six weeks or longer if the student is not engaged in study on an at least half-time basis. The earnings (Grad Fellow-In Class or Grad Fellow-Out Class) / Object Code assigned are assigned by system depending on FICA/Medicare exemption status.  
(1)

The following information should be entered into Workday for Research Assistants:

Job Class	Job Profile Description	Object Code (assigned by Workday)
206060	Research Assistant A	5041 / 5070

**Research Fellow** - A Research Fellow is a full-time Penn graduate student who performs research under the direction of an investigator or a faculty member where the research is directly related to the area in which the student's degree is to be conferred and where equivalent research is required of all candidates as a condition for receiving such a degree. (Note: This category is for PhD students who are performing research that is a requirement of the degree program.)

The monthly-paid stipend is subject to applicable federal and local taxes. In addition, as a full-time graduate student, a Research Fellow's stipend is exempt from FICA/Medicare tax. This exemption will not be available during school breaks of six weeks or longer if the student is not engaged in study on an at least half-time basis.

The following information should be entered into Workday for Research Fellows:

Job Class	Job Profile Description	Object Code (assigned by Workday)
217303	Research Fellow	5044

**Educational Fellowship Recipient** - An Educational Fellow is a full-time Penn graduate student enrolled in a degree program. An Educational Fellow receives a fellowship that is normally paid from University of

Pennsylvania funds, such as a dean's account or the University Fellowship fund, that requires no service of the student for the term of the appointment. Amounts paid to such students are to aid them in the pursuit of their studies, the primary purpose of which is to further the students' education and training. Since an Educational Fellow is not required to perform service, the University is not currently required to withhold applicable federal, state and local taxes or report any payments on IRS Form W-2 or Form 1099, as may be applicable. Different withholding and reporting rules will apply to international students, and these rules are summarized in footnote (2), below.

The following information should be entered into Workday for Educational Fellowship Recipients:

Job Class	Job Profile Description	Object Code (assigned by Workday)
217401	Educational Fellowship	5046

**Pre-Doctoral Trainee** - A Pre-Doctoral Trainee is a full-time Penn graduate student enrolled in a degree program, who participates in training programs directly related to their degree. A pre-doctoral trainee receives a fellowship that is paid from external grants but that requires no service of the student for the term of the appointment. The normal source of funding is a U.S. government training grant (i.e., an N.R.S.A. institutional or individual grant). A Pre-Doctoral Trainee does not perform service for the University but may engage in research to further their personal and professional development. Since no service is required by the student, the University is not currently obligated to withhold applicable federal, state and local taxes or report such payments on IRS Form W-2 or Form 1099, as may be applicable. Different withholding and reporting rules will apply to international students, and these rules are summarized in footnote (2), below.

The following information should be entered into Workday for Pre-Doctoral Trainees:

Job Class	Job Profile Description	Object Code (assigned by Workday)
217801	Pre-doctoral Trainee	5046

**NOTE:** For any PhD student who is a Teaching Fellow, Research Fellow, Educational Fellow or Pre-Doctoral Trainee who also has a student worker position, payments for work performed as a student worker should be entered as a **one-time payment** using Graduate Student Worker Monthly one-time payment plan. Pre-Doctoral Trainees need to verify that such employment is allowed by their grant prior to accepting a student worker or other paid position.

### Footnotes:

(1) For Earning and EB rate application, please review the object rule document here:  
<https://www.finance.upenn.edu/wp-content/uploads/Object-codes-rules-in-Workday.pdf>

(2) Although no reporting or withholding is required for U.S. students, the students must report and pay federal income tax on any payments in excess of tuition, fees, books, and certain other expenses. Further, there are special rules for international students. All Educational Fellowship and Pre-doctoral trainee grants to international students must be reported on IRS Form 1042-S. If the international student is not from a tax treaty country, then federal income tax must be withheld from the stipend allowance at

14%. Those international students from tax treaty countries that have a provision for scholarships and fellowships may claim exemption from withholding by [applying for a tax treaty](#).