

Guidelines for Good Practice In Graduate Education



A major purpose of graduate education at the University of Oregon is to instill in each student an understanding of and capacity for scholarship, independent judgment, academic rigor, and intellectual honesty. It is the joint responsibility of faculty and graduate students to work together to foster these ends through relationships which encourage freedom of inquiry, demonstrate personal and professional integrity, and foster mutual respect.

Graduate student progress toward educational goals at the University of Oregon is directed and evaluated by an adviser and a graduate committee. These individuals provide intellectual guidance in support of the scholarly and artistic activities of graduate students. The adviser and the graduate committee are also charged with the responsibility of evaluating a graduate student's performance in research and creative activities. The graduate student, the adviser, and the graduate committee, then, comprise a basic unit of graduate education. It is the quality, breadth, and depth of interaction in this unit that largely determines the outcome of the graduate experience.

High quality graduate education depends upon the professional and ethical conduct of the participants. Faculty and graduate students have complementary responsibilities in the maintenance of academic standards and the creation of high quality graduate programs. Excellence in graduate education is achieved when both faculty and students are highly motivated, possess the academic and professional backgrounds necessary to perform at the highest level, and are sincere in their desire to see each other succeed.

*To this end, it is essential that **graduate students**:*

- Conduct themselves in a mature, professional, and civil manner in all interactions with faculty and staff.
- Recognize that the faculty adviser provides the intellectual and instructional environment in which the student conducts research, and may, through access to teaching and research funds, also provide the student with financial support.
- Recognize that faculty members have broad discretion to allocate their own time and other resources in ways which are academically productive.
- Recognize that the faculty adviser is responsible for monitoring the accuracy, validity, and integrity of the student's research. Careful, well-conceived research reflects favorably on the student, the faculty adviser, and the University.
- Exercise the highest integrity in taking examinations and in collecting, analyzing, and presenting research data.
- Acknowledge the contributions of the faculty adviser and other members of the research team to the student's work in all publications and conference presentations.
- Maintain the confidentiality of the faculty adviser's professional activities and research prior to presentation or publication, in accordance with existing practices and policies of the discipline.
- Take primary responsibility to inform themselves of regulations and policies governing their graduate studies.

*It is also imperative that **faculty members**:*

- Interact with students in a professional and civil manner in accordance with University policies governing nondiscrimination and sexual harassment.
- Impartially evaluate student performance regardless of religion, race, gender, sexual orientation, or national origin of the graduate student candidate.
- Serve on graduate student committees without regard to the race, gender, sexual orientation, or national origin of the graduate student candidate.
- Prevent personal rivalries with colleagues from interfering with their duties as graduate advisers, committee members, or colleagues.
- Excuse themselves from serving on graduate committees when there is an amorous, familial, or other relationship between the faculty member and the student that could result in a conflict of interest.
- Acknowledge student contributions to research presented at conferences, in professional publications, or in applications for copyrights and patents.
- Not impede a graduate student's progress toward the degree in order to benefit from the student's proficiency as a teaching or research assistant.
- Create in the classroom, lab, or studio supervisory relations with students that stimulate and encourage students to learn creatively and independently.
- Have a clear understanding with graduate students about their specific research responsibilities, including time lines for completion of research and the thesis or dissertation.
- Provide verbal or written comments and evaluation of student's work in a timely manner.
- Discuss laboratory, studio, or departmental authorship policy with graduate students in advance of entering into collaborative projects.
- Refrain from requesting students to do personal work (mowing lawns, babysitting, typing papers, etc.) without appropriate compensation.
- Familiarize themselves with policies that affect their graduate students.

Graduate education is structured around the transmission of knowledge at the highest level. In many cases, graduate students depend on faculty advisers to assist them in identifying and gaining access to financial and/or intellectual resources which support their graduate programs.

In some academic units, the student's specific adviser may change during the course of the student's program. The role of advising may also change and become a mentoring relationship.

The reward of finding a faculty mentor implies that the student has achieved a level of excellence and sophistication in the field, or exhibits sufficient promise to merit the more intensive interest, instruction, and counsel of faculty.

*To this end, it is important that **graduate students**:*

- Devote an appropriate amount of time and energy toward achieving academic excellence and earning the advanced degree.
- Be aware of time constraints and other demands imposed on faculty members and program staff.
- Take the initiative in asking questions that promote understanding of the academic subjects and advance the field.
- Communicate regularly with faculty advisers, especially in matters related to research and progress within the graduate program.

Faculty advisers, on the other hand, should:

- Provide clear maps of the requirement each student must meet, including course work, languages, research tools, examinations, and thesis or dissertation, and delineating the amount of time expected to complete each step.
- Evaluate student progress and performance in regular and informative ways consistent with the practice of the field.
- Help students develop artistic, interpretive, writing, verbal, and quantitative skills, when appropriate, in accordance with the expectations of the discipline.
- Assist graduate students to develop grant writing skills, where appropriate.
- Take reasonable measures to ensure that each graduate student initiates thesis or dissertation research in a timely fashion.
- When appropriate, encourage graduate students to participate in professional meetings or perform or display their work in public settings.
- Stimulate in each graduate student an appreciation of teaching.
- Create an ethos of collegiality so that learning takes place within a community of scholars.
- Prepare students to be competitive for employment which includes portraying a realistic view of the field and the market at any given time and making use of professional contacts for the benefit of their students, as appropriate.

In academic units, faculty advisers support the academic promise of graduate students in their program. In some cases, academic advisers are assigned to entering graduate students to assist them in academic advising and other matters. In other cases, students select faculty advisers in accordance with disciplinary interest or research expertise. Advising is manifold in its scope and breadth and may be accomplished in many ways.

A student's academic performance and a faculty member's scholarly interests may coincide during the course of instruction and research. As the faculty-graduate student relationship matures and intensifies, direct collaborations may evolve which entail the sharing of authorship or rights to intellectual property developed in research or other creative or artistic activity. Such collaborations are encouraged and are a desired outcome of the mentoring process.

These guidelines were written by the Graduate Council and were adopted as a statement of the faculty by the University of Oregon Senate on May 24, 1995.

This document has benefited from the work of the Graduate School at the University of California-Davis; the Graduate College and Graduate Council at the University of Arizona (Mentoring: The Faculty-Graduate Student Relationship, Cusanovich and Gilliland, 1991); the Office of Graduate Studies at the University of Southern California; and the Graduate School at North Carolina State University. Materials are used by permission.

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