Guidelines for Good Practice in Graduate Education

From the University of Washington’s Graduate School: https://www.grad.washington.edu/mentoring/good-practice/

Good practice in graduate education centers on responsible interactions between graduate students and faculty, supported by staff. The Graduate School and the Graduate Faculty, represented by the Graduate School Council, offer this document as constructive and instructive guidelines for all those involved in graduate education at the University of Washington.

Graduate programs help to advance human knowledge, educate professionals, and resolve problems to address societal needs. To accomplish these goals, each graduate student ideally will develop an understanding of and capacity for scholarship, independent judgment, academic rigor, and intellectual honesty. The key component of the graduate education transaction lies in the relationship between faculty and students for which both parties share responsibility. Faculty and students must work together to ensure an atmosphere that encourages freedom of inquiry and fosters mutual respect.

These guidelines are intended to be constructive and instructive to faculty and graduate students, and do not constitute statements of institutional policy or requirements.

The guidelines have been divided into three groups. Each of these groups provides information for students and faculty members about their individual roles and responsibilities.

Professionalism and Ethics

- Student's Responsibilities
- Faculty Member's Responsibilities

Teaching

- Student's Role
- Faculty Member's Role

Mentoring

- Student's Role
- Faculty Member's Role

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Professionalism and Ethics

High quality graduate education depends upon the professional and ethical conduct of the participants. Faculty and graduate students share complementary responsibilities in the maintenance of academic standards and the development 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
- work with diverse faculty and peers regardless of their race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or national origin
- exercise the highest integrity in taking examinations, in collecting, analyzing, and presenting research data, and in teaching practice
- take primary responsibility to inform themselves about the specific regulations and policies governing their graduate studies at the department and Graduate School levels
- recognize that, in many disciplines, the faculty advisor 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
- manage time effectively for maximum professional development as well as personal health and well being, balancing competing demands such as being a student, a graduate assistant, a parent, a spouse, a caregiver, etc.
- respect faculty members' need to allocate their time and other resources in ways that are academically and personally productive
- recognize that the faculty advisor is responsible for monitoring the accuracy, validity, and integrity of the student's research, so that careful, well-conceived research will reflect favorably on the student, the faculty advisor, and the University
- acknowledge the contributions of the faculty advisor and other members of the research team to the student's work in all publications and conference presentations
- maintain the confidentiality of the faculty advisor's and fellow students' professional activities and research prior to presentation or publication, in accordance with existing practices and policies of the discipline
- participate at an appropriate level in discipline-based activities, such as seminars and conferences, as a component of professional development
- participate at an appropriate level in university, departmental, or program governance as a component of professional development
- uphold the public service mission of the university at an appropriate level
It is essential that faculty:

- act in a manner that best serves the education and professional development of students
- interact with students in a professional, civil, and collegial manner in accordance with University policies and relevant laws
- impartially evaluate student performance regardless of the student's religion, race, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, or other criteria that are not germane to academic evaluation
- promise a reasonable degree of confidentiality in communication with students, taking care not to discuss a student's performance, research results, or behavior with other students
- 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 duties as graduate advisor, committee member, or colleague
- 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
- discuss laboratory, studio, or departmental authorship policy with graduate students in advance of entering into collaborative projects
- acknowledge student contributions to research presented at conferences, in professional publications, or in applications for copyrights and patents
- ensure that a student's experience as a teaching, research, or staff assistant contributes to his/her professional development and does not impede the student's progress toward the degree
- create in the classroom, lab, or studio supervisory relations with students that stimulate and encourage students to learn creatively and independently respect the academic freedom for students to express opinions that may differ from those of faculty
- attain with graduate students a clear understanding of their specific research responsibilities, including time lines for completion of research and the thesis or dissertation
- refrain from requesting students to do tasks not closely related to their academic or professional development for the personal advantage of a faculty member
- familiarize themselves with policies that affect their graduate students
- provide opportunities within the graduate program for students to seek assistance for their grievances without threat of retaliation
- respect students' need to allocate their time among competing demands

Teaching

No matter what career a graduate student enters after degree completion, experience in teaching will be useful; presentations, evaluation and assessment, leading discussions, and the like, are activities that take place not only in the academy, but in a wide variety of business, industrial, and government settings. Teaching includes interactions with students about instructional issues, such as holding office hours, reviewing tests or paper scores/evaluations with students, answering questions in special teaching centers in the discipline, tutoring, conducting labs,
leading discussions, assisting students to solve problem sets, commenting on studio work, or lecturing. Graduate students and faculty should work together to enhance student learning and achieve professional development for the graduate teaching assistant.

In this context, the **graduate student's role** is to:

- work cooperatively with supervising faculty and other teaching assistants to accomplish the tasks set out by the TA assignment
- give adequate attention to the teaching role by conscientious efforts in planning, preparation, and implementation of TA assignments
- achieve an appropriate balance between teaching responsibilities and other essential activities
- take advantage of whatever orientation and training opportunities are offered as professional development; use the library and other services of the Center for Instructional Development and Research for more information on teaching and learning
- proactively seek varied teaching opportunities
- engage in reflective analysis of teaching activities

In this context, the **faculty member's role** is to:

- provide adequate training for teaching assistants appropriate for the responsibilities they will assume; in some cases training will be provided by departmental training programs
- provide appropriate communication with and mentorship for teaching assistants to enhance their professional development and to ensure the quality of student learning
- develop a clear understanding with graduate students about their specific TA responsibilities, including division of authority and labor, expectations for performance, and the like
- observe the student's teaching in order to provide feedback on, and assistance for, current activities and recommendations for the student's future employment
- identify appropriate departmental and campus resources to assist graduate students in their professional development as teaching scholars
- respect the boundary of part-time appointments when assigning duties
- foster opportunities for students to attain teaching competence

**Mentoring**

Graduate education depends primarily on the establishment of an intellectual relationship between a graduate student and mentoring faculty members. Mentors most frequently serve as wise and trusted advisors, supporters, tutors, visionaries, challengers, guides, advocates, and models. 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.

In this context, the **student's role** is to:
• devote an appropriate amount of time and energy toward achieving academic excellence and earning an advanced degree in a timely fashion
• recognize the constraints and other demands imposed on faculty members and program staff
• take the initiative to communicate regularly with faculty advisors, especially in matters related to research and progress within the graduate program

In this context, the **faculty member's role** is to:

• provide clear direction for the requirements each student must meet, including coursework, languages, research tools, examinations, and thesis or dissertation, 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; offer fair opportunities for students to correct deficiencies in their work
• offer adequate time to meet with students
• attend committee meetings and examinations, and participate with full attention in these activities
• help students develop artistic, interpretive, writing, oral communication, and quantitative skills in accordance with the expectations of the discipline
• where appropriate, assist graduate students to develop grant writing skills
• take reasonable measures to ensure that each graduate student initiates thesis or dissertation research in a timely fashion
• provide oral or written comments and evaluation of students' work in a timely manner
• when appropriate, encourage graduate students to participate in professional meetings or perform or display their work in public settings
• prepare students to be competitive for employment, which includes providing current information about the field and the market, making use of professional contacts for the benefit of students, and supporting students' employment goals without being prescriptive
• create an ethos of collegiality so that learning takes place within a community of scholars
• continue to be an advisor and colleague after student graduates