

Appendix A: Guidelines for successful mentoring

Keys to S.U.C.C.E.S.S. for Graduate Students and Faculty Mentors

Developed by the Work Group on Advising & Mentoring

Downloaded from <http://gradvising.umn.edu/success.html> 11 May 2018

A graduate student is encouraged to set clear expectations for academic relationships. Advisees who have a clear idea of how the advisor and other mentors can help them achieve their educational and career goals will get the most out of relationships with mentors and advisors. Create a plan to guide you as you work with mentors to complete your degree.

Understand your rights and responsibilities. Advisees have a right to be treated with respect; this includes the right to study in a harassment-free environment, have equal access and opportunity in all educational programs without individual or systemic barriers, and seek religious and disability accommodations. Advisees are expected to contact appropriate offices to request accommodations, seek advocates and mediation.

Communicate with advisor/mentors regularly. The success of any effective relationship is dependent on communication. Advisees need to make sure they communicate with faculty mentors regularly, not just when facing a crisis. Communication includes sharing successes, asking questions and seeking feedback in problem solving, which allows an advisor to provide effective, timely support, and can help prevent a crisis.

Connect with resources to nurture your well-being. Pursuing a graduate or professional degree can be stressful, and it is important for advisees to connect with resources that will nurture their emotional, physical, cultural, and spiritual well-being – whether individuals, student services programs, or interest/affinity groups. Putting personal interests on hold while in school often creates stress, which hinders rather than helps progress to degree. If your advisor does not appear to have your best interest at heart, you have a right consult other mentors and to seek a new advisor.

Establish milestones to reach degree completion. Take time to develop an Individual Development Plan in order to know, understand, address and update progress with your specific writing, teaching, research and professional development goals. Review with peers and mentors. Reflective practice allows you to plan for success.

Spend your time wisely. Graduate school success is highly dependent on how well students manage their time and that of their advisor. Learning effective time management skills is a start, using them is a necessity for personal development and for interacting regularly and effectively with advisors.

See yourself as part of a community. Show up at departmental events and invite faculty to your events, offer to be part of new student recruitment, set up resource sharing for teaching assistants, enroll in professional development programs to improve skills and deepen networks. Engaged students report increased satisfaction and progress.

A Faculty Mentor is encouraged to support your student's goals and career plans.

Advisors who listen to graduate and professional students' goals, share ideas and additional possibilities, and ask future-looking questions will help their advisees to find and create their own appropriate career paths. Take care to distinguish between your hopes and their hopes.

Understand your roles and responsibilities. One of the key roles an advisor plays is that of a mentor. As a mentor, the advisor might help the advisee assess their academic strengths and weaknesses as well as assist in course selection and exploring possible research areas. In addition, an advisor also has a responsibility to treat advisees with respect and to ensure that the advisee is able to pursue their academic work in a harassment-free environment with access to any needed accommodations.

Communicate timely feedback respectfully and constructively. Direct and honest feedback will help students assess errors and move forward when it is informational, specific, constructive, timely, positive, personal and differential. Faculty mentors, especially dissertation advisors and workplace supervisors, are expected to refrain from engaging in intimidation and humiliation in workplace and professional interactions with students whatever the setting or context.

Create a safe environment for your graduate student. Advisee will experience highs and lows: exhilaration, fear, possibility, frustration, joy, anger. Ideally, an advisor will hear and talk about these experiences and be equipped to provide appropriate guidance, including referrals. Not “just” students, RAs or TAs, advisees have full, complex lives; therefore, advising includes learning about/ creating an environment free from racism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of prejudice, intolerance, or harassment. Because students are also future colleagues, it is critical that advisors understand and respectfully navigate current power dynamics.

Expect and elicit on-going progress to degree completion. To create effective annual student progress reviews, schedule regular short meetings each term: a first discussion establishes goals with steps/ suggestions/resources for meeting them; a mid-term email exchange allows for updates and adjustments; a term-end review provokes mapping out next steps and goal setting.

Serve as a resource and provide networking support. When a faculty or staff member commits to serving in a mentoring role, that person is an on-going contributor to the success of the student. Talking through ideas, linking students to appropriate resources and suggesting ways to broaden or deepen the student’s network are essential components of this role.

See yourself as part of a community. Create opportunities for informal socializing within department events and support student groups in their events. Know your local resources for graduate student professional development and bring this information to your department. Talk with peers across institutional types to help students understand multiple career paths.

Appendix D: Best advising practices for graduate student success

Adapted from the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resources Sciences: Best Advising Practices for Graduate Student Success.

Best practice	Student's & advisor's responsibility	Advisor's responsibility	Student's responsibility
Establish milestones for academic and research progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within 60 days: Discuss and agree on milestones to track student progress. • By 2nd year for Ph.D. students or 2nd semester for M.S. students: Establish advisory and exam committee(s) and develop a course work plan. • Annually: Document and review student progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate expectations with respect to independence and how student is to function in the fairly unstructured graduate school environment. • Clarify availability of continued funding (e.g., assistantships or fellowships). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly understand your own motivations for going to graduate school. • Seek alternative or supplemental funding, as needed. • Consult the Director of Graduate Studies or Graduate Program Coordinator to ensure that program requirements are met on time.
Maintain open lines of communication and provide timely feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss an optimum meeting frequency and meet regularly. • Establish written expectations and schedules; update as necessary as the degree program progresses or with changing circumstances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comment on student's work (reports, draft posters, seminar presentations, manuscripts, etc.) within 30 days. • Be mindful student's time, remember they have numerous commitments. Give them enough lead time to complete work. • Communicate developments that may impact time to degree (e.g., planned absences, sabbaticals, termination of funding). • Understand cultural differences that might affect communication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit progress reports, draft posters or seminar presentations, manuscripts, thesis drafts, and other work in a timely manner. • Be mindful of advisor's and staff time. They are here to work with you, but remember they have other commitments. Give them enough lead time to help you with questions or issues. • Inform advisor of changes in schedule, including any paid or unpaid leave. • Seek help from advisor or from other sources to resolve difficulties.
Understand the terms and conditions of graduate assistant employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that offer letters and terms of employment are understood. • Comply with business practices of the department/program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand graduate student rights. • Provide a safe work environment free from intimidation, humiliation, or harassment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete any required training (e.g., safety, responsible conduct of research, ethics) in a timely manner.

<p>Develop research ideas and career goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree on the scope and sequence of thesis research (thesis proposal) and engage at all stages. • Clarify expectations for multiple tasks (e.g., teaching, work/life balance). • Develop student career goals; revisit and revise periodically. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give constructive feedback on student's research ideas. • Mentor students as they apply for jobs and advise on effects to their degree plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep a journal of research ideas and activities. • Seek professional development opportunities.
<p>Connect with the larger campus and professional community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize and respect cultural differences. • Seek opportunities for leadership and professional development skills such as: public speaking, research ethics, working across differences, collaboration, conflict resolution, and data management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help student network with colleagues at other institutions. • Support student participation in scientific conferences, campus seminars, and on committees within the U of MN and CBS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend campus seminars and events. • Serve on committees within the U of MN and CBS. • Participate in graduate student orientation and recruitment activities. • Participate in scientific conferences (find external travel funding, as needed).