

GUIDELINES FOR GOOD PRACTICE IN GRADUATE EDUCATION

INTRO

For Faculty and Graduate Students

Graduate programs help to advance human knowledge, educate professionals, and resolve problems to address societal needs. Graduate faculty and graduate students have a joint responsibility to accomplish these goals. Each graduate student should develop an understanding of and capacity for scholarship, independent judgment, academic rigor, and intellectual honesty. Faculty and students must work together to create an atmosphere that ensures freedom of inquiry, fosters mutual respect, and demonstrates professional integrity.

Good practice in graduate education centers on responsible interactions between graduate students and graduate faculty, supported by college and department staff. The following guidelines are based on the collective experience and wisdom of the major research universities. These guidelines are intended to be constructive and instructive to faculty and graduate students; as such, they do not constitute statements of institutional policy or requirements.

Each category below provides information for students and faculty members on their individual roles and responsibilities.

PROFESSIONALISM AND ETHICS

High quality graduate education depends upon the professional and ethical conduct of the participants. Faculty members 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.

Graduate Student Role

- Take primary responsibility to inform themselves of the specific policies and procedures governing their graduate studies (<https://catalog.unl.edu/graduate-professional/graduate/>) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.
- Interact with faculty, staff and other students in a mature, professional, and civil manner in accordance with University policies.
- Conduct the whole of one's academic career with unwavering integrity.
- Talk with a trusted faculty member if there are concerns about integrity and ethics.
- Work with diverse faculty and peers regardless of their race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or national origin.
- Exercise the highest integrity in taking examinations and in collecting, analyzing, and presenting research data.
- Participate in university, departmental, or program governance as a component of professional development.
- Participate in discipline-based activities, such as seminars and conferences, as a component of professional development.

- 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.
- Recognize that faculty and staff have many other professional responsibilities in addition to graduate education.

Faculty Role

- Inform themselves of the specific policies and procedures governing graduate studies (<https://catalog.unl.edu/graduate-professional/graduate/>) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.
- Create an environment of the highest ethical standards and insist that students behave ethically in all their professional activities.
- Interact with students in a professional and civil manner in accordance with the University policies and relevant laws.
- Ensure a reasonable degree of confidentiality in communicating with students, taking care not to discuss a student's performance, research results, or behavior with other students.
- Impartially evaluate student performance regardless of religion, race, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, or other criteria that are not germane to academic evaluation.
- Serve on graduate student committees without regard to the religion, race, gender, sexual orientation, or nationality of the graduate student candidate.
- Prevent personal rivalries with colleagues from interfering with their duties as graduate advisors, committee members, or colleagues.
- Excuse themselves from serving as advisors on graduate committees or supervising assistantship work when there is a familial or other relationship between the faculty member and the student that could result in a conflict of interest.
- Not impede a graduate student's progress and completion of his/her degree in order to benefit from the student's proficiency as a teaching or research assistant.
- Encourage students to learn creatively and independently respect the academic freedom of students to express opinions that may differ from those of faculty.
- Provide oral or written comments and evaluation of students' work in a timely manner.
- Discuss laboratory and/or departmental authorship policy with graduate students before entering into collaborative projects.
- Ensure an absence of coercion with regard to the participation of graduate students as human research subjects in the faculty advisor's research.
- Refrain from requesting students to do tasks unrelated to their academic or professional development for the personal advantage of a faculty member.
- Familiarize themselves with policies that affect their graduate students.

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 range 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, lecturing, or mentoring undergraduate researchers. Graduate students and faculty should work together to enhance student learning and promote the professional development of the graduate teaching assistant.

Graduate Student Role

- 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, preparing, and implementing TA assignments.
- Achieve an appropriate balance between teaching responsibilities and other essential activities
- Take advantage of orientation and training opportunities offered as professional development; use the library and other services provided by Graduate Studies on teaching and learning.
- Proactively seek varied teaching opportunities.
- Engage in reflective evaluation of teaching activities.

Faculty Role

- Provide adequate training for teaching assistants appropriate for the responsibilities they will assume; in some cases training may be available through campus-wide or department 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 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.
- Foster opportunities for students to attain teaching competence.

RESEARCH

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

Graduate Student Role

- Learn the research methods, ethical dimensions, and historical knowledge bases of the discipline.
- Abide by the University's policy on research misconduct. This policy applies to researchers in all disciplines.
- Recognize that the faculty advisor, in nearly every case, will determine when a body of work is ready for publication and what is an acceptable venue, since the faculty advisor bears responsibility for overseeing students' performance and ensuring the validity of the research.
- Recognize that 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.

- Maintain absolute integrity in collecting, analyzing, and presenting research data.
- Preserve the data collected during experiments or noted during research (with precise identification of sources) to avoid future confusion or disputes about access or ownership.
- Acknowledging the contributions of the faculty advisor and other members of the research team to the student's work in all publications and conference presentations. (It is also appropriate to acknowledge the sources of financial support).
- Expect that their research results, with appropriate recognition, may be incorporated into progress reports, summary documents, applications for continuation of funding, and similar documents authored by the faculty advisor, to the extent that the student's research is related to the faculty's research program and the grants which support that research.
- Recognize that the faculty advisor 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 advisor, and the University of Nebraska.
- Maintain the confidentiality of the faculty advisor's professional activities and research prior to presentation or publication, in accordance with existing practices and policies of the discipline.

Faculty Role

- Provide students with knowledge of the current frontiers and opportunities in disciplinary and inter- or cross-disciplinary research.
- Clarify expectations for specific research responsibilities, including time lines for completion of research and the thesis or dissertation.
- Provide appropriate guidelines, including expected timetables, for completion of research projects, and respect students' research interests/goals.
- Acknowledge student contributions to research presented at conferences, in professional publications, or in applications for copyrights and patents
- Openly discuss authorship and intellectual property policies with graduate students.

ADVISING AND MENTORING

The relationship between the graduate student and their graduate faculty supervisor is central to excellent graduate education. Graduate students develop best in a closely monitored environment in which the faculty provide both high expectations and high support.

Graduate student progress toward educational goals at the University of Nebraska is directed and evaluated by a graduate faculty advisor, the relevant graduate committee, and the student's supervisory committee. The advisor and the individuals on the committee provide intellectual guidance in support of the scholarly/creative activities of graduate students. The advisor, the supervisory committee, and the graduate committee also are charged with the responsibility of evaluating a graduate student's performance in scholarly/creative activities. The graduate student, the advisor, the supervisory committee, and the graduate committee comprise the basic unit of graduate education at UNL. It is the quality, breadth, and depth of interaction within this unit that largely determines the outcome of the graduate experience.

Graduate Student Role

- Devote an appropriate amount of time and energy toward achieving academic excellence and earning the advanced degree.
- Recognize time constraints and other demands imposed on faculty members and program staff.
- Initiate regular communications with faculty advisors, especially in matters related to research and progress within the graduate program.

Faculty Role

- Provide clear maps of the requirements each student must meet, including course work, languages, research tools, examinations, and thesis or dissertation, and delineate the amount of time expected to complete each step. A graduate student handbook, including written documentation of departmental policies, program requirements and expectations for satisfactory performance can serve this purpose.
- 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.
- Set aside adequate time to meet with students.
- Help students develop artistic, interpretive, writing, oral, and quantitative skills, in accordance with the expectations of the discipline.
- Assist graduate students in the development of grant writing skills, where appropriate.
- Take reasonable measures to ensure that each graduate student initiates a thesis or dissertation research in a timely manner.
- When appropriate, encourage graduate students to participate in professional meetings or perform or display their work in public settings.
- Create an ethos of collegiality so that learning takes place within a community of scholars.
- Provide a realistic view of the field and the current job market and make use of professional contacts for the benefit of their students, as appropriate.

SOURCE

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