

College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS)

Best Advising Practices for Graduate Student Success

CFANS wants graduate students to be successful and recommends the following Best Practices for graduate students and their advisers. Please contact your graduate program office for requirements specific to your program.

Best practice	Student's and adviser's joint responsibility	Adviser's responsibility	Student's responsibility
<p style="text-align: center;">Establish milestones for academic and research progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Within 60 days</u>: Discuss and agree upon milestones to track student progress • <u>By 2nd semester for M.S. student and no later than 2nd year for Ph.D. student</u>: Establish advisory and/or exam committee(s) (program dependent) and develop a course work plan • <u>Annually</u>: 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., Assistantship or Fellowship) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly understand your own motivations for going to graduate school! • Seek alternative or supplemental funding, as needed • Consult Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) or Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC) to ensure that program requirements are met on time
<p style="text-align: center;">Maintain open lines of communication and provide timely feedback</p>	<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 • Communicate developments that may impact time to degree (e.g., planned absences or sabbaticals, or 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 research work in a timely manner • Inform adviser of changes in schedule, including any paid or unpaid leave • Seek help from adviser or from other sources (see next page) to resolve difficulties
<p style="text-align: center;">Understand the terms and conditions of Graduate Assistant employment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that offer letters and terms of employment are understood • Comply with business practices of the department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand graduate student rights (see next page) • 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 style="text-align: center;">Develop research ideas and graduate student 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 style="text-align: center;">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 students network with colleagues at other institutions • Support student participation in scientific conferences, campus seminars and on committees within the U of M and CFANS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend campus seminars and events • Serve on committees within the U of M and CFANS • Participate in graduate student orientation and recruitment activities • Participate in scientific conferences (find external travel funding, as needed)

Graduate Student Rights

- An academic environment that is free from intimidation, humiliation, and harassment
- Working within the number of hours appropriate for your appointed position
 - The standard 50% assistantship requires an average of 20 hours of work per week at the discretion of the faculty advisor when school is in session (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, UMN Graduate Assistant Employment Policy - policy.umn.edu/hr/gradstudentemployment and policy.umn.edu/hr/gradstudentemployment-appg). This work requirement is in addition to time spent on coursework and/or thesis work.
- Timely review and return of manuscripts and thesis drafts (i.e., 30 days)
- Paid and unpaid leaves (i.e. parental, holiday, sick, bereavement, military, court appearance, jury duty, voting) (Policy: http://policy.umn.edu/sites/policy.umn.edu/files/appendix/gradstudentemployment_appf.pdf)
- Leave of absence in emergency situations (Policy: <http://policy.umn.edu/education/gradstudentleave>)
- Reasonable religious and disability accommodations (Policies: <http://policy.umn.edu/hr/religiousholidays> and <http://regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/policies/DisabilityServices.pdf>)
- Completion of an agreed upon CFANS Scholarly Work Agreement, to resolve issues with regard to research or academic performance
- Assistance when dealing with difficult situations, without concern for retaliation or punishment

Additional Help for Students

Use available resources if you have concerns about your academics, faculty adviser, or work environment. Do not wait to seek help. In case of an emergency, call 911 or UMN Police (612-624-2677).

- Speak to your faculty advisor first if you are comfortable doing so; address problems directly and honestly.
 - To discuss a matter confidentially, please contact the Student Conflict Resolution Center.
- When you feel it is inappropriate to contact your faculty advisor, consult your Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), Program Level Coordinator (GPC), College Coordinator, or the Student Conflict Resolution Center for assistance. Use your best judgment in deciding which course of action is right for you.
- International students should consult with International Student and Scholar Services when dealing with conflicts or concerns.

Counseling and Mental Health Services:

University Counseling and Consulting Services

<http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu/>

(612) 624-3323

Boynton Mental Health Clinic

<http://www.bhs.umn.edu/east-bank-clinic/mental-health-services.htm>

(612) 624-1444

Disability Resource Center

drc@umn.edu

(612) 626-1333

Graduate Assistant Employment Services

<http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/gae>

(612) 624-8647

Graduate Student Services and Progress (GSSP) Office

<http://www.grad.umn.edu/current-students/gssp>

(612) 625-3490

International Student and Scholar Services

<http://www.iss.umn.edu/>

(612) 626-7100

Reference Guides

Keys to S.U.C.C.E.S.S. – <http://gradvising.umn.edu/success.html>

Worst Practices: Advising and Mentoring – <http://gradvising.umn.edu/worst-practices.html>

Tips for Dealing with Difficult Behavior – <http://gradvising.umn.edu/difficult-behavior.html>

Preparing for a Difficult Conversation – <http://gradvising.umn.edu/difficult-conversations.html>

Resources for RAs & Supervisors – <http://wbt.umn.edu/pdf/RAs%20and%20Research%20Faculty.pdf>

SafeU (Safe Walk & Ride Service)

Walking Escort Service

(612) 624-9255

Gopher Chauffeur

(612) 388-6911

Student Conflict Resolution Center

<http://www.sos.umn.edu/>

(612) 624-7272

Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action

<https://diversity.umn.edu/eoaa/>

(612) 624-9547