Outlining Expectations

The progress, development, and success of a graduate student centers on the commitment of both the Student and the Principal Investigator (PI) to contribute to their mutual relationship. Basic principles of best practices in mentoring and graduate student life appear in the two lists that follow. Graduate students should be aware of what is necessary for their success and their PI should be aware of practices that promote their Students' best interests. This relationship should be a collaborative one in which there is open communication, teamwork, and respect.

These guidelines are intended to be modified, appended, or reduced to fit specific needs based on an **open discussion** between the Student and the PI. The department culture and students can benefit from a concerted effort to incorporate these best practices, but we do not intend to mandate, monitor, or enforce them in any way.

Graduate Assistantship Overview

Graduate students on an assistantship are on a 50% appointment. A 50% appointment means that 50% of the work week should be committed to activities that earn the stipend and the remaining time (50%) should be dedicated to earning the degree (coursework, research, and writing thesis/dissertation). This time commitment (based on a 40-hour work week) is the minimum expectation.

The duties may include serving as a teaching assistant for a course, working on projects outside of the thesis/dissertation research, assisting with other students' projects, mentoring/teaching other students, etc. It is important to remember that research ebbs and flows and the intensity of ongoing research may necessitate more hours for a period. To complete the degree on an accelerated timeline or to take advantage of other opportunities, a student can expect to work more than 40 hours/week. See below for further details.

References
https://www.mcgill.ca/gradsupervision/files/gradsupervision/shore_supervision.pdf   https://students.usask.ca/documents/graduate/student-supervisor-agreement.pdf
https://www.mcgill.ca/gradsupervision/supervisors/roles-and-responsibilities/expectations   Virginia Tech Expectations for Graduate Education, Graduate students
https://www.amcs.uiowa.edu/sites/amcs/files/Dale-1.pdf

General Expectations

Graduate students are expected to:

- Interact with faculty, staff, and other students in a mature, professional, and civil manner in accordance with University policies.
- Work within the guidelines provided by the department to select an appropriate PI and committee members. Those selected should be free of conflicts of interest or coercive relationships among committee members and with the Student that might preclude a committee member from evaluating student work by academic merit alone.
- Devote an appropriate amount of time and energy toward achieving academic excellence and earning the advanced degree or certificate. Please review Graduate Assistantship Overview for additional information.
- Recognize the time constraints and other demands imposed on faculty members and program staff.
- Take primary responsibility to inform themselves of and conduct themselves in accordance with the Graduate School's policies and procedures, specific program requirements, and standards of performance established by faculty and articulated in departmental graduate student handbooks and their respective professional associations or organizations. Students should locate and review their departmental graduate student handbook.
    - Fulfill the requirements of their program in a timely manner and participate in the review process.
    - Take the initiative to ask questions that will promote their understanding of the academic requirements of their program requirements and deadlines. In addition, Students should understand the assistantship requirements and seek to fulfill them satisfactorily.
    - Students must know what courses they need to take, and when to take them. Being aware of deadlines is essential for PI and students.
- Take the initiative to arrange meetings and communicate with the PI as often as necessary to ensure progress in research and time to degree (minimum: once per semester). The Student and PI should establish a system that works for both people at the beginning of the program. Communication includes notifying PI on the Student's project development, issues they are facing, complications with their work, and their schedules (e.g., if they will be away for extended periods of time).
- Address problems as early as possible starting with your PI and then Graduate Student Coordinator. Inform faculty of conflicts while working towards a resolution.
- Inform the PI and Graduate Student Coordinator of any leaves of absence that may be needed, as well as their date of departure and expected date of return.
    - To maintain a healthy work-life balance, students should be able to take some scheduled time off; discuss the timing and length with your PI. Note that international students have additional requirements for approved leaves of absence; consult the office of International Student Services (ISS) for details.
- Students are expected to be organized. Successful students use an agenda, plan, and think ahead. Students should come to meetings with the appropriate documents (prepared and forwarded ahead of time) and with questions prepared. Being organized is a key step towards effective time management and that is essential for success in graduate school (and beyond!).
- For international students, recognize that the immigration form specifies the normal length of the academic program (2 years for master's degree, 5 years for Ph.D.). Extensions to the immigration form may be requested based on academic reasons; consult with IGSS staff for more information.

References
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https://www.amcs.uiowa.edu/sites/amcs/files/Dale-1.pdf

Research and Ethics

Graduate students are expected to:

- Complete and maintain compliance trainings and follow the protocols daily. Lack of compliance can result in a lab or laboratory group getting shut down which affects many people in a serious manner.
- Maintaining absolute integrity in taking examinations and in collecting, analyzing, and presenting research data.
- Contribute to the maintenance of an ethical environment by reporting any unethical actions they observe or are aware of.
- Take special care to 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.
- Work collaboratively with the PI to set clear guidelines and expectations on the research activities, including timetables for deliverables.
- Recognize that the PI and committee members are responsible for guiding graduate student research, but that Students are responsible for conducting the independent research required for the graduate degree.
- The Student will provide the PI with sufficient time before an impending deadline to provide suggestions/revisions to work (including proposals, literature reviews, analysis, chapters, research and scholarship applications, reports, manuscripts, or scholarly presentations). Work collaboratively with PI to agree upon "sufficient time" details.
- Work collaboratively with PI to appropriately acknowledge the contributions (co-authorship, mention in the acknowledgements section, mention in the dissertation acknowledgements section, etc.) of faculty and other members of the research team in all publications and conference presentations.
- Maintain the confidentiality of the PI's and other lab's professional activities/research prior to presentation or publication, in accordance with existing practices of the discipline.

Teaching and Training

Graduate students are expected to:

- Seek and receive appropriate training and evaluation for instructional roles they undertake.
- Pursue, to the extent possible, teaching and training opportunities that are relevant to their career expectations and that enhance teaching to diverse learners and populations.

Professional Development

Graduate students are expected to:

- Pursue professional training programs, seminars, and courses that will enhance their professional growth and development, personal growth and development and help them build a broad network of professional contacts.
- Contribute, to the extent possible, to the discourse of the scholarly discipline through presentations, publications, collaborative projects, and other means.

Assistantships and Financial Support

Graduate students are expected to:

- Request clear guidelines for the responsibilities of the assistantship from the appropriate faculty or staff member.

References
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https://www.mcgill.ca/gradsupervision/supervisors/roles-and-responsibilities/expectations   Virginia Tech Expectations for Graduate Education, Graduate students
https://www.amcs.uiowa.edu/sites/amcs/files/Dale-1.pdf

- Fulfill the responsibilities and requirements of the appointment as stated in the contractual agreement with the department. Please review Graduate Assistantship Overview for additional information.
- Prepare grant applications as needed depending on funding availability. Finding available grants and writing grant proposals provide great opportunities for you to clarify your project, hone persuasive writing skills, and critically consider the resources you need to conduct the research. These are also impressive items to include on future resumes/CVs.
- Act in a professional manner in all aspects of their duties as assistants.
- International students: adhere to the requirements of immigration regulations for F-1 and J-1 students, including limitations on employment, and consult immigration advisors in the Graduate School regarding immigration questions (see ISS website).
- Recognize that fellowships carry with them responsibilities that might be different than assistantships. Fellowship recipients are responsible for learning about and complying with all requirements associated with their appointment.
- Report additional employment beyond the assistantship/fellowship to the department.

Community

Graduate students are expected to:
- Uphold, in their own classrooms, research groups, and laboratories, an ethos of collegiality and collaboration.
- Students should be engaged and active members of the lab. This includes taking part in laboratory meetings and being responsive to activities in the laboratory. This could include showing up for lab clean-up days, replying to emails related to lab events and activities, and generally working to be an integral and important member of the lab.
- Contribute to the department and university community to the extent that each is able.

References

https://www.mcgill.ca/gradsupervision/files/gradsupervision/shore_supervision.pdf https://students.usask.ca/documents/graduate/student-supervisor-agreement.pdf
https://www.mcgill.ca/gradsupervision/supervisors/roles-and-responsibilities/expectations Virginia Tech Expectations for Graduate Education, Graduate students
https://www.amcs.uiowa.edu/sites/amcs/files/Dale-1.pdf

General Expectations

PIs are expected to:

- Interact with other faculty, staff, and students in a professional and civil manner in accordance with University policies. Be respectful and honest in your communication, avoid conflicts of interest, interact with students, staff, and faculty colleagues in a professional and civil manner.
- Clarify expectations regarding collaborative work, authorship, publication, and conference presentations.
- Give reasonable notice to the Student of extended absences from campus, such as research leaves, and make satisfactory arrangements during such absences.
- Disclose any conflict of interest that may arise with respect to the Student.
- Recognize time constraints and other demands imposed on students and program staff.
- Design programs that take advantage of individual interests and strengths and that can be completed in a timely manner.
- Encourage the Student to be open about problems in their working relationships (including the relationship with you, a committee member, student, or staff), and be open to addressing such problems.
- Guide the Student on degree requirements, utilizing the certification forms to ensure timelines and milestones are met. Ensure that the Student is meeting their research responsibilities, appropriate elective course work, research, thesis proposal, thesis writing, suitable resources, and workspace.
- Provide Student with an evaluation of their progress and performance in regular and informative ways (suggested frequency is one meeting per semester minimum) and address lack of progress with academic or financial consequences. The Student and PI should establish a system that works for both people at the beginning of the program.
- Help the Student to understand the rules of the institution, including Graduate School policies & procedures or direct them to the Graduate Student Coordinator.
- Sign necessary paperwork in a timely fashion, whether it is expense reports, certification forms, or forms for scholarships.
- Help troubleshoot, whether it is issues with a collaborator or fellow graduate student, or laboratory equipment failure.
- Engage in consultation on the composition of the advisory and examining committees.

Research and Ethics

PIs are expected to:

- Discuss laboratory or research authorship policies with the Student in advance of entering collaborative projects. Encourage faculty-graduate student collaborations which entail the sharing of authorship or rights to intellectual property developed in research.
- Assess and confer proper and fair acknowledgment of the Student's contributions to scholarly activity.
- Define research goals verbally and in writing, including research tools, access, security, and evaluation, to ensure understanding across cultures and experience levels.
- Uphold and transmit the highest professional standards of research and scholarship.
- Provide clear guidelines of expectations to the Student on research activities, including timetables for deliverables in all phases of the Student's research.

References
https://www.mcgill.ca/gradsupervision/files/gradsupervision/shore_supervision.pdf
https://www.mcgill.ca/gradsupervision/supervisors/roles-and-responsibilities/expectations
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https://students.usask.ca/documents/graduate/student-supervisor-agreement.pdf
Virginia Tech Expectations for Graduate Education, Graduate students

- Provide a safe laboratory environment by following the standards put in place by the university. Ensure adequate training, dissemination of policy, and good practice. The PI will work with the university and students to make sure problems are dealt with in a timely fashion.
- The PI(s) will respond in a timely manner (normally not to exceed 30 days) with constructive suggestions/revisions to written work (including proposals, literature reviews, analysis, chapters), as well as research and scholarship applications, reports, manuscripts, or scholarly presentations.

Teaching and Training

PIs are expected to:
- Provide guidance on how to work effectively as a member of a team.
- Help the Student develop academic, research, writing, oral, quantitative, or other relevant professional skills required by the discipline or field.

Professional Development

PIs are expected to:
- Engage in mentor training (for example WISCIENCE training) to continually improve mentoring skills.
- Prepare the Student to be competitive for employment or future graduate programs by acknowledging student contributions, encouraging participation in academic and research-related conferences, professional publications, and patent applications.
- Encourage the Student to participate in professional organizations and build on their personal skills and interests that might benefit the student, university, or society.

Assistantships and Financial Support

PIs are expected to:
- Provide clear guidelines for the responsibilities of the assistantship. Including:
  - Expected number of hours and when those hours will be worked during the week/semester.
  - Specific job duties.
  - Preferred means of communication with the PI.
- Be open to discuss a student's concern about assigned or requested projects that, **on average over the course of a semester**, are more than the hours for which they are being paid and **do not** contribute to their thesis or dissertation.
- Help the Student apply for funds to cover direct research costs and to provide stipends to students.
- Act in a professional manner in all aspects of your duties as PI.

Community

PIs are expected to:
- Uphold, in their classrooms, research groups, and laboratories, an ethos of collegiality and collaboration.

☐   All topics outlined above have been discussed and agreed upon by the following:

Student Signature   _____   Date_____

PI Signature   _____   Date_____

References
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