

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, teaching assistant) in a timely manner.
Develop research ideas and career goals	<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.
Connect with the larger campus and professional community	<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 events, and on committees in UMN, CBS, and PMB. • Celebrate and announce your students' successes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend campus seminars and events. • Serve on committees in UMN, CBS, and PMB. • Participate in graduate student orientation and recruitment activities. • Participate in scientific conferences (find external travel funding, as needed).