

Best Practices for Graduate Mentoring

Graduate mentors, including a student's graduate advisor(s), others at the university, and external professionals, provide professional and general insights, advice, and assistance to graduate students. Good graduate mentoring makes a vital contribution to the academic and professional success of individual students, advances the disciplines represented in the College, and contributes to the mission of the College as a whole. A positive mentoring relationship depends on the cooperation of both mentor and mentee; both should therefore work together in creating appropriate expectations for their mentoring relationship and in implementing those expectations in practice. (See [here](#) and [here](#) for help with this.) With this in mind, here are best practices for graduate mentors and mentees in the College:

Mentors:

1. Graduate mentors should conscientiously supervise, encourage, and support students in their academic endeavors and assist them in securing research support.
2. Mentors should respond effectively, respectfully, and in a timely manner to requests for guidance and support from mentees.
3. Graduate mentors should advise students concerning professional ethics, encourage the practice of research and publication consistent with ethical standards, and help students avoid ethically questionable situations.
4. Graduate mentors should strive to enhance the educational value of teaching and research assistantships of the students under their supervision. To do so they should provide discipline-specific guidance for new and experienced GTAs and GRAs.
5. Graduate mentors should be objective in the evaluation of research and academic performance and communicate that evaluation fully and honestly to their students. Graduate mentors should report accurately on the competence of students to other professionals who require such evaluations.
6. When engaged in teaching, research, or supervision, graduate mentors should recognize the power they hold and should avoid engaging in conduct that exploits or demeans students or that could be construed as an abuse of that power.
7. Graduate mentors should not permit personal animosities or intellectual differences with colleagues to impede student access to those colleagues or interfere with students' research or progress toward a degree.
8. Graduate mentors should aid and advise graduate students in seeking professional employment inside and outside of academia, taking into account the current state of the job market and the particular situation of the student. This includes directing students towards appropriate resources (see for example [here](#)) and advising students about career opportunities and implications associated with their participation in particular research projects or degree programs.

Mentees:

1. Graduate students should be open and willing to discuss their professional goals, aspirations, and areas where they need guidance with their mentor.
2. Graduate students should be open to guidance and criticism from their mentors.

3. Graduate students should respond effectively, respectfully, and in a timely manner to communication and guidance from mentors.
4. Graduate students should come to scheduled meetings prepared and on time. Templates are available [here](#) for students to prepare for meetings.
5. Graduate students are strongly encouraged to establish and maintain multiple mentoring relationships or develop a network of mentors that can provide support and guidance throughout their graduate career and beyond. Graduate students are encouraged to include, as part of this network, colleagues, faculty beyond their department, university staff, alumni, and external professionals.
6. Graduate students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of resources across campus to develop short-term and long-term academic, research, and other professional goals and be willing to discuss these with their mentor.

Graduate mentoring relationships can break down. If so, the formation of new mentoring relationships should be encouraged without prejudice. (For more information about what to do when a mentoring relationship breaks down, see Chapter 6 of the University of Michigan's [*How to Get the Mentoring You Want: A Guide for Graduate Students.*](#))