

GUIDELINES FOR ADVISING AND MENTORING GRADUATE STUDENTS

GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

Effective advising and mentoring of graduate students is essential to the promotion of excellence in graduate education, research, and creative activities at Georgia State University. The following guidelines are based on nationally recognized best practices aimed at providing graduate students with the intellectual support and guidance necessary for their academic progress and professional success. While advising and mentoring are inevitably shaped by individual and disciplinary expectations, these guidelines assume that graduate programs, faculty, and students always share responsibility for establishing mentoring relationships that exemplify mutual respect, open communication, fairness, and integrity. To these ends, best practices distinguish between **mentoring** and **advising** while acknowledging the necessarily close relationship between these activities. Where faculty advising of graduate students has traditionally consisted of giving counsel about degree program requirements and academic progress, mentoring goes beyond advising and includes modeling professional and ethical behavior, providing emotional support, and exposing mentees to networking and professional opportunities across multiple career paths. Accordingly, these guidelines advocate that students are best served by seeking out more than one mentor over the course of their graduate education.

Responsibilities of the Graduate Departments/Programs:

Provide a graduate handbook that includes requirements for degree completion, a general timeline for expected progress within the program, relevant academic unit and College deadlines and policies, and consequences for failure to meet these expectations and milestones. The handbook should be updated annually and made available to students and faculty.

Communicate the roles and responsibilities of all administrators associated with the graduate program, including their contact information and availability for meeting and advising.

Conduct regular (at least annual) written evaluations of student progress and performance that incorporate, where necessary, constructive recommendations for improvement and clearly stated consequences if recommendations are not met. These evaluations should be discussed with students.

Implement a survey mechanism for soliciting student feedback regarding their experiences with faculty mentoring.

Develop clear guidelines for resolving both formal grievances and informal conflicts between students and faculty, as well as between students. Ensure that guidelines are consistent with college and university guidelines for handling student grievances. Have a mechanism in place that allows students to express concerns without fear of retribution.

Communicate in writing the responsibilities, terms, and expectations associated with graduate student assistantships, the requirements for renewal of funding (if applicable), and the number of hours per week students should work fulfilling their assistantship duties. The work assigned to funded students should further their professional development and should not hinder their ability to progress in their degree programs.

Ensure that all students have an advisor and adequate mentoring.

Expose students to a range of professional development and career possibilities including opportunities outside the academy.

Responsibilities of the Graduate Faculty:

Know the requirements, policies, and deadlines of the program, the college, and the university and assist students in meeting them.

Discuss expectations for progress through program. Meet with students on a regular and ongoing basis. Provide direct, honest, timely, and constructive feedback regarding students' progress.

Discuss expectations and policies for the sharing of authorship and/or rights to intellectual property developed in research or in other creative or artistic activity. Explain the standards and norms for authorship in one's own discipline. Clarify who owns and can access data that is being collected and discuss issues of copyright and patent agreements that might occur.

Resolve conflicts in an appropriate manner and provide advisees with resources as necessary.

Model professional behavior/ethics and communicate behavioral expectations for the mentor/mentee relationship. Create an environment that is free from prejudice, intolerance, intimidation, humiliation and harassment.

Maintain professional relationships and boundaries between faculty and students at all times (e.g., do not enter into relationships, such as financial or romantic, with students that might compromise professional judgement or student success).

Foster professional development of students by advising on matters of conference presentation, networking, and selection of appropriate publication venues for research and creative efforts.

Promote advisee career development and commit to an ongoing mentoring relationship beyond graduation.

Responsibilities of the Graduate Students:

Know the requirements, policies and deadlines of the program, the college, and the university and take personal responsibility for meeting them.

Take responsibility for the development of one's own educational, research, and career goals. Develop a timeline and action plan for achieving these goals and review it with advisor and/or committee (depending on the discipline) at least annually.

Seek input and advise from multiple faculty members. Understand that one is likely to receive the most well-rounded educational experience by pursuing multiple types of mentoring relationships from faculty members throughout the course of one's program.

Communicate effectively with one's advisor in a professional, consistent, and clear manner. Recognize time constraints of faculty and staff and plan accordingly. Seek regular feedback on performance and be responsive and open to constructive criticism.

Maintain ethical standards when conducting research and engaging in scholarly activities. This includes compliance with institutional and federal regulations for human subject and animal research as well as institutional/disciplinary standards for copyright and plagiarism and expectations of granting agencies when working on federal, state or foundation grants.

Be an engaged member of the graduate community. Seek opportunities for networking and socializing with peers in the department as well as the college/university. Attend department, college, and university events and take advantage of professional development offerings to build diverse skills and expand networks.