



## GUIDELINES FOR ADVISING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN FACULTY AND GRADUATE STUDENTS

Stanford University



STANFORD UNIVERSITY  
VICE PROVOST FOR GRADUATE EDUCATION

Excellence in graduate education depends upon the professional and ethical conduct of all members of our community. These guidelines focus on the professional academic relationship between faculty advisors and graduate students. Although disciplines vary in particular advising norms, the guidelines are universal and applicable across the disciplinary spectrum. In making expectations explicit, faculty advisors and students gain a shared understanding of Stanford's commitment to best practices that establish clear communication within faculty-student advising relationships.

### **FACULTY ADVISORS:**

#### **Serve as intellectual advisors and professional mentors to their graduate students, by:**

- helping students develop academic and professional skills expected by the discipline;
- guiding students to design academic or research experiences that build on their interests and strengths and that can be completed in a timely manner;
- encouraging and modeling dedication to high quality teaching and mentoring;
- encouraging collaboration that, where appropriate, entails the sharing of authorship or rights to intellectual property developed in research or other creative or artistic activity;
- encouraging students to be open about any problems in their work relationships, including with an advisor, and actively helping to resolve those problems;
- being aware of and directing students to University resources to support students through challenges;
- providing students with timely, regular, and constructive feedback on their progress, especially if students' lack of progress may prevent them from obtaining the desired degree.

#### **Understand the academic and non-academic policies that pertain to graduate students, including:**

- helping students understand the degree program's requirements and timely progress to degree, such as coursework, languages, research, examinations, and thesis or dissertation;
- discussing laboratory, studio, or departmental authorship policy in advance of entering into collaborative projects;
- informing students of their responsibility to comply with all University policies including Intellectual Property, Environmental Health and Safety, Responsible Conduct of Research, Human Research Protection, Sexual Harassment Prevention, Sexual Assault Prevention, Honor Code, and Fundamental Standard.

#### **Prepare students to be competitive for future employment, by:**

- promoting free inquiry and free exchange of ideas, while abiding by policies on confidentiality of research;
- acknowledging student contributions to research presented at conferences, in professional publications, or in applications for copyrights and patents;
- encouraging graduate students to participate in professional meetings, perform or display their work in public settings, and publish the results of their research;
- providing a realistic view of the job market and career options, including what is needed to succeed in students' career of choice or pointing students to resources that provide that information;
- encouraging students to acquire the professional skills necessary for impact in a rapidly changing world.

#### **Maintain a high level of professionalism, including:**

- abiding by Stanford policies that set parameters on the nature of faculty-student relationships as well as policies on professional conflict of commitment and interest;
- excusing themselves from participating in committee or other decisions regarding any student with whom they have a relationship that could represent a conflict of interest;
- never impeding graduate students' progress toward the degree or toward employment in order to benefit from students' proficiency as a teaching or research assistants;
- interacting with students, staff, and faculty colleagues in a professional manner within a respectful workplace.

## **GRADUATE STUDENTS:**

### **Understand faculty advisors' central role, as well as constraints on their time. This includes:**

- recognizing that faculty advisors provide the intellectual environment in which students learn and conduct research, and, through access to teaching and research resources, may provide students with financial support;
- recognizing that faculty advisors are responsible for monitoring the accuracy, validity, and integrity of the students' academic work, and, in the case of research, ensuring that the contributions of all participants are properly acknowledged in publications;
- consulting with their advisors before attempting to publish results of work done under the advisors' direction and/or in the advisors' studio or laboratory, as the quality reflects on students, faculty advisors, and Stanford;
- being aware of time constraints and other demands imposed on faculty members and staff;
- taking the initiative to arrange meetings or communicate via other mechanisms with faculty advisors as often as necessary to keep the advisors informed of any factors that might affect their academic progress, including research or time to degree;
- consulting with the advisors to resolve any problems in their working relationships with their advisors or others, seeking guidance from other faculty or staff as needed.

### **Take primary responsibility for informing themselves about policies, requirements, and practices governing their financial support, degree and course requirements, research activities, and conflict resolution. This may involve:**

- consulting departmental guidelines for graduate students, the Graduate Academic Policies and Procedures Handbook ([gap.stanford.edu](http://gap.stanford.edu)), the Research Policy Handbook ([rph.stanford.edu](http://rph.stanford.edu)), the Stanford Bulletin ([bulletin.stanford.edu](http://bulletin.stanford.edu)), and the Administrative Guide ([adminguide.stanford.edu](http://adminguide.stanford.edu));
- fulfilling the expectations of policies and requirements; seeking clarification from faculty advisors and staff if they are uncertain about the precise meaning or application of a particular regulation or policy.

### **Exercise high professional standards in all aspects of their work. This includes:**

- observing the University's policies on academic integrity and the responsible conduct of research, which apply to students, faculty, and staff in all disciplines;
- maintaining absolute integrity in taking examinations, creating original works and, for those doing research, in collecting, analyzing, presenting, and disseminating research data;
- taking special care to preserve the data collected during experiments or noted during research (with precise identification of sources) in order to avoid future confusion or disputes about access or ownership;
- acknowledging the contributions of faculty advisors and other members of the research team to students' work in all publications and conference presentations, and acknowledging sources of financial support;
- familiarizing themselves with the statement On Academic Authorship published in the Research Policy Handbook;
- maintaining the confidentiality of the faculty advisors' professional activities, including research, creation of original works and other creative endeavors, in accordance with existing practices and policies of the discipline;
- informing faculty advisors of conflicts and working towards a clear resolution;
- interacting with students, staff, and faculty colleagues in a professional manner to create a respectful workplace.

## **DEPARTMENTS AND PROGRAMS:**

- Create an intellectual community where students, faculty, and staff can thrive in pursuit of academic excellence;
- Introduce new graduate students to the policies, practices, and resources of the department and the University through an orientation or advising session and follow up as needed to ensure students' understanding;
- Provide students with written documentation of departmental policies, degree requirements, and timelines;
- Designate one or more members of the faculty as resources to help graduate students and faculty resolve conflicts: the department chair, the director of graduate studies, or a designated departmental resource person;
- Resolve problems locally and quickly if possible; consult with School Dean's office staff, the University Ombuds and School of Medicine Ombuds, or VPGE office as needed.