

## **GRADUATE EDUCATION EXPECTATIONS**

### **REVISED DRAFT 06/10/10**

Northwestern University has long provided high quality graduate education due to its ability to foster intellectual growth and dynamic collaboration among members of its community. Its continued success is directly rooted in establishing positive mentoring relationships between graduate students and faculty, which produces talented, innovative research scholars and prepares mentors for future graduate students.

The Graduate Leadership Council is committed to maintaining this *community of scholars*, which will continue to guide the university toward the research frontiers of the future. We recognize the need to allow varying mentoring styles across graduate departments to best facilitate academic success. In order to better strengthen this personal freedom and encourage unique problem-solving approaches, we submit these recommendations to assist students, faculty, and staff in their constructive working relationships.

### **ADVISORS and STUDENTS:**

- Students and faculty should establish appropriate communication guidelines when first joining a research group and be open to communication throughout the course of a student's tenure.
- Faculty advisors should be familiar with the core curriculum of the department and should be available to discuss the student's academic progress throughout the year.
- At the end of each academic year, students and advisors should meet to determine whether certain goals and expectations have been realized. Students should receive written confirmation that their progress is satisfactory or written notice that they are failing to meet expectations. Further, details concerning certain milestones should be thoroughly discussed. These milestones include but are not limited to core course requirements, qualifying exams, dissertation prospectus, and dissertation progress. At this time, expectations for the following year should be discussed. Success or failure to meet those goals should be discussed at the following year's meeting, but can certainly be discussed beforehand.
- Students should update faculty advisors regularly regarding their progress to ensure that the program requirements are being met. Furthermore, students should proactively develop research projects in consultation with their faculty advisor.
- Students and faculty should openly discuss expectations regarding vacation time, maternity/paternity leave, leaves of absence, conflicts, etc.
- Faculty members should refrain from assigning tasks unrelated to the students' academic and professional development, especially personal tasks for faculty members, unless the task is actually voluntary and receives some additional remuneration. This does not include limited clerical work (copying, filing) that may be related to teaching or research duties.

- Faculty members should support students' efforts to balance their research/academic responsibilities with their extracurricular activities.
- Faculty should also support student participation in activities that will connect them to the broader Northwestern community (i.e., academic conferences, lectures/speaker series outside of the department, professional development seminars, and social networking opportunities).
- Students should show ambition, dedication, and commitment to their profession as researchers, scholars, and teachers.
- Students should commit to graduate training, work on research projects, and teaching assignments in a responsible and dedicated manner.
- Students should inform themselves of The Graduate School and program requirements and fulfill them ably.
- Students, faculty, and staff should treat each other with respect and collegiality.

**DEPARTMENT and GRADUATE PROGRAM:**

- From matriculation to graduation, all students should have an assigned faculty advisor. Until students officially join research groups or choose a dissertation advisor, departments should assign an interim advisor to each student, preferably the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS).
- Each department should provide students with necessary training and educational opportunities to be creative and focused research scholars who are capable of managing the inherent responsibilities within leadership positions, whether in academic or industrial settings.
- Each department should communicate important updates in a timely manner to all members of the department. These updates can include students receiving research awards, faculty becoming tenured, personnel changes, and publicizing faculty position openings at other universities.
- Each department should send an email at the beginning of the academic year reminding its members of its policies and resources. This annual update should include links to the program handbook, links to reimbursement forms, changes in department leadership, notification of newly appointed graduate student leaders, policies regarding the use of office equipment, and links to department listservs.
- Each department should provide a range of professional development opportunities including seminars, workshops, and tutorials that provide students exposure to a diverse set of career possibilities.

- Each department should promote, develop, and maintain a strong network of department alumni/ae.
- Each department should encourage the creation of a graduate student council within the department. This council should incorporate all interested graduate students and serve as means of communicating student suggestions to the program leadership and, where appropriate, a forum for discussion of possible program changes. The DGS should meet with an elected council leadership on a regular (quarterly) basis. For small programs, it may be beneficial to combine the councils of smaller programs with one another, or with the council of a larger, affiliated program, subject to discussions between the students and departmental leadership.
- Each department should establish guidelines for adjudicating internal conflicts between students and faculty advisors. Departments should ensure due diligence in resolving these matters in a prudent and just manner. Departments should establish an ombudsperson and/or ombudscommittee to moderate minor conflicts.