

College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS)

Best Practices Guide for Graduate Student Success

CFANS wants graduate students to be successful and recommends the following Best Practices for graduate students and their advisers:

Best practice	Student's and adviser's joint responsibility	Adviser's responsibility	Student's responsibility
Establish milestones for academic and research progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Within 60 days</u>: Discuss and agree upon milestones that will track student progress • <u>By 2nd semester for M.S. student and 2nd year for Ph.D. student</u>: Establish an advisory committee and complete a Graduate Degree Plan • <u>Annually</u>: Document and review student progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate expectations on the extent of graduate-student independence, and how student is to function in the fairly unstructured graduate-school environment • Clarify availability of continued Graduate Assistantship or Fellowship funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly understand your own motivations for going to graduate school! • Seek alternative or supplemental funding, as needed • Consult Director of Graduate Studies or Plan Level 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"> • Meet regularly, preferably at least weekly or twice a month 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comment on student reports, draft posters or seminar presentations, or manuscripts within 30 days • Communicate program changes (e.g., planned absences or 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, or manuscripts in a timely manner • Inform adviser of changes in schedule, including any paid or unpaid leave • Seek help from adviser or from other sources (see next page) if or when things get difficult
Understand the terms and conditions of Graduate Assistant employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carefully read offer letters and terms of Graduate Assistantship employment • Comply with business practices of department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand graduate student rights (see next page) • Provide a safe work environment free from intimidation, humiliation, or harassment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete any required training (e.g., safety, research conduct of research) in a timely manner
Develop research ideas and graduate student career goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree on a scope and sequence of thesis research (thesis proposal) • Clarify expectations for multiple tasks (e.g., teaching, work/life balance) • Discuss graduate student career goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give constructive feedback on student's research ideas 	<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"> • Help students network with colleagues at other institutions • Support student participation in scientific conferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend campus seminars and events • Serve on committees • Participate in graduate student orientation and recruitment activities • Participate in scientific conferences (and find external travel funding, as needed)

Student Rights

You as a student in CFANS have the right to:

- A harassment-free work and academic environment
- Working within the number of hours appropriate for your appointed position
 - The standard 50% assistantship requires an average of 20 hours of work per week at the discretion of the faculty advisor when school is in session (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, UMN Graduate Assistant Employment Policy - policy.umn.edu/hr/gradstudentemployment and policy.umn.edu/hr/gradstudentemployment-appg).
- Timely review and return of manuscripts and thesis drafts (i.e., 30 days)
- Paid leaves (i.e. parental, holiday, sick, bereavement, military, court appearance, jury duty, voting)
 - http://policy.umn.edu/sites/policy.umn.edu/files/appendix/gradstudentemployment_appf.pdf
- Leave of absence in emergency situations
- Reasonable religious and disability accommodations
- A completed Scholarly Work Agreement, in the event of a disagreement between you and your adviser on your quality of work or academic performance
- Assistance when dealing with difficult situations, without concern for retaliation or punishment

Additional Help for Students

Use available resources if you have concerns about your academics, faculty adviser, or work environment. Do not wait to seek help. In case of an emergency, call 911 or UMN Police (612-624-2677).

- Speak to your faculty advisor first if you are comfortable doing so; address problems directly and honestly.
 - To discuss a matter confidentially, please contact the Student Conflict Resolution Center.
- When you feel it is inappropriate to contact your faculty advisor, consult your Director of Graduate Studies, Program Level Coordinator, College Coordinator, or the Student Conflict Resolution Center for assistance. Use your best judgment in deciding which course of action is right for you.
- International students should continue to consult with International Student and Scholar Services when dealing with conflicts or concerns.

Counseling and Mental Health Services:

University Counseling and Consulting Services

<http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu/>

(612) 624-3323

Boynton Mental Health Clinic

<http://www.bhs.umn.edu/east-bank-clinic/mental-health-services.htm>

(612) 624-1444

Disability Resource Center

drc@umn.edu

(612) 626-1333

Graduate Assistant Employment Services

<http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/gae>

(612) 624-8647

Graduate Student Services and Progress (GSSP) Office

<http://www.grad.umn.edu/current-students/gssp>

(612) 625-3490

International Student and Scholar Services

<http://www.isss.umn.edu/>

(612) 626-7100

Reference Guides

Keys to S.U.C.C.E.S.S. – <http://gradvising.umn.edu/success.html>

Worst Practices: Advising and Mentoring – <http://gradvising.umn.edu/worst-practices.html>

Tips for Dealing with Difficult Behavior – <http://gradvising.umn.edu/difficult-behavior.html>

Preparing for a Difficult Conversation – <http://gradvising.umn.edu/difficult-conversations.html>

Resources for RAs & Supervisors – <http://wbt.umn.edu/pdf/RAs%20and%20Research%20Faculty.pdf>

SafeU (Safe Walk & Ride Service)

Walking Escort Service

(612) 624-9255

Gopher Chauffeur

(612) 388-6911

Student Conflict Resolution Center

<http://www.sos.umn.edu/>

(612) 624-7272