

Faculty have a responsibility to mentor graduate students. Mentoring has been defined as....

I. Help guide students through degree requirements. This means:

1. Providing a clear map of program requirements from the beginning, making clear the nature of the coursework requirements and qualifying examination, and defining a timeline for their completion.
2. Providing clear guidelines for starting and finishing dissertation or thesis work, including encouraging the timely initiation of the dissertation or thesis research.
3. Providing guidance in developing a defensible research proposal and in conducting publishable research.
4. Guiding students towards writing an acceptable thesis or dissertation based upon publishable research by providing feedback in a timely manner.

II. Guiding students through thesis or dissertation research. This means:

1. Clearly evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the student's research and providing suggestions on how the research can be improved.
2. Ensuring that the research is experimentally and statistically sound and supported by a thorough analysis of published literature.
3. Encouraging an open exchange of ideas, including pursuit of the student's ideas.
4. Checking regularly on progress.
5. Critiquing written work and providing suggestions for data analysis and presentation in a timely manner.
6. Providing and discussing clear criteria for authorship of collaborative research.
7. Encouraging (and if necessary helping) the student to seek and obtain advice and feedback from other committee members and others with appropriate expertise on their research throughout the process of project planning and collection, analysis, and interpretation of data.
8. Assisting in finding sources to support dissertation research; such as, teaching assistantships, research assistantships, fellowships, etc.
9. Being aware of student's research needs and providing assistance in obtaining required resources. For example, serve as the student's advocate for necessary desk and/or laboratory space.

III. Guiding students through professional development. This means:

1. Providing guidance and serving as a role model for upholding the highest ethical standards.
2. Treating students respectfully.
3. Encouraging and critiquing oral and written presentations.
4. Encouraging participation in professional meetings of regional groups as well as of learned societies.

5. Facilitating interactions with other scholars, on campus and in the wider professional community.
6. Encouraging submission of research to peer-reviewed journals or other appropriate outlets.
7. Assistance with applications for research funding, fellowship applications, and other applications as appropriate for the respective discipline.
8. Being the student's advocate in academic and professional communities.
9. Providing career guidance, specifically assistance in preparation of CV and job interviews, and writing letters of recommendation in a timely manner.
10. Recognizing and giving value to the idea that there are a variety of career options available to the student in her/his/your field of interest and accepting that the student's choice of career options is worthy of support. For example, guiding the student to teaching opportunities when appropriate for the student's goals.

General expectations or goals for MS theses and PhD dissertations are:

1. MS thesis: description of a research problem and a report of procedures, results and conclusions of significant scientific experiments directed toward that problem that are deemed appropriate for publication in a scientific journal.
2. PhD dissertation: description of a broad research problem and report of procedures, results and conclusions of a series of at least three sets of significant scientific experiments directed toward the problem that are deemed appropriate for publication in scientific journals.

As partners in the mentoring relationship, graduate students have responsibilities. As mentees, students should:

1. Be aware of their own mentoring needs and how they change through their graduate tenure. Graduate students should discuss these changing needs with their mentors.
2. Recognize that one faculty member may not be able to satisfy all of a student's mentoring needs. Seek assistance from multiple individuals/organizations to fulfill the mentoring roles described above.
3. Recognize that their mentoring needs must respect their mentor's other responsibilities and time commitments.
4. Maintain and seek regular communication with their mentors, especially their major professor.