

Agreement between Faculty Advisor and Graduate Student in School of Natural Resources

The purpose of this document is to set forth expectations held by both the graduate advisor and the student to create an efficient and healthy working relationship. It is a set of guidelines not a contract. This is a working document that can be modified with mutual consent. These guidelines may be set at or before the time the student begins their graduate career. *Any set of guidelines should include elements from the following themes: 1) work (research) expectations, b) work-life balance, c) mentoring, d) mental health awareness, and e) conflict resolution.* For more information, please refer to SNR's student handbook (<https://snr.unl.edu/gradstudent/gradhandbook.aspx>)

1. *Work (research) expectations*

- a. Work topics: discuss tentative topics in which the student and advisor will collaborate
 - i. Discussion could include specific areas of responsibilities (e.g. field work, data gathering, data analysis, writing, etc.), authorship order & other co-authors
 - ii. Teaching: will the student be expected to teach, and if so, identify the frequency and potential courses
 - iii. How will the research projects benefit the student's career? Ex: If the student can identify a career path, how will these projects equip them with the experience needed for said career?
 - iv. Note that advisors often have contractual obligations, and major changes in research effort by the student might not be feasible.
- b. Work products: discuss what the work products will be (e.g. posters, presentations, thesis, dissertation, manuscripts, etc.), as well as how feedback and revisions will be managed (e.g., develop timeline for work products). In particular, what does the advisor envision as a thesis/dissertation: publishable manuscripts, if so, how many? Can papers be submitted during the degree program and still be included in the thesis/dissertation?
- c. Meeting times: discuss meeting frequency (as well as time & place, if possible)
 - i. Individually and/or lab meetings
- d. Funding: discuss sources and timeline of funding throughout student's career; please refer to the SNR graduate student handbook for FTE pay scales.
- e. Professional development: discuss what conferences, workshops, or training opportunities the student will attend and who will pay
- f. Timeline: discuss graduate student career timeline for major events (see at the end of this agreement). Be sure that all required courses will be taken prior to graduation date.

2. *Work-life balance*:

- a. Working times: discuss guidelines for work hours, days per week, time off, sick days, etc. You can refer to the SNR graduate student handbook for suggested work hours per FTE pay scale.
- b. Outside work commitments: if relevant, discuss commitments that either party may be involved in that may not be related to work goals but are part of that person's life (e.g. Graduate Student Associations, clubs, hobbies, etc.)

3. *Mentoring*: discuss how both parties will work together to achieve work goals whilst maintaining healthy working relationship (you can use the worksheets provided by UNL [UNL mentoring handbook](#)). You can also refer to the Mentor Map resource from the 'National Center of Faculty Development and Diversity ([mentoring map](#))

- a. Advisors: What commitments will you make to mentor and support your graduate student in their training, research, and professional goals? (see examples below, adapted from Brown University guidelines)
 - i. Provide a professional environment that is intellectually stimulating, and free of harassment.
 - ii. Provide constructive comments on writing and oral presentations, discuss ethics in research, help student write grant proposals.
 - b. Graduate Students: What commitments will you make to complete your research and degree? (see examples below, adapted from Brown University guidelines)
 - i. Demonstrate efforts in classroom and/or research settings. Ex: pass classes with satisfactory grades, work with advisor to select an advisory committee, be aware of the policies and requirements of the graduate program, etc.
 - ii. Work with advisor to develop a research topic, communicate updates, as well as establish and maintain a timeline for each phase of my work goals
4. *Mental health awareness*: make both parties aware of university resources that are available in the event of mental health matters.
- a. Resources: [UNL mental health resources](#)
5. End of year meeting: The advisor and student should meet, if necessary, to address specific issues raised in the graduate student annual report.
6. *Conflict resolution*: make both parties aware of resources available to handle disagreements that cannot be resolved between advisor and student.
- a. UNL SNR Ombudsman: Dr. Patricia Freeman

Sample Milestone Timeline

Academic Milestones	Year 1			Year 2			Year 3			Year 4	Year 5	Additional Years
	F	W	S/S	F	W	S/S	F	W	S/S			
Milestones:												
<i>Qualifying Exam</i>												
<i>Preliminary Exam</i>												
<i>Candidate Exam</i>												
<i>Dissert. Comm. Mtg.</i>												
<i>Dissertation Defense</i>												
Other Milestones:												

Resources

- General
 - <https://www.brown.edu/academics/gradschool/academics-research/graduate-advising-and-mentoring/advising-and-mentoring-resources-faculty>
 - <https://www.unl.edu/mentoring/faculty-encourage-departments-strengthen-mentoring>
 - <https://www.unl.edu/mentoring/introduction>
- Work expectations

- Work-life balance
 - <https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/gradhacker/achieving-work-life-balance>
 - <https://www.nature.com/articles/nbt.4089.pdf?origin=ppub>
 - <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/ss.214>
- Mental Health
 - <https://scholar.harvard.edu/bolotnyy/publications/graduate-student-mental-health-lessons-american-economics-departments>
 - <https://naspa.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.2202/1949-6605.1310#.XebyrehKg2w>
 - <https://www.nature.com/articles/nbt.4089>
- Mentoring
 - <https://celt.uwindsor.ca/index.php/CELT/article/view/4440>
 - <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11162-015-9403-x>
 - <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.3102/0002831214549449>
 - <http://ijds.org/Volume13/IJDSv13p361-388Sverdlik4134.pdf>
 - <https://link-springer-com.libproxy.unl.edu/book/10.1007%2F978-3-319-39217-2>
 - https://link-springer-com.libproxy.unl.edu/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-39217-2_4
 - Pp. 58:
<https://provost.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/Committee%20on%20Graduate%20Education%20Report.pdf>
- Conflict resolution
 - <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10755-010-9142-z>
 - <https://www.northeastern.edu/graduate/blog/how-to-resolve-employee-manager-conflict/>