

Introduction

The Graduate Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities is an aspirational document drafted to serve as an agreeable set of standards to shape a standardized expectation of what the Purdue graduate student experience should be. This document is not enforceable university policy, but it demonstrates a commitment of students, faculty, and administration to a set of fundamental norms to promote the most positive graduate education culture and mutual success for everyone at Purdue. It shall inform all Purdue graduate students, irrespective of their roles as students, graduate staff, or fellows, to ensure that their time at Purdue is both enjoyable and efficacious, seeking to foster graduate student engagement with the principles of academic freedom, equal opportunity, inclusion and diversity, discovery and research, teaching, learning, and shared governance.

I. Purdue Graduate Student Rights

Article 1. Equal Educational Opportunity for Graduate Students

1. Graduate students have a right to be informed of the rights described in this document upon enrollment and to be free of reprisals for exercising them.
2. Graduate students have the right to clear and specific written requirements for achieving an advanced degree upon admission into their graduate program including, but not limited to, course work, examinations, publication, and conference attendance. Information regarding time-to-degree, availability and administration of graduate assistant salary, and faculty placement options should also be accessible.
3. Graduate students have the right to reasonable and appropriate resources to successfully fulfill their research and academic obligations, acknowledging that the dynamic nature of research and availability of resources may sometimes require adaptation to alternative research approaches.
4. Graduate students have a right to respectful mentoring and advising relationships with faculty and all members of their graduate committee and to evaluation by their committee in accordance with fair procedures in matters of continuation within their program, based solely on the individual graduate student's academic and professional performance.
5. Graduate students have a right and should be encouraged to pursue academic and professional training that is relevant to their personal career path and that will make them competitive for their career goals after the completion of their program.
6. Graduate students have a right to access wellness resources, including programs for mental and physical well-being, to optimize their academic achievement and their contribution to the university overall.
7. Graduate students have the right to a clearly defined grievance procedure detailed within their graduate program's manual and to seek resolution without retaliation.

Article 2. Supportive and Constructive Workplace Environment for Graduate Staff

1. Graduate staff working as administrative, professional, research, and/or teaching assistants have

the right to clear and specific written job descriptions, responsibilities, and benefits (such as vacation and sick leave) that come with their appointment. This notification should occur prior to the start of employment, and staff members should be immediately informed in writing of changes.

2. Graduate staff members should understand the impact of their earnings on eligibility for student loans and salaries. Relevant university, college, department and/or graduate program resources, including human resources and business office staff, should be responsive to graduate student inquiries about their working conditions.
3. Graduate staff have a right to structured and specific training to ensure that they can meet the expectation of their appointment.
4. Graduate staff have the right to a competitive salary relative to their colleagues in comparable departments in peer institutions, standardized to cost of living for an individual who is renting housing in the Greater Lafayette area. Graduate salary levels should be evaluated on a triennial basis by colleges and departments. The process and rationale for outcomes of evaluations should be made available to the pertinent graduate staff members.
5. Graduate staff have a right to an accurate written description of the availability, sources, and conditions for the continuity of financial and resource support for a graduate staff appointment, and immediate notice of any changes impacting continued support. If the conditions for employment change, contract obligations by both parties should meet all obligations. Only if the graduate staff leaves the position prior to the Graduate Staff Employment Manual minimums, should any obligation of tuition repayment beyond the graduate staff fee be executed.
6. Graduate staff with a benefit eligible appointment have a right to graduate staff leave and benefits, as defined by Human Resources, and to participate in the process for assessing benefit coverages, plans, and rates.
7. Graduate staff have the right to a clearly defined workplace grievance procedure detailed within their department's graduate program manual and to seek resolution without retaliation.

Article 3. Mentoring, Advising, and Performance Feedback

1. Graduate students have a right to request consultation on all aspects of their progress within their degree program. Graduate students should receive regular and constructive feedback and guidance concerning their performance on a mutually agreeable schedule from all members of their graduate committee. Requests for meetings by either party should be met in a timely fashion, and feedback should be provided in writing when requested.
2. Graduate students have the right to change their major professor(s) and the right to alternative supervision; however, this right should be exercised judiciously and with respect to the investments a faculty member makes when accepting a student. In cases where the student's major professor departs from the university after the student's coursework has begun, the graduate student should be informed of all options available to continue studying. If a graduate program is to be discontinued, provisions shall be made for students already in the program to complete their course of study.

3. Graduate students have a right to prompt notification of any concern of their major professor, graduate committee, department, or the university related to their performance that may jeopardize their continued participation in their graduate program. Graduate students have the right to receive a fair opportunity to improve performance and address deficiencies subject to a reasonable, mutually agreed upon set of guidelines and timetable.

4. Graduate students have a right to question and refuse tasks that would impede progress in completing their program or that are not immediately related to their academic or professional development, unless these tasks are explicitly established within the requirements of their program or a staff appointment.

5. Graduate students have a right to full confidentiality in their communication with staff, faculty, and administrators, unless superseded by Title IX, FERPA, or other state or federal law.

Article 4. Research Contribution and Authorship

Graduate students have a right to fair treatment and attribution, including authorship, for significant contribution to ideas and work performed on faculty- or university-sponsored research. The norms and standards within the respective discipline or the implication of interdisciplinary research to authorship should be explicitly explained by the primary investigator and agreed upon by all participating researchers. Individual rights and responsibilities on research projects should be discussed as early as possible and communicated throughout the duration of the project, acknowledging that the dynamic nature of research may dictate transition of responsibilities or authorship positions once a project has been started.

Article 5. Participation in Governance

1. Graduate students have the right to consultation in the decision-making process of all departments and graduate programs when graduate students may be affected.

2. Graduate students have the right to representation in all university committees where graduate students may be affected, with voting privileges when appropriate and without fear of retaliation for exercising this right. Selection of graduate students to serve on university committees should be made in consultation with the Purdue Graduate Student Government.

II. Purdue Graduate Student Responsibilities

Article 1. Graduate Student Engagement with the University

1. Graduate students are responsible for understanding and carrying out the responsibilities that are described in this document and the implications to their time spent at the university.

2. Graduate students are responsible for fostering their own success. They should be diligent in carrying out their duties in a conscientious and timely manner and do their best to ensure stability for other students, faculty, programs, and departments with whom and wherein they work.

3. Graduate students are responsible for maintaining active and professional communication with their major professor. They should inform their major professor immediately of special circumstances that

may preclude completion of their work. These circumstances could include, but are not limited to, the unique nature of the research, dire financial situations, civic obligations, family obligations, and religious obligations.

4. Graduate students are responsible for attending class and completing all assignments in accordance with the expectations established by their instructors and the academic requirements of their graduate programs.

5. Graduate students are responsible for taking the initiative in seeking information that promote their understanding of the academic requirements and the financial particulars of their graduate program and to be receptive of information and updates provided to them through multiple forms of communication, including Purdue e-mail.

6. Graduate students are responsible for informing the university of changes in address, phone number, enrollment status, or any other circumstance which could affect satisfactory progress in their program or financial aid and assistantship awards.

7. Graduate students are responsible for providing service to and actively participate in the governance of their program, their department, school or college, and the university community, and they should endeavor to contribute to the administration and ongoing improvement of their graduate program, the graduate student government, and the university.

Article 2. Purdue Graduate Staff Responsibilities

1. Graduate staff should recognize that a graduate staff appointment represents an obligatory average weekly time commitment to duties that may be uncoupled from their academic responsibilities. They are responsible for maintaining regular and open communication with their employer, to ensure mutual understanding of the expectations of their appointment, and to perform their duties as outlined and in accordance with institutional guidelines and policies.

2. Graduate staff with teaching appointments are responsible for upholding the highest level of academic integrity, professionalism, and diligence in their teaching practices.

3. Graduate staff with research appointments are responsible for upholding the highest levels of research integrity, consistent with the responsible conduct of research.

4. Graduate staff are responsible to understand their role and due diligence in fostering professional relationships with their advisors and university personnel.

III. Amendments to the Graduate Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities

Any amendments to the Graduate Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities should seek endorsement from the Purdue Graduate Student Senate, the Graduate Council, and the University Senate.

Guidelines for Graduate Student Mentoring and Advising

Preamble: Purdue University is committed to providing its graduate students with a world-class education and equipping them to become leaders in society and in the global workforce. Key to success is the relationship between the student and major professor. The advisory role of the major professor is arguably the most significant factor influencing quality of education, development of professional skills, and overall career success for Purdue graduate students. Consequently, it is imperative that graduate faculty members provide mentoring and advising concomitant with a preeminent university. The principles articulated in this document were endorsed by the Graduate Faculty via approval by the Graduate Council to help assure that every graduate student receives the best educational experience Purdue has to offer.

General Advising Guidelines

Serving as a major professor involves being supportive and engaged in promoting academic and career success for Purdue graduate students.

1. Although the Graduate School offers orientation programming for new students and departments and colleges typically also provide orientation sessions, most students are not fully aware of academic expectations, the best ways to navigate their graduate program, and the employment opportunities available to them when they graduate. Major professors should:
 - a) work with their students to develop an academic plan (to include periodic milestones along the way) that will help them progress through their degree program in a timely manner and properly prepare them for success after graduation;
 - b) encourage participation in professional development activities, relevant to their students' professional goals;
 - c) assist their students in assembling their advisory and examining committees; and
 - d) discuss with their students long-term career objectives and provide guidance in securing summer internships (when appropriate) and permanent job placement. This assistance may include introductions to colleagues in industry, government, or at other universities, and/or referrals to resources on campus, such as the Center for Career Opportunities.
2. On occasion, major professors may have to change the nature of their advisory relationship with their student. This can occur when professors retire or move to another university, or when students change major professors. In such cases, major professors should do all that is possible to ensure that their students have a pathway to completion and assist their students during the transition.
3. Research style and organization can vary widely among faculty. Students are often not aware of what is expected and how progress is measured. Major professors should make their expectations for research and their view of what constitutes satisfactory progress clear. Furthermore, at the onset of thesis/dissertation research, students should be given a clear picture of the accomplishments expected for degree completion.
4. An important part of developing as a scholar and successfully progressing through a degree program involves receiving feedback. Major professors should provide progress reviews to their students at least annually and should be accessible so that students can receive input when needed.

Guidelines for Supervising Graduate Staff

Graduate faculty oversee research, but in many cases they also supervise graduate teaching assistants, graduate research assistants, and other graduate staff. In these cases, faculty members have additional responsibilities.

1. Faculty supervisors should be familiar with department, college, Graduate School, and university policies regarding graduate staff employment and should refer students to the appropriate sources for employment information, such as the *Graduate Staff Employment Manual*, department resources (if available), and the Office of Human Resources.
2. Faculty should provide graduate staff working as research, administrative, and/or teaching assistants clear expectations of the roles, responsibilities, and professional benefits that come with that employment, and the associated time commitments should be consistent with university policy. For example, students on 50 CUL and 25 CUL appointments are expected to work approximately 20 and 10 hours per week respectively.
3. A common source of stress among graduate students is the uncertainty associated with funding. Loss of funding or gaps in funding can result in student attrition. Major professors should discuss the funding situation with their students, keep the students apprised of any anticipated changes as soon as this information becomes known, and discuss contingency options in the event funding becomes unavailable. Where possible, the academic unit should ensure continuity of funding, except in cases of poor academic or work performance.
4. Faculty members, departments, and colleges should regularly review graduate student salary levels to assure that they are appropriate.

Guiding Principles

A good student-advisor relationship is an important ingredient in helping students to be productive in their research and requires establishing reasonable expectations. While it is difficult to define “reasonable expectations” in a broad sense, the following principles and practices can be helpful in achieving a positive climate for discovery in which graduate students can thrive.

1. Major professors should take care in not overburdening their graduate students: there should be realistic expectations, recognizing that students have the right to a personal and social life outside of work and time off, periodically, to rest and relax. Major professors should avoid working conditions that preclude their students from having a manageable work-life balance, as this is not in the best interest of Purdue’s graduate students.
2. The best major professors are understanding, supportive, and empowering, providing enough guidance to allow students to explore and discover without over directing or micromanaging. Students should be encouraged by their major professors to interact with their advisory and examining committees, as these committee members can provide multiple perspectives that can be beneficial. They should also encourage other types of mentoring relationships where appropriate.
3. The best major professors put their students first amid competing priorities.
4. Students should be given opportunities to attend and participate in professional development activities as these are important to prepare them for the competitive job market.
5. Projects in which faculty members involve students should be appropriate and consistent with providing a valuable educational work or research experience.