

Texas A&M University

Compact Between Graduate Students and Their Supervising Faculty

PREAMBLE

Graduate training entails formal education in scholarly and creative works, as well as research and/or other professional training under the supervision of one or more faculty who are qualified to fulfill the responsibilities of a mentor. A positive mentoring relationship between the graduate student and the supervising faculty is a vital component of the student's preparation for a successful career. This purpose of this compact is to help facilitate such a relationship.

Individuals who pursue graduate degrees are expected to take responsibility for their own intellectual and professional development. Faculty who advise students are expected to fulfill the responsibilities of a mentor, including the provision of training, guidance, and instruction in the development of creative and innovative works and/or responsible conduct of research. The goal is to maintain and enhance an environment conducive to excellence in scholarship and/or scientific inquiry.

This compact offers the opportunity to discuss guiding principles intended to promote and support the development of a positive mentoring relationship between the graduate student and the graduate student's supervising faculty. This compact should supplement degree plans and other forms required by the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies as well as program-specific plans provided by the student's graduate program for the purpose of informing students about the milestones that they are expected to reach to earn an advanced degree.

We recommend that early in their academic career (e.g., within a month of formally selecting a supervising faculty or upon submission of their degree plan) students should discuss with their supervising faculty the topics listed on the following pages that are most relevant to them. Faculty and students typically find it helpful to document in writing the responsibilities and expectations that were discussed.

With their signature, the supervising faculty and the student acknowledge that they have discussed the relevant topics and identified mutually agreed upon expectations and responsibilities. It is recommended that the compact be placed in the student's file held in the department's office.

It is understood that various aspects of the student's pursuit of their degree can change over time and therefore the compact should be reviewed regularly (e.g., once a year) and modified as needed.

DEFINING STUDENT AND SUPERVISING FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

The following are a list of topics the graduate student and the graduate student's supervising faculty should consider discussing. For convenience, a fillable form with instructions is available at <http://ogaps.tamu.edu>.

1. **Frequency and Methods of Communication between Supervising Faculty and Student** (How often will student and mentor meet? How should updates or changes in expectations and issues be communicated?)
2. **Research and Training of the Student** (What is the student's project? Are there specific people who will oversee training other than the supervising faculty and to what degree will the student assist with other projects in the lab or working group? To what degree are students encouraged (or discouraged) from engaging in projects in other labs or working groups?)
3. **Professional Development** (What constitutes professional development? What activities should students plan to engage in to enhance the quality of their graduate education?)
4. **Common Laboratory or Working Group Responsibilities** (Which tasks and duties are shared among all lab or working group members, including the student?)
5. **Notebooks, Data, Media** (What is the policy of the laboratory or working group related to the storage and sharing of data, notebooks, media, or other information relevant to ongoing or completed projects?)
6. **Work Hours/Attendance on Site** (How many hours per week is the student expected to work on projects in collaboration with the students supervising faculty? How many hours per week is the student expected to work at an onsite location, such as laboratory, studio, or clinic?)
7. **Authorship and Contributor Policies** (What is the policy that constitutes authorship on a project on which the student contributed? How is the order of authors determined in a manuscript or abstract? In what other ways, besides authorship, might the student's contribution be acknowledged?)
8. **Manuscripts or other scholarly/creative works expected for Graduation** (Are there specific expectations for the number of manuscripts or other works (published, submitted and/or in preparation), and the student's authorship position on these manuscripts or other works, required for the student to graduate?)
9. **Intellectual Policy and Copyright Issues: Disclosure, Patent Rights and Publishing Research Discoveries** (What is the policy for claims on intellectual property and patents that come out of the student's work? How is the outlet or vehicle for publication of the student's work decided?)

10. **Selection of a Thesis/Dissertation Committee** (What is the process for determining the subject of the thesis/dissertation and the composition of the thesis/dissertation committee?)
11. **Attendance of Professional Meetings** (Under which conditions can or should a student travel to a Regional, National, or International meetings? For example, only if the student is presenting? Who covers the cost and what will be covered?)
12. **Career Development / Job Search and Placement** (What is the career choice of the student? What arrangements can be made to allow the student to participate in courses, workshops, etc. for their particular interests without compromising their research or scholarly training? What is the process in the student's field for job search and placement?)
13. **Time off for Illness, University Holidays, and Vacation.** (What is the policy for vacations, holidays, and personal days?)
14. **Funding and Financial Support** (Is the student financially supported and by what mechanism (GAR, GAT, GANT)? Is the student expected to support herself or himself? Will the student be provided with resources to complete research or scholarly work?)
15. **Graduate Training Milestones** (What are the milestones that the student should plan to reach? How will these milestones be met?)
16. **Conflict Resolution and Student Complaint Policies** (How will conflicts be resolved and what processes are preferred? Student-supervisor discussions or discussions that include other parties (e.g., committee members, department graduate advisor, department head). Use of university ombuds services?).
17. **Additional Topics not listed here.**

By our signature we acknowledge that we have discussed the topics above that are most relevant and that we have identified mutually agreed upon expectations and responsibilities. We acknowledge our joint intention to re-evaluate this compact regularly (e.g., once a year) and modify as needed throughout the student's period of academic standing.

Student's Name

Signature of Student

Date

Supervising Professor's Name

Signature of Supervising Professor

Date

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Copyright and Intellectual property

Intellectual Property, Texas A&M System Policy 17.01
<http://otc.tamu.edu/ForInventors/IntellectualPropertyRights>

Copyright Guide, Texas A&M University Libraries
<http://guides.library.tamu.edu/copyright>

United States Copyright Office
<http://www.copyright.gov/>

United States Patent and Trademark Office
<http://www.uspto.gov/trademark>

"Graduate Students' Ownership and Attribution Right in Intellectual Property", Indiana Law Journal
<http://www.repository.law.indiana.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1765&context=ilj>

Ombuds Officer and Graduate Appeals Process

Ombuds Officer for graduate students, TAMU
<http://ogapstest.tamu.edu/New-Current-Students/Ombudsperson>

Graduate Appeals Process, TAMU
<http://ogaps.tamu.edu/New-Current-Students/Graduate-Appeals-Panel-Process>

TAMU Academic Calendar
<http://registrar.tamu.edu/general/calendar.aspx>

Examples of Professional, Discipline-specific Guidelines for Authorship
American Psychological Association: <http://www.apa.org/research/responsible/publication/>

TAMU Graduate Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities
http://www.gpsctamu.org/uploads/4/0/2/1/40216525/2014-09-16_bill_of_rights_and_responsibilities.pdf

This compact is adapted from the AAMC's Compact Between Biomedical Graduate Students and Their Research Advisors (December 2008) and the UT System Health Institutions Compact Between Graduate Students and Their Research Advisors.