

Expectations of PhD Students

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This document is intended to give prospective graduate students in Developmental Science an overview of my general expectations of my students and of myself as an advisor.

Mentoring students is my favorite part of being a professor! I had excellent role models when I was a graduate student and post-doc and believe the mentoring relationship is crucial for student success.

Expectations for Graduate Advising

I aim to be autonomy-supportive in my advising style. This means that I am committed to helping students become independent scholars through scaffolding their ideas. I value students' perspectives, offer choices, provide encouragement and support, pave the way for their success, and generally want to help them become highly competent in their area of expertise and feel confident in presenting their ideas in writing, teaching, and public speaking.

Students can expect me to:

- Meet individually every other week (or more often as needed)
- Communicate honestly and respectfully
- Cultivate a lab-wide commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Care deeply about the whole person and work/life balance
- Provide a supportive and productive lab environment where students have access to the equipment, research assistance, and scientific consultation need to complete their work
- Help them learn experimental design until it becomes a “reflex”
- Help them develop their own research ideas, encouraging increasing independence
- Jointly establish deadlines for a “pipeline” of research productivity
- Help them think through statistical approaches and find resources on campus and beyond for advanced courses
- Provide critical and constructive feedback on their work in a timely manner
- Offer professional development advice at each stage
- Strive to provide funding support through my own grants or helping students prepare fellowship and grant applications, including research funds and travel to scientific meetings
- Help them navigate departmental and university requirements, such as progress through candidacy and selection of committee members
- Discuss authorship early in the research process, while acknowledging changing circumstances
- Advocate for them by writing letters of recommendation and introducing them to colleagues and the larger science and industry networks
- Support *their* dreams for themselves, including non-academic careers.

Expectations of Graduate Students

Embarking on a PhD program is a serious commitment, calling for intense dedication, long hours, and resilience in the face of the inevitable dead ends and rejections that come with being a scientist. But it is also likely to mark one of the most exhilarating and fulfilling times of your life, where you can carve out time to learn new skills, read broadly, think deeply, meet lifelong friends, and best of all, begin to have a positive impact on the lives of young people through scientific discovery.

I expect my students to:

- Attend and contribute to weekly lab meetings, which could include leading an article discussion, presenting preliminary results, giving practice talks, trying out a new method
- Spend a minimum of 20 hours/week on research
- Discuss any potential additional work commitments with me beforehand
- Have an agenda prepared for individual meetings with me and keep a log of what was discussed and decisions that were made
- Develop their own ideas; I have a strong record of supporting students who became experts on topics related to but separate from mine
- Work with increasing independence as they complete their degree within the recommended period of time (2 years for a MS, 3 additional years for a PhD)
- Apply for their own internal institutional funding (e.g., Small Grants, Dissertation Fellowship) and external funding (e.g., NSF Graduate Research Fellowship, Ford Fellowship)
- Communicate openly and regularly with me (before small problems become big ones)
- Exhibit a collaborative service mindset about their contributions to the lab and department, as well as to the broader community and society as a whole
- Maintain good organization of personal and general lab files
- Review and abide by all lab procedures and ethical requirements including intellectual property and guidelines for working with human subjects
- Acquire a broad knowledge of the philosophy, history, and current state of the field
- Become skilled in techniques used in research, including field, laboratory, statistical, and computer methods
- Learn to think, write, and speak clearly and effectively
- Submit their best work for publication in a timely fashion; 2-3 publications prior to the dissertation
- Become an effective classroom teacher and mentor to undergraduate research assistants.