

UC Davis Graduate Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities

Preamble:

Graduate student rights and responsibilities rest on their roles as junior colleagues who are critical to the university's mission of teaching and research. All members of the university community are responsible for securing and respecting the general conditions conducive to a graduate student's unique role as student, researcher, and teacher. This document is a revised and updated version of the 1990 UC Davis Graduate Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities, produced by the UC Davis Graduate Student Association, and endorsed in principle by the Graduate Council and Graduate Division of the UC Davis campus on November 7, 1990.

Graduate students have the following rights:

1. Graduate students have the right to information about specific and concrete degree requirements as approved by the Graduate Council. These requirements shall be communicated clearly upon entrance to the graduate program. No graduate student shall be held to program requirements instituted after their initial acceptance, unless the student so chooses.¹

Prospective and current graduate students have the right to know the "normative time to degree" and the "average time to degree" within a specific graduate program; a program's student attrition rate and, if available, the predominant reasons for lack of program completion; and a program's placement record.

2. Graduate students have the right to an accurate description of the availability and the likelihood of financial and resource support within their programs. Programs shall provide a thorough description of the requirements, qualifications, and applicable deadlines necessary for academic employment,² training or financial support at the university.

Assignments of office or lab space, or any necessary materials for teaching and research, should consider the need for adequate graduate student space and resources.³

3. Graduate students have the right to receive objective evaluations of progress based on criteria that are understood by the Graduate Adviser and the student. Evaluations shall be factual, specific, and shared with the student within a reasonable period of time. Annual progress reports and reports of split decisions on oral examinations should be in writing. Graduate students should be given a fair opportunity to correct or remedy deficiencies in their academic performance, and the reasons for unsatisfactory performance on programmatic examinations shall be stated clearly to the student in a written evaluation.⁴ Any intent to disqualify a student from a graduate program for academic reasons must be preceded by specific, written performance information, well in advance of actual disqualification. Only the Dean of Graduate Studies can disqualify a student from a graduate program for academic reasons.⁵

When presented with the opportunity to evaluate their professors, graduate students have the right to do so without fear of retribution and with the assurance of confidentiality.

Graduate students have the right to accurate information in selecting a major professor and in recommending other members of their committees. Graduate students have the right to change their major professors if necessary. If a graduate student's major professor departs from

the institution once the student's work is under way, the program shall strive to provide the student with alternative supervision, external to the institution if necessary. If a degree program is to be discontinued, provisions shall be made for students already in the program to complete their course of study.

4. Graduate students have the right to expect reasonable training opportunities, and have the right to refuse to perform tasks if those tasks are not closely related to their academic or professional development. The student's lesser status, authority and/or experience should not be exploited to the personal advantage of a faculty member.⁶

Graduate students have the right to accurate and timely information pertaining to the conditions of their employment at the university, including vacation and sick time, work-study policies, and the impact of their wages on eligibility for student loans and stipends.⁷

The university should strive to provide training and/or direct teaching experience appropriate for each student's career focus. Graduate students have a right to explore professional development opportunities for a range of academic and non-academic careers, not limited to research positions, and to expect access to accurate information about the job market and placement assistance.⁸

5. Graduate students have the right to co-authorship in publications involving significant contributions of ideas or research work from the student. Where applicable, students shall receive "senior authorship" for publications composed primarily of their creative research and writing. As early as possible, faculty and graduate students shall agree upon authorship positions commensurate with levels of contributions to the work.⁹ Ideas derived from seminar discussion or lab meetings should be treated as shared intellectual property between the faculty, postdoctoral scholars and students involved. Graduate students have the right to work with faculty mentors to develop original research and work toward independent scholarship.

If the graduate program does not have a formal policy establishing an expectation of single-authorship, then the thesis/dissertation may include co-authored, collaborative work, provided the student's capstone committee approves and the acknowledgements or introductory portion of the work clearly indicates the detailed role and contributions of the student in co-authored work.¹⁰

6. Graduate students have the right to expect that graduate programs incorporate student representatives into decision-making processes.¹¹ This provides for increased communication of student ideas and concerns, as well as evidence that graduate students are "in training" as future academicians. Graduate students have the right to raise concerns with the program administration and to be given reasonable policy explanations without fear of unprofessional response. If a satisfactory explanation is not given, the student has a right to raise the concern at the level of the Dean of Graduate Studies.

7. Graduate students have the right of freedom from discrimination and sexual harassment and violence. The University of California is committed to creating and maintaining a community where all individuals who participate in University programs and activities can work and learn together in an atmosphere free of harassment, exploitation, or intimidation.

Discrimination is defined as an illegal or prohibited adverse educational action or harassment based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, pregnancy (includes pregnancy, childbirth, and medical conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth), physical or mental disability, medical condition (cancer related or genetic characteristics), ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, or service in the uniformed services (includes membership, application for membership, performance of service, application for service, or obligation for service in the uniformed services).¹²

The University also prohibits sexual harassment and sexual violence. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, when submission to or rejection of this conduct affects a person's employment or education, unreasonably interferes with a person's work or educational performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or learning environment. Sexual harassment includes sexual violence. Sexual violence includes sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking.¹³

Graduate students have the right to "be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled."¹⁴ Graduate students have the right to be free of reprisals for exercising their rights.

8. Graduate students have the right to reasonable confidentiality in their communications with faculty and staff.¹⁵ The performance of a graduate student shall not be discussed with other students by professors or staff. Discussion of the student's performance among faculty shall be of a professional nature, being limited to academic performance. The substance of the communication shall be based on a need to know relevant information.

In accordance with the Federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), graduate students have the right to review their academic records and files, to know which authorized personnel have access to their file, and to seek amendments to their files.¹⁶

9. Graduate students have the right to appeal for cause any decision affecting their academic standing, to file complaints against the graduate program or members thereof, and to petition for redress of grievances. Where a graduate student presents reasonable evidence regarding misconduct by a faculty member or probable cause that such misconduct took place, the program shall attempt to provide a way by which the student can avoid working directly with the accused faculty member. Graduate students have a right to file grievances outside the university structure with an appropriate regional association.¹⁷

10. Graduate students have the right to form clubs and organizations within their programs, colleges, ethnicities, shared interests, or any other constituencies, for the purposes of academic, professional, or social networking, sharing, and advocacy. Graduate student employees have the right to join a collective bargaining unit that has been authorized to represent them.

Graduate students are responsible for the following:

1. Graduate students have a responsibility to conduct themselves, in all educational activities, in a manner befitting a junior colleague. Graduate students' behavior should be a credit to themselves, the higher academic unit and the university. They have the responsibility to

respect and uphold all relevant university policies regarding professional conduct, including but not limited to the Code of Academic Conduct and the University Policy on Nondiscrimination, Sexual Harassment and Student Records and Privacy. Graduate students have the responsibility to uphold and respect all of the aforementioned rights for fellow graduate students.

Graduate students have a responsibility to provide accurate and honest reporting of research results and to uphold ethical norms in research methodology and scholarship.

Graduate students are responsible for informing the university of changes in address, phone number, and enrollment status which might affect financial aid or assistantship awards, and/or any other circumstances which could affect satisfactory progress towards a degree.

2. Graduate students have a responsibility to fulfill their teaching and/or research obligations to the best of their knowledge, training and ability. Graduate student employees should carry out their job responsibilities in a conscientious and timely manner. They have the responsibility to inform the university of any changes or circumstances that would prevent them from carrying out these obligations, and to do their best to ensure stability for faculty, programs and departments. Graduate student employees have a responsibility to seek accurate information about the conditions of their employment contract, including vacation and sick time, work-study policies, and the impact of their wages on eligibility for student loans and stipends.

Graduate students holding Graduate Student Researcher (GSR) positions have a responsibility to maintain regular communication with their employer, to maintain integrity in their research activities and to perform their research duties as outlined and in accordance with institutional guidelines and policies. They have a responsibility to report any questionable or unethical research procedures.

Graduate students holding Teaching Assistant (TA) or Associate In ___ (AI) positions have a responsibility to maintain regular communication with the Instructor of Record. TAs and AIs have a responsibility to uphold the highest level of academic integrity in their teaching practices. This includes maintaining student confidentiality, avoiding any exploitation of student vulnerability, and avoiding personal relationships with students. TAs and AIs have a responsibility to foster academic integrity in their students, including timely and accurate reporting of any academic misconduct, and serving as mentors to undergraduates when possible and appropriate.¹⁸

3. Graduate students have a responsibility to participate in the campus community to the extent that each is able, and to enrich the campus in whatever ways possible. This may include contributing to the academic development and the social and intellectual environment of their particular program or involvement in decision-making and policy creation relative to graduate student issues at the program and campus-wide levels.

Graduate students have a responsibility to uphold the public service aspects of the mission of a public university, at a level appropriate to their ability and graduate program. They have the responsibility to provide high quality and ethical teaching to undergraduate students, and to provide valuable research and support to the faculty and other graduate students.

4. Graduate students are responsible for devoting an appropriate amount of time and energy toward achieving the advanced degree within normative time, except when special circumstances apply. They are responsible for attending class and completing all assignments in accordance with the expectations established by their instructors and programs of study.¹⁹

Graduate students have a responsibility to take the initiative in asking questions that promote their understanding of the academic requirements and the financial particulars of their specific graduate program. They have a responsibility to take the initiative in accessing any necessary resources for mental and physical well-being, to optimize their academic achievement and their contribution to the university overall.²⁰

5. Graduate students have a responsibility to understand their role in the development of the professional relationship between faculty mentor and graduate student, including having an awareness of time constraints and other demands imposed on faculty members and program staff. Graduate students should recognize that one faculty member may not be able to fulfill all of a student's mentoring needs, and have the responsibility to seek assistance from multiple individuals and organizations as needed. Furthermore, graduate students are responsible for communicating regularly with faculty mentors and advisers, especially in matters related to research and progress within the graduate program and/or for maintaining a mutually agreeable schedule of evaluative/supervisory conferences with Major Professors and Graduate Advisers.²¹

¹ [UC Davis Graduate Council Policy on Degree Requirements GC2005-04 \(rev.5\)](#)

² [APM UCD Appendix II-B, Appointment of Graduate Students to Academic Positions](#) and [Graduate Studies Adviser's Handbook, Student Financial Support](#)

³ [UC Davis Policy and Procedure Manual 360-21](#)

⁴ [Graduate Studies Adviser's Handbook, Standards of Scholarship](#)

⁵ [Graduate Studies Policy on Disqualification and Appeal GS2005-01](#)

⁶ [Faculty Code of Conduct, Academic Personnel Manual, University of California Davis, Section APM-015](#)

⁷ [Appointment of Graduate Students to Academic Positions, Academic Personnel Manual, University of California Davis, Section APM- Appendix II-B](#)

⁸ [Graduate Council Mentoring Guidelines](#)

⁹ [Graduate Studies Adviser's Handbook, Graduate Council Guidelines for Authorship](#)

¹⁰ [UC Davis Graduate Council Policy on Co-authorship GC2015-01](#)

¹¹ [UC Davis Graduate Council Policy on Bylaws for Graduate Groups GC2011-02](#)

Also see the [Graduate Student Guide for advocacy resources on campus](#)

¹² [UC Davis Policy and Procedure Manual, Student Complaints of Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment, or Arbitrary Treatment 280-05](#)

¹³ [UC Davis Policy and Procedure Manual, Sexual Harassment 400-20](#)

¹⁴ [American Association of University Professors, "Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students,"](#)

¹⁵ [Faculty Code of Conduct, Academic Personnel Manual, University of California Davis, Section APM-015](#)

¹⁶ [UC Davis Policy and Procedure Manual, 320-21](#)

¹⁷ [UC Davis Policy and Procedure Manual, 280-05](#)

¹⁸ [UC Davis Student Judicial Affairs Code of Academic Conduct](#)

¹⁹ [Graduate Council Policy on Time to Degree GC2000-01](#)

²⁰ [Graduate Student Guide, see Campus Resources](#)

²¹ [Graduate Council Mentoring Guidelines](#)