If Things Do Not Work Out

When all members of a program take responsibility for the success of graduate students, minor difficulties should not grow into major ones. When problems do arise, the best hope for a solution lies in the honest and open discussion of the issue.

The first task is to discover where the difficulties lie.

Is either party making unreasonable demands?

Is someone neglecting his or her obligations?

What reasonable solutions are there for the situation?

Whenever appropriate and possible, a meeting among the concerned parties should be arranged to try to resolve the difficulties. This may entail a meeting between a student and a faculty member, a student and his or her thesis committee, a student and the departmental safety officer, a program director and a faculty member, etc. Sometimes it may be most effective for all members of the graduate program to get together to air problems and try to come up with a solution.

Those problems that are not resolvable within the program should be brought to the attention of the Office of the Dean, School of Graduate Studies (848-932-7747). For students who are not in Ph.D. programs, the dean of the faculty unit that grants the professional degree should be contacted. Discussing the situation with a dean may help to identify the most promising options for solving the problem. When appropriate, the dean can also take action to help resolve the problem. Inquiries will be treated in a confidential manner, unless a formal complaint is filed.

Harassment and Safety Offices

If you believe that you may be the victim of harassment, are accused of harassment, or have questions about harassment, contact the Office of Employment Equity at 848-932-3973. If you have concerns about the safety of the laboratory in which you are working, contact Rutgers Environmental Health and Safety Office (REHS) at 848-445-2550. Should you believe that your personal safety is in jeopardy, immediately contact the Rutgers University Police Department at 911. For non-emergencies, please call 732-932-7211.

Call for Assistance

Dean’s Offices

School of Graduate Studies
25 Bishop Place, CAC
848-932-7747 | info@grad.rutgers.edu

School of Engineering
98 Brett Road, Engineering Bldg., BC
848-445-3170

School of Management & Labor Relations
94 Rockafeller Road, Janice H. Levin Bldg., LC
848-445-4616

Mason Gross School of the Arts
33 Livingston Avenue, Civic Square Bldg., CAC
848-932-9360

Edward J. Bloustein
School of Planning & Public Policy
33 Livingston Avenue, Civic Square Bldg., CAC
848-932-5475 | ejb@ejb.rutgers.edu

Graduate School of Applied & Professional Psychology
152 Frelinghuysen Road, Psychology Bldg., BC
848-445-2000

School of Health Related Professions
33 Livingston Avenue, Civic Square Bldg., CAC
848-932-9360 | shrpadm@shrp.rutgers.edu

School of Health Related Professions
Stanley S. Bergen Bldg., Newark Campus
973-972-5454 | shrpadm@shrp.rutgers.edu

June 2017
Overview

The Ph.D. is a research degree that prepares students to become independent scholars. It signifies that the holder is capable of original and ethical research in a particular field and of making a significant contribution to that field. The Ph.D. is a research degree that prepares students to become independent scholars. It signifies that the holder is capable of original and ethical research in a particular field and of making a significant contribution to that field.

General Responsibilities

Program:
• Make program guidelines and procedures for completion of degree requirements explicit and available to all.
• Provide annual assessments of all full-time students in the program.
• Set up mechanisms to provide feedback to students on their progress. Maintain records on attrition and time to degree.
• Supervise adjoining so that all students have an advisor who are aware of program requirements and available on campus.
• Recognize that students are apprentice scholars, teachers, and researchers, and support them according; inform students of opportunities for research and professional development.
• Develop a community within the program and create opportunities for faculty and students to come together to discuss educational, academic, ethical, pedagogical, professional—and to present their work to colleagues.
• Treat all students fairly. Work to make standards of funding equitable and all students aware of funding opportunities. Seek opportunities for external funding (e.g., training grants).

Faculty Members:
• Know program and university guidelines and requirements.
• Be available for consultation. Initiate contact with students.
• Attend program colloquia and social events.
• Seek support for students through research grants; advise students on seeking and writing proposals for external fellowships and research support.
• Respect students’ ideas and abilities. Encourage students to become intellectually independent.
• Transmit the skills, norms, and ethical values of the discipline to students; recognize that faculty members are often role models for graduate students.
• Assume responsibility and provide opportunities for students’ intellectual and professional development.
• Avoid entering into relationships with students (financial, romantic, etc.) that might interfere with professional judgment or responsibilities.

Students:
• Committed to a high standard of excellence and integrity in all graduate work; follow the guidelines of the Rutgers Policy on Academic Integrity.
• Keep program guidelines and expectations.
• Learn independently when possible; seek guidance when needed. Respect faculty members’ time.
• Manage time so that all responsibilities are met.
• Seek funding to supplement institutional and faculty sources of support.
• Avoid entering into relationships with faculty (financial, romantic, personal, etc.) that might interfere with professional judgment or responsibilities.
• Participate in program colloquia and other events.

Coursework / Qualifying Examinations

Program:
• Establish learning goals for the program and for each formal course. Publish goals and methods of assessment.
• Periodically revise these to ascertain if goals are being met and to make needed adjustments.
• Publish accurate course descriptions.
• Provide the courses needed to fulfill university and program requirements so that students are able to complete coursework in a timely manner.
• Work with department chair and deans to manage faculty leaves so that adequate course offerings are available.
• Provide broad general guidelines for exam preparation.
• Inform students early in their graduate career of the number and kinds of examinations they will be expected to take.
• Ensure that the examinations are fair from year to year, both in content and in grading system.
• Set up procedures so that examinations are graded and returned in an efficient manner.

Faculty Members:
• Know the sequence of courses that students must take to progress through the system satisfactorily.
• Recognize that graduate students often look to faculty members as role models for their own teaching.
• Conduct classes in a way that encourages students to learn creatively, independently, and rigorously.
• Indicate clearly how all work will be evaluated.
• Return all graded work promptly.
• Accept responsibility for the development of challenging but fair examinations.
• Work closely with students to develop appropriate methods to handle problems and help them draw up realistic reading lists as necessary.

Student:
• Work closely with a faculty advisor to plan a program of coursework that provides the necessary grounding in the field to allow timely progression to the dissertation stage.
• Attend classes regularly and work industriously.
• Complete all assignments honestly and in a timely fashion, working independently when expected or in teams when appropriate.
• Maintain acceptable progress toward the degree by scheduling all qualifying examinations, written and oral, as soon as possible.
• Block out the necessary amount of time for sufficient preparation for examinations and stick to the schedule.
• Learn to manage time so that all responsibilities are met.
• Seek funding to supplement institutional and faculty sources of support.
• Avoid entering into relationships with faculty (financial, romantic, personal, etc.) that might interfere with professional judgment or responsibilities.
• Participate in program colloquia and other events.

Dissertation / Research

Program:
• Help student accepted into candidacy to find a faculty member to chair their dissertation committee.
• Help students to identify prospective members and students work together amicably so that students may complete degrees expeditiously.
• Treat students as apprentice researchers and teacher, whose efforts require guidance and supervision by qualified faculty.

Faculty Members:
• Help students create appropriate dissertation committees.
• Work with the student to develop a meaningful topic on a problem that the student has participated in defining.
• Provide students with a full range of experiences to ensure that they will be prepared to succeed professionally.
• Teach students the research methodologies and the library, laboratory, or field skills that will enable them to become capable, independent scholars.

Student:
• Work independently when possible, with a team when appropriate, and seek assistance when necessary.
• Conduct research honestly and report it accurately. Acknowledge the contributions of others. Maintain academic integrity.
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• Adhere to established timetables and work to complete the dissertation in a timely manner.
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• Respect the advisor’s desire for confidentiality concerning research that has not yet been reported.
• Acknowledge that faculty members have a responsibility to maintain high scholarly standards; be open to suggestions for revising or refining research issues.

With this tripartite model, a more traditional mentor/student relationship should develop. Historically, in both the U.S. and European university systems, a close and sustained relationship between an experienced faculty mentor and an advanced graduate student has been a central, respected component of graduate education, a tested and effective relationship which can be a rich experience for both parties. Although the whole process is broadly directed by the School of Graduate Studies, successful mentoring is best achieved using a tripartite model, where students, individual faculty members, and the graduate program all cooperate to ensure that students are mentored and guided in the program, making good progress.

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