

College of Agricultural and Applied Sciences (CAAS)

Best Advising Practices for Graduate Student Success

CAAS wants graduate students to be successful and recommends the following best practices for graduate students and their advisers. Please contact your graduate program office for requirements specific to your program.

Best practice	Student's and advisor's joint responsibility	Advisor's responsibility	Student's responsibility
<p>Establish milestones for academic and research progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Within 60 days</u>: Discuss and agree upon milestones to track student progress • <u>By 2nd semester for a M.S. student and no later than 2nd year for a Ph.D. student</u>: Establish program-dependent advisory and/or exam committee(s) and develop a course work plan • <u>Annually</u>: Document and review student progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate expectations with respect to independence, and how the student is to function in the fairly unstructured graduate school environment • Clarify availability of continued funding (e.g., assistantship or fellowship) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly understand your own motivations for going to graduate school! • Seek alternative or supplemental funding, as needed • Consult the director of graduate studies (DGS) or plan level coordinator (PLC) to ensure that program requirements are met on time
<p>Maintain open lines of communication and provide timely feedback</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss an optimum meeting frequency and meet regularly, weekly or at least monthly. • Establish written expectations and schedules; update as necessary as the degree program progresses, or as circumstances change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comment on student's work (reports, draft posters, seminar presentations, manuscripts, etc.) within 30 days • Communicate developments that may impact time to degree (e.g., planned absences or sabbaticals, or termination of funding) • Understand cultural differences that might affect communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit progress reports, draft posters or seminar presentations, manuscripts, thesis drafts and other research work in a timely manner • Inform adviser of changes in schedule, including any paid or unpaid leave • Seek help from adviser or from other sources (see next page) to resolve Difficulties
<p>Understand the terms and conditions of graduate assistant employment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that offer letters and terms of employment are understood • Comply with business practices of the department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand graduate student rights (see next page) • Provide a safe work environment free from intimidation, humiliation, or harassment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete any required training (e.g., safety, responsible conduct of research, teaching assistant course, sexual misconduct prevention, ethics) in a timely manner
<p>Develop research ideas and graduate student career goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree on the scope and sequence of thesis research (thesis proposal) and engage at all stages • Clarify expectations for multiple tasks (e.g., teaching, work/life balance) • Develop student career goals; revisit and revise periodically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give constructive feedback on student's research ideas • Mentor students as they apply for jobs and advise on effects to their degree plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep a journal of research ideas and activities • Seek professional development opportunities
<p>Connect with the larger campus and professional community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize and respect cultural differences • Seek opportunities for leadership and professional development skills such as: public speaking, research ethics, working across differences, collaboration, conflict resolution, and data management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help students network with colleagues at other institutions • Support student participation in scientific conferences, campus seminars and on committees within USU and CAAS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend campus seminars and events • Serve on committees within USU and CAAS • Participate in graduate student orientation and recruitment activities • Participate in scientific conferences (find external travel funding, as needed)

Graduate Student Rights

- An academic environment that is free from intimidation, humiliation, and harassment.
- Working within the number of hours appropriate for your appointed position.
- The standard 50% assistantship requires an average of 20 hours of work per week at the discretion of the faculty advisor when school is in session (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, USU Graduate Assistant Employment Policy gradschool.usu.edu/costs/assistantships). The work requirement is in addition to time spent on coursework and/or your thesis work.
- Timely review and return of manuscripts and thesis drafts (i.e., 30 days).
- Paid and unpaid leaves (i.e. parental, holiday, sick, bereavement, military, court appearance, jury duty, voting, reasonable religious and disability accommodations) are at the discretion of the advisor and department head.
- Leave of absence in emergency situations - Policy: gradschool.ou.usu.edu/resources/all-forms/leave-of-absence
- Completion of an agreed upon CAAS Scholarly Work Agreement, to resolve issues regarding research or academic performance.
- Assistance when dealing with difficult situations, without concern for retaliation or punishment.

Additional Help for Students

Use available resources if you have concerns about your academics, faculty advisor, or work environment. Do not wait to seek help. In case of an emergency, call 911 or USU Police (435-797-1939)

- Speak to your faculty advisor first if you are comfortable doing so and address problems directly and honestly.
 - To discuss a matter confidentially, contact the Division of Student Affairs usu.edu/student-affairs/usu-student-services
- When you feel it is inappropriate to contact your faculty advisor, consult your director of graduate program (DGP), graduate program coordinator (GPC), or the USU Division of Student Affairs for assistance. Use your best judgment in deciding which course of action is right for you.
- International students should consult with International Student and Scholar Services when dealing with conflicts or concerns. usu.edu/orientation/international/index

Aggie Wellness:

USU Counseling and Consulting Services

usu.edu/aggiewellness/mental-health

(435) 797-1012

For mental health emergencies, call 911

Student Health & Wellness

usu.edu/aggiewellness/shwc/

(435) 797-1660

For physical health emergencies, call 911

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

LatinX Cultural Center usu.edu/latinx/

(435) 797-4160

Disability Resource Center usu.edu/drc/

(435) 797-2444

Inclusion Center usu.edu/inclusion

(435) 797-1728

Student Employment Services

Career Design Center usu.edu/career-design-center/faculty-staff/student-employment

Academic Student Support Services (SSS)

Apply for TRIO usu.edu/sss/apply

International Students

usu.edu/orientation/international/index

(435) 797-0283

Visiting Scholars

usu.edu/global-engagement/visiting-scholars/visiting-scholars

(435) 797-1124

Academic Success Programs

Tutoring usu.edu/asp/

Test Taking usu.edu/academic-support/test/

Study Smarter usu.edu/academic-support/studysmart

Supplemental Instruction usu.edu/supplemental-instruction/

Student Support Courses usu.edu/academic-support/courses

Safety and Preparedness

Personal Escort Service/Lock-Out/Feeling Unsafe

(435) 797-1939

Aggie Safe App/USU Alerts usu.edu/campus-life/safety/

Reporting safety concerns or crimes usu.edu/campus-life/safety/

(435) 797-1939

Student Conflict Resolution

Division of Student Affairs usu.edu/student-affairs/

(435)797-1712