

Colorado School of Mines Graduate Student, Faculty Advisor, and Office of Graduate Studies
Memorandum of Understanding

November 3, 2011

edited 4/16/18

Preamble

We, the graduate students of the Colorado School of Mines, as distinct members of the campus community, in order to help promote a collegial, respectful, and academically sound environment, endorse the values and responsibilities enumerated below. We will strive to fulfill the provisions outlined in this document, as we believe these lay a solid foundation for faculty and students to build a vibrant and genuine intellectual community.

The guidelines articulated below are intended to provide a framework of guidance for navigating the rich and complex interactions between graduate students and faculty.. The intended audience is the graduate student body, though faculty members and the administration may find it to be a useful resource as well. Nothing in this document can, or is intended to replace good-faith communication and cooperation between students and faculty. Rather, it is our intent to reinforce the importance of this cooperation, and to provide support and guidance to graduate students for this cooperation. As such, this document is not legally binding, but rather a statement of principles to be used to help guide faculty, students, and administration. This document is intended to aid graduate students in building positive working relationships with faculty, empowering them to maximize the potential of their graduate education as well as identify and resolve conflicts should they occur.

Dependent upon the degree of the student's choosing, we expect these to vary.

We recognize that graduate students, as students, budding scholars and oftentimes institutional employees, serve in many different and potentially conflicting roles. Expectations and protections associated with each of these roles are defined by a variety of sources (e.g., Board Policy, Human Resources, Office of Graduate Studies, Departments and Divisions, federal and state regulations, professional societies, etc.), and are not repeated below. Within this context, some of the principles articulated below may be contradictory to policies stated elsewhere when applied to individual situations. In application to these situations, it is not the intent of this document to justify violation of any institutional, regulatory or governmental policy/requirement, but again to provide a framework for understanding and resolving potential conflicts within the confines of complying with the relevant institutional, regulatory and/or governmental requirements.

1. **Defining the path** - Establishing a mutual understanding of degree requirements and timelines.

- a. **Research Requirements** - GSG will hold advisors accountable to clearly communicating deliverables attached to a student obtaining their degree of choice. We expect graduate students and advisors to discuss publication (number of papers, suitable impact factor, etc) and presentation requirements with internal and external organizations (conferences, journals, other universities, etc) before a student begins executing research for their advisor. We will also hold university and department administrators accountable to clearly and regularly communicating fundamental degree requirements, such as required research credit hours and examinations.
- b. **Coursework Requirements** - GSG acknowledges that graduate coursework is defined by core requirements for the department in which they are housed, but it should ultimately complement subject matter and time constraints of the student's research. GSG expects university and department administrators to clearly communicate core coursework requirements throughout the graduate student's experience at Mines.

Expectations the advisor has in addition to catalogue, disputes between student and advisor on what a realistic courseload looks like, when courses should not be taken anymore, students advocating to take whatever coursework they desire, understanding between admin, advisor(s) and students on making classes auditable (monetary aspects? pay if you go above allocation for class? also time management considerations)

- c. **Deliverables** - Qualifying Exam, Thesis Proposal, Thesis Defense
- d. **Timeline** - mutual understanding of reasonable timeline to complete papers, finish coursework, get degree, writing thesis, defend proposal, qualifying exam
2. **Resources and Funding** - Establishing a mutual understanding of where money comes and goes as well as the obligations attached
 - a. **Research** - Projects, Publications, Attribution, Hours
 - b. **TA Duties** - Teaching, Grading, Tutoring, Hours
 - c. **Lab Duties** - Sysadmin, Equipment Maintenance, Cleaning, Hours
 - d. **Reporting Duties** - Updates to NSF, industry collaborators/sponsors, attribution
 - e. **Constraints** - Scope of funded projects, fellowship vs grant
 - f. **Equipment Access** - What funds equipment costs, software licenses
 - g. **Collaborator Access** - What questions should the student take to collaborators
 - h. **Timelines** - Funding expiration/renewal dates, how they align with Graduation timeline, what happens if funding runs out early
3. **Defining the Relationship** - Establishing a mutual understanding of expectations with regard to the Student-Advisor relationship.
 - a. **Meetings** - Regularity, Duration, Content, Attendees, Location
 - b. **Communications** - Forum (Email, Text, Video Chat, etc.), Response Time Expectations, Frequency, Availability, Formality
 - c. **Topics to Discuss** - It's not rude to ask about any topic in this document

- d. **Advisor or Others as Sources of Advice** - for Research, Networking, Career Development, Personal
 - e. **Time Management** - Student and Advisor Times in Office or Lab (Regular or Irregular)
 - f. **Time off** - After deadlines, Family or Personal purposes
 - g. **Deadline Responsibilities** - Tracking Deadlines, Submitting abstracts and papers
 - h. **Conflict Resolution** - Opportunities to resolve personally, when to seek Third Party Help
 - i. **Behavioral Ethics** - How to Address Each Other, Topic/Physical/Personal Boundaries
 - j. **State of Roles** - For student (thesis, non-thesis, distance learners), advisor, committee anyone in mentor/mentee relationship. Role of university.
4. **Student's Rights and Privileges**
- a. **Intellectual Property** - Who holds IP for projects, implications for startups
 - b. **Authorship** - How are co-author vs first author decisions made?
 - c. **Assembly** - Graduate students have the right to govern themselves through GSG, which may freely assemble and express opinions without fear of retribution
 - d. **Nondiscrimination** - The parties to this document agree to uphold, at minimum, the protections of U.S. Title IX as of April 2018 even if it loses the force of law
 - e. **Livable Stipend** - Graduate students on full support can expect a stipend which is sufficient to live in the Golden area
 - f. **Advocacy** - Students can find advocacy on their behalf, at minimum, through GSG

Bill of Rights (this document): Agreement between GSG, Faculty Senate

FaQ: GSG's opinions, point to OGS resources as needed

Student/Advisor Questionnaire: GSG and OGS, OGS hosts office hours for review, warn faculty senate this will be happening

Graduate Student Responsibilities

1. We have a responsibility to conduct ourselves in a manner befitting a representative of the university. Our behavior should be a credit to our program, the university and ourselves. We have the responsibility to respect and uphold all relevant university policies regarding professional conduct.
2. In our role as students, we have a responsibility to read, be familiar and comply with all of the rules and regulations defined in the Graduate Bulletin. In our role as employees, we have the responsibility to read, be familiar and comply with the employment policies defined by the Office of Graduate Studies, the Office of Human Resources and, if available, the hiring program.
3. We have the responsibility to fulfill any teaching and research obligations to the best of our knowledge, training, and ability; to carry out our job responsibilities in a conscientious and timely manner; and, to perform these duties in accordance with all relevant university, state and federal rules and regulations.
4. It is our responsibility to provide accurate and honest reporting of research results and to uphold the ethical norms promulgated by the institution and our professional societies in research methodology and scholarship. We acknowledge the importance that ethics plays in our professional careers, and as such, it is our responsibility to become educated on this topic.
5. We have a responsibility to devote appropriate time and energy toward achieving the advanced degree in which we are enrolled.
6. We have a responsibility to communicate regularly with faculty members and advisors, especially in matters related to our research activities and our progress toward degree.
7. We have the responsibility to understand our role and to do our part in the development of the relationship between a faculty mentor and a graduate student. This includes having an awareness of time constraints and demands imposed on faculty members and program staff. We recognize that one faculty member may not be able to fulfill all of a student's mentoring needs. In these instances, we have the responsibility to seek assistance from multiple individuals and organizations as needed.
8. We have the responsibility to take ownership of our experience and the direction of our educational program, to be familiar with and meet program requirements, and define our unique research path. We understand that while graduate advisors may guide students on our journey, it is our responsibility to create the most enriching graduate experience we can.
9. We have the responsibility to educate ourselves on the availability of financial support, whether it be through the university via teaching or research assistantships, or through fellowship programs supported by governmental agencies (e.g. National Science Foundation).

Graduate Student Expectations

1. We should have the opportunity to openly and respectfully express our views, and, to the level of our desire, participate in the university community. As graduate students, we may govern ourselves through a university-sanctioned organization, currently the Graduate Student Association.
2. We may expect to interact with those faculty members who will enrich our graduate education. We recognize, however, that establishing a mentor-mentee relationship is mutual and to be successful requires enthusiastic participation by the potential faculty mentor. We cannot compel a faculty member to become a mentor.
3. We should expect timely information related to degree requirements, and the availability and likelihood of financial support.
4. We may expect that academic advisors be available to establish and maintain a mutually agreeable schedule of evaluation and supervisory meetings, either remotely or in person. This expectation extends to include reasonably prompt email response and communication, especially when advisors are working away from campus.
5. We expect reasonable confidentiality in our direct communications with professors and in any discussion of performance or behavioral issues. The substance of these communications and issues should be shared with others on a need-to-know basis only.
6. We should receive objective and timely evaluations of progress-toward-degree based on criteria that are understood by both the advisor and the student. Reasons for unsatisfactory performance should be clearly communicated in writing. Students should be given a fair opportunity to correct or remedy deficiencies in academic performance in compliance with the policies defined in the Graduate Bulletin.
7. We should be included in the co-authorship of publications that are based on activities to which we have contributed sufficient intellectual capital, as defined by our academic advisor(s). To avoid potential misunderstandings, as early as possible, faculty and students should agree upon authorship positions commensurate with levels of contributions to a particular work.
8. We should have the opportunity to provide evaluations of professors, both within the classroom environment and as faculty mentors, without fear of retribution.
9. Should we feel that we are assigned tasks thoroughly outside the scope of our academic or professional development program, we may strive to resolve this issue at an informal level. If it cannot be resolved informally, we may seek to resolve the issue with Human Resources.

Program and Institutional Responsibilities

1. Provided we maintain good academic standing and are making satisfactory progress toward our intended degrees, the degree program to which we have been admitted has the obligation to provide us with opportunities to continue to make progress toward degree with a goal of timely completion.
2. Each program should communicate degree requirements clearly. Currently enrolled students should be notified in writing of changes in program requirements or administrative processes, and how existing students will be “grandfathered” into the new system.
3. Upon entry into a degree program, new students should be provided a thorough description of the requirements, qualifications, and applicable deadlines necessary for academic employment, training or financial support at the university.
4. The university, departments, and programs shall strive to enhance financial aid and the acquisition of other resources to support research-based graduate education. This includes maximizing institutional resources and seeking support from outside the institution.
5. It is the responsibility of the institution, departments and faculty mentors to provide students with meaningful opportunities for professional training. This training should include socialization into the norms of the discipline, information about professional associations and conferences, job interview skills, career options, standards of conduct and professional ethics, and the basic intellectual skills required to be successful practitioners of the discipline. In turn, we will endeavor to participate in these opportunities.

Modification Protocol

The version of this document dated November 3, 2011 has been endorsed by the Graduate Student Association and members of the faculty as represented by the Graduate Council and Faculty Senate. It has not been approved for inclusion in the Graduate Bulletin. Any modifications to the document must be approved by the Graduate Student Association, Graduate Council, and Faculty Senate. Any modifications made to this document without going through these channels will cease to carry the endorsement of both the faculty and the graduate student body.