



Suggested Best Practices for Thesis Advisors Working with Graduate Students

Statement of Purpose

The relationship between graduate students and thesis advisors is crucial in order to achieve success in graduate studies, especially when conducting thesis projects. There are times when conflicts and/or issues arise and often it is because expectations were unclear or not aligned from the beginning. Thus, a thorough understanding of each person's role will help ensure productive learning and successful outcomes.

Suggestions for Roles and Expectations

The following are suggested themes that can serve as the basis for discussion between graduate students and thesis advisors to clarify expectations.

- Thesis advisor's supervision
- Deadlines
- Frequency and method of communication
- Protocols and frequency for meetings
- Research Recognition
- Guidance and resources

Thesis advisor's supervision:

- In what areas will the thesis advisor provide guidance to the student on the project? (i.e. methodology, materials, content of the research, others)
- How involved will the thesis advisor be in supervising the project? Will the advisor will be actively engaged in all aspects of the student's research, or will the main responsibility of the project reside with the student?

Deadlines:

- What are important deadlines for this project?

- What will be the protocol on submitting project components?
- How will the student submit the project components to the advisor? (i.e. hard-copy, e-mail, etc.)

Communication and meetings:

- What are preferred method(s) of contact for the advisor and student?
- How frequently will you be in touch with each other?
- How and how often will you meet with each other?
- At what points of the project will you meet?
- How will meetings be scheduled?

Research recognition (if applicable):

- How would the graduate student's research contribution be recognized in publications?

Guidance and Resources:

- What is the role of the thesis committee in the process?
- What is the advisor's philosophy of committee involvement?
- Will the advisor help the student navigate conflicts with committee members?
- Will the advisor help the student procure resources to support the project (i.e. fellowships, grants, etc.)?