GRAD GUIDE TO SETTING EXPECTATIONS

ADVISING & WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH FACULTY

**Remember**

- Relationships between graduate students and faculty members are crucial for education and professional development – including long-term career goals.
- Grad school is a different “work culture” involving your academic program and/or professional settings (i.e. field placements).
- Consider asking other students or faculty members directly what the expectations of that “culture” are to avoid difficulties.
- **Start these conversations** – if faculty and others are open to discussing – as soon as possible to preemptively avoid future problems.

**General Advising Considerations**

- The faculty’s preferred title (“Dr. Longhorn” vs. “Bevo”) – in public and in one-on-one interactions
- Preferred method of communication (email, phone, skype, text, in-person) and how quickly is a response expected? (ie. within 24 hours including weekends)
- How often will individual advising check-ins occur?
- How will feedback on your progress be provided? How will evaluation occur? How regularly?
- What functions and level of mentorship will your advisor provide? How much autonomy is expected of you?
- What has the faculty member found to be successful in working with students in the past? What has been difficult?
- How are conflicts brought up with the faculty member? And resolved?
RESEARCH & LAB EXPECTATIONS

What are the research and lab expectations, including:
- Lab meeting frequency (i.e. required two hour block every week)?
- Clear understanding of slated research projects on semester-by-semester basis and yearlong goals?
- Available opportunities for independent research vs. faculty led investigations?
- Expected familiarity with particular research techniques or statistical programs?
- Availability to work with other students from other labs/departments?
- Freedom to work with other faculty members from other lab/departments?
- Student’s research role, including expected time requirements or production of materials (literature review, leading focus groups, etc.)?
- How will authorship be decided — including revisiting decisions further into project?

WHAT ABOUT YOU??

- What information are you comfortable sharing about your personal life with your faculty members?
- How much time and energy are you willing to consistently dedicate?
  - Will there be various “high points” during the year that will require more stamina from you?
  - What about your accessibility during winter/summer breaks?
- When will you know you’ve reached your limit? How will you communicate that? How will you say “No”?
- How are you going to communicate your boundaries?

REMEMBER:

The Office of the Student Ombuds is always available to help you practice these skills and help you think through how you want to approach a difficult conversation. We offer opportunities for mock discussions.

OFFICE OF THE STUDENT OMBUDS

512-471-3825
STUDENTOMBUDS@AUSTIN.UTEXAS.EDU

Updated Fall 2015