



Graduate Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities

Approved May 8, 2011

Upon enrollment, all graduate students shall be informed of the following rights and responsibilities, and shall be free from reprisal for exercising them.

Definitions

For the purpose of this document the following terms mean:

Academic Adviser - A graduate student's official adviser(s), responsible for the student's, guidance, mentorship, or supervision.

Academic Colleague - Members of the academic community with whom a student may interact. This includes, but is not limited to other graduate students, post doctoral fellows, faculty, administrators, administrative staff, and academic advisers.

Graduate Student - A graduate academic and/or professional student.

Major - The student's concentration of study.

Reasonable - as applicable: (a) Within the scope of current university, state and federal policies, regulations and laws; (b) within program requirements and expectations of coursework, working hours, working and research scope; (c) with consideration to the full scope of student responsibilities; (d) with equity across departments and University of California campuses; (e) within commonsense ethical and moral bounds.

University - The University of California.

Unreasonable - not "reasonable" as specified above.

A Graduate Student has the Right to:

Article I. Be treated fairly and to be treated as an academic colleague upon accepting admission to a graduate program.

Section A. In accordance with applicable Federal and State law and University policy, graduate students have the right to study and work in an environment free of discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, medical condition (cancer-related or genetic characteristics), genetic information (including family medical history), ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, or service in the uniformed services (as defined by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994).

Section B. Graduate students have the right to work and study in an environment absent of discrimination for having dependents, including, but not limited to, children, partners, or parents.

Section C. Graduate students have the right, within reason, to confidentiality and professional treatment by their academic colleagues.

- i. Discussion of the student among academic colleagues will be of a professional nature, will be limited to the student's academic performance, and will not be made in a discriminatory or derogatory manner.

Section D. Graduate students have the right to academic free speech, both as students and as graduate student instructors within the academic setting, and will not be penalized for their ideas.

Article II. Have specific and concrete requirements for achieving an advanced degree.

Section A. These requirements will be communicated clearly in writing upon admission to the graduate program.

- i. They will be made publicly available and easily accessible.
- ii. Historical documents will be kept publicly available and easily accessible for students for 10 years to ensure that students who are grandfathered to older requirements have continued access to information about their requirements.
- iii. Changes to the requirements will be made publicly available and easily accessible before they go into effect.

A Graduate Student has the Right to:

- iv. Notification will be given to all students to whom the changes apply in advance of their effective date and before any contractual agreement is made between the student and the department.

Section B. Graduate students will be guaranteed the right to graduate upon successful fulfillment of the requirements.

Section C. Graduate students will be given clear and reasonable work expectations.

- i. Students will not be expected to work more hours than is consistent with fair labor practices or standards of the department.
- ii. Students will not be expected to violate their religious beliefs while under University enrollment.

Section D. Graduate students have the right to accurate information when selecting an academic adviser and other members of their committees.

- i. Graduate students have the right to change their academic adviser if necessary.
- ii. If a graduate student's academic adviser departs from the institution once the student's work is under way (whether by choice, layoff, or an unforeseeable event), the program will strive to provide the student with alternative supervision, external to the institution if necessary.

Section E. Prospective and currently enrolled graduate students have a right to know the "normative time to degree" and the "average time to degree" within a specific graduate program.

Article III. Receive an objective evaluation, as well as regular feedback and guidance, concerning their academic performance and progress towards an advanced degree.

Section A. Graduate students will be notified of any deficiencies in their academic performance and be given specific recommendations and requirements needed to correct their deficiencies before action against the student is taken.

Section B. Evaluations will be factual and specific, and will be shared with the graduate student within a reasonable period of time.

A Graduate Student has the Right to:

Section C. In the event of major examination failure or unsatisfactory performance, reasoning for such assessment will be provided to the graduate student in a clear, written evaluation.

Section D. Any intent to dismiss a student from a graduate program for academic reasons must be preceded by specific, written performance evaluation well in advance of actual dismissal, with a clear and specific opportunity to remedy those reasons.

- i. There will be clear guidelines for the dismissal of a graduate student from an academic program.
- ii. There will be an appeal process by which a graduate student can challenge the dismissal in a fair manner.

Section E. Termination of an academic adviser's relationship with a graduate student must be preceded with a written warning within a reasonable period of time.

Section F. Graduate students have the right to access to their academic file, excluding any materials to which they have explicitly and in writing waived access rights (such as letters of recommendation).

Article IV. Receive credit and recognition for intellectual and research development.

Section A. A graduate student will receive due authorship credit and recognition for publications involving the student's work.

- i. First authorship or co-authorship credit and recognition will be given as appropriate to the level of contribution by the student as described by the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative.

Section B. A graduate student will receive due credit and recognition for curriculum developed by the student.

Section C. A graduate student will receive due credit and recognition for innovation(s) and intellectual ideas developed by the student.

Article V. Refuse to perform tasks, without penalty, retribution, or prejudice, if those tasks are not pertinent to their academic or professional development program.

A Graduate Student has the Right to:

Section A. Graduate students will not be exploited to the personal advantage of faculty members, university staff, administrators, or other academic colleagues.

Section B. Graduate students will not be coerced into performing unreasonable tasks.

Section C. Graduate students will be granted reasonable time frames to complete tasks that are requested of them.

Article VI. Participate in an academic atmosphere that is welcoming and encouraging of diversity.

Section A. Diversity includes, but is not limited to, personal and academic opinion, origin, nationality, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, disability and medical condition.

Section B. International students will be treated equally to other students (with the exception of out of state fees and where it may be in conflict with state or federal law) and allowed the same opportunities within the purview of the university.

Article VII. Be provided a safe university environment.

Section A. A safe environment protects a student's mental and physical well-being.

Section B. A safe environment includes, but is not limited to

- i. safety from crime;
- ii. safety from harassment and discrimination; and
- iii. a research and learning space that complies with federal, state and university laws and regulations regarding environmental and occupational standards.

Article VIII. Be informed of financial and resource support.

Section A. Departments will provide current and prospective graduate students with an accurate description of the availability and the likelihood of ongoing financial and resource support within their programs and at the university.

A Graduate Student has the Right to:

Section B. Graduate students who also hold positions as employees of the university deserve to be protected by the same rights as other public sector employees.

Article IX. Have reasonable on-campus housing policies, where on-campus housing is available.

Section A. Graduate students have the right to be informed of policies and procedures for on-campus housing, including information on availability, wait time, and limitations on residence time and eligibility.

Section B. Graduate students have the right to representation in the planning and governance of on-campus housing in which they live.

Article X. Participate in representation and political engagement.

Section A. Graduate students have the right to express their views and to participate in the political processes of the academic community and the community at large.

Section B. The graduate student population reserves the right to form and maintain an independent governing body.

Section C. Graduate students will have representatives on all campus-wide administrative committees that affect graduate students, with voting privileges where appropriate according to the guidelines of shared governance.

- i. The recognized graduate student representative body have the right to be notified of vacancies in committees within a reasonable time.
- ii. The recognized graduate student representative body will be given written charges and responsibilities of these committees once a year and when they are modified.
- iii. The recognized graduate student representative body will be informed when new committees are formed.

Section D. Where appropriate, all departments and graduate programs will include graduate student representatives in the decision-making process, which include, but are not limited to, determination of policies, standards, and admissions.

A Graduate Student has the Right to:

Article XI. Have access to adequate resources and training for career objectives.

Section A. Graduate students will have access to career services targeted specifically to the post-graduate school job market.

- i. These services will pertain to academic as well as non-academic professions.

Section B. Teaching assistants and teaching associates have a right to appropriate pedagogical training. This includes but is not limited to:

- i. Implementing a structured training program by graduate programs for their teaching assistants and teaching associates.
- ii. Outlining the expectations of a graduate student teacher, and the ways in which those expectations can be achieved, for their teaching assistants and teaching associates.

Article XII. Have access to health insurance and health care services.

Section A. The university will provide access to a university health insurance plan and health care services.

Section B. The university health insurance plan will meet the following minimum requirements:

- i. Be competitive with other locally available plans in terms of cost and coverage.
- ii. Include access to dependent care.
- iii. Include comprehensive mental health coverage.
- iv. Access to health care services will be available at any University of California campus, under conditions that apply to students registered on that campus.

Section C. A student has the right to chose between accepting the university's health insurance or an alternative plan of choice.

Article XIII. Have access to a formal and unbiased arbitration process

A Graduate Student has the Right to:

Section A. Graduate students have the right to arbitration if the rights outlined in this document or in university policy are infringed.

Section B. Graduate students have the right to arbitration before actions are taken against them.

Section C. Arbitration will occur before a neutral party.

Section D. Graduate students have the right to present all relevant evidence to the arbitrators.

Section E. If the conflict has not been resolved by the above methods, the graduate student has the right to an appeals process consistent with campus policy.

Section F. Official grievance procedures and informal complaint procedures will be clearly defined at the graduate division and at the department or graduate program level. These procedures will be presented to graduate students at the time of entry.

Responsibilities

A Graduate Student has the Responsibility to:

1. Adhere to all University policies and procedures.
2. Conduct themselves in a manner befitting academic colleagues in all activities related to the university.
3. Devote an appropriate amount of time and effort toward the advanced degree within normative time, except when special circumstances apply.
4. Uphold ethical norms in research and scholarship and provide accurate and honest reporting of research results, research methodology, and scholarship.
5. Proactively participate in the faculty mentor and graduate student relationship.
6. Uphold the University's mission statement.

By: Graduate and Professional Student Committee 2010-2011; Approved May 8, 2011