

Commitments to Graduate Students

1. We will be constructive in our criticism of students' work. The purpose of the feedback we provide is to help students learn and develop skills, not to undermine students' confidence or to demonstrate our own superiority. We do owe it to our students to be forthright and incisive in our critical feedback, and there may be occasions when we must evaluate a student's work as unsatisfactory. However, we will always strive to avoid a style of criticism that a reasonable person would find humiliating or belittling.
2. When students are seriously ill or are experiencing a family emergency, we will accommodate them by allowing them to complete their required work at a later date. We will not require students to forgo or delay medical treatments or recovery, or to neglect a family emergency, in favour of attendance at classes or faster completion of work. We expect students (to the extent that their health allows) to notify us of medical or family circumstances that will affect their attendance or their work, and to provide proper documentation of those circumstances as requested.
3. We recognize that our students have the right to at least two uninterrupted weeks of vacation time per year. Vacation scheduling is to be negotiated between the supervisor and the student but will not be restricted arbitrarily. The supervisor will arrange for any coverage of research lab responsibilities while the student is on vacation. Normally, students are not expected to be at the university on statutory holidays or on other days when the university is closed, but in special cases where this is necessary (e.g., situations in which animal care, research participants, or equipment must be attended to), the student has the right to additional vacation time in lieu of those holidays. (Note that some labs will of course require students to work outside normal business hours, as for example in the case of sleep labs, animal labs, or labs using community research participants.)
4. We will not require our students to pay for their thesis research or for other projects they conduct with us. Supervisors may of course decline to subsidize a proposed project that they deem to be too expensive.
5. We will accommodate, within reasonable and feasible limits and with proper notification, the work schedules of part-time students.
6. We will respect students' right to decline suggestions to expand or add projects beyond those initially agreed between the supervisor, committee, and student. Students and supervisors, in consultation with committee members, will agree early in the course of the degree program on the work that the student will have to complete. Students have the right to decline suggestions for additional or expanded projects, and when a student does decline such suggestions, supervisors will continue to meet all of their obligations to the student, such as giving thesis feedback, completing paperwork, providing references that fairly reflect the student's record of work, and so on. (Note that students who are receiving a stipend from their supervisor are generally expected to do research work

beyond their course and thesis requirements. The supervisor will communicate to the student what work is expected (e.g., projects to be worked on, approximate hours, etc.)

7. We will respect our students' privacy and autonomy. For example, we will not require students to meet with us at our or their homes. Some supervisors or other faculty members may organize or host social events from time to time, in keeping with the positive value that many faculty members place on social interaction. However, students may decline to attend such events without any negative consequences.
8. We will encourage our students to think critically and independently and to make intellectual contributions to the projects they work on with us. We want our students to feel comfortable in expressing views that differ from ours. We also want to teach our students to be able to conduct research independently, not merely to execute our own decisions.
9. In general, we will be supportive and respectful in supervising our students. The role of supervisor does properly involve giving direction and setting standards, and there may be occasions when a supervisor will insist on (for example) another thesis draft, additional analyses, or use of a particular method. But we will avoid a dictatorial style in which supervisors make demands and students obey due to fear of punishment.