



UNIVERSITY OF
OREGON

Division of Graduate Studies

**Directors of Graduate Studies Handbook
2021-2022 Academic Year**

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Introduction

This handbook was written with Directors of Graduate Studies (DGS) in mind, but Graduate Coordinators, Department Heads and graduate students may also find it helpful. It is important to point out that this handbook is designed to provide guidance and is not a contract or comprehensive summary of all [UO current policies](#).

About the Division of Graduate Studies

In 2021, the Graduate School became the [Division of Graduate Studies](#). The Division promotes excellence, innovation, and inclusiveness across all graduate programs. Serving as the institutional home for graduate students, the Division provides cross-disciplinary experiences, funding, and professional development; advocates for graduate students, within and beyond the university; and partners with programs to prepare the next generation of researchers, scholars, entrepreneurs, artists, and thought leaders to transform our communities, locally and globally. The Division administers graduate education for the seven schools and colleges with graduate programs at the University of Oregon, awarding master's degrees, doctoral degrees, graduate certificates, and graduate specializations in more than 80 disciplines.

Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) Responsibilities

At its core, the DGS is a faculty member who serves as a conduit between graduate students, faculty, and the Division of Graduate Studies. While the roles and responsibilities associated with this role are detailed below, the Division acknowledges that in some programs, these roles are spread out over several faculty members.

DGSs are responsible for ensuring that students and faculty are aware of the program's academic expectations and for maintaining clear and effective channels of communication. The DGS serves as the chief advocate for students in their program. This can take the form of advising students, reviewing progress reports, holding regular meetings with graduate student groups, or serving as a mediator when there are strained relationships between students and faculty. Additionally, the DGS represents the department to the Division of Graduate Studies and is responsible for keeping up to date on all policies and procedures.

As you are the chief advocate for graduate students in your program, it is in your best interest to get to know the students. For smaller programs, that could be a monthly meeting with students. For larger programs, that might involve meeting with smaller groups of students. If the students have an organized group, consider going to one of their functions. If they don't have an organized group, encourage them to form one.

If you have developed a relationship of trust, you will find that students are more willing to come to you with problems that arise with their academic pursuits, employment, health, professional development, or even their personal life. Sometimes they don't know where to turn and are looking for advice. Sometimes they are looking to you to solve their problems. Sometimes they just want someone to talk with.

Program Handbooks

The DGS should work with department colleagues to maintain a program handbook that provides accurate, up-to-date information including, but not limited to the following information:

- contacts and roles
- advisor/advisee relationship details
- committee policies
- satisfactory academic progress guidelines
- grounds for dismissal from the program
- degree requirements
- benchmarks
- timelines
- program specific Graduate Employee (GE) information and link to General Duties and Responsibilities Statements (GDRS)
- advancement to candidacy procedures
- procedures for petitioning a change in a departmental requirement
- degree completion procedures

Advising/Mentoring

Graduate student progression toward educational goals at the University of Oregon is directed and evaluated by an advisor and a graduate committee. These individuals provide intellectual guidance and developmental feedback in support of the scholarly and artistic activities of graduate students. They can also serve as great resources for suggestions for funding and professional development. Advising and mentoring is enhanced when advisors recognize and engage graduate students' sociocultural assets in the processes of learning and production of knowledge. The advisor and the graduate committee are also charged with the responsibility of evaluating a graduate student's performance in research and creative activities. Then, the graduate student, the advisor, and the graduate committee comprise a basic unit of graduate education. The quality, breadth, and depth of interaction in this unit largely determines the outcome of the graduate experience.

High quality graduate education depends upon the professional and ethical conduct of the participants. Faculty and graduate students have complementary responsibilities in

the maintenance of academic standards and the creation of high quality graduate programs. Excellence in graduate education is achieved when both faculty and students are highly motivated, possess the academic and professional backgrounds necessary to perform at the highest level, and are sincerely invested in one another's success.

Advisors are often in the best position to identify potential safety issues with students. Concerns about harm to self or others should be reported directly to the [Office of the Dean of Students](#).

The Council of Graduate Schools has identified mentoring as one of the most influential factors on degree completion. They have identified the following promising practices for programs to help in the development of good mentoring practices:

- Conduct a comprehensive orientation for new students
- Develop/revise graduate student handbooks promptly
- Make expectations and requirements transparent
- Develop/enhance mechanisms for tracking student progress
- Implement regular advisor/advisee meetings and progress reports
- Set up an annual student performance review system
- Institute a report on students' plans immediately upon their advancement to candidacy
- Encourage early advising, including having first-year advisors and the establishment of administrative structures for the early identification of, and interventions aimed at, retaining, "at-risk" students
- Consider peer and external mentors options for all new students

The Division of Graduate Studies has set up a webpage for [Best Practices in Mentoring](#). Additionally, the University of Michigan has developed an [excellent guide](#) for faculty on how to mentor graduate students. It is a must read for all DGSs (and ideally, all Graduate Faculty).

Graduate Policies

The Division of Graduate Studies, in collaboration with the Graduate Council, sets [policies](#) associated with graduate studies. However, you should also make sure that your program-specific policies are spelled out in a program handbook that is accurate and up-to-date. You can think of Division of Graduate Studies policies as a set of minimal requirements for all programs at the University of Oregon. However, individual programs can have more stringent policies. For example, the Division of Graduate Studies requires that students maintain at least a 3.00 GPA, while a program could have a policy requiring that their student maintain at least a 3.25 GPA. However, they

cannot institute a policy that does not also meet the Division of Graduate Studies policy (e.g., setting a minimum GPA of 2.50). Another example is that PhD students must have two core dissertation committee members, with at least one core member being from the student's degree-granting department. So while a program could require that both core members reside in the degree-granting department, they could not allow both core members to be outside the department.

As with any policy, there are going to be exceptions. The Division of Graduate Studies has a process for petitioning for exceptions to UO policies. Similarly, you should establish a process for how you will handle exceptions to your program policies. What is the procedure and who is responsible for making the final decision? That person is likely the DGS, but it could vary based on department organization and culture.

Graduate Council

The [Graduate Council](#) is a University Standing Committee that advises the Vice Provost for Graduate Studies on matters pertaining to graduate study at the University of Oregon. The Council establishes general policies and regulations governing graduate study and is responsible for reviewing proposals for graduate-level curriculum changes. The committee consists of 14 voting members. There are 12 teaching faculty, with six from the College of Arts and Sciences (two from each division) and one from each of the professional schools/colleges. Additionally, there are two graduate students, one from a master's program and one from a doctoral program.

Curriculum Changes

The Division of Graduate Studies works with departments and schools/colleges to develop new and innovative graduate programs, to improve current programs to better achieve institutional goals for graduate education, and to assist in the review process. This is accomplished through both [formal and informal mechanisms](#), involving a strong partnership with the Office of the Provost, the Faculty Senate, and the Graduate Council.

Below are the potential stages of review for new or revised graduate programs:

- Department level
- College level
- External review
- University level (Graduate Council and Senate)
- Board of Trustees
- Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC)

- Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)

It is strongly recommended that proposals are shared informally with the Assistant Vice Provost in the Division of Graduate Studies and the Vice Provost for Academic Excellence in the Office of the Provost for initial feedback in advance of formal submission. They will help guide you through the process and provide clarity about what level of approval is required.

Satisfactory Progress Requirements

In conjunction with the Graduate Council, the Division of Graduate Studies has developed [Satisfactory Progress](#) requirements, summarized below:

- **GPA:** Graduate students must maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.00 in graded graduate courses. Individual graduate programs may have higher GPA requirements.
- **Grades:** The accumulation of more than 5 credits of N or F grades, regardless of GPA, is considered unsatisfactory.
- **Departmental Requirements:** Graduate programs may have more stringent requirements than the Division of Graduate Studies minimums, and/or they may have other criteria, such as research progress, examinations, or other milestones. Any such requirements must be documented within a handbook or other departmental materials.
- **Student Conduct:** Depending on the nature of the violation, the Division of Graduate Studies will also consider violations of the [Student Conduct Code](#) when determining whether a student is in good standing.

If a student is found to not be meeting satisfactory academic progress requirements, either through a departmental review process or by the Division of Graduate Studies, they will be placed on academic warning or academic probation (see link above for details) and must work with their department to develop a remediation plan with clear expectations for improvement and timelines to regain good standing. If the student does not meet the expectations within the given timelines, they may be recommended for dismissal. The dismissal recommendation to the Division of Graduate Studies may come from the Department Head of the student's home department or the Dean (or Dean's designee) of the student's School or College. Final dismissal decisions are made by the Vice Provost for Graduate Studies.

Note: There is an additional set of [satisfactory academic progress standards](#) for financial aid recipients.

Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation (GTFF)

The Division of Graduate Studies has a long-standing partnership with the [GTFF](#). The GTFF is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers and represents graduate students performing instructional, research, and administrative assignments. In coordination with Employee and Labor Relations, the Division implements and enforces the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) by processing Graduate Employment contracts and providing consultation to departments on employment and academic requirements of the CBA. The Division provides a CBA-mandated training, which is required for all graduate students in their first term as a GE. Topics include general employment information, equity and inclusion, discrimination and sexual harassment policies, and GE reporting obligations.

General Duties and Responsibilities Statements (GDRS)

The CBA between the UO and the GTFF details the [GDRS](#) that each hiring unit must prepare describing the conditions under which GE appointments and reappointments are made, evaluations are performed, etc. The GDRS is not a job description. In a grievance situation or dispute, however, the hiring unit will be held to the policies and procedures outlined in its GDRS. First-time GE-employing units who need to create a new GDRS should review the GDRS docs of similar units and then contact the Division of Graduate Studies to get started.

Graduate Employees (GEs)

GE is the term used at the University of Oregon for teaching, research, and administrative graduate assistantships. During each quarter that a student holds a GE appointment, they must be enrolled for and successfully complete at least nine graduate credits toward their degree. As per the CBA, there are three categories of GE appointments:

Instructor: Most positions in academic departments are teaching-related. Duties may include serving as a grader, a teaching assistant, a lab or discussion section leader, or sole instructor for a class.

Researcher: These positions are offered by academic departments as well as UO's many research centers and institutes.

Administrative: These positions are often in non-academic units.

Additionally, the CBA defines three levels of GE appointments:

GE I: Regularly enrolled graduate students admitted to a graduate degree program or doctoral students who are not eligible for a GE II or GE III appointment.

GE II: Regularly enrolled graduate students who have A) a master's degree in the same or cognate field, B) successfully completed a qualifying examination, or C) completed 45 credit hours toward a doctoral degree and have written recommendation of the head of their major department.

GE III: Regularly enrolled doctoral students who have been advanced to candidacy.

For some programs, there is an increase in salary as students advance from one level to another. For others, the salary is constant across levels. Check with the Division of Graduate Studies if you are unsure of the salaries for your program.

[GE appointments](#) include a tuition waiver for up to 16 credits per term. The cost of the tuition waiver is charged to the index from which the GE salary is paid. Note that if a GE III is funded off of a grant, the grant is only responsible for covering three credits, while the [rest of the tuition cost is covered by the university](#).

Conflict of Interest, Conflict of Commitment, and Outside Activities: The University encourages employees to engage in [outside activities](#) that advance the mission of the UO with the expectation that those activities be proactively disclosed, when required by this policy, if they would or could present a conflict of interest so they can be managed in a manner that protects integrity, ensures legal compliance, and promotes good stewardship of public resources.

Insurance

One of the most common, high-stakes issues that comes up with graduate students is health insurance. It is important to understand the following key points:

- The insurance offered through the GTFF is for graduate students who are GEs.
- The cost of the GTFF insurance is charged to the index from which the GE salary is paid.
- Because of a letter of agreement between the UO and the GTFF, graduate students who are fully supported on an extramural training grant are also eligible for the GTFF health insurance plan. These can either be institutional or individual training grants (e.g., NIH F1 or T1 awards).

- Students funded on non-GE fellowships are not eligible for GTFF insurance. An example of this type of funding would be a First Year Fellowship or the Jane Grant Dissertation Fellowship.
- Graduate students who are not GEs are eligible for the [UO Student Health Benefit plan](#), administered by [University Health Services](#). University Health Services provides comprehensive primary healthcare and mental health resources, as well as a wide array of specialty services. There are separate [health and wellness support services](#) for students in Portland through an agreement with Portland State University.
- There can be substantial differences between the GTFF and UO Student Health Benefits insurance plans (e.g., coverage for dependents and dental).

It is therefore very important that you consider these points when discussing or awarding fellowships to graduate students.

International students are required to have health insurance, either through the GTFF health plan, the UO Student Health Benefits Plan, or another private insurer. International students are automatically enrolled in the UO Student Health Benefits Plan but can [request a waiver](#) if they can provide proof of health coverage that meets or exceeds the university's standards.

Summer

Summer presents some unique challenges for graduate students, especially as it relates to funding. Many students are funded through a GE appointment, either to work in a research lab or to teach. Students who do not hold a GE in the summer but did have a GE appointment in any two quarters of the preceding academic year are eligible for a [summer tuition waiver](#) (formerly known as the "Summer Sandwich" tuition waiver). The waiver is applicable for up to 16 credits of tuition for classes that will be used to meet degree requirements. However, the waiver does not cover fees for self-support courses, courses with irregular fees, or tuition for those courses that are not used toward degree requirements, or courses at other universities.

In the summer term (and only during the summer term), a unit may hire a GE at more than the standard 0.49 FTE maximum, up to 1.0 FTE. However, there are [very specific criteria and guidelines](#) that need to be followed.

Admissions

The Division of Graduate Studies sets and implements graduate admissions policies and procedures, with consultation from Graduate Council, the Office of Admissions, and

the Registrar's Office. [The Division sets and enforces minimum admission requirements](#) for all graduate programs and administers the UO graduate portal for admissions applications (currently GradWeb but transitioning to Slate with a target go-live date of August 2022). Additionally, the Division provides guidance on and enforcement of best practices in graduate admissions, such as annual review of admission offer letters, resources for holistic application review, and guidance on the consideration of race and gender in graduate admissions.

While the Division of Graduate Studies website outlines the [general graduate admission procedures](#) for the university, we direct students to the website for the program they're applying in order to read about specific requirements and deadlines for their program of interest. It is very important that your program website clearly outlines your admission procedures and requirements. The Division of Graduate Studies provides [trainings on admissions policies and procedures](#) as well as supplementary materials that outline the flow of the admissions process.

Recruitment

The Division of Graduate Studies provides centralized support for the recruitment efforts implemented across campus at the graduate level. These include recent initiatives, such as McNair Scholars visits, materials on best practices, "Applying to Graduate School at the UO" workshops, and revised/re-branded collateral materials. The Division administers and provides a variety of [recruitment funding options](#) to be utilized by programs to aid their efforts of recruiting students. While these awards are primarily for recruiting PhD students, it is important to check each program requirement carefully.

Teaching

The Division of Graduate Studies partners with the [Teaching Engagement Program](#) (TEP) to help support the many programs they offer to assist [graduate student teaching](#) on campus.

[Day of Teaching](#): Occurring during orientation week, this event helps all graduate student teachers access high-quality training before they enter the classroom and invites them into the vibrant and supportive UO teaching community. They will work with TEP, UO faculty, and experienced GE peers to learn inclusive, engaged, and research-led teaching practices so they can begin their UO teaching careers with confidence.

[Graduate Teaching Initiative \(GTI\)](#): This program offers UO graduate students structured and rigorous, yet flexible, pathways to develop as college teachers. Those who complete a series of core requirements earn a certificate of completion. GTI students participate in individual and small-group teaching consultations, draft a

teaching portfolio, observe classes taught by faculty and peers, and attend various workshops and conversations on teaching. In addition, students who develop a special project that makes a substantive, original contribution to the UO's community of teaching and learning can earn an advanced certificate of completion.

[Kimble First-Year Teaching Award](#): This award recognizes outstanding teaching by graduate student instructors who have demonstrated a commitment to professional development and reflective practice. The annual prizes typically are awarded to one first-time lab or discussion section leader and to one first-time sole instructor.

[Classroom Management](#): While classroom management issues are not common, they can result in a disruption of the learning environment. To help you advise graduate students as both teachers and students, you should consult resources provided by [the Office of the Provost](#), [Teaching Engagement Program](#), and [General Counsel](#).

Professional Development

The Division of Graduate Studies is committed to helping our graduate students reach their professional and academic goals by [providing workshops and opportunities](#) that support the graduate student experience. Professional development complements academic training by providing skill development opportunities tailored to graduate student needs to help ensure academic and professional success within and beyond academia.

The Division of Graduate Studies provides workshops, programs, and resources that help graduate students and postdocs develop the skills, knowledge, and mindset for both academic and professional success.

The focus of our programs is on six core competencies:

- career development;
- oral and written communication skills;
- social justice, equity, and inclusion;
- leadership and professionalism;
- personal development and wellness; and
- academic and disciplinary excellence.

Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity is a fundamental part of excellence in the graduate community at the University of Oregon. Our excellence grows only as we engage and embrace ideas and perspectives brought by individuals from differing backgrounds, cultures, and

experiences, as well as those who have been traditionally underrepresented in graduate education. An inclusive campus environment is an important component of student learning. As part of this effort, the Division of Graduate Studies [works to support programs](#) in their efforts to recruit and support diverse cohorts of students through outreach efforts, graduate application fee waivers aligned with diversity and need priorities, and the Promising Scholar Awards. The Division of Graduate Studies is presently engaged in aligning with best practices to increase equity, inclusion and inter-cultural understanding in ways that allow all graduate students to thrive and succeed.

The [Division of Equity and Inclusion](#) provides resources that are accessible by graduate students, such as the Multicultural Center and a list of campus events. Additionally, they have run the [Creating Connections](#) program, which serves underrepresented graduate students across the University of Oregon. It is a place where they can connect, engage, and partner to serve otherwise unmet needs through social gatherings and community building activities that celebrate diversity and embrace inclusion.

Graduate Research Forum

The [Graduate Research Forum](#) is a one-day event in the spring that celebrates the research, scholarship, and creative expressions of graduate students in all of the UO's colleges and schools. It regularly showcases the work of more than 100 graduate students representing more than 35 disciplines. Judges from across the university campus and community help evaluate scholarly work, and cash prizes are awarded to winners in numerous categories. Traditionally, there have been three categories of presentations. *Poster presentations* summarize research and provide a starting place for discussion. *Panels* consist of talks by three to five graduate students with a common theme. Finally, the *Three-Minute Thesis (3MT)* competition gives students one slide and a maximum of three minutes to present their research. Note that due to COVID, we did not hold a Graduate Research Forum in 2020-21, but did host a virtual 3MT event (video available [here](#)). We will be evaluating our plans for this event as the COVID situation evolves.

International Student and Scholar Services

[International Student and Scholar Services](#) (ISSS) is a unit within the [Division of Global Engagement](#). ISSS provides core services and programs to international students, visiting scholars, and international faculty at the University of Oregon. ISSS staff are available to meet with students by appointment and during drop-in advising hours. Their staff is also available to support departments in all aspects of an international student or scholar's experience on campus.

ISSS's core services include:

- Immigration document processing
- Regulatory compliance and reporting
- International employee petitions and advising
- Immigration advising
- Holistic advising and triage support
- Student retention
- Social and academic integration
- Outreach and advocacy

ISSS's core programs include:

- [Financial Aid & Scholarships](#)
- [International Student Orientation \(ISO\)](#)
- [Exchange & Sponsored Programs](#)
- [Friendship Foundation for International Students](#)
- [International Student Advisory Board](#)
- [Intercultural Programming](#)
- [International Student Intern Program](#)

New international graduate students should plan to attend the International Graduate Student Orientation, which is presented by the Division of Graduate Studies in coordination with ISSS. New international graduate students are also invited to participate in the International Student Orientation (ISO) when available.

American English Institute

The [American English Institute](#) (AEI) serves the educational mission of the University of Oregon through scholarship, English language instruction, and English language professional training. The AEI champions the University's mission of internationalization and is a leader in helping achieve the University's goals for diversity and student success. The AEI supports the University in the integration of international students into all aspects of campus life, and collaborates with faculty across campus toward creating a successful academic experience for all international students. The AEI provides services to departments and graduate students, including:

- **The TOEFL Waiver Oral Interview**, a requirement for students requesting an exception to the English Language Proficiency requirement for admission

- **SPEAK test** for non-native speakers of English who accept teaching GE positions must complete a test of their English-speaking ability and the SPEAK test is one of the accepted assessments.
- **Advanced English courses** for UO international graduate students (Graduate and Scholarly Writing I and II, Academic Discourse, Teaching in US University Settings)
- **Pre-Academic GradPrep Bootcamp (currently on hold):** A three-week intensive program, held in late August to mid-September, that prepares newly admitted graduate students for the rigors of graduate studies in US colleges and universities. Current graduate students are also welcome. GradPrep offers four hours of morning classroom work and two to three hours of afternoon seminars that include workshops, lectures, guest speakers, presentations, group projects, and field trips. Students will also have time to work on independent research tasks as time permits.

Thesis/Advisory and Dissertation Committee Structures

Dissertation Committee: The Division of Graduate Studies, in collaboration with the Graduate Council, has established a [Dissertation Committee Policy](#). The dissertation committee consists of a minimum of four members, each with a particular role: Chair, Core Member and Institutional Representative. In some departments, committees also include the role of advisor separate from the chair. The dissertation committee supervises a student's dissertation work, determines the acceptability of the dissertation, and serves as the final examining committee. The dissertation committee must be proposed to and approved by the Division of Graduate Studies via the degree-awarding department no later than six months before the date the student expects to hold their final oral defense. Each department or program determines its own internal dissertation committee approval procedures.

Master's Committee: The master's candidate's advisory/thesis committee, appointed by the department, determines the work to be completed in light of the student's academic background and objectives. There are no explicit Division of Graduate Studies guidelines for the formation and make up of this committee. The number of committee members is determined by the department. The advisor is typically a tenure-related member of the graduate faculty, though non-tenure-track faculty members may be appointed if appropriate and within departmental guidelines.

Transfer of Graduate Credit

Master's students may request to transfer a maximum of 15 graduate credits into their master's degree program. A [Request for Transfer of Graduate Credit form](#) must be

submitted no later than the end of the term prior to completion of the degree. While the transfer can be from another program at the UO or another institution, transfer credit from another institution will not count toward the requirement of 24 credits in UO graded graduate courses, nor will they be used in calculating the cumulative grade point average.

There is no formal university transfer credit process for doctoral students. Each program sets its own policy regarding acceptance of transfer credits and is responsible for tracking how transfer credits fit into departmental degree requirements. Transfer credits can only be used to meet departmental degree requirements; they cannot be used to waive or substitute for minimum university doctoral degree requirements.

Data Collection and Dissemination

In order to ensure that graduate programs and schools/colleges can make data-informed decisions and program improvements, the Division of Graduate Studies collects, analyzes and disseminates data about graduate students and graduate education to UO units and as part of national data collection efforts. In partnership with [Institutional Research](#), the Division of Graduate Studies distributes program reports to deans, department heads, and program directors on a yearly basis.

On a regular basis throughout the admissions cycle, the Division of Graduate Studies compiles data on application numbers and projected enrollments for the upcoming academic year. Finally, the Division has developed and implemented a number of surveys that provide data to graduate programs to allow them to make more informed decisions, and to increase the depth, breadth and availability of institutional knowledge for reporting and decision-making functions. These surveys include the Exit Survey, the Admitted Enrolling-Not Enrolling Survey, the Student Experience Survey and the CGS Career Pathways Surveys.

Law School

The [School of Law](#) is part of the Division of Graduate Studies and has a representative on the Graduate Council. The Division of Graduate Studies serves as a resource for law students, faculty, and staff. However, the School of Law's J.D. and LLM programs are on a semester system and they complete their own admissions process. As many of their policies are regulated by the American Bar Association, it is important that law students pay special attention to the individual policies set by the School of Law.

GradWeb

GradWeb is a customizable web-based software designed to meet the specific needs of graduate education and administration. GradWeb automates Division of Graduate Studies processes and provides for electronic interaction between the Division, departments, students, faculty, Office of Admissions, and the Office of the Registrar. The Division uses this system for the management of admissions, awards, doctoral committees, and degree completion. Revisions to GradWeb are made on an annual basis, and the Division welcomes any feedback for improvements. There are different levels of access to GradWeb for [Department Staff](#), [Faculty](#), and [Current Students](#).

The Division is in the process of retiring GradWeb. The admissions portion of GradWeb will be replaced by Slate in August 2022, and we are in the process of identifying solutions for the remaining functions of GradWeb.

Student Problem-Solving Resources

Problems in Student-Advisor Relationships: One of the most challenging jobs of a DGS is working to navigate bumpy relationships between advisors and students. This is especially difficult for PhD students, where students often rely on their advisor for letters of recommendation, potentially for their entire career. One of the best strategies is to develop a mentoring program for faculty members. Additionally, developing close relationships with the graduate students in your program will help ensure that they are willing to come talk with you when there is a problem.

While ignoring the problem and hoping it will go away may be the most common (and easiest) approach, in the long run, this will likely come back to haunt you. All it takes is one really problematic situation to make you wish you would have never taken this position in the first place. Here are some alternate strategies.

- Meet individually with either the student or advisor. Or both. Sometimes students or faculty are not aware of how their behavior is damaging this important relationship. If no one is willing to tell them, it is unreasonable to expect the behavior to change.
- Meet with the student and the advisor together. Sometimes all it takes is to have a facilitator (you) in the room - someone to offer advice or help with suggestions that they can try to move forward. Sometimes, just your presence in the room is enough.
- In addition to the advisor, it may be helpful to involve the student's other committee members. The student's committee can serve as a useful check on an unreasonable advisor, or a student with unrealistic expectations.

- Involve an outside expert. The [ombuds program](#) can offer suggestions on how to proceed in this area. In Portland, [Student Services Portland](#) is a good resource.
- Reach out to another trusted DGS. Sometimes talking to someone else might offer other ideas, or that person may have experienced something similar to what you are going through.

And if none of these approaches help, please reach out directly to the [Vice Provost for Graduate Studies or the Assistant Vice Provost for Graduate Studies](#) for assistance.

Grievances: There are two types of grievances that you might see as a DGS:

- [Academic grievances](#) (jump to section Q. Graduate Student Academic Grievances). There are four potential steps in this process:
 - step 1 - department
 - step 2 - school/college
 - step 3 - Division of Graduate Studies
 - step 4 – Provost
- Employment (GE) grievances, which are covered under Article 13 of the [CBA](#). There are three potential steps in this process:
 - step 1 - supervisor
 - step 2 - head of hiring unit
 - step 3 - UO President or designee

Note that while the Division of Graduate Studies will do its best to provide confidentiality, the General Counsel's office does not recommend promising participants confidentiality. For example, there may be mandatory reporting under our prohibited discrimination policy, there may be a mandatory reporting under the UO's child abuse policy, there may be a permissive reporting under our Title IX policy, and, if the matter proceeded to an investigation, an investigator could pursue facts by interviewing potential witnesses in order to resolve the grievance.

Sexual, Physically Intimate, or Romantic Relationships with Students: Graduate students can find themselves in a unique situation – being both students and instructors. The UO senate recently revised their [policy](#) about relationships with students. These relationships pose a potential conflict of interest in the employment or educational context when one individual has, or could reasonably expect to have, responsibility for supervising, directing, overseeing, evaluating, advising, or influencing the employment or educational status of the other.

Student Support Resources

Emergency Funds:

- The [Jesse M. Bell Graduate Loan](#) is a short-term loan available to graduate students of high academic standing to be used in the pursuit of their graduate studies at UO. Bell loans can be made up to a maximum of \$500. Repayment is due within 30, 60, or 90 days according to the conditions of the individual loan. A service charge of \$8 per loan will be charged to the student account.
- The [Graduate Student Assistance Fund](#) program is designed to assist graduate students facing financial hardship relating to a qualifying event (new child, medical issue, childcare expenses). The fund currently provides up to \$1,500, but maximum award amounts are determined by the nature of the qualifying event. The amount could change with a new CBA with the GTFF.
- [UO Emergency Loans](#) are available for up to \$300. Students apply for these loans through the Student Billing Office. Repayment terms are up to 90 days. A service charge of \$8 per loan will be charged to the student account.

Students with Disabilities: The [Accessible Education Center](#) (AEC) is a great resource for assisting students with disabilities. They facilitate and support access and inclusion for students with disabilities through collaboration and consultation with students, faculty, staff, and the community. The AEC works to create and sustain physical, curricular, and informational environments that are informed by and responsive to the diverse characteristics and experiences of students with disabilities and variations of ability.

Health Care: GEs are eligible for [insurance provided by the GTFF](#). Graduate students who are not GEs are eligible for the UO Student Health Benefit plan, administered by [University Health Services](#). University Health Services provides comprehensive primary healthcare and mental health resources, as well as a wide array of specialty services. They work to support students in reaching their optimal health so that they can achieve their full academic and personal potential. There are separate [health and wellness support services](#) for students in Portland through an agreement with Portland State University.

Mental Health: [Counseling Services](#) is a great resource for mental health resources. They provide a variety of services including individual and group therapy, crisis support, consultation, and community referrals. They strive to make students as comfortable as possible and facilitate therapy in many different settings. Groups meet every term to

discuss issues that are relevant to them and the student experience at the UO. They also offer individual therapy and can connect students with therapists in the local community. Students in Portland can reach out to [Student Life Portland](#).

Ombuds Program: The [Ombuds Program](#) offers all members of the campus community a central, safe, and easy place to gain access to support and problem-solving resources. The Ombuds Program promotes a visitor-driven process that honors the guiding principles of independence, neutrality, confidentiality, and informality. All communication with the Ombuds Program is understood to be confidential. The ombudsperson will talk you through strategies, options, and resources for addressing your concern. The office may also help you think through (or practice) a non-escalating approach for dealing directly with an issue. In Portland, students should contact the [Director of Student Services](#).

Title IX: Title IX is a comprehensive United States federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any federally funded education program or activity. The main objective of Title IX is to avoid the use of federal money in ways that support sex discrimination in education programs and to provide individuals with effective protection against those practices. In an educational institution, such as a university, Title IX also applies to any education or training program operated by a recipient of federal financial assistance. The [Office of Investigations and Civil Rights Compliance](#) handles title IX investigation at the UO.

Deputy Title IX Coordinators serve an integral function in supporting the work of the Office of Investigations and Civil Rights Compliance among various constituencies and across campuses. Reports of gender discrimination, sexual harassment and sexual violence can be made directly to Deputy Title IX Coordinators. They are also available to assist with training on Title IX reporting obligations and can serve as a resource for questions about Title IX and resources both on and off campus. Contact the [Division of Graduate Studies directly](#) if you need to reach out to the Division's Deputy Title IX Coordinator.

Leave of Absence: Whether for academic or personal reasons, there will be times when it is in the best interest of a student to take a leave of absence from their studies. Graduate students who will not be enrolled for one or more terms (excluding summer) should [apply for on-leave status](#). Only graduate students in good standing are eligible for on-leave status; if you have a student considering leave who is not in good standing, contact the Division of Graduate Studies to discuss options. The maximum number of on-leave terms is six for a doctoral student and three for a master's or certificate student.

For students who are employed as GEs, the GTFF CBA also contains provisions for [paid and unpaid absences](#), including family and medical leave.

[Division of Graduate Studies Website](#) and Staff: We are here to help. Consult our website for policies, forms, and other resources. If you're not sure who to contact with a question, you can always reach out to graduatestudies@uoregon.edu.

The screenshot shows the top portion of the University of Oregon's Division of Graduate Studies website. It features a dark green header with the university logo and name on the left. On the right, there is a navigation menu with links for 'Grad Student One Stop', 'Master's', 'Doctoral', 'Postdocs', 'International', 'GEs', 'Faculty/Staff', and 'GradWeb'. Below the navigation is a search bar with the text 'search this site' and a magnifying glass icon. Underneath the search bar is a light green navigation bar with buttons for 'Admissions', 'Academics', 'Funding and Graduate Employment', 'Professional Development', 'Campus Life', 'Diversity', and 'About Us'.

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