

Supervising Graduate Students

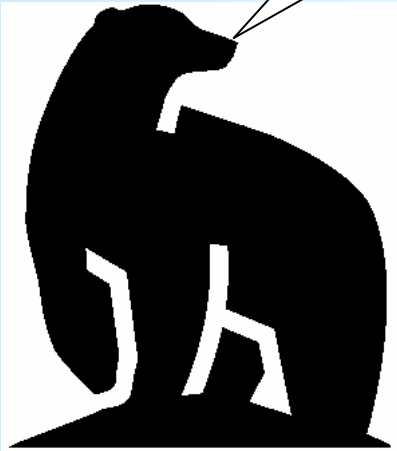
Advising Graduate Students

Mentoring Graduate Students

Working with Graduate Students

Advising
graduate
students is
EC.

EC! GRRR!



Ethics

Expertise

Experience

Communication

Consistency

Courtesy

Resources

UAF Catalog: The catalog can be viewed as part of the University's contract with the student. The catalog supersedes other documents.

Graduate School Website: www.uaf.edu/gradsch/

Graduate Advising Manual: Coming soon!

SFOS Academic Program Staff

Graduate School Staff

Program Head, Associate Dean, Dean, and Graduate School Dean

Committee Chair (major advisor) roles and responsibilities include:

Before accepting a student into your program

Beginning at the application stage, discuss academic and career goals with the student. Although it isn't easy (especially since a student's goals can change), programs and faculty should accept students whose goals and interests are consistent with what UAF and the faculty member can offer. Major advisors and committees should work with students to help them attain their goals, consistent with the academic standards and requirements of the degree program.

If the student is accepted to the department or research project with funding, be very clear about the duration of support, and the options for subsequent funding, when the funding offer is made. If any substantive changes occur, let the student know ASAP.

Provide a detailed description of the duties that will be required of an RA or TA, especially any unusual requirements:

- Remote field work (in remote field camps)
- Shipboard work
- Other travel
- Hazardous materials or activities
- Work schedule



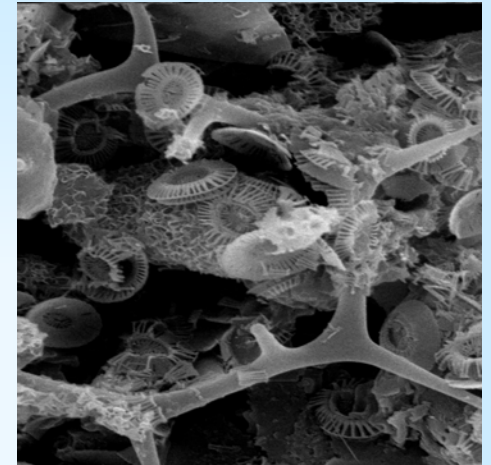
Describe thesis research topics (in general) that are consistent with the funding source and advisor expertise.

During the first year

Assist the student in the selection of the other advisory committee members.

Determine the appropriateness of the student's thesis/project topic (with other committee members).

Ensure that you and the student have obtained the required University and agency approvals for research involving human subjects, vertebrate animals, marine mammals, endangered species, public lands, radioactive materials, biohazards, hazardous materials, and any other regulated activities.



Ensure that the student obtains the training required to conduct his or her research, including training needed to meet University and regulatory requirements.

Assist the student in designing his or her research, review the final plan carefully, and approve it, in consultation with the other committee members, before the student begins work. Help the student to revise the design as needed based on the early results and other developments.

Along with other committee members, review and approve the Graduate Study Plan and the Advancement to Candidacy Form to ensure that the student is meeting all degree program requirements.

Throughout the student's program

Meet frequently with the student to follow progress and assist with problems that arise with the research or academics. Carefully review the materials the student prepares for meetings, such as progress reports.

Work with the student to set realistic timelines for completion of the research and thesis and for academic milestones such as course completion and comprehensive exams.

If the student is not meeting timelines in research or academics, meet with the student as soon as you become aware of the problem. Try to ascertain the reasons and help the student to improve their rate of progress. Or, in some circumstances, revise the timeline.



With the student, choose opportunities for them to present their work, see other research presentations, and meet other students and researchers in the field. *If possible accompany the student and make introductions.*

If the student wants a different career (e.g., agency), try to help with contacts in that organization.

Encourage the student to begin looking for jobs ca. 6 months before degree completion.

The end is near

Review drafts of the thesis or project, or portions thereof, in a timely manner. In ordinary circumstances, two to three weeks should be sufficient for a draft Master's thesis or project, and four to six weeks for a Ph.D. dissertation.

Thoroughly review the final draft of the thesis before the defense. In addition to reviewing the content, see that a high standard of writing quality is maintained throughout the thesis.

Chair the thesis defense.

Carefully review the thesis before it is printed in final form for submission to the Graduate School and confirm that all the changes required by the committee after the defense have been incorporated.

Committee roles and responsibilities include

Review and approve the Graduate Study Plan and the Advancement to Candidacy Form, including the research plans.

Check the thesis/project design before the research or project begins, and suggest needed changes.

Attend committee meetings and carefully review the materials the student prepares for them, such as progress reports.

Assist the student with research issues that fall within the committee member's special area(s) of expertise.

Thoroughly review the thesis before the defense and see that a high standard of scholarship and writing quality are maintained throughout.

Participate in the public defense of the thesis.

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Review the thesis before the final version is submitted to the Graduate School, to ensure that required corrections have been made.



Board of Regents Policy

“The University of Alaska will not permit or tolerate discrimination that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or learning environment, or that interferes with an individual's performance.”

Students and employees are protected from discrimination based on race, religion, color, national origin, citizenship, age, sex, disability, marital status, changes in marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions or parenthood.

Problems

My student is not making any (or much) progress: *Meet, identify and remove barriers, set a written schedule, require progress reports (or partial drafts), in severe cases specify consequences.*

My student is not working hard enough: *Why? Lack of direction (internal or external), lack of interest/motivation, work environment, outside factors. What level of work is “hard enough”?*

My student is overly dependent on me for directions: *Often the case, initially. Break up large tasks into smaller, easier parts, but allow and expect the student to take the initiative on these. Gradually increase the length and complexity of tasks. In some (extreme) cases, insist that the student solve some problems: “I know you can handle that yourself. Go ahead.”*

My student does not respond well to criticism, i.e., takes offense or does not improve. *Nobody likes to be criticized, and it is difficult to criticize constructively. Consider the following approach:*

- ◆ *Allot sufficient time for the meeting, without interruptions, and when neither of you is likely to be tired, hungry, or unusually cranky.*
- ◆ *Avoid criticizing in front of others, except that sometimes committees need to work as a group.*
- ◆ *Keep criticisms specific to a few issues that need improvement. If there are many such issues, prioritize and save some for later.*
- ◆ *Offer specific instructions for improvement (if appropriate) or ask the student for an improvement plan.*
- ◆ *Praise as well as criticize. Don't criticize at every encounter (the 80:20 rule works for NC:C too).*
- ◆ *Be calm and courteous, even if the student is defensive.*
- ◆ *Listen carefully to the student's response or explanation. Agree or disagree, but avoid being drawn into an argument.*
- ◆ *If the discussion is no longer constructive, end it, but offer an appointment for later.*

My student avoids me: Why? Lack of progress, your past criticism, you are too busy (or seem so). Initiate contact (try an intermediary if the student won't talk to you). Advisors do have the authority to require student attendance at reasonably scheduled meetings.

My student does poor quality work: Does the student need additional instruction on expectations? Is there insufficient time allotted to do quality work? Does the student need more supervision?

My student writes very badly: Courses, practice, Writing Center, writing TA

My student is is not complying with research ethical or regulatory requirements: As PI or co-author, you may be held responsible. Hence, this cannot be overlooked. Appropriate training is important, e.g., RCR workshops.

I think my student should not or cannot finish his or her graduate degree:

First, check this perception with other faculty (committee members, instructors of courses) and the Program Head. Do they share your views of this student?

Counsel the student about his/her prospects. Try to draw the student out and let him/her do much of the talking. Is continuing this graduate program really the student's best option? Voluntary withdrawal is much less traumatic than dismissal.

Resignations from thesis committees are strongly discouraged as an alternative to dismissals, and should not occur without consultation with the program head and Dean. A proposed policy, now under review, would require their approval of resignations.

Dismissals: Due Process and Fair Warning

Academic grounds - GPA or repeatedly failed comps or a failed defense. Recommended by committee, approved by Head, Dean, Dean of the Graduate School.

Academic misconduct-same process, but document.

Research misconduct-Contact John Blake for advice and procedures, especially if funded research, but understand that you (if the PI or a co-author) probably have some responsibility.

Lack of progress - Normally (but not always) undertaken only after the time limit for a degree program has passed. Document lack of progress with “conditional” or “unsatisfactory” Reports of Graduate Advisory Committee (may be filed much more often than annually). An explicit dismissal warning should be issued, in writing, at least one semester before the dismissal can occur.

Accentuate the Positive

Graduate education is a key part of UAF's research mission.

Graduate students help you advance your research program.

Graduate students provide new ideas and new perspectives.

Graduate students give you someone to talk to, who understands what you are talking about.

Graduate students are the future of our field(s).