

Statement of Mutual Expectations for NACS Students and Advisors

For the Period: Fall 2026 through Summer 2027

Student: _____

Advisor: _____

This Statement of Mutual Expectations (SME) is intended to describe and clarify the duties, responsibilities, and procedures that make for a productive relationship between student and advisor. The advisor and student should meet to discuss and complete the SME digitally.

All graduate assistantships are subject to UMD policies and procedures as set forth in the Graduate Catalog: <https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/policies/policies-graduate-assistantships>.

Please circle or bold appropriate answers and respond where necessary.

1. What are the student's responsibilities?
 - a. Conduct research related to dissertation.
 - b. Learn while assisting others in research that will not be in the student's dissertation.
 - i. If so, will authorship be granted?
 - c. Train others in the lab.
 - i. If so, how many hours per week?
 - d. Perform duties that involved lab maintenance and function (i.e., cleaning, ordering, etc.).
 - i. If so, list duties:
 - e. Course teaching (e.g., TA; give lectures).
2. What are the advisor's responsibilities?
 - a. Set up regular meetings
 - b. Discuss your lab environment and work ethic with your mentee
 - c. Determine the training expectations
 - d. Establish, update, and follow a training plan for your mentee; set clear and reachable milestones
 - e. Discuss career goals with your mentee
3. In addition to the advisor, who does the student report to for big picture research questions (i.e., design of experiments, preparation of grants, papers and NACS milestones, and obtain knowledge of your field)?
 - a. Just the advisor
 - b. Post doc
 - c. Grad student
 - d. Lab tech
 - e. Self-taught (i.e., read manual, online learning, workshops, read literature, etc.)

4. Who does the student report to first for technical help (i.e., conduct of experiments, analysis, statistics)?
 - a. Advisor
 - b. Post-doc
 - c. Grad student
 - d. Lab tech
 - e. Self-taught (i.e., read manual, online learning, workshops, etc.)
5. The student will respond to the advisor's communications (e.g., email) within:
 - a. 1 business day
 - b. 2 business days
 - c. Other:
6. The advisor will respond to the student's communications (e.g., email) within:
 - a. 1 business day
 - b. 2 business days
 - c. Other:
7. What kind of response turnaround time for feedback on written work should the student expect?
 - a. 1 week
 - b. 2 weeks
 - c. Other:
8. What paper and/ or conference submission deadlines should be met this year and when? Please list title and authors. If additional deadlines arise, please document in writing (e.g., email).
9. What milestone will the student achieve this year?
 - a. First year research project
 - b. Qualifying exam
 - c. Dissertation proposal
 - d. Dissertation defense

Scheduling (e.g., work hours, meetings, vacation and holiday procedures)

1. How much advance time is typically necessary for the student to request time off? (excluding illness, family leave, emergencies, jury duty, etc.)
 - a. 2 weeks
 - b. 1 week
 - c. Less than a week: How many days?
 - d. More than 1-2 weeks: How many?

2. Is the student expected to work during holiday breaks, spring break, winter term and summer term? If yes, how much and when?
3. How often will the student and advisor meet in person or remotely?
 - a. At least weekly
 - b. Bi-Weekly
 - c. Monthly
4. Can reading, analysis and writing be done remotely? Yes or No?
5. Is the student expected to communicate over the weekend? Yes or No?
6. For each term below, what are the specific goals and responsibilities of the student, and how much time should be dedicated to each per week?
 - a. Fall:
 - b. Winter:
 - c. Spring:
 - d. Summer:

Duties and Time Commitments

From the Graduate School catalog:

Departments are to provide work assignments that GAs receiving full stipends can satisfactorily complete in no more than a 20-hour average work week, and are to ensure that GAs spend no more than 20 hours per week on average throughout the term of appointment on work unrelated to their research. The actual number of hours required to complete assignments in any given week may vary.

Time Commitment: For RAs, the 20-hour average should include the time spent in library and/or laboratory, and on all other research tasks providing assistance to the assigned project. Graduate students working on research projects funded by grants are often also working on material directly related to their theses or dissertations. It is not unusual in such cases for grant work and personal work to merge and for the work time to consume far more than the usual 20-hour weekly average.

Time Commitment: For TAs, the 20-hour average should include the time spent in faculty lectures, class preparation, classroom or laboratory teaching, reading and commenting on student papers or examinations, office consultation, and other duties required to carry out the teaching role.

Please note that all graduate assistantships are subject to University of Maryland policies and procedures as set forth in the Graduate Catalog: academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/policies/policies-graduate-assistantships. Nothing in the SME should contradict them, but if they do, the Graduate Catalog policies and procedures govern.

Applying for Internal Fellowships or External Funding

1. Do you plan to apply for internal or external fellowships/grants this year? Yes or No?
2. If yes, which ones do you plan to apply for?

Long term career goals

1. What are the student's long term career goals?
2. What progress will be made toward them?

Other Notes:

NACS Mentoring Statement

The NACS Mentoring Statement can be found on the NACS home page under Items of Interest. Both mentor and mentee should read the NACS Mentoring Statement.

Please note: If either party is not following the agreed upon expectations in this SME, please inform Jonathan Simon.

We have met to review and discuss this agreement on the date noted below. The advisor gave the student an opportunity to ask and receive answers to any questions:

Student

Name: _____ **Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____

Advisor

Name: _____ **Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____