

Expectations for Faculty Advising and Mentoring of ENST Graduate Students

Graduate faculty in **Environmental Science and Technology** are dedicated to graduate students' success. This document lays out our defining principles concerning advising of Master's and PhD students. By the time a new graduate student arrives in the ENST program, they already have been assigned a Graduate Advisor who will serve as their primary mentor. ENST graduate students may also benefit from mentoring by other faculty members who may or may not serve on their advisory committee, and they are encouraged to develop a network of mentoring relationships. Most of the comments in this document, however, understand the student's primary mentor to be their Faculty Graduate Advisor (who is chair of their advisory committee).

Key Departmental Goals

The ENST faculty have identified key goals for the graduate program. Faculty that mentor graduate students are agreeing to:

- Meet regularly with their mentees
- Effectively communicate expectations and provide regular feedback on progress.
- Foster excellence in research.
- Encourage excellence in education
- Promote a vibrant intellectual environment.
- Promote professional and career development.
- Cultivate ethical behavior in research practices and publishing.
- Foster independence.
- Create healthy learning spaces.
- Address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Key Department Values

- **Demonstrate respect** for the mentee's time, research, and professional goals. The mentor is an important source of advice and guidance but should respect the mentee's independence and autonomy. The mentee should also respect the mentor's time, research, and professional goals.
 - As students begin their program, mentors should explicitly discuss expectations of time spent doing research and other duties. Based on UMD policies, ENST graduate students are entitled to two weeks of collegially supported absence (i.e. vacation) per year and students on 12 month GAs are expected to work during the summer.
 - The mentor and mentee should be clear about proper lines of communication—meetings, email, texting, calling. This should include discussing comfort levels regarding contact in the evenings and weekends.

- The mentor and mentee should discuss ownership and storage of data (both written and digital) and make a reasonable plan for data publishing and archiving.
- The mentor and mentee should be clear on the timeline and benchmarks (see appendix) for completing the program and make every effort to meet this timeframe. Master's students typically complete the program in 2 to 2.5 years and PhD's in 4 to 5 years.
-

● **Practice professional behavior.** All parties will be professional in their interactions with each other.

- Mentors should model professional behavior and provide opportunities for mentees to practice similar skills at venues such as department seminars, department poster sessions, and scientific meetings.
- Mentors should facilitate introductions and encourage students to interact with other faculty members, colleagues, and stakeholders (when appropriate) to also build professional interpersonal skills.

● **Engage in transparent communication** about expectations of both parties. Demands of the program may vary at different stages (e.g. when the student is undertaking field or laboratory studies or when the student is heavily engaged in writing.) The mentor and mentee should have continual discussions about their expectations so that they are always transparent. Clear communication can help reduce misunderstandings and build trusting relationships.

- Mentors should meet with mentees at the beginning of each semester to agree on mutual expectations. This can be facilitated by both parties agreeing to a formal statement of mutual expectations. These conversations should include discussions of teaching assignments, responsibilities within the research group, and the mentees own research goals and progress.
- Mentors and mentees should establish a regular meeting schedule. Within ENST, graduate students typically meet once a week or once every two weeks with their faculty mentors (at an absolute minimum, no less than once a month).
- Mentors should assist mentees in establishing a committee by the end of their first semester (Master's) or second semester (PhD). Mentors should facilitate a meeting of the committee shortly after and then annually.
- Mentors and mentees should complete the ENST graduate student annual report form by the end of Spring semester each year.

● **Be responsive.** Mentors and mentees should be responsive to each other. They should agree on how quickly they will respond to each other, the setting of any work-life boundaries, and what topics are appropriate beyond professional development, graduate assistantship (GA) responsibilities and thesis and dissertation research. The mentor and mentee should discuss and agree the appropriate time frame to provide/receive responses on emails, drafts, etc.

- Mentors typically work closely with students. They should be clear in their role as a professional mentor to oversee research projects and assist the student in becoming

a more well-rounded professional.

- The mentor should also consider and clearly communicate if they are able to be a source of support for mentees during times of professional and personal challenges. Mentors should be aware of University resources such as counseling services.

● **Provide recourse and alternatives.** In many cases mentors and mentees enter into a professional/mentoring relationship before they know each other, and occasionally challenges arise in the relationship (often as a result of inadequate communication or a difference in expectations). Every effort should be made to settle difficulties, and the mentor should take the initiative and seek to resolve issues quickly. If they are unable to sort through and resolve differences, the mentor and mentee should seek guidance from the graduate director or department chair. If issues remain unresolvable, then the mentee may change mentors. However, funding is not necessarily guaranteed when there is a change in mentors, and the original mentor is not obligated to financially support a mentee that changes mentors.

- Mentors should encourage students to attend the yearly graduate student orientation held by the ENST Director of Graduate Studies.
- Mentors should make clear that students should address concerns first to the Director of Graduate Studies and secondly to the ENST Department Chair, before taking issues to entities outside of the department.
- Mentees should also be aware of GATES, the ENST graduate student organization, and consider attending regular meetings.

Appendix – ENST Benchmarks for full time Graduate Students

Benchmarks for Full Time ENST PhD Students.								
	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4	
	S1	S2	S1	S2	S1	S2	S1	S2
Initial meeting with academic advisor	X							
Formation and meeting of advisory committee		X		X		X		X
Completion of Plan of Study		X						
Completion of Entrance Seminar				X				
Complete the majority of formal coursework				X				
Complete the comprehensive exams					X			
Approval of dissertation proposal				X				
Advance to candidacy						X		
Completion of Exit Seminar								X
Complete/defend the dissertation								X
Complete the program/graduate								X
Submission of Annual Report		X		X		X		X
Scheduling/completion of departmental teaching ¹								

Benchmarks for Full Time ENST MS Students.				
	Year 1		Year 2	
	S1	S2	S1	S2
Initial meeting with academic advisor	X			
Formation and meeting of advisory committee		X		X
Approval of Plan of Study		X		
Completion of Entrance Seminar		X		
Complete the majority of formal coursework			X	
Approval of research proposal/plan		X		
Completion of exit seminar				X
Complete/defend the thesis				X ²
Submission of Annual Report		X		X
Scheduling/completion of departmental teaching ²				

¹ As stated in the ENST Graduate Handbook, teaching is considered a valuable and integral component of the graduate education experience, and all ENST graduate students are expected to undertake a teaching assignment during their graduate program (see Grad Handbook for more details)

² In order for research in some disciplines to be publishable, it must include data from two summer field seasons, and in those cases, a more reasonable benchmark to *Complete/defend the thesis* would be the 1st (Fall) semester of Year 3.