

Expectations for Graduate Education

Division of Graduate Studies

Kent State University

Introduction

This document outlines the expectations for graduate students, graduate program faculty, academic departments and programs, and Graduate Studies across all the university's campuses. Working groups consisting of graduate associate deans, faculty, professional staff and graduate students from across the university compiled the expectations.

All members of the university community share responsibility for ensuring that these expectations are upheld. The expectations are grouped under six headings: (1) progress toward degree, (2) research and ethics, (3) teaching and training, (4) professional development, (5) assistantships and financial support, (6) community and (7) health and wellness.

This document is made available to all graduate students, faculty, staff and administrators in all colleges, departments, and administrative units.

Definition of a Graduate Student

A graduate student is an individual who has earned a bachelor's degree and is pursuing additional education in a specific field. The additional education may include degrees or non-degree studies, and be either full- or part- time, at any of the campuses or programs of Kent State University. Graduate students are in the process of advancing from receiving knowledge to creating, enhancing, and taking ownership of new knowledge.

Graduate students have various backgrounds, life experiences, and goals. Graduate students have diverse needs and responsibilities in multiple roles at Kent State University, such as student, researcher, educator, mentor, emerging and advancing professional, engaged scholar, and responsible citizen.

Working Together

Kent State University's [Mission](#): "We transform lives and communities through the power of discovery, learning and creative expression in an inclusive environment."

Kent State lists "[Students First](#)" as their number one strategic priority to "Provide an inclusive and engaged living-learning environment where all students thrive and graduate as informed citizens committed to a life of impact."

To fulfill this mission, Kent State University seeks to instill in each student an understanding of and capacity for scholarship, independent critical judgment, academic rigor, and intellectual integrity. It is the joint responsibility of faculty, staff and graduate students to work together to foster these ends through relationships that encourage freedom of inquiry, demonstrate personal and professional integrity, and foster mutual respect.

Graduate students work closely with faculty to acquire the skills of academic disciplines and to create and synthesize knowledge needed to address the complex issues of society through disciplinary and

interdisciplinary research, scholarship and creativity. Graduate education is a critical component in the development of new knowledge, analysis of current research, development of new ideas, innovation, and dissemination of scholarship within and beyond the university.

Building a graduate community for quality graduate education depends upon the professional and ethical conduct of faculty, staff and students. Each party in the graduate process—that is, the faculty, the graduate students, the graduate department or program—has particular responsibilities and expectations in ensuring the achievement of these primary goals.

A Note about Academic Civility

Academic culture values intellectual freedom and accomplishment as it seeks to explore and develop new ideas. The critical examination of ideas is sometimes accompanied by intense disagreement. In this environment, graduate students have opportunities to gain knowledge, develop the ability to think critically, and improve skills of persuasion. Graduate and professional training gives students both the intellectual capacity and the courage needed to confront complex challenges they will face in the future. The highest level of academic work is accompanied by free and robust debate and deliberation within the University's community.

Kent State University remains a supportive environment where students can grow through the exploration and articulation of ideas. Our community values its commitment to civility in academic discourse. The [university policy regarding faculty code of professional ethics](#) describes the responsibilities of faculty to their students, the university and their profession. All university employees must comply with the standards as stated in the [employee code of conduct](#). They include expectations for each individual employee:

- To maintain a professional demeanor.
- To respect the dignity and well-being of others.
- To respect and safeguard the rights and property of others.
- To prohibit discrimination while respecting the differences in people, ideas and opinions.
- To practice personal and professional integrity.

Graduate students, too, should strive to meet these expectations.

If graduate students experience behavior that goes beyond academic disagreement, they are encouraged to meet with their active advisors, program directors, departmental chairpersons and/or the student ombuds.

Expectations for Graduate Education: Graduate Students

Graduate students in all programs are expected to gain expertise in an area of study and, especially in doctoral programs, to expand the knowledge of the field or to push disciplinary boundaries by discovering and pursuing a topic of scholarly inquiry and research. As junior colleagues and professionals-in-training, graduate students will learn to communicate disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge through a variety of forms of instruction and dissemination of work.

Progress Toward Degree

Graduate students are expected to:

- Work within the guidelines provided by the program, department, school or college and participate in selecting appropriate advisors and committee members for dissertations, theses, and projects.
- Devote an appropriate amount of time and energy toward achieving academic excellence and earning the advanced degree or certificate. Estimated time and effort needed for success in traditional courses, research, thesis and dissertation hours are outlined in your department/college graduate handbook. Work with advisors to plan and structure time toward completion of dissertations, thesis and projects. A full-time assistantship amounts to an average of 20 hours of work per week, independent of time spent on courses or tasks related to research and dissertation credit hours.
- Take primary responsibility to inform themselves of and conduct themselves in accordance with the [Division of Graduate Studies policies and procedures](#), specific program requirements, and standards of performance established by faculty and articulated in department, school or college graduate student handbooks and their respective professional associations or organizations. Students should obtain and review their department, school or college graduate student handbook.
- Maintain [good academic standing](#). For most students this includes maintaining a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0. Refer to the [College of Podiatric Medicine's section](#) in the University Catalog for GPA expectations for students seeking the Doctor of Podiatric Medicine degree.
- Take the initiative to ask questions that will promote understanding of the academic requirements of specific graduate programs and consult program, department, school, or college graduate student handbooks.
- Fulfill the requirements of programs in a timely manner. Each department, school, or college may have different policies regarding progression criteria and time limits to degrees. Review the department, school, or college graduate student handbook to discern progression criteria and time limits specific to your degrees. Meet with advisors regularly to discuss progress toward degree completion.
- [Understand the graduate student leave of absence policy and your specific program plan of study](#). Inform faculty advisors and graduate program coordinators of any leaves of absence that may be needed, as well as dates of departure and expected dates of return. Note that international students have [additional requirements for approved leaves of absence](#); consult staff in the Office of Global Education (OGE) for details. In addition, inform faculty advisors and graduate program coordinators of any changes in plans of study, such as going from full-time to part-time.

- For international students, recognize that the immigration form specifies the normal length of the academic program. [Extensions to the immigration](#) form may be requested based on academic and other reasons; consult with OGE staff for more information.

Research and Ethics

It is expected that graduate students will:

- Communicate regularly with faculty advisors and committee members, especially on matters related to research, academic progress, concerns, and problems within their graduate program.
- Request clear guidelines of expectations from the supervising faculty members on research activities, including timetables for deliverables.
- Recognize that faculty advisors and committee members are responsible for guiding graduate student research; however, students are responsible for conducting independent research required for graduate degrees.
- Recognize the time constraints and other demands imposed on faculty members and program staff.
- Exercise honest and ethical behavior in all academic pursuits, whether these pertain to study, course work, research, engagement, or teaching. Refer to Kent State University's [Code of Student Conduct and policies on academic misconduct](#), including cheating and plagiarism, and sexual misconduct.
- Acknowledge the contributions of faculty and other members of the research team in all publications and conference presentations. Work with faculty to agree as early as possible upon authorship or acknowledgements commensurate with levels of contributions to the work. Recognize that research results, with appropriate acknowledgement, may be incorporated into progress reports, summary documents, applications for continuation of funding, and similar documents authored by faculty advisors, to the extent that the students' research is related to the faculty advisors' research programs.
- Work with faculty to understand and follow Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects (IRB) and the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) guidelines and complete required [Office of Research Compliance guidelines](#) training when pursuing projects requiring human or animal subjects.
- Know and follow the Kent State University [policies on intellectual property](#).

Teaching and Training

Graduate students are expected to:

- Attend appropriate training for instructional roles asked to undertake. Attend the teaching assistant day of training during graduate student orientation. Attend department, school or college trainings when requested.
- Respond to evaluations of teaching.
- Pursue, to the extent possible, teaching and training opportunities that are relevant to career expectations and enhance teaching to diverse learners and populations.
- Devote time and commitment to instructional duties in order to provide high-quality education to students.
- Engage in ethical conduct in- and outside of the classroom. Be aware of and respect interpersonal boundaries between yourselves and the students you teach.

Professional Development

It is expected that graduate students will:

- Pursue professional training programs, seminars, and courses that enhance professional and personal growth and development and help build a broad network of professional contacts. Review the Division of Graduate Studies and Graduate Student Senate websites to learn about some of these professional development opportunities.
- Seek out mentors and advisors to help prepare for professional careers and responsibilities.
- Work continuously to develop skills in writing, publication, professional speaking and critical thinking. Contribute, to the extent possible, to the discourse of the scholarly discipline through presentations, publications, collaborative projects, and other means.
- Pursue and secure funding for conference attendance through Kent State University Graduate Student Senate and other department, school, college and research funding opportunities.

Assistantships and Financial Support

If appointed to graduate assistantships (GA), graduate students are expected to:

- Request clear guidelines for graduate assistantships from the appropriate faculty or staff members. Understand assistantship requirements.
- Fulfill the responsibilities and requirements of appointments as stated in the contractual agreement with the department, school or college. Students on full-time assistantships are expected to work an average of 20 hours/week. These hours are in addition to the hours required for coursework and individual thesis/dissertation research.
- Act in a professional manner in all aspects of their duties as graduate assistants.
- Distinguish tasks that are not related to or are in excess of contractual obligations and discuss this with supervisors and program coordinators. This includes work on assigned projects that, on average over the course of a semester, are in excess of the hours stipulated in contractual agreements.
- Recognize that international students are strictly limited by immigration law to 20 hours of employment per week while classes are in session. They may work up to 28 hours per week during breaks.
- Recognize that fellowships carry with them responsibilities that might be different than assistantships.
- Report any additional employment beyond the assistantship or fellowship through the Leave of Absence Workflow available in the student tab in Flashline.
- Avoid situations that can result in conflicts of interest. See the [university's conflict of interest policies and procedures for more information](#).

Community

It is expected that graduate students will:

- Uphold, in their own classrooms, research groups and laboratories, an ethos of collegiality and collaboration.
- Contribute to the department, school or college and university communities to the extent that you are able.
- Act fairly, impartially, professionally, and in the student's best interest in all dealings with graduate students, in accordance with [university policies governing non-discrimination and](#)

[harassment of all kinds.](#)

- Contribute to the mission of Kent State University by providing high-quality teaching to undergraduate students, supporting the scholarly activities of fellow graduate students, and upholding the public-service aspects of the university mission.
- Behave consistently with Kent State University culture of care and [Core Values](#), as a community member who respects and celebrates diversity.
- Exemplify in all actions ‘Flashes take care of Flashes’.

Health, Wellness and Self-Care

- Recognize that health and wellness are essential for achieving full potential as a student.
- Manage stress, especially at times of peak stress during each semester. Be an active consumer of health, wellness and self-care resources at Kent State University.
- Seek out information about ways to live a healthy lifestyle.
- Communicate early with course instructors or advisors if experiencing health-related problems.
- Know and abide by Kent State University health-related policies, e.g. no-smoking and no-tobacco on campus, [Flashes Safe Seven](#) principles and other Covid-19 safe practices.

Expectations for Graduate Education: Faculty

Members of the graduate faculty and others who have supervisory relationships with graduate students serve a variety of critical roles including model teachers and researchers, advisors, committee members, and mentors. Graduate faculty provide intellectual guidance and support for graduate students' scholarly and pedagogical efforts and are responsible for the ongoing evaluation of graduate students' performance in academic, research, and scholarly and creative activities. As mentors and advisors, faculty are responsible for helping graduate students discover and participate in appropriate channels of scholarly, professional, and disciplinary exchange. In addition, faculty are responsible for helping graduate students develop the professional research, teaching, and networking skills required for a variety of career options, both within and outside academia. Faculty working with graduate students must be familiar with policies and practices related to graduate study as outlined in their unit and college handbook and in university policy. In addition, the expectations articulated here convey a broader sense of how faculty interact with and support graduate students.

Progress Toward Degree

- It is expected that faculty will take a variety of measures, consistent with their role and program, to support the academic progress of graduate students:
- Advise students to ensure the courses they take align with timely progress and student interests.
- Establish a meeting schedule that has been mutually agreed upon with their graduate students.
- Provide timely feedback to students during coursework and during thesis/dissertation process.
- Take reasonable measures to ensure that graduate students who initiate thesis or dissertation research do so in a timely fashion.
- Communicate expectations of graduate students by providing clear descriptions of the requirements each student must meet, including course work, research tools, examinations, and thesis or dissertation work.
- Conduct student evaluations that are factual, specific, and based on criteria that are understood by both the faculty advisor and the student.

Research and Ethics

It is expected that faculty will:

- Provide intellectual guidance on and promote rigor in students' educational programs and specific research projects.
- Provide students with knowledge of the current frontiers and opportunities in disciplinary and inter-or cross-disciplinary research.
- Provide appropriate guidelines for completion of research projects.
- Create an environment of the highest ethical standards and act as role models for ethical behavior in all professional activities.
- Treat all students fairly and assess their work in meaningful ways, consistent with the discipline. Assessment of work should be judged by academic scholarly merit alone.
- Promote a collaborative environment when serving on student committees.

- Recognize graduate student participation in supervised research and ensure that ethical standards of attribution and acknowledgment in collaborative settings are followed.
- Work with graduate students to agree as early as possible upon authorship positions and acknowledgments commensurate with levels of contributions to the work.
- Work with students to understand and follow [Office of Research Compliance guidelines](#).
- Mentor and monitor students' compliance with standards of academic integrity, including avoiding [plagiarism and other violations according to university policy](#).
- Recognize the power structures inherent in faculty-student relationships and avoid engaging in conduct that exploits or demeans students or that could be construed as an abuse of that power.
- Refrain from allowing personal animosities or intellectual differences with colleagues to impede student access to those colleagues or interfere with students' research or progress toward a degree.
- Ensure a safe and secure working environment.
- Direct students to the [Office of the Student Ombuds](#) for any university related concerns or grievances.

Teaching and Training

It is expected that faculty will:

- Encourage and assist students in developing teaching and presentation skills that meet the needs of diverse learners and populations.
- Help students develop interpretive, writing, oral, and qualitative and quantitative skills, in accordance with the expectations of the discipline.
- Assist graduate students in developing grant-writing skills, where appropriate.
- Provide resources and training for any equipment, instruments, laboratory procedures, or field skills that are necessary for the student's research and/or teaching program.
- Model and mentor ethical practices in teaching and training.

Professional Development

It is expected that faculty will:

- Encourage graduate students to participate in professional meetings or to display their work in public forums and exhibitions.
- Model and mentor ethical professional behavior, and engage in discussions about managing situations that would be considered as unethical.
- Encourage graduate students to pursue professional training programs, seminars, and courses that will enhance their professional and personal growth and development.
- Prepare students to be competitive for employment, which includes portraying a realistic view of the field and the job market and making use of professional contacts for the benefit of their students. See the Graduate Studies website for [Professional Development Programs](#).
- Encourage graduate students to develop skills in establishing an appropriate balance between work responsibilities and personal life.
- Maintain support for advisees beyond graduation.

Assistantships and Financial Support

It is expected that faculty will:

- Assign tasks to graduate assistants that are within the scope of their contractual obligations.
- Communicate clear expectations around requirements associated with students' assistantship aligning with both university and unit policy and practice.
- Adhere to all university policies regarding graduate student employees.
- Recognize that students on graduate assistantships (GAs, GRAs, & GTAs) should not be expected to work on assistantship responsibilities, on average over the course of a semester, in excess of the hours for which they are being paid (e.g., average of 20 hours/week for students on full-time assistantship).
- Recognize that the employment of international students in F-1 and J-1 visa status is strictly limited by immigration regulations and assist international students to stay within these limitations. Staff should assist and guide international students to stay within these limitations and consult with the Office of Global Education and International Student and Scholar Services if questions about the status of an international student arise.
- Regularly evaluate graduate assistants.

Community

It is expected that faculty will:

- Demonstrate and encourage collegiality with students, faculty, and staff.
- Act fairly, impartially, professionally, and in the student's best interest in all dealings with graduate students, in accordance with university policies governing nondiscrimination of graduate students on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age, ethnic background, disability, religion, national origin, or any other factor unrelated to competence or performance. Act fairly, impartially, professionally, and in the student's best interest in all dealings with graduate students, in accordance with [university policies governing non-discrimination and harassment of all kinds](#).
- Follow FERPA guidelines, which mandate a student's right to reasonable privacy and confidentiality in all communications among students, professors, staff, and administrators.
- Behave consistently with Kent State University [Core Values](#), as a community member who respects and celebrates diversity.
- Adopt "Students First" as a strategic priority.
- Exemplify in all actions "Flashes take care of Flashes."

Health, Wellness and Self-Care

- Recognize that health and wellness are essential for achieving positive student learning.
- Assist students with resources to manage stress, especially at times of peak stress during each semester. Ensure that students know about health, wellness and self-care resources at Kent State University.
- Encourage students to seek out information about ways to live a healthy lifestyle.
- Communicate early with students experiencing health-related problems.
- Know and abide by Kent State University health-related policies, e.g. no-smoking and no-tobacco on campus, [Flashes Safe Seven](#) principles and other Covid-19 safe practices..

Expectations for Graduate Education: Staff

Members of the university staff who have working relationships with graduate students serve a variety of critical roles such as providing assistance with progress toward degree, research and ethics, teaching and training, professional development, assistantships and financial services, and being an active member of the Kent State University community.

Progress toward Degree

It is expected that staff will:

- Support the academic progress of graduate students in their program.
- Inform graduate students of the requirements for the academic program, including the expected time-to-degrees, the plan of study, and availability of required courses.
- Provide accurate, timely, and clearly stated information regarding university policies and procedures appropriate to individual circumstances (e.g., academic conditions, transfer of credit, leave of absence, re-enrollment).
- Assist graduate students with scheduling of courses when needed.
- Support and respect graduate students' work-personal life balance.

Research and Ethics

It is expected that staff will:

- Create an environment of the highest ethical standards and act as role models for ethical behavior in all professional activities.
- In activities in which staff members engage outside the university, it is plainly their responsibility to make it clear, when circumstances require, that they are acting as individuals and not as representatives of the university.
- Treat all graduate students equitably and justly.
- Provide graduate students with a safe working environment.
- Follow FERPA guidelines.
- Avoid situations that might create conflict of interest for graduate students.
- Educate and work with students to understand and follow [Office of Research Compliance guidelines](#), when appropriate.

Teaching and Training

It is expected that staff will:

- Provide the appropriate training, assistance, and mentorship to graduate teaching assistants. Staff should encourage reflection upon and evaluation of teaching duties, with the goal of continuously improving the quality of the education provided to Kent State students.
- Model and create a culture of safety in the research environment that includes the proper training, planning, and guidance. Staff members should create a culture that will not tolerate unsafe or inappropriate acts by others.

Professional Development

It is expected that staff will:

- Provide information to graduate students about professional meetings, public forums, and exhibitions relevant to their area of study.
- Provide information about additional resources outside the academic department or area of study that would contribute to a graduate students' overall professional growth and development
- Recognize that continual learning is a vital part of graduate student development at Kent State.
- Contribute to personal and professional development by attending varied learning opportunities that will result in improved performance for staff and their work group.

Assistantships and Financial Support

It is expected that staff will:

- Avoid assigning tasks to graduate assistants that are not related to or are in excess of their contractual obligations.
- Recognize that students on graduate assistantships (GAs, GRAs, & GTAs) should not be expected to work on assistantship responsibilities, on average over the course of a semester, in excess of the hours for which they are being paid (e.g., average of 20 hours/week for students on full-time assistantship).
- Recognize that the employment of international students in F-1 and J-1 visa status is strictly limited by immigration regulations and assist international students to stay within these limitations. Staff should assist and guide international students to stay within these limitations and consult with the Office of Global Education and International Student and Scholar Services if questions about the status of an international student arise.

Community

It is expected that staff will:

- Demonstrate and encourage collegiality with students, faculty and staff.
- Act fairly, impartially, professionally, and in the student's best interest in all dealings with graduate students, in accordance with [university policies governing non-discrimination and harassment of all kinds](#).
- Behave consistently with Kent State University [Core Values](#), as a community member who respects and celebrates diversity.
- Adopt "Students First" as a strategic priority.
- Exemplify in all actions 'Flashes take care of Flashes.'

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- Encourage students to seek out information about ways to live a healthy lifestyle.
- Communicate early with students experiencing health-related problems.
- Know and abide by Kent State University health-related policies, e.g. no-smoking and no-tobacco on campus, [Flashes Safe Seven](#) principles and other Covid-19 safe practices.

Health and Wellness Resources

[University Health Services: 330-672-2322](#)

- [Psychological Services: 330-672-2487](#)
- [KSU Nurse Line: 330-672-2326](#)
- [University Health Promotion](#)
- [Women's Clinic: 330-672-8264](#)
- [Travel Clinic: 330-672-2232](#)

[The Counseling Center: 330-672-2208](#)

[Psychological Clinic: 330-672-2372](#)

[KSU Coronavirus Updates](#)

[Center for Sexual and Relationship Violence Support Services: 330-672-8016](#)

- [SRVSS Resources for Faculty and Staff](#)
- [Kent Campus Resources](#)
- [Regional Campus Resources](#)
- [Off-Campus Resources](#)

[Student Ombuds: 330-672-9494/ombuds@kent.edu](#)

[Women's Center: 330-672-9230](#)

- [Women's Center Support Services](#)
- [Women's Center Resources](#)
- [Food Pantry](#)
- [Career Closet](#)

[LGBTQ+ Center](#)

[Office of Global Education International Students and Scholar Services](#)

[OGE Resources for Faculty & Staff](#)

[Center for Adult and Veteran Services](#)

- [Single Parents](#)

[Student Health Insurance Plan](#)

- [International Students Enrollment and Waiver](#)
- [Graduate Assistants' Enrollment website](#) (International GA's complete the GA enrollment form at <https://requestcoverage.uhcsr.com/kent>)
- [Voluntary Enrollment website](#)
- [University Policy Regarding International Students' Health Insurance Requirement](#)

