**Goals and Expectations for Graduate Students and Their Mentors**

To make the experience as rewarding as possible, graduate students should be aware of the expectations on them. Conversely, their mentors also are expected to uphold certain responsibilities. Each graduate student’s experience is different and much depends on the person’s previous experience and the nature of the needed work. Therefore, it is necessary to keep a running dialog between all parties because things often change over time and with new projects.

**Graduate student’s Goals & Expectations**

* Graduate students should ensure that at least 75% of their time overlaps with the 9am – 5pm schedule. ***Regular work schedules are best*** (particularly in the beginning stages) to ensure that the mentor will be available for support. Graduate students should report absences to their mentors (and any other collaborators) out of courtesy.
* Graduate students must adhere to all ***safety protocols*** of the lab. Best safety practices recommend closed-toed shoes and pants.
* Graduate students must adhere to all ***scientific integrity practices***. Fabrication, falsification, and forgery are not tolerated and will result in severe action.
* Graduate students ***are part of the lab***. They are expected to perform all the roles of a lab member such as attending lab meetings and re-ordering items when they run low.
* Graduate students are expected to keep a ***standard lab notebook*** and well-organized, annotated electronic files. All notes, (notebook and electronic files) should be subject to periodic review to ensure that relevant information is retained.
* A goal of the graduate student should be to ***conduct good, consistent, and efficient research***. Graduate students should aim to be able to report the goal and overarching question of their project coherently. They are required to clearly and effectively articulate their progress and results.
* A goal of a graduate student should be to progressively acquire a ***sense of ownership*** of their project. This will involve thinking through experiments an possible new directions. It will require a growing understanding of their field and the acquisition of new skills. This will require reading papers, staying up to date on new techniques, and reaching out to other scientists.
* A goal of a graduate student should be to build their ***professional skills***. This includes command of their field, effective communication, professional conduct, and emotional intelligence.
* Graduate students should ask ***questions, questions, questions***! If something is unclear, or even a little bit fuzzy, feel empowered to ask specific questions or just to have things explained again.
* If there is any ***problem*** with the project, understanding, or the working environment, the graduate student should try as best as possible to communicate their concerns.

**Mentor Goals & Expectations**

* Mentors are expected to inform graduate students of any ***absences*** and recommend other mentors during their absences. Mentors are expected to outline times and periods to ‘check in’ on the progress of the project and to check that the best methods are employed to ensure success. This can be once a week, at certain points in each protocol, or progressively as needed.
* Mentors must inform graduate students of all ***safety practices and scientific integrity practices*** that are standard in their field.
* Mentors are expected to outline the ***goals and techniques*** used in the project clearly. If there is any confusion, mentors are expected to be approachable and set aside time and effort to clarify any confusion. Mentors should provide sufficient background information for techniques, approaches, and projects.
* Mentors should try to ***include*** graduate students in lab discussions, meetings, or journal clubs, as they are applicable.
* Mentors should make it a goal to ***become better mentors***, to hone their skills in project design, management, and instruction. They should also work on effective communication, rapport, approachability, professional conduct and emotional intelligence.
* If there is any problem with the project, understanding, or the working environment, the mentor should try to ***communicate their concerns***.
* Mentors are expected to foster the future ***professional development*** of their graduate students after they leave the lab. They are expected to write letters of recommendation.

Science can be both joy and frustration and it is important to understand that both are a normal part of laboratory work. When working in this unpredictable yet also exciting framework, good communication between mentors and mentees will help keep the project on track and keep people from feeling like they are going crazy. If at any time anyone feels that some aspect of the work, the research, or the relationship is not working, please make the best effort to talk about these issues so they can be addressed and resolved.