

Guidelines for a successful advisor-advisee relationship, Version 2.1¹

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Boozhoo/hello!

This document provides a guiding framework for how our advisor–advisee relationship will function during your time in your graduate program. Its purpose is to offer clarity, support, and shared expectations so that you can navigate your academic journey with confidence and transparency. While not a formal contract, it serves as a resource you can consult at any point to understand how we work together, what you can expect from me, and what responsibilities you carry as an advisee.

This document is also a living text. Over time, I expect that the framework outlined here may be revisited and refined. You are encouraged to take an active role in shaping it—your experiences, insights, and perspectives are essential to ensuring that our broader academic community remains supportive, ethical, and responsive to the people within it.

Advisor–Advisee² Expectations and Responsibilities

This document outlines shared expectations designed to support a productive, respectful, and ethically grounded advising relationship. It serves as a reference point for both advisor and advisee, ensuring clarity around roles, responsibilities, boundaries, and communication practices throughout the course of graduate study.

Advisor Responsibilities

Advising and mentoring graduate students is a central faculty responsibility, requiring professionalism, integrity, responsiveness, and sustained engagement. The advisor–advisee relationship is a professional partnership focused on intellectual development, scholarly training, and preparation for diverse academic and non-academic career pathways.

¹ Current as of November 26, 2025.

² These guidelines also apply to the broader mentor–mentee relationships; although this document uses the terms *advisor* and *advisee*, its principles are equally relevant to any formal or informal mentorship I provide.

As your advisor, I am committed to the following:

Academic Guidance

- Meeting with you on a regular basis to discuss progress, challenges, and next steps.
- Providing guidance on course selection, program requirements, and intellectual directions.
- Offering careful, constructive support in selecting and refining your thesis or dissertation topic, preparing your proposal, developing research questions, and planning for comprehensive exams and final defenses.

Responsiveness and Feedback

- Responding to communication with reasonable promptness: acknowledgments within 24–48 hours and substantive responses within 72–96 hours.
- Reading and commenting on drafts, thesis chapters, and related scholarly work in a timely manner, with clear expectations for turnaround times established in advance for larger submissions.

Professional Development

- Supporting your development as an emerging scholar and professional, including guidance on:
 - funding and fellowship opportunities;
 - research and archival resources;
 - community partnerships and relationship-building;
 - conferences, networking, and professional associations;
 - preparing job materials and job talks.
- Providing letters of recommendation for fellowships, teaching/research assistant positions, tenure-track academic positions, professional roles, and other opportunities, with appropriate notice and information from you.

Ethics, Equity, and Compliance³.

- Adhering strictly to all university policies on ethics, research conduct, sexual misconduct, harassment, discrimination, conflicts of interest, and professional behaviour
- Ensuring that research under my supervision meets all ethical requirements, including protocols involving human participants, community-engaged work, safety regulations, and institutional approvals.

³ For the purposes of this current version of these guidelines, this document and my advising follows the policies and procedures set out by the University of British Columbia.

- Directing you to training or resources on power dynamics, sexual harassment, equity, human rights, and research ethics.

Support, Privacy, and Well-Being

- Respecting your privacy, personal circumstances, identities, obligations, and goals.
- Recognizing diverse backgrounds, learning needs, and career trajectories.
- Encouraging open dialogue about challenges that may affect academic progress and working collaboratively to develop realistic and supportive solutions.

Transparency and Communication

- Communicating clearly about expectations, timelines, responsibilities, and any required departmental or institutional reporting.
- Informing you, whenever possible, when concerns need to be shared with the Graduate Advisor, department chair, or other relevant offices.

Continued Responsibility During Leave

- Maintaining advising responsibilities, feedback, and communication during periods of sabbatical or academic leave, with appropriate planning to avoid disruption to your progress.

I am **not** responsible for providing clinical psychological or emotional counseling, meeting deadlines without receiving materials on time, or supplying information that would violate ethical or professional obligations.

Professional Boundaries

A healthy advising relationship requires clearly defined professional boundaries. These boundaries protect both advisor and advisee, prevent conflicts of interest, and ensure that power dynamics are handled ethically and transparently.

Both parties agree to maintain the following boundaries:

Professional Conduct

- All interactions will remain collegial, respectful, and focused on academic and professional development.
- Meetings and communication should take place in appropriate settings and through professional channels.

Privacy and Personal Life

- Both advisor and advisee will respect each other's privacy, personal time, and personal commitments, including reasonable limits on communication outside standard working hours.
- I do not add students as "friends" on Facebook, Instagram, or any other non-public-facing social media platform. This separation protects professional integrity and prevents blurring of personal and academic boundaries.

Appropriate Expectations

- Neither party will make requests or expect tasks outside the scope of appropriate academic or employment-related work.
- Personal rapport should never create obligations, pressures, or situations that compromise professional judgment or academic freedom.

Ethical and Legal Standards

- Both parties will uphold university policies regarding discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct, equity, conflict of interest, and professional ethics.
- Power dynamics will be managed transparently, with clear communication when issues require consultation with departmental or institutional leadership.

Clear boundaries foster trust, accountability, and a safe, equitable environment where academic creativity and scholarly growth can flourish.

Communication Expectations

Effective advising depends on clear, regular, and respectful communication.

- Email will serve as the primary method of communication unless otherwise agreed.
 - Meetings will be scheduled at mutually suitable times, with the expectation that agendas, documents, or drafts are shared beforehand when appropriate.
 - Urgent communication outside standard working hours should be reserved for genuinely time-sensitive matters only.
 - Both parties will strive to communicate expectations and deadlines as early as possible to avoid unnecessary stress or delays.
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Feedback on Academic Work

Feedback is essential for scholarly growth and timely degree completion.

- Turnaround times for routine feedback are described under Advisor Responsibilities.
- Larger submissions—such as full dissertation chapters, article drafts, or comprehensive exam materials—may require additional time, which will be discussed openly in advance.
- Expectations for drafting, revision cycles, and scheduling defenses will be established well ahead of major milestones to ensure clarity and sufficient preparation.

Authorship and Intellectual Property

In this advising relationship, authorship is guided by transparency, fairness, and disciplinary norms.

- My policy is that graduate students are **first authors** on papers arising from their research.
- If I have not contributed significantly to the conceptualization, drafting, or revision of a paper, I do **not** expect to be included as an author.
- Authorship order and contributions will be discussed early and revisited as projects evolve.
- Intellectual property rights and responsibilities follow university policy and ethical scholarly practice.

This approach ensures student leadership, scholarly independence, and proper recognition of intellectual labour.

Research Ethics and Compliance

All research must be conducted in accordance with university, departmental, and funding-agency policies.

- Projects involving human participants, community-based research, health data, or sensitive materials require appropriate approvals and training.
- I will guide you in identifying the necessary protocols, and you are responsible for completing required certifications (e.g., ethics training, safety modules).

- Community-engaged research must follow cultural protocols, agreements, and expectations of reciprocity, respect, and accountability.
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Accessibility, Wellness, and Accommodations

Graduate education should support both intellectual growth and personal well-being.

- Students requiring accommodations are encouraged to contact university accessibility services. I will fully support approved accommodations and ensure they are implemented respectfully.
 - Both parties recognize the pressures inherent in graduate study and agree to communicate early when difficulties arise so that appropriate support, resources, or adjustments can be explored.
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Funding and Financial Transparency

Funding is a critical dimension of graduate training.

- I will provide transparent information about RAships, TAships, stipends, fellowships, external awards, and application cycles.
 - Students are encouraged to apply for external funding appropriate to their field and will receive guidance in preparing competitive applications.
 - Funding expectations tied to RA or TA work will be clearly articulated and limited to appropriate duties.
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Conflict Resolution

Conflicts can arise in any academic relationship. A clear process helps resolve issues respectfully.

- Concerns should first be addressed directly, in a timely and constructive conversation between advisor and advisee.
- If issues persist or require additional support, the Graduate Advisor, program chair, or relevant university offices may be consulted.
- Seeking assistance or mediation will not be treated as unprofessional, punitive, or inappropriate.

This process protects both parties and ensures that disagreements are handled openly and fairly.

Advisee Responsibilities

While the advisor carries significant responsibility due to the inherent power imbalance, the advisee also contributes to maintaining a productive, respectful, and communicative relationship.

As an advisee, you are expected to:

Scholarly Engagement

- Interact with me and your committee in a respectful, honest, and intellectually engaged manner.
- Take initiative in scheduling meetings, communicating progress, and seeking guidance when needed.

Professional Conduct

- Provide reasonable notice for letters of recommendation or administrative requests.
- Maintain open communication about significant personal or academic challenges that may impede progress (without obligation to disclose private details).
- Follow university policies on ethics, harassment, discrimination, and professional conduct.

Respect for Boundaries

- Uphold the professional boundaries outlined above, including respecting privacy, personal time, and limits on informal communication channels.

Fair and Appropriate Work Expectations

- You are **not** responsible for performing tasks or services for your advisor outside the normal expectations of coursework, research requirements, or approved RA/TA duties.
- Any employment-related work will be limited to the appropriate scope of your paid role.

Students should remember that faculty–student relationships are professional in nature and must be conducted according to established ethical standards.