Mentor-Mentee Expectations*
Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering
University of Wisconsin-Madison

A. Introduction

The Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE) is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive community that is welcoming, safe and secure for all students, staff, and faculty. As is true for the entire University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW) campus, the ECE Department is committed to providing equal opportunity and equal access, and to complying with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations and University of Wisconsin System and university non-discrimination policies and procedures.

In order to promote a positive relationship between students and their research advisors, the ECE Department has developed this expectations document to offer a set of broad guidelines that apply to the mentor-mentee relationship. The goal is that this document will be used:

- To describe community standards for the mentor-mentee relationship in the ECE Department
- As part of the orientation for new graduate students and faculty
- As a starting point for discussions between students and research advisors about the issues addressed herein
- As part of a regular and ongoing discussion between students and research advisors

Mentors and mentees are expected to review and discuss this document when they begin working together. Individual research groups may have additional or more specific guidelines/requirements. Such group-specific guidelines should be consistent with those articulated here and be reviewed by mentors and mentees similarly to this document.

Section B of this document describes expectations of mentors, while Section C describes expectations of mentees.

B. Expectations of research advisors in the ECE Department

Education and Degree Progress

Advisors are committed to prioritize their students’ education. They

- Support students’ success in their coursework
- Do not ask students to perform tasks or personal favors that are unrelated to their training program, research, professional development, and/or appointment.

Advisors review their students’ progress towards their degree and provide regular, timely feedback and goal-setting advice. They

- Respect students’ privacy and abide by the Federal Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA) in reviewing progress and providing feedback

*This document borrows elements of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) compact (2017).
• Enter annual evaluations in the College of Engineering's Graduate Online Assessment and Achievement Learning System (GOAALS) and review the evaluation, individually, with each student
• Bring concerns about progress to students’ attention in a timely manner.

**Advisors are committed to students’ research projects.** Advisors work with students to help plan and guide research projects, set reasonable and attainable goals, and establish timelines for completion of projects.

**Advisors encourage input from PhD Preliminary Examination Committee and Final Defense Committee members.** They

- Advise students on selecting committees that meet departmental and university policies
- Acknowledge that the function of these committees is to help students develop and complete research requirements
- Respect the ideas and suggestions of their colleagues on the committees.

**Advisors help guide students through the requirements and deadlines of the graduate program and the UW as described in the ECE Graduate Student Handbook and UW Guide.**

**Advisors are committed to seeking and providing financial resources, as appropriate and according to ECE Department and UW guidelines, for students to conduct their thesis/dissertation research.**

**Professional Development**

**Advisors encourage students to attend and present their research at scientific/professional meetings and make an effort to secure and facilitate funding for such activities.** Advisors also provide opportunities for students to discuss science and their research findings with colleagues and fellow scientists within the institution and broader scientific community.

**Advisors promote training of students in professional skills needed for a successful career.** They

- Promote training in oral and written communication, grant writing, the peer review process, management and leadership, collaborative research, responsible conduct of research, teaching, and mentoring
- Encourage students to seek opportunities to develop skills in other areas relevant to their professional development, even if not specifically required by the program
- Encourage students to seek career and professional development advice from multiple mentors.

**Advisors create an environment in which students can discuss and explore career opportunities and paths that match their skills, values, and interests and are supportive of their career path choices.** They
• Are accessible to give advice and feedback on career goals
• Work with students on an individual development plans to help define career goals and identify training milestones
• Provide letters of reference for students’ subsequent phases of professional development in a timely manner or discuss with the students why such a letter would not be in the students’ best interest
• Continue interest and involvement as students move forward into careers.

Research Environment

Advisors promote an environment that is intellectually stimulating, respectful, emotionally supportive, equitable, healthy, collegial, and free of harassment throughout students’ time in the research advisors’ groups. They

• Foster students’ professional confidence and encourage intellectual development, critical thinking, curiosity, and creativity
• Set expectations for sharing of responsibilities amongst group members, such as cleaning and ordering supplies
• Provide access to appropriate safety training for students
• Provide guidelines for collaborative use of supplies, facilities, and equipment
• Review data management, storage, and record-keeping policies and procedures with students.

Advisors demonstrate respect for all students as individuals without regard to gender, race, national origin, religion, disability or sexual orientation, and cultivate a culture of tolerance among the entire research group.

Advisors respect disability accommodations approved by the McBurney Disability Resource Center.

Scientific Integrity

Advisors discuss intellectual-property policy issues regarding disclosure, patent rights, and publishing research discoveries with students.

Advisors discuss authorship policies regarding papers with students. Advisors acknowledge students’ scientific contributions to the work in the research group and provide assistance to publish students’ work in a timely manner.

Work-Life Balance

Advisors discuss any planned absences with students well in advance and apprise students of any unexpected absences due to illness or other issues. They work with students to develop plans for minimizing disruptions due to travel, sabbaticals, or other absences.

Advisors respect and work to encourage healthy work-life balance. They
- Support regular periods of downtime, including weekends, holidays, and outside of daytime business hours, for students to pursue non-academic activities. During such downtime periods students are not expected to respond to email, cellular, or other forms of communication.
- Normally hold group meetings during daytime business hours on weekdays, typically between 8 am and 6 pm.
- Give students advance notice of paper submission or other deadlines that will occasionally necessitate communication or interaction on weekends or evenings.

Advisors maintain group standards consistent with university policies on work hours, medical leave, and vacation.

C. Expectations of graduate students in the ECE Department

_Education and Degree Progress_

**Students are committed to the successful completion of their degree.** They
- Acknowledge they have the primary responsibility for their own education.
- Are committed to graduate education and demonstrate this responsibility in the classroom, the research environment, and all other related academic and professional activities.
- Exhibit a high level of professionalism, self-motivation, initiative, engagement, scientific curiosity, scientific integrity, and ethical standards.
- Understand that meeting program academic requirements will involve effort beyond the minimum requirements associated with an appointment.

**Students keep research advisors informed on the progress and results of course work, research, and professional and career development activities.** They
- Are responsive to the advice and constructive criticism from their advisor.
- Discuss timing of external activities requiring advisor input, such as fellowship applications or paper/conference submissions, well in advance of corresponding deadlines.

**Students work with research advisors to develop a thesis/dissertation project.** They
- Establish a timeline for each phase of their work.
- Keep engaged with the work, discuss experimental findings and any pitfalls, while working to meet established goals and deadlines.

**Ph.D. students work with research advisors to select a Ph.D. Preliminary Examination Committee and take Ph.D. Preliminary Examinations within three semesters of receiving Advanced Graduate Standing.** They discuss progress and are responsive to the advice and constructive criticism from committee members.

**Ph.D. students work with research advisors to complete and defend their PhD thesis in**
a timely manner according to ECE Department expectations.

Students are knowledgeable of the policies and requirements of their graduate program, graduate school, and institution as described in the ECE Graduate Student Handbook and UW Guide.

Professional Development

Students are committed to develop their careers. They

- Acknowledge that they have the primary responsibility for the development of their careers
- Explore career opportunities and paths that match and develop their individual skills, values, and interests to achieve desired career goals
- Understand that there are tools such as the individual development plan that help define career goals and develop training plans
- Participate in training on research ethics
- Seek career planning guidance throughout their graduate education from their research advisor(s), career counseling services, thesis/dissertation committee, and other mentors and resources.

Students attend and actively participate in research group meetings, seminars, and journal clubs that are part of their educational program. Students often seek out other enrichment opportunities, such as teaching, participation in professional organizations and meetings, membership on committees, and departmental events to further enhance research, leadership, and professional skills.

Research Environment

Students are good citizens, take part in shared responsibilities and use resources responsibly. Students:

- Maintain a safe and clean workspace
- Are respectful of and work collegially with all research group personnel and fellow students
- Contribute actively to all team efforts and collaborations while respecting the individual contributions of others
- Contribute to an environment that is safe, equitable, and free of harassment
- Bring problems that arise to advisors’ attention in a timely manner.

Students maintain detailed, organized, and accurate research records.

Students acknowledge that ownership of original notebooks, digital files, data, and tangible research materials may be subject to sponsored research agreements and/or UW policies. They

- Understand these materials typically remain with the research group after finishing their thesis/dissertation so that other individuals can reproduce and carry on related research
• Maintain archival versions of code and data for use by other individuals
• Follow advisor and UW policy on making and accessing copies of research notebooks, digital files, and other tangible research materials for their own use.

Students are knowledgeable of and comply with all UW research policies, including safety practices, animal use, and human-research policies. They
• Participate in the UW Responsible Conduct of Research Training Program and follow the guidelines presented therein while conducting research
• Seek input on and comply with institutional policies regarding research design and data analysis.

Scientific Integrity

Students consult with advisors to learn what research results may be discussed or shared with any entities outside the group prior to publication. They
• Keep information about problems they or others in the group are working on confidential
• Obtain prior permission before discussing results not in the public knowledge with anyone outside the group.

Students discuss policies on authorship and attendance at professional meetings with research advisors. They
• Adhere to agreed-upon timeframes for preparing drafts of manuscripts and presentations
• Work with advisors to disseminate relevant research results in a timely manner before completion of degree requirements.

Students understand that fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research will result in severe consequences under UW research misconduct policies.

Students comply with intellectual property, invention disclosure, and export control policies.

Work-Life Balance

Students follow university policies on work hours, medical leave, and vacation.

Students discuss any planned absences with advisors well in advance and apprise advisors of any unexpected absences due to illness or other issues. They work with fellow research group members and advisors to develop a plan for minimizing disruptions due to any absences.