Five Best Practices for Advising Graduate Students

A Guide for Faculty and Staff

Developed by the Office of Graduate Studies, July 2020
BEFORE WE BEGIN

- This webinar will be recorded and made publicly available on the GRC webpage for faculty resources (coming soon!)
- All participants will be muted but chat function will be open
- There will be time for a Q/A session at the end
The **Office of Graduate Studies** provides leadership and service to promote graduate education and support graduate student success. We offer funding opportunities, host professional development events, and oversee the thesis, project and dissertation submission process.

We are home to the **Graduate Resource Center**. The GRC provides educational and community-building opportunities exclusively to graduate students.
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Identify Your College
Best Practices for Advising Graduate Students
1. ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO CONNECT WITH THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES & GRC

- Remind graduate students to enroll in our Canvas course to receive email announcements from the GRC (faculty and staff may also enroll)
- Encourage students to participate in webinars for academic and professional development (and to submit suggestions for webinar topics)
- Encourage students to apply to our funding opportunities
- Contact us with general questions or to schedule an appointment
2. ENSURE STUDENTS KNOW THEIR PROGRAM AND UNIVERSITY GRADUATE REQUIREMENTS

- Ask them to review their program’s catalog page
- Discuss with them their program’s learning outcomes
- Ensure they are aware of University policies regarding graduate study
  - Many graduate programs have additional requirements that must be met along with University requirements – make sure students are aware of these.
  - Students can set up an advising appointment with the GRC Coordinator regarding University–level policies (Service: “Graduate Requirements Inquiries”)
- University-level policies and resources are outlined in the Graduate Studies Handbook on the Office of Graduate Studies homepage. It is updated continuously as policies and procedures change.
3. MAINTAIN REGULAR CONTACT WITH GRADUATE STUDENTS

- Regularly check in with your graduate students about their progress and experience, especially during the remote semester (via email, Zoom, in-person once we’re back on campus, etc.)

- At a minimum, plan to meet with your graduate students:
  a) Early in their first semester to establish their **program plan**
  b) To **advance them to candidacy** sometime after they’ve completed 12 units but **BEFORE** they enroll in thesis, project, or comprehensive exam units
  c) During the semester prior to their expected graduation date to perform a **grad check**
3a. The Initial Advising Appointment

- Establish the student’s program plan
- Discuss enrollment options and for current term and course offerings for future terms
- Discuss Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement (if applicable; requirement suspended for Fall 2020)

For conditionally classified students*, also review qualifying course requirements:

- The courses that must be completed
- The grade that the student must earn in such courses
- The timeframe by which the student must clear their conditions

*Once conditions are met, change a conditionally classified student’s status to classified standing by completing a GS-8 form.
3b. The Advancement to Candidacy Appointment

Advancement to Candidacy is the University prerequisite for undertaking the culminating experience (thesis/dissertation, project report, or comprehensive exam). Students are advanced to candidacy through the completion of the GS-10 form.

- Discuss how the culminating experience relates to the student’s professional goals (especially if they are given a choice)
  
  Example: Students wanting to pursue a doctoral program may want to consider a thesis over a comp. exam to demonstrate to an admissions committee their ability to conduct original research.

- Discuss what the culminating experience is designed to assess and the metrics by which it will be evaluated

- Share best practices for preparing for and/or progressing through the culminating experience
3b. Advancement to Candidacy Requirements

To advance, students must have:

- Classified graduate standing (conditionally classified students cannot advance)
- Completed 12 semester units in residence
- A 3.0 GPA
- Satisfied the GWAR
- An approved program plan on file with the college
- The recommendation of the student’s academic department and approval of the College Associate Dean
- Completed any Departmental/College requirements for advancement
Students apply for graduation the term prior to their anticipated graduation term. Before signing off on a graduation application, log into GET and review the student’s CAAR to check the following:

- Is the student listed in the correct option (if applicable)?
- Is the student’s catalog date correct?
- Is the student advanced to candidacy?
- Have all the course substitutions been entered on CAAR?
- Has the student completed all or almost all of his/her coursework for their program?
- Will the courses the student is planning to enroll in for his/her last semester here fulfill any missing requirements that are listed on CAAR?
- Is the student’s program GPA a 3.0 or above?
- Are the program units that the student has completed listed correctly on GET? It is always good to hand count the units the student has completed for his/her program and compare those units with CAAR.
4. ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THEIR WRITING AND RESEARCH SKILL DEVELOPMENT

- **GRC Writing Consultants** provide writing support to graduate students on a variety of writing assignments and projects.

- **GRC Thesis Reviewers** provide style manual formatting support (e.g., APA style, MLA style, etc.) to graduating graduate students.

- The **University Library** provides research and writing support to graduate students by giving students access to:
  - **Databases** with scholarly sources
  - **Research Librarians** assigned to each department
  - **Resources** to develop citation skills
The GRC oversees the thesis, project, and dissertation formatting and submission process.

- Inform students that they will be working with the GRC frequently during their last term or consider inviting the GRC Coordinator to deliver a thesis webinar to your class or program.
- Encourage students to attend a thesis workshop (offered every Fall, Spring, and Summer term)
  - Getting Started on the Thesis focuses provides tips on selecting a topic, forming a committee, and creating a timeline for thesis completion.
  - Thesis Formatting and Submission focuses on format requirements and submission procedures, including an overview of deadlines and required forms.
If you would like the GRC Coordinator to present a webinar for your class, program, or department on any of the topics covered in this PowerPoint, or if you would like to collaborate on developing new programming, please send an email to achav143@calstatela.edu.

Requests will be accommodated on a first-come, first-served basis and as his schedule allows. Faculty requests for weekend and evening webinars should be submitted at least 3 weeks in advance.
To stay updated, please visit the Office of Graduate Studies and Graduate Resource Center for more information.
CONTACT US

BY EMAIL
Office of Graduate Studies: gradstudies@calstatela.edu

Graduate Resource Center: GRC@calstatela.edu

ZOOM OFFICE HOURS
Monday through Friday:
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Find Zoom link for office hours online.
Thank you for your participation and engagement with the Graduate Resource Center and for your support of our graduate students’ success.
Q/A SESSION

You may unmute yourself or type your questions into the chat.