

Steps Toward Effective Mentorship Relationships

Consider what you personally need when meeting with your mentor and what questions you can ask to get the help you need. Develop a collaborative relationship with your mentor and communicate your needs so that they can help you identify the resources you need. Here are some topics to consider and discuss at the start of your program.

1. Start with and always refer back to the [SEFS Graduate Student Handbook](#)
2. Discuss communication, meeting preferences and schedules, for example:
 - a. Best way to contact
 - b. Frequency of meetings
 - c. Expected response time
 - d. Lab/research group meetings and expectations
 - e. Anticipated work schedule, location ([including building information](#))
3. Set expectations, goals, requirements, agendas and keep notes, for example:
 - a. Give a brief overview of current experience/qualifications
 - b. Share any concerns about starting graduate school
 - c. 1st quarter goals and long-term goals (see next pages)
4. Developing a set of shared expectations for your interactions
5. Develop a timeline for your degree and break tasks into manageable pieces (see next pages)
6. Prioritize topics and due dates.

Prepare a meeting agenda, schedule the meeting, and provide the agenda prior to the meeting; your committee chair can revise the agenda as needed. Keep your advisor aware of deadlines well in advance (agree on needed lead time)
7. Be open to feedback and give feedback.
8. Conduct an annual review of your progress and the mentoring relationship (see last page)
9. Find additional SEFS, UW, or external mentors

One mentor can't do it all; seek additional faculty, staff, and peers with experience and skills you seek to develop.

[Visit UW Graduate School Mentoring Resources.](#)

General Degree Timeline

The table on the next page can be used in meetings with your committee chair to plan and track your degree progress. The following items should be addressed:

- **Courses:** Are not on this timeline, but need to be filled out on the *SEFS Program of Study Form* associated with your particular program and found at the [bottom of this page](#). Think about program requirements and your needs and goals, and plan out your coursework. You should aim to done with mandatory course work in year 1. What courses, papers, tutorials, or resources can help address weaknesses? Do you need to petition for a change to the program requirements? Fill out the *Graduate Program Requirement Petition Form*, found on the same page linked above.
- **Thesis/Dissertation Progress:** when will you have a research proposal ready, when will you be presenting your proposal, timing of various exams, when is the final draft due, pencil in timing for a final defense, when is the final document due to graduate school?
- **Conferences/Major Presentations:** Which conferences do you want to go to; which presentations does your chair expect you to do; what external funding will you be applying for to attend? Information about funding sources and application procedures can be found on the [web page here](#).
- **Publications: Think of this as an anticipated body of work.** What specific publishing goals do you have, in which journals, and how are publications costs covered? How will the publications process be handled after you graduate, such as dealing with peer-review responses, resubmissions and so on?
- **External Proposals:** will you be applying for external fellowships and funding; where, when are the due dates, are reference or other expected documents required from your committee chair?
- **Funding:** fill in your funding plan and assure there are no gaps or that you have an agreed plan for extensions of degree. Consider how RA or TA obligations affect degree progress.
- **Other:**

Year 1

Quarter	Thesis/Dissertation Progress	Conferences/Major Presentations	Publications	Proposals	Funding	Other
Au						
Wi						
Sp						annual committee meeting (or earlier)
Su						

Year 2

Au	PhD students plan to take qualifying exams in their second year; a <u>SEFS committee approval form</u> is required					
Wi						
Sp		Present in <u>SEFS Graduate Student Symposium</u> ?				annual committee meeting (or earlier)
Su						

Year 3

Au	PhD students need to complete qualifying exams by 9 th quarter					
Wi						
Sp						annual committee meeting (or earlier)
Su						

Annual Review

Annual reviews should be a collaboration between the student and their committee chair. Below is a set of possible topics to cover:

1. Summarize (briefly) your research progress since the last update meeting, including any publications, presentations, and seminars. Also list any honors, awards, and/or notable benchmarks you have achieved.
2. Reference relevant sections of the timeline to describe your goals and to outline how you will achieve them. Have your goals or plans changed since the last update meeting?
3. How satisfied are you with your progress toward your long-term goals? Are there any areas where you are unsatisfied?
4. What obstacles do you believe you might encounter while pursuing your goals (related to e.g. background knowledge, training, outside responsibilities, and/or health issues)?
5. Describe any professional opportunities (such as technical learning, teaching or mentoring experience, or participation in courses, workshops, or training programs) that you think will benefit you in the next year.
6. Describe any other graduate school or career development topics you would like to discuss with your PI regarding the attainment of your long-term goals.
7. Describe any scheduling constraints and/or upcoming deadlines that your advisor should know about (e.g. travel and letters of recommendation for fellowship applications).

Annual Review Signatures

Student Signature	Date	Graduate Committee Chair Signature	Date

Advisee keeps the original document and delivers a copy to the committee chair.