

# UC Riverside Graduate Student Rights & Responsibilities

## Preamble

Considering the nature of the academy, we, the graduate students of the University of California, Riverside, in order to promote a collegial, respectful, and academically sound relationship between our faculty and colleagues, and to define our role in the University as a whole, do formally endorse the rights and responsibilities enumerated below. We will strive to fulfill the provisions outlined in this document, so that faculty and students can together build and preserve a genuine intellectual community in the pursuit of scholarly inquiry and research.

It is the view of our community that such a goal is best preserved through the combined efforts of faculty, staff, and students toward the protection and enrichment of a campus culture receptive to the rights and responsibilities of graduate students. This document's purpose is to provide a general framework of guidance for graduate students with regards to academic issues. This document is not a legally binding document. Rather, it calls upon the Chancellor, the Academic Senate, and the general campus community to recognize the provisions listed here and to provide for their earnest respect and enforcement. Many of the items contained within are already specified as rights or responsibilities of students in official university literature, often in greater detail than presented here.

## Section 1 General Provisions

1. As members of the University community, we, as graduate students, have the right to be respected as individuals. *Faculty handbook*
2. We have the right to be free from “discrimination, including harassment,” based “on political grounds, or for reasons of race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, national origin, ancestry, marital status, medical condition, status as a covered veteran, or within the limits imposed by law or University regulations, because of age or citizenship or for other arbitrary or personal reasons.” Official grievance procedures and informal complaint procedures should be publicly available at the Graduate Division and at the department or graduate program level. *Faculty Code of Conduct, Part II A.2.* <https://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programs/files/apm/apm-015.pdf>
3. We have the right to express our views and to participate in the political processes of the University community at large. *University of California Policies Applying to Campus Activities, Organizations, and Students, Section 30.00.* <https://policy.ucop.edu/doc/2710523/PACAOS-30>
4. We have the right to be informed of our rights as graduate students and free from reprisals for exercising the rights claimed herein.

## Section 2 Provisions for Mentorship

1. We have the right to respectful mentorship. *Faculty Code of Conduct, Part II A.* <https://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programs/files/apm/apm-015.pdf>
2. We have the right to the “confidential nature of the relationship between professor and student” including our communications with members of the faculty. *Faculty Code of Conduct, Part II A.* <https://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programs/files/apm/apm-015.pdf>

3. A member of the faculty should not discuss a student's formal academic evaluation or behavior with other students. Discussion of a student's performance among the faculty should be of a professional nature. *Faculty Code of Conduct, Part II A.* <https://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programs/files/apm/apm-015.pdf>
4. We have the right to refuse to perform tasks if those tasks are not closely related to our academic or professional development program. Members of the faculty should not exploit our abilities to their personal advantage. *Faculty handbook*
  - a. A student's vulnerability in having a lesser status and authority in the academic unit or lesser experience in the academic field of study should not be exploited to the personal advantage of faculty members.
  - b. Students should not be coerced into performing tasks in grievous excess of other students because of characteristics that are vulnerable to discrimination.
5. Faculty are to "acknowledge significant academic or scholarly assistance" from students. Faculty and graduate students are expected to discuss collegially, respectfully, and in a timely manner, the recognition associated with contributions to scholarship and research. For example, the quality and level of work expected for first authorship, and the forms of co-authorship, should be clearly understood and commensurate with disciplinary norms relating to factors such as creative input, the conduct of research, and writing. *Faculty handbook*
6. To make certain decisions independently of their faculty advisors. This right is subject to restrictions imposed by the university and the student's department/program, such as the policies on satisfactory progress and time-to-degree. These include the right to: Choose a thesis/dissertation advisor, choose a thesis/dissertation topic (a student's advisor can veto a topic that is outside his/her area of expertise or available funding, if applicable), and be consulted on the membership of their research committee.
7. We will conduct ourselves, in all University activities, in a manner befitting an academic colleague. Our behavior should be a credit to ourselves, to the higher academic unit, and to the University.
8. We will provide accurate and honest reporting of research results, and we will uphold ethical norms in research methodology and scholarship. *Student code of conduct*
9. We will understand our role and do our part in the development of the relationship between a faculty mentor and a graduate student.
10. We will select a mentor whose research interests correspond to our own.
11. We will communicate regularly with faculty mentors and advisors, especially in matters related to research and progress within the graduate program.
12. We will have an awareness of the time constraints and other demands imposed on the members of the faculty and the program staff.

### **Section 3 Provisions for the Degree**

1. We have the right to access non-confidential "approved outline of program requirements for all graduate and professional degree programs offered through the Graduate Division." These requirements should be communicated clearly to us when we enter a graduate program, and we will thereafter routinely consult them in order to evaluate our progress. *Grad Div*

2. Graduate students should be informed in a timely manner of any and all changes to rules, policies, and procedures related to their graduate program of study.
3. Graduate students are required to complete only the degree requirements which were published in the UCR Course Catalog at the time of admission. (If the requirements should change after the student's admission, some degree programs may give the student the option of fulfilling the new requirements instead.)
4. Graduate students have the right to know the normative time to degree, the average time to degree, and the maximum allowed time to degree within their graduate programs. This information should be explicitly communicated to newly admitted students. *Grad Div*
5. We will devote an appropriate amount of time and energy toward achieving the advanced degree within normative time, allowing for exceptional circumstances. We understand that timely progress through the program is necessary to allow prospective students to begin their pursuit of the advanced degree. *Grad Div*
6. We will take the initiative by asking questions in order to clarify the academic requirements and the financial matters of our specific graduate program.
7. We will honestly acknowledge the state of our progress toward the degree.
8. Graduate students have the right to know a program's "graduate rates of enrolled students," and, if available, the predominant reasons for which students choose to leave, but this should in no way compromise the privacy rights of others. *University of California Policies Applying to Campus Activities, Organizations, and Students, Section 72.00.*  
[www.ucop.edu/ucophome/uwnews/aospol/uc70.html](http://www.ucop.edu/ucophome/uwnews/aospol/uc70.html)

#### **Section 4 Provisions for Financial Support**

1. We have the right to an accurate description of the availability and likelihood of financial and resource support within our programs. *Grad Div*
2. Newly admitted graduate students should be provided a thorough description of the requirements and qualifications necessary for "appointments of graduate students to all academic personnel titles" including "information on minimum requirements for appointment, terms of employment, benefits, tax information, TA training programs, and more" at the University, with deference to the current collective bargaining agreements. *Grad Div*
3. The University, departments, and programs should make every effort to enhance student financial support and other resources in support of graduate education. This includes maximizing University resources and seeking support from outside the University. In turn, we will seek funding from outside sources as available.
4. All graduate programs and/or emphases should have clearly written policies regarding the distribution of financial support and academic employment.
5. Graduate students reserve the right to form and maintain a union.

#### **Section 5 Provisions for Wellness Support**

1. Graduate students have the right to an intellectually stimulating and diverse academic environment that includes members from historically underrepresented groups.

2. Graduate students have the right to be informed of policies and procedures for procuring on-campus housing, including information on availability, expected time on wait list, limitations on stay (including restrictions, if any, imposed by academic policies), and restrictions on eligibility.
3. Graduate students have the right to have access to basic outpatient health care services on any University of California campus, under conditions that apply to students registered on that campus. *UC Student Policy Manual, section 171.15.*
4. Graduate students have the right to access timely mental health consultations and to receive referrals to outside providers should Counseling and Psychological Services be unable to meet their needs.
5. Graduate students should be provided with appropriate office, study, and lab space.

### **Section 6 Provisions for Evaluation**

1. Graduate students have the right to access their academic file as specified by the UC Student Policy Manual , section 130.40.
2. We have the right to have “evaluations of students” that reflect “each student’s true merit” and based on criteria that are understood by the faculty, the graduate adviser, and us. *Faculty Handbook*
3. Evaluations should be factual and specific, and should be shared with us within a reasonable period of time. Certain evaluations, including annual progress reports, qualifying examinations, and unusual or additional program requirements, should be presented in writing.
4. The reasons for unsatisfactory performance on programmatic examinations should be stated clearly in a written evaluation.
5. We should be given a fair opportunity to correct deficiencies in our academic performance with agreed upon timetables for remedy.
6. Any intent to dismiss a student (in regular status not on academic probation or on provisional status) from a graduate program for academic reasons must be preceded by specific, written performance information, well in advance of actual dismissal. The “Graduate Dean has final authority” with regards to academic dismissal and “an appeal can go no higher.” *Grad Div*

### **Section 7 Provisions for Grievances**

1. Graduate students have a right to full-faith consultation and mediation if their rights are infringed.
  - a. Students with grievances should be given the opportunity for full-faith consultation and mediation before actions are taken against them.
2. Graduate students have a right to clearly defined official grievance procedures and informal complaint procedures at the department and campus-wide levels. Each department should have grievance procedures.
3. Graduate students have a right to procedures appropriate to the nature of the case and the severity of the potential discipline.
4. When a formal hearing is required, a graduate student has a right to the following minimum procedural standards to assure a fair hearing.
  - a. The opportunity for a prompt and fair hearing, upon the request of the student at which the University shall bear the burden of proof, and at which the student shall have the opportunity to present documents and witnesses and to confront and cross-examine

witnesses presented by the University. No inference, however, shall be drawn from the silence of the accused.

- b. A record of the hearing; an expeditious written decision based upon the preponderance of evidence, which shall be accompanied by a written summary of the findings of fact.
- c. An appeal process.

### **Section 8 Provisions for Professional Training and Future Employment**

1. It is the responsibility of departments, faculty advisors and mentors to provide students with meaningful opportunities for professional training. This training should include socialization into the norms of the discipline, information about professional associations and conferences, job interview skills, career options, standards of conduct and professional ethics, and the basic intellectual skills required to be successful practitioners of the discipline. In turn, we will endeavor to participate in these opportunities as available. *UCR Academic Senate Bylaws, Graduate Division Regulations, GR1.6.*  
[http://senate.ucr.edu/bylaws/?action=read\\_bylaws&code=gr](http://senate.ucr.edu/bylaws/?action=read_bylaws&code=gr)
2. We have the right to explore our full professional options, both inside and outside the academy.

### **Section 9 Provisions for Contributions to the University Community**

1. The graduate student population reserves the right to form and maintain a governing body that is free from coercion.
  - a. Graduate students should have representatives on all campus-wide administrative committees that affect graduate students, with voting privileges where appropriate according to the guidelines of shared governance.
  - b. The graduate student representative body should be given charges to these committees once a year and be informed when new committees are formed.
  - c. All departments and graduate programs should include graduate student representatives in the decision-making process where appropriate.
2. We will participate in the University community to the extent that we are able, and we will leave the campus enriched in whatever ways possible.
3. We will contribute to the academic development and the social environment of the department or program in which we are pursuing an advanced degree.
4. We will contribute to the administration of the graduate program, of student government, and of the University.
5. We will uphold the public service aspects of the mission of a public University at a level appropriate to our individual wits and ability.
6. We will recognize the value of being good citizens of the University.

### **Section 10 Three Principles of Shared Governance**

1. We have the right to share in the governance of the University. We have the right to “have the privilege of the floor” of the Academic Senate “including the right to make motions.” *Academic Senate*

2. Graduate students, when reasonable and appropriate, “shall be invited to attend and participate at all meetings of” of Academic Senate committees, according to the guidelines of shared governance. *Academic Senate*
3. We have the right to “participate in the governance of the University” including our departments and programs. Student representatives should be selected by the students in the program. Our involvement in appropriate policy decisions made at the departmental and program level provides for increased communication of our ideas and concerns, as well as evidence that we are in training as future academicians. *University of California Policies Applying to Campus Activities, Organizations, and Students, Section 72.00.* [www.ucop.edu/ucophome/uwnews/aospol/uc70.html](http://www.ucop.edu/ucophome/uwnews/aospol/uc70.html)

### **Section 11 Endorsement and Amendments**

The endorsing bodies of this document are requested to review and propose changes to said document. These changes are subject to approval by all endorsing bodies. This review and amendment should take place during the Fall Quarter every academic year.

The following entities are in endorsement of this document as a guiding document for graduate student academic rights and responsibilities.