



### **QUICK TIPS FOR PROMISING PRACTICES: ANNUAL REVIEW**

- Review graduate student progress at least once a year. This provides an opportunity to review performance and clarify expectations. Students value knowing more than just their grades.
- Annually assess student progress, set goals and identify milestones for the coming year.
- Require students to prepare a progress report in advance. This can be narrative and free-form (useful as it indicates student view of what's important) or a standardized form in order to generate what faculty find useful for the review.
- Some departments require that the student meet annually with their entire doctoral committee (once it is formed) to improve a shared understanding of student needs. Others have the student schedule frequent meetings with the committee. Some arts programs require a multiple-faculty critique on each of the student's performances throughout the year.
- Faculty members review the student's file in advance and discuss the student's performance. Then their review can be reported to the student orally by the advisor and the student encouraged to take notes.
- Some programs use a standard form for this review session so that faculty are providing uniform information about each student.
- Consider every dimension of student performance as this will provide a multi-faceted understanding of academic strengths and weaknesses. Significantly, it also can indicate the non-academic skills that contribute to student success.
- Regular review can function as an early warning system. It encourages the student and faculty to identify behaviors early on that might amplify later problems. It provides an opportunity for students to share any underlying personal problems that may be affecting work.
- Provide the student with a written version of the review that indicates progress to date and clearly sets out expectations for the coming year. This could be in letter or other form. Both the advisor and the student should sign this and a copy placed in the student's file. It is useful and valuable for the program to have clear, regular documentation of student progress—for general reference and particularly if a misunderstanding arises.
- Encourage the student to follow up informally with any faculty the student considers to be mentors. The student is likely to feel more relaxed after the formal meeting, and able to discuss any critique in a constructive fashion.

For more information about the resources available through the Rackham Graduate School, contact Mark Kamimura-Jimenez at 647-2655 or [mkamimur@umich.edu](mailto:mkamimur@umich.edu).