



QUICK TIPS FOR PROMISING PRACTICES: ORIENTATION

- Provide students with a graduate student handbook that offers a detailed roadmap of program requirements, expectations and responsibilities. Include checklists, timelines, milestones, and options for subfields. The handbook should serve as a reliable, detailed reference for any orientation to the degree program. Make it available online and accessible on the department's website.
- Provide an introduction to graduate school and orientation to your program. Use varied programming to explore in depth the facets that are central to their first two years.
- Host lunches or meetings early in the fall semester for small groups of students for more personalized introductions to faculty and staff, and their roles in the department.
- Stage the orientation for first-year students at intervals throughout the first year. This allows you to present what they need to know in the order they are likely to need it.
- Arrange for each incoming student to meet with the graduate chair or faculty director in late August and early September in order to plan the first two years of coursework.
- Invite current students to participate in both formal and informal orientation events. This allows new students the opportunity to both hear the perspective of current students and to ask questions about their experiences.
- Familiarize new students with the norms of the discipline through a professionalization seminar. This allows them to explore the nature of graduate education in the field and responsibilities involved.
- Offer introductory seminars or literature review workshops that roll out the fundamentals of a topic. This is especially useful for students who have changed disciplines or been out of school for some time.
- Encourage new students to get early research experience in the summer preceding matriculation.
 - Encourage department faculty to extend this offer if they have a suitable project.
- Encourage students to attend Rackham's Fall Welcome and Information Fair event. At this event, new students will hear from University and student leaders, have access to more than 70 campus and community organizations and meet other new students from a variety of disciplines.

For more information about the resources available through the Rackham Graduate School, contact Natalie Bartolacci at 647-2640 or nplosky@umich.edu.