Rackham Handbook for Faculty Directors of Graduate Programs

RACKHAM GRADUATE SCHOOL
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

2018-19

Contents

Preface

This handbook provides a reference for faculty members who act as the primary chair or director for Rackham programs. It has been developed with generous contributions by Rackham associate deans and many experienced faculty leaders who have served as graduate chairs. Rackham uses the term graduate chair to refer to the faculty member designated as leader of the graduate program by a department, school, or college. Departments and programs may use other labels and in some cases this role is shared by two or more people who must communicate and coordinate efforts to see that the full range of responsibilities is met.

The role of the graduate chair is critical to the success of the graduate program. Although the tasks of the graduate chair vary with the aims and requirements of the program, all programs share certain common goals and face common challenges. This handbook will help the graduate chair to understand and prioritize tasks and to manage responsibilities. It provides a list of additional resources for this purpose.

The responsibilities of the graduate chair typically include:

- Providing leadership to promote excellence in graduate education
- Leading a faculty graduate committee
- Recruiting and admitting students, and assisting their transition to graduate study
- Advising and mentoring students and defining program procedures
- Providing information to students and faculty about internal and external funding opportunities
- Providing information to students about career options and job opportunities
- Assisting students and faculty in problem solving and resolution of conflict
- Monitoring progress of students and cohorts throughout the program
- Overseeing communication and coordination with the school/college and with Rackham
- Collaborating with the primary staff person supporting the graduate program

Rackham offers an orientation each fall for graduate chairs that includes an overview of resources available to assist them in their important leadership roles. For further information, or to make suggestions or corrections for this handbook, contact Assistant Dean John Godfrey in the Rackham Dean's Office.

Part 1: Leading the Graduate Program

The Challenge to Promote Quality

The graduate chair provides leadership to promote excellence in graduate education. This includes:

- Managing the formation of the annual student cohort that is:
    - of high quality, with scholarly interests aligned to those of the faculty and committed to scholarly or professional pursuits
    - diverse in demographic backgrounds and intellectual interests
- Supporting students academically and promoting successful completion of the degree by:
    - providing effective and regular mentoring that includes continuity during faculty leaves
    - working with program or department chair(s) (and appropriate dean) to assure the uninterrupted availability of courses in the program curriculum
    - maintaining a clear, fair, and effective process for preliminary or qualifying examinations
    - assuring that students receive regular written feedback about their academic progress, including coursework, exams, research, and thesis or dissertation
    - assisting students who wish to change advisors
- Supporting students financially by:
    - allocating financial support at the time of admission
    - seeing that students are supported at each stage of study
    - overseeing a fair process for nominating students for external and internal fellowship and grant opportunities
    - ensuring that GSI and other departmental assignments are made in a fair and timely way
    - providing information to all students about funding for research, travel, and professional development opportunities
- Assisting in the successful placement of graduates (jobs, postdoctoral fellowships, etc.) and aiding and tracking their careers by:
    - providing opportunities to help students consider potential career paths
    - circulating information about job and postdoctoral openings
    - tracking the career success of graduates and making this information available to current and prospective students

Collaboration in Meeting the Responsibilities of the Graduate Chair

The graduate chair works closely with the chair of the department or program, the faculty graduate committee, the graduate coordinator(s), and the associate dean for graduate education in the school or college. The graduate coordinator is responsible for the regular administrative work that supports graduate students in the program—a good working relationship between the graduate chair and graduate coordinator is indispensable for effective management of the program. In addition, the graduate chair works closely with other faculty and with administrators in other units, particularly the Graduate School.

Many units designate a [faculty ally for diversity in graduate education](). Faculty allies work with the Graduate School on issues of recruitment, admissions, retention and completion, and are contacts about diversity issues for students in their programs.

Leadership and staff at the Rackham Graduate School collaborate with graduate chairs and provide assistance for programs, faculty, and students. We offer an arena where graduate students can interact more widely with students and faculty from across the university.

Leading the Graduate Committee

The graduate chair leads the faculty graduate committee. This committee's responsibilities vary but often include:

- Setting priorities (cohort size, diversity, selectivity, recruitment, resource allocation, rigorous program assessments, etc.) and promoting program quality
- Overseeing orientation for new students and for students as they enter each stage of graduate study
- Overseeing regular review of student academic progress and ensuring that all students receive feedback at least annually
- Overseeing the administration of qualifying and/or preliminary examinations
- Assuring training of students in standards of academic and professional integrity and the responsible conduct of research and scholarship
- Maintaining transparent and equitable funding policies
- Ensuring that the curriculum is well-planned and that course information is current and accurate
- Organizing events to build a strong student-faculty community
- Overseeing the program's procedures when a student is failing to make satisfactory academic progress
- Handling issues of student misconduct
- Advocating for space and facilities that benefit graduate students
- Keeping information on the program website and graduate handbook up-to-date and accurate

Communications

The graduate chair sees that prospective students, students, faculty and others have easy access to accurate and up-to-date information about the program. You should be sure to keep graduate students informed about important matters that affect them, including changes in program requirements and policies, curriculum, facilities, etc.

Create a Graduate Handbook for Your Program

The graduate chair works with graduate coordinators to produce a program handbook and update it annually. A handbook is a useful way to ensure that uniform information about the program and its policies and procedures is available to students, faculty, and administrators. It provides an overview of the organization of the program and its place within larger structures of the department, school/college, and the Graduate School. It contains course and program requirements, including those for examinations; describes processes for the selection of faculty advisors; and provides information about other program-specific policies and processes. The handbook should outline a

typical course of study from entry through graduation that includes expectations and milestones for each year. It is good practice to include a checklist of annual student tasks and deadlines. Other information may include:

- Internal and external funding opportunities, including GSI/GSRA appointments and funding from the department, school/college, and Rackham
- For LSA programs, explanation of the Ten-Term Rule for teaching assistantships
- Overview of Rackham academic policies with links to relevant sites
- Jobseekers file (including student profiles)
- Annual form for assessing student progress

Maintain the Program Website

The program's website is its front door. Out-of-date websites create confusion and are ineffective. Prospective students examine your website carefully as they decide whether to apply. If it is well-maintained, your students will use it often. Including information about accomplishments and job placement of graduates will make it of interest to your alumni.

Build Community

Fostering a sense of community promotes productive interactions among students and faculty. As graduate chair, you can make sure that graduate students are included in departmental and other activities and organize events to encourage interaction among students and between students and faculty.

Part 2: Building the Graduate Cohort

Your program should have a recruiting plan. Attracting, selecting, and enrolling the best prospects are critical to academic reputation, improved completion rates, and appropriate time to degree. Recruiting the best students is a year-round process and is increasingly competitive even for the most highly-ranked programs. Careful enrollment planning is also needed to develop a suitably-sized, focused and diversified cohort that takes into account available funding, research and teaching needs, and the anticipated job market for graduates. The Rackham website offers [guidance and information about resources for recruiting](#).

Rackham Resources for Recruiting Prospective Students

Your faculty and current graduate students are the best recruiters for your program. Rackham staff are also ready to collaborate with you and have a number of resources to facilitate your efforts. Our resources fall into these general categories: funding, prospective student data, promising practices, summer research programs, and general information about U-M and applying to graduate school.

Funding

Grants are available through the Deans Office to supplement recruitment activity in your program. We provide application fee waivers for participants in many national organizations. Rackham staff engage in

other activities to facilitate recruiting for all Rackham programs; for more information contact Emma Flores at emxf@umich.edu or 615-3692. The Rackham Merit Fellowship is the single largest source of Rackham funding for incoming students who meet the eligibility requirements. Full descriptions of other smaller targeted fellowships are found in the funding section of Rackham's website.

When you make offers to prospective students, we encourage you to include Rackham funding resources that are available to all graduate students for attendance at professional conferences and for student research.

Prospective Student Data

We provide a subscription to the GRE Search Service which allows searches on a wide range of criteria. We also have access to numerous national databases, including McNair Scholars and National Name Exchange, which we can share with you. Please email rack-pipeline-gradschool@umich.edu if you want access to these lists. For general questions about recruitment, Contact Emma Flores at 615-3692 or emxf@umich.edu.

Rackham's website has a registration form for prospective students which loads information directly into M-Pathways. Our staff will show you how to request reports on prospects and to send targeted communications. For assistance, contact Shih-Wen Wu at shihwu@umich.edu.

Promising Recruitment Practices

Examples of successful recruiting practices drawn from research, national projects, and Rackham's Program Review are available. Rackham staff are ready to meet with you to review your current activity, other promising practices, and possible strategies for successful recruiting. Contact Ida Faye Webster at 615-5670 or idafaye@umich.edu.

Summer Programs

Our Summer Research Opportunity Program provides the opportunity to bring promising undergraduate prospects to campus for the summer to work with your faculty on current research. For more information contact Emma Flores at 615-3692 or emxf@umich.edu. There are dozens of other summer research programs on campus.

The Role of the Graduate Chair in Admissions

One of the most important and time-consuming responsibilities for the graduate chair is overseeing the admissions process, putting together funding packages for admitted applicants, and following through to encourage admitted applicants to come to the University of Michigan. In most programs, admitted candidates come to visit the Ann Arbor campus and the graduate chair is often responsible for organizing events to showcase the strengths of the program and the University. Not all admitted applicants are familiar with the variety of ways they might fund their graduate education, so it is highly desirable to provide each admitted student with full information. All admitted Ph.D. students should be offered multi-year funding packages, and these should be explained explicitly.

The graduate chair works closely with faculty through the admissions season. The graduate chair:

- Understands, promotes and upholds Rackham Graduate School policies to ensure the integrity of the admissions evaluation process
- Establishes the timeline that guides the evaluation and decision making process in the program
- Ensures that all application data are protected and kept confidential

The graduate chair's leadership is crucial to ensuring a consistent and systematic process for the review, short listing, and selection of graduate students. Central to this is a holistic evaluation process. A holistic process has been proven to be the most effective way to determine which applicants, on the basis of preparation, skills, and interests, are the best match or fit with program or departmental resources. By carefully weighing strengths, achievements, and the ways that an applicant might contribute to the educational environment of the graduate program, evaluators increase the likelihood that they will offer admission to those most likely to succeed. Rackham has provided a detailed description of holistic review and examples of graduate programs that successfully use this process.

Acceptance rates can be substantially improved by maintaining personal contact with admitted students. Personal contact by the graduate chair, program faculty, program administrators, and current graduate students make it much more likely that students will accept your admission offer. Contacts by email, social media, or personal phone calls are opportunities to discuss graduate life at U-M and to answer questions.

Promoting Diversity

One of the very important ways in which you provide leadership is in the active recruitment of students from groups underrepresented in your graduate student population. You may use a variety of strategies, including encouraging broad departmental involvement in outreach, inviting prospective students to campus, attending relevant events on campus or nationally, and identifying faculty and current graduate students who can help you recruit underrepresented students.

Many departments and programs have a designated faculty member who serves as a faculty ally for diversity in graduate education. Faculty allies work with the Graduate School on issues of recruitment, admissions, retention and completion, and serve as contacts on diversity issues for students within their own programs.

Our website can direct you (and prospective students) to U-M diversity resources. Included on our page of program statistics is information about the demographics of your current students, which may be of interest to some candidates.

International Students

The International Center has services and workshops to assist international students. Faculty need to be mindful that attention should be given to address how international students negotiate cultural differences in institutional climate, interpersonal relationships with faculty and other students, mental health and well-being, norms for research integrity, and other issues. Students should be encouraged to become involved with GRIN (Graduate Rackham International), a Rackham student organization

that supports connections and social involvement among students across cultures and programs of study, and advocates on issues that affect the success and well-being of international students.

Assistance from the Graduate School with Admissions

The Rackham Graduate Admissions Office grants admission to applicants who meet Rackham requirements upon recommendation of the graduate program. Admissions works with programs to facilitate the best possible service to each applicant from the submission of the application materials to the registration for classes and supports the process in the following ways:

- Advises applicants, graduate program staff, and faculty on policy and campus wide procedure and university services
- Insures a systematic approach to the collection of application materials
- Processes the application materials which includes evaluating official transcripts to confirm bachelor's degree equivalency and institutional accreditation
- Manages the application data and decisions using the M-Pathways student administration system
- Issues the immigration forms required for international students who seek to enroll using an F-1 or J-1 visa

Pre-Appointment Student Background Checks

The University of Michigan requires a pre-appointment background check for graduate students appointed as Graduate Student Instructors, Graduate Student Staff Assistants, and Graduate Student Research Assistants. Background checks are conducted as a part of the appointment process for master's students. Ph.D. students complete their background check during the summer, prior to their first registration. More information may be found in the University's [Policy on Background Screening](). Questions should be directed to [Academic Human Resources](), which administers the background check process

Getting Students Started

The graduate chair plays a central role in helping students through graduate study. In academic matters, he or she encourages effective advising among faculty, fair distribution of funding, clear enunciation of program requirements, consistent mentoring, and the development of academic skills and knowledge of ethical standards. One of the best ways to ensure this is to offer an appropriate orientation at each stage of study, including career development and placement.

Orientations for New Students

Nearly all graduate programs provide an orientation to get new graduate students off to the best start. While these are done in many different ways, they are most useful when the activities are well-designed and up-to-date. Many students are new to the University, and most are new to graduate education. What's familiar to those in your program may be baffling to those starting off in their first year. Many programs have full outlines of their orientations on their website. This allows participants to get the information they need and to be ready to ask questions.

For International Students

The International Center has services to acclimate and assist new international students, including Mandatory Immigration Check-Ins, the International Center Summer Orientation, and a variety of workshops.

For international students, attention may be needed to address:

- Facility in English language for academic purposes—the English Language Institute [ELI] is an expert resource, offering classes and writing and speaking clinics with one-on-one language and academic support
- How research and originality are paramount to the Ph.D., beyond grades or performing to stated measures
- Norms and standards regarding research integrity

Part 3: Guiding Students Through Their Degree Programs

Often graduate chairs are called upon to give guidance in personal matters such as health and wellness, conflict resolution, and personal development when a graduate student is moving into the next stage of study, research, or career advancement. There are many at the University who can assist you; see the resources listed in Appendix A.

Developing Good Mentoring Relationships

Effective mentoring relationships are essential to excellence in graduate education. Graduate chairs are critical to the process of identifying and assigning advisors for graduate students and oversee the maintenance of effective mentoring relationships. Graduate chairs provide guidance to both faculty and students on their respective responsibilities in the mentoring relationship. The graduate chair helps to set expectations in matters such as how the faculty advisor and student will communicate with each other and how often, and how mentors and students can resolve conflicts.

Another resource for building and sustaining these relationships is the Faculty Committee on Mentoring (MORE) initiative. U-M faculty designed MORE to develop tools and to engage with faculty and students to share tools and practices for effective mentoring. MORE sponsors workshops and programs, and has a website that provides information and other resources. The MORE committee is available upon request to facilitate departmental mentoring workshops. Faculty use these workshops to identify and discuss norms for faculty-graduate mentoring within their field(s) and to discover effective and appropriate mentoring strategies. Departments use these workshops as an opportunity to discuss the professional development of students, the increasing diversity of the graduate student population, the importance of two-way conversations between mentor and mentee, and the value of written mentoring plans. These workshops can be tailored to meet the needs of the program and are typically developed in consultation with program leadership.

One of the most valuable methods of establishing and maintaining a good mentoring relationship is the use of a shared plan or agreement between faculty and student. Such an agreement lays out a set of responsibilities and expectations for both parties in the mentoring relationship. Discussing the

creation of such a written agreement early in the relationship can help to identify students who may not be a good fit for the research and personality of a faculty member. For examples of these plans and other advice on mentoring, two Rackham guides are available: *How to Mentor Graduate Students* for faculty and *How to Get the Mentoring You Want* for students. MORE has also prepared Developing Shared Expectations, which contains a roster of topics on responsibilities, expectations, and other areas important for developing an effective mentoring relationship.

Guiding Professional Development

In both master's programs and doctoral programs, students benefit from exposure to a wide range of professional development opportunities. A wide range of professional development activities are available that are geared to each stage of degree work and career preparation.

Faculty mentors and advisors are positioned to introduce graduate students to the most suitable professional development workshops, conferences, etc. Resources are available at the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching, English Language Institute, University Library, Sweetland Center for Writing, and many others units. Rackham also offers opportunities to advance the professional development of University of Michigan graduate students. To that end, we coordinate a variety of resources to assist with professional development, including workshops, social media, and a network of faculty and staff dedicated to supporting graduate students. For further information, contact Laura Schram at 615-3658 or lnschram@umich.edu and see the Rackham professional development website. We encourage you to make sure that faculty and students are aware of these opportunities.

Understanding Rackham's Academic Policies

The academic policies of the Graduate School apply to all Rackham programs and are designed to ensure consistent standards in admissions, registration, degree requirements, and the awarding of degrees across all Rackham programs. Please make sure that students know about these policies.

The Rackham Policies website can help you quickly find information and forms for every phase of progress and completion for students in master's and doctoral programs. You will find detailed information and forms for retaining student status and degree completion, such as:

- Master's degrees
- Dual degree programs
- Calculating GPA
- Registration
- Leaves of Absence
- Extramural Study Status
- Reinstatement

From time to time, policies are revised by the Rackham Executive Board. We will always notify you of these changes, and ask you to pass along to your students those changes that will affect them.

Responsible Conduct of Research and Scholarship

Learning standards of academic and professional integrity and how to responsibly conduct research and scholarship (RCRS) is a necessary part of graduate education. Doctoral programs provide RCRS training for their Ph.D. students before they reach candidacy. Graduate chairs oversee the implementation of this training and certify that each student who applies to advance to candidacy has met this requirement.

Other Requirements and Resources

The graduate chair makes sure faculty and students are aware of other requirements and resources available to support each phase of graduate education, particularly those pertaining to dissertation completion. These include:

- *The Dissertation Handbook* is a guide to submitting the doctoral dissertation and completing the doctoral degree requirements.
- Navigating Your Degree provides students with a step-by-step description of what to do both before and after the oral defense.
- *Formatting Guidelines* takes students through the formatting requirements for Rackham dissertations.

Assisting Students with Funding

The graduate chair coordinates efforts to make sure that students have adequate funding and that the program's funding procedures are complete, clear, and fair. Whatever the funding resources and practices in your program, you are a critical source of information for both students and faculty.

The principal sources of funding for most graduate students come from the department, program, school or college. The graduate chair works with the department chair, associate dean, or dean to develop fair and effective funding plans for students. Rackham provides block grants to most programs to help to meet some of the financial needs of students. Information on Rackham-administered fellowships, grants, and scholarships; GSI, GSRA, and GSSA appointments; other U-M resources; and external sources can be found on the Rackham website and in the Resources section of Appendix A.

In all Ph.D. programs, students are funded for four years or more through a combination of fellowships, teaching, or research assistantships. Summer funding varies from program to program, and graduate chairs work with students to help them identify and apply for this support. Students should be strongly encouraged to seek funding from federal agencies, private foundations, and other external sources. When students are successful, Rackham will frequently partner with graduate programs to provide cost sharing to supplement the support (stipend, tuition, GradCare, dental insurance, and/or summer support) that is covered by the external sponsor. Doctoral students also are eligible to apply for additional University funding, e.g., Rackham Pre-doctoral Fellowships, Institute for the Humanities Fellowships, or Barbour Scholarships.

Overseeing Annual Reviews of Student Progress

Faculty should review the academic progress of each graduate student at least once a year and the graduate chair is often responsible for organizing and overseeing arrangements for these regular reviews. Annual reviews provide an opportunity to assess performance and clarify expectations about next steps. Students value knowing their status and receiving candid feedback. An annual review that assesses student progress, sets goals and identifies milestones for the coming year, and benefits students enormously. Regular review helps to identify early signs of difficulties and provides an opportunity for students to share any underlying personal problems that may be affecting their work.

Faculty should make sure to inform each student of the program's shared expectations about what constitutes satisfactory academic progress at each stage of graduate study. From the outset of graduate study, each student should be familiar with the program's and the Graduate School's standards for satisfactory academic progress. Documenting and sharing with each student a constructive critique of his or her efforts and progress provides a year-by-year record of how the student is meeting those standards. In the event that a student is unable to make satisfactory progress, these annual reviews establish a record of faculty efforts to advise the student and improve their performance.

Leaves of Absence

Students who have completed a term in a Ph.D. program are eligible to request a leave of absence which enables them to not register during a fall or winter term and remain in compliance with the continuous enrollment requirement for these programs. A student on a leave of absence suspends progress toward the degree for a minimum of one fall or winter term. As program director, you review requests and forward recommendations to Rackham for approval. Students may request a leave of absence for medical reasons, for family necessity or dependent care, for military service, or for personal reasons. Further information about leaves of absence for Ph.D. students can be found in Rackham Academic Policies, section 2.2.2. For questions, contact Ida Faye Webster at rackham.loa@umich.edu, 615-5670.

Time Limit Extensions for Family Care

Demands of caring for immediate family may greatly affect the time that a student can devote to educational responsibilities. As graduate chair, you will review and approve any request for a one year extension of the time limits for achieving candidacy, maintaining fellowship eligibility, or completing the degree. Further information can be found in Rackham Academic Policies, section 2.6.

Parental Accommodation Policy

Accommodations are available to allow a student to maintain registered full-time statues immediately following the birth or adoption of a child. Eligible students are entitled to an extension of one year to the maximum time limits to degree and candidacy. Graduate chairs review these requests and forward them to Rackham for approval. Further information is found in Rackham Academic Policies, section 2.5, and at the Graduate Student Parental Accommodation webpage. For questions, contact Ida Faye Webster at rackham.parental.accommodation@umich.edu, 615-5670.

Career Outcomes of Graduates

The success that new graduates have in moving into new careers, especially in a tight job market, is an important index of the effectiveness, quality, and national reputation of any graduate program. The graduate chair can be of great service by assisting faculty and students in the job search process. Useful steps include monitoring available options in and out of the academy, coordinating placement efforts, and by providing information about graduating students to prospective employers. The steps that can be taken to help placement vary by discipline, but useful initiatives include:

- Providing a "going on the job market" workshop that is specific to your discipline and attentive to the timing of the market in your field
- Inviting alumni to participate in a panel about different kinds of jobs in your field or discipline
- Collecting examples of CVs, cover letters, and teaching portfolios from students who have been successful on the job market and making them available to current job seekers

Part 4: Student Problem Solving and Crisis Management

Graduate chairs are called upon to deal with a range of exceptional issues involving students. These include instances of unprofessional behavior and academic integrity, misunderstandings and disputes between students and faculty about academic or personal matters, and various sorts of student adversity, often involving health and emotional well-being. Occasionally, it is necessary to deal with the death of a student or faculty member and the repercussions of this loss to the community.

Advice and support are available to help avoid problems and to manage these issues when they arise.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities often need special provisions in order to succeed in their graduate program. Students who require academic accommodations because of a documented disability may get assistance from the office of [Services for Students with Disabilities](). [Rackham can provide assistance]() for graduate students who require accommodations to fulfill their obligations as graduate student instructors or as graduate student research assistants. Please contact Darlene Ray-Johnson at [RackResolutionOfficer@umich.edu]() or 936-1647 with any questions.

Mental Health Issues

Graduate study is a stressful activity. Faculty and staff members often are on the front line in recognizing and addressing student health and mental health concerns. These concerns can affect scholarly work and academic progress and create difficulties with advisors or other faculty, staff, and students, and can be expressed by disruptive behavior, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, relationship or financial problems, and other emotional difficulties. The goal in managing [graduate student mental and emotional health]() concerns is to fashion an individualized approach that supports the student's continued and successful enrollment and that does not compromise the health and safety of the campus community.

The [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS) office provides free confidential services, including psychiatric support, to enrolled students. These services also include referrals to community resources and crisis interventions. CAPS also provides grief counseling and consultation on a range of issues for students, faculty, and staff. Rackham has an embedded CAPS counselor, Dr. Laura Monschau, dedicated to working with graduate students. She can be reached at 764-8312, lauralm@umich.edu.

Medical Accommodation

Faculty should make reasonable accommodations for academic work and other deadlines when students have a brief illness or other health-related difficulty during the term. For questions, contact Ida Faye Webster at idafaye@umich.edu, 615-5670.

Rackham Graduate Student Emergency Fund

Students may encounter an emergency or unusual one-time unforeseen expense and may apply for limited funds to help meet the costs of certain exigencies such as major accidents, medical, dental or other circumstances which meet the criteria for this exceptional support. Please see the [Rackham Graduate Student Emergency Funds webpage](#), or contact Darlene Ray-Johnson at RackResolutionOfficer@umich.edu or 936-1647 with any questions.

Emergency Mental and Physical Health Withdrawal

In acute circumstances, the University reserves the right to request or require students to withdraw when mental or physical health-related behavior significantly disrupts the ability of the student or other students, faculty, or staff to participate in the educational and research or employment opportunities of the University. Under this policy, the University provides a structured and supportive process of withdrawal, and consideration for reinstatement, that is designed to facilitate the student's likelihood for success. Details of this policy can be found in [Rackham Academic Policies, section 2.7](#), and at the University's [Emergency Health Withdrawal and re-enrollment Policy and Procedures webpage](#).

Grade Grievances

Student grievances about grades and academic evaluations are handled by the policies of the individual schools and colleges. Please become familiar with the policies of your school or college.

Unsatisfactory Academic Standing, Academic Probation and Warnings

You should make certain that the up-to-date requirements for good academic standing are published in your program's graduate student handbook, including the procedures that will be followed when a student's academic performance is unsatisfactory. Students should be notified immediately in writing when their performance falls below an acceptable level. Under Rackham's academic policies, a note of unsatisfactory academic standing will be placed on the student record when the cumulative GPA falls below a B (3.0 on a 4.0 point scale). If your program has additional requirements for satisfactory standing, you should notify Rackham OARD when it is determined that a student is not meeting these requirements. A student with unsatisfactory academic standing may not advance to candidacy and will not be awarded a degree or Rackham certificate and may change programs or transfer credits only

with permission of the admitting program. Details of the Graduate School's policy are found in [section 3.5.1 of the Rackham Academic Policies](#).

Academic Dismissal

Clearly articulated procedures and careful record-keeping safeguard the rights of both students and faculty when a student is unable or unwilling to meet the academic expectations of the program. Program faculty have a collective responsibility for determining that a student should be recommended to the Graduate School for dismissal. The decision to dismiss a student for academic reasons should never be made by a single faculty member, but should involve at least three persons including, for example, the student's advisor, the faculty director of the program, and at least one other faculty member who is involved in program policy or admissions.

Starting with the 2019 Winter Term, Ph.D. and D.M.A. programs will implement program-level policy and procedures for academic probation and dismissal that will be reviewed by Rackham deans to ensure that these are consistent with new Graduate School policy guidelines. Academic probation is normally required before a program may recommend to the Graduate School that a doctoral student be dismissed for academic reasons. As an exception, and only with advance notice to students, program policy may allow dismissal without probation for a student who fails to pass candidacy or preliminary exams. In accordance with its approved and published policy, a program may place on academic probation a student who has not maintained satisfactory academic standing. Rackham's policy guidelines for how a student should be placed on probation; the length of the required probationary period and student funding during this period; required written notifications of the dismissal recommendation to the student, the advisor, and Rackham; the end of the probationary period and dismissal; and options for appeal, are found in [section 3.5.2. of the Rackham Academic Policies](#).

While the decision to recommend dismissal of a student rests with the faculty in the student's program, the Graduate School implements the written recommendation for dismissal.

Addressing Problems in Student-Research Advisor Relationships

Research advisors are strongly encouraged to consult with the graduate chair when they have early concerns about a student's performance. The advisor should document and provide a written summary of difficulties that may cause consideration of terminating a student, and discuss these with the student in a timely manner. These discussions should also be included formally as part of the annual review. Advisors may terminate the student-advisor relationship because of a student's poor performance and lack of progress.

Academic Disputes

On occasion, academic disputes between faculty and graduate students come to the attention of the graduate chair. The Graduate School provides a process for the resolution of disputes related to equity and fairness of decisions or procedures that affect a student's academic standing and progress toward the degree. Rackham's academic [dispute resolution policy](#) is designed to serve both students and faculty in a way that is consistent with the integrity policies of the University. For assistance, contact

Darlene Ray-Johnson at RackResolutionOfficer@umich.edu or 936-1647, Rackham's Resolution Officer.

Academic and Professional Integrity Issues

Graduate School policies [define forms of academic and professional misconduct by Rackham graduate students and lay out procedures for investigating and adjudicating these cases](). Faculty advisors or instructors often contact the graduate chair for advice and guidance about how to determine if something constitutes misconduct and what to do in such cases. For assistance if this arises contact Rackham's Resolution Officer, Darlene Ray-Johnson, at RackResolutionOfficer@umich.edu or 936-1647.

Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct Issues

The University has issued *[Policy and Procedures on Student Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence]()*. Under this policy, as a graduate chair you are defined as a responsible employee and must immediately report any information about suspected prohibited conduct involving a student to Pamela Heatlie, Title IX Coordinator and Senior Director for Institutional Equity at the [Office for Institutional Equity](), at pheatlie@umich.edu, 763-0235. Prohibited conduct includes any instance of sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, sexual assault, stalking, or intimate partner violence.

Assistance with reporting to the University may be obtained from the [Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC)](), the University of Michigan Police Department (763-3434), or Rackham's Resolution Officer, Darlene Ray-Johnson, at RackResolutionOfficer@umich.edu, 936-1647. SAPAC provides free and confidential crisis intervention, advocacy, and support for students who are survivors of sexual assault and misconduct.

Conflict of Interest or Commitment Issues

Students or faculty may contact you about how to manage a potential conflict of interest or conflict of commitment involving a student. A *conflict of interest* can occur when a student has an involvement in an activity or interest outside the University (such as employment or participation in a start-up or other venture) which could provide the basis for unethical actions or decisions on behalf of the external interest. These can include, for example, using University resources to benefit the external interest. A *conflict of commitment* occurs when an external activity or relationship competes with the student's primary academic responsibilities, including coursework, research, and teaching. You should contact the point person designated by your school or college to handle these issues who can advise the student about how to eliminate or manage the conflict. The [Office of Research Ethics and Compliance](), a unit of the U-M Office of Research, provides useful information about University policies and procedures for these issues.

Personal Grievances

Students may contact Rackham's Resolution Officer, Darlene Ray-Johnson, at RackResolutionOfficer@umich.edu or 936-1647, concerning perceived discrimination and harassment. The following additional resources for addressing the personal grievances of graduate students are also available:

- The Dean of Students office has staff trained to help students, faculty and staff uncertain of where to turn; they possess the knowledge and influence to solve a full range of problems.
- The Office of Student Conflict Resolution provides a variety of programs and services to support a safe, just and peaceful community that can help students learn how to manage and resolve conflict peacefully. OSCR offers a range of conflict resolution pathways.
- The Center for the Education of Women + (CEW+) focuses on educational and financial supports, and career advancements to address challenges faced by women and all nontraditional students and underserved populations.
- The Spectrum Center provides education, information and advocacy services to create an open, safe, and inclusive environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and similarly-identified members of the University community.
- The University's central student Ombuds Office (different from the Rackham Resolution Officer) is a place where student questions, complaints, and concerns about the functioning of the University can be discussed.

Addressing Disruptive Non-Academic Behavior

The Office of Student Conflict Resolution (OSCR) administers campus-wide policies and procedures for violations of the University's non-academic misconduct policies, including harassment, assault, theft, cyber-bullying, and other infractions of the University's Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities. For questions about whether a student's behavior rises to the level of misconduct under University policy, contact the Office of Student Conflict Resolution at 936-6308.

When a student's behavior does not violate University policies but disrupts the work of other students, faculty or staff, the program may take steps to resolve these concerns.

The decision to address non-academic issues should be based on the student's behavior. When it is determined that a student's behavior is disruptive to the work of others, steps should be taken to ensure that the student receives clear and specific feedback about the nature of the behavior, the impact it has on others, and the requirements for correcting the behavior.

The program or graduate chair, advisor, mentor, or other appropriate faculty member should meet with the student and:

- Discuss the disruptive behavior and its impact, using specific examples;
- Explain the expectations of the program for standards of behavior;
- Give the student an opportunity to provide an explanation for the behavior that gives cause for concern;

- Inform the student of University resources that are available to help manage the behavior;
- Inform the student of the consequences for failing to correct the behavior (for example, continued outbursts may result in filing a report to OSCR);
- Make a written record of the conversation and send a summary to the student.

If signs indicate that health-related issues may underlie the concerning behaviors, contact Rackham's Resolution Officer, Darlene Ray-Johnson, at 936-1647 or RackResolutionOfficer@umich.edu. She can consult representatives from campus support services to develop a plan of action to address the disruptive behaviors.

For advice about how to talk with students who are concerned about another student's behavior, contact Sarah Daniels, Associate Dean of Students at 764-7420.

If you are concerned about a possible risk for your safety or the safety of others, contact Darlene Ray-Johnson to discuss security options. If you need immediate assistance in responding to a threat, contact the U-M Police Department at 763-1131 or dial 911. Off campus locations should dial 911.

For additional resources or information, see Appendix A, or contact Darlene Ray-Johnson at 936-1647 or RackResolutionOfficer@umich.edu.

Part 5: Program Administration

Accessing Program Data
Beginning in the 2018 fall term, Rackham will move data reports and resources for programs to an interactive and accessible online environment so that programs can access information and create reports for evaluation and planning. Program directors and chairs will receive information in the fall and Rackham will hold information sessions about how to access and use this new data resource.

Rackham Program Review
The purpose of the Rackham Program Review is to strengthen collaboration among Rackham, faculty responsible for graduate programs, and other schools and colleges to identify opportunities to improve graduate education. It complements the expertise of program faculty through the sharing of data about historical patterns and ideas for promising practices in graduate education.

Each degree program is reviewed every five years. The graduate chair plays a significant role in the review, meeting with Rackham leadership and following up on the recommendations from the review. Each new graduate chair benefits from reviewing their program data from the previous review and from familiarization with the letter summarizing the conversations and conclusions. If you have questions about Rackham Program Review, please contact Ida Faye Webster at 734-615-5670 or rackham-program-review@umich.edu.

Programs are informed in mid-winter when a review is scheduled to take place in the following year and notified that current graduate students will be surveyed about their experience. Over the summer, Rackham sends program-specific data on graduating students and schedules two fall

meetings with graduate program leadership. In the first meeting, discussion focuses on successes and challenges for the program, how plans for the program have been realized, responses to the data sent (career outcomes and survey of graduating doctoral students) and how program leadership can engage with faculty about anticipated near and long-term disciplinary changes that may affect graduate education.

In advance of the second meeting, the Graduate School sends program-specific data on current students (recruitment, admissions, completion, and the results of the student survey). This informs the meeting's discussion of the program's current state and steps to help ensure its progress toward its future goals. The dean of Rackham and the dean of the school or college subsequently meet to discuss the strengths and opportunities of the programs that participated in the review. This conversation focuses on how to work together to support planning to advance the quality of the programs. At the conclusion of the review early in the winter term, the Rackham dean and associate dean send a letter summarizing the conversations and making recommendations to the department chair, graduate chair, and dean of each participating program. We then ask program leadership to respond in writing to these recommendations before the start of the spring term.

Proposing a New Graduate Program

Faculty may develop ideas for new Rackham programs in emerging fields of scholarship, research, and professional preparation. A proposal for a new degree or graduate certificate must be approved by the Rackham Executive Board before the program can be advertised and students admitted. Rackham guidelines help faculty think through and develop proposals. The guidelines also discuss proposal requirements for:

- Dual degree programs
- Accelerated master's programs
- Accelerated master's and dual degree programs with other institutions
- Rackham Interdepartmental Programs (Rackham IDPs)
- Online degree programs

Careful consideration should be given to the need for a new program. The development of a successful proposal for a new program requires at least several months and occasionally as long as a year. To discuss developing a new graduate programs, please contact Assistant Dean John Godfrey, jgodfrey@umich.edu, 764-4401.

Changes to Existing Programs

The Rackham Executive Board also reviews and approves major changes to existing graduate programs. For minor changes, please notify Rackham, as some of these changes also require approval, and all changes in program requirements require notification. Please contact Assistant Dean John Godfrey at 764-4401 or jgodfrey@umich.edu.

Admissions Suspension, Moratorium and Program Deactivation

Program faculty may recommend to Rackham that admissions to a graduate program be temporarily suspended for one year. This is usually done to address short-term issues such as over-enrollment or the need to re-design curriculum.

If the faculty have longer-term concerns about program quality or viability, they may ask the Graduate School to place a moratorium on admissions, or to close the program. In any of these circumstances, please contact Assistant Dean John Godfrey at 764-4401 or jgodfrey@umich.edu.

Appendix A: Resources

Contact List of Key Rackham Offices by Topic

Topic	Phone	E-mail
Academic degree requirements, records, dissertations	763-0171	oard.questions@umich.edu
Academic policies and procedures	764-4400	RackhamDeansInfo@umich.edu
Admissions, applications, fees, I-20s, and DS 2019s	764-8129	rackadmis@umich.edu
Budget funding transfers	763-2278	rackham.budget@umich.edu
Changes to current term registrations	763-5174	registrar@umich.edu
Changes to prior term registrations	763-0171	oard.questions@umich.edu
Conflict resolution, student concerns and problems	615-3682	RackhamDeansInfo@umich.edu
Counseling and Psychological Services	764-8312	tdsevig@umich.edu
OR 24 hour crisis line	996-4747	U-M Psychiatric ER
Rackham CAPS counselor, Dr. Laura Monschau	764-8312	lauralm@umich.edu
Dean's Office	764-4400	RackhamDeansInfo@umich.edu
Facilities (Rackham room scheduling and assistance)	764-8572	facsched@umich.edu
Fellowships (Rackham), student funding sources	764-8119	rackham.fellowships@umich.edu
Funding (Rackham) sources for faculty	764-4400	RackhamDeansInfo@umich.edu
Institutional research and reporting	764-4400	rackhamir@umich.edu
Recruitment	647-4013	rack-pipeline-gradschool@umich.edu
Student employment at Rackham	647-5927	rackhamhr@umich.edu

See Rackham's website for a complete listing of contacts.

Online Guides for Graduate Students and Faculty
- Rackham Graduate School Academic Policies
- *How to Get the Mentoring You Want* (for students)
- *How to Mentor Graduate Students* (for faculty)
- OUTlist (LGBT mentoring directory)
- Research Ethics and Compliance at the University of Michigan

- Integrity in Scholarship
- *Dissertation Handbook*
- *Abstract and Dissertation Format Guidelines*
- Plagiarism and Copyright Resources
- Doctoral Degree Deadlines

Rackham Registration Policies
- Rackham Graduate School, Graduate Programs and Registration Policy
- Rackham Graduate School, Ph.D. Students and Registration Policy

Dealing with Student Health and Mental Health
- Practices to Facilitate Academic Success, Mental and Emotional Health
- Mary A. Rackham Institute, Psychological Clinic
- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
- MiTalk
- University Health Service (UHS)

Student Funding
- Rackham Graduate School, Funding
- Rackham Graduate Student Research Grant
- Rackham Conference Travel Grant
- Rackham Graduate Student Professional Travel with Children Grant
- Rackham Graduate Student Emergency Funds
- Rackham Administered Fellowships, Grants and Scholarships
- Cost Sharing by Rackham
- Rackham Graduate School, Interdisciplinary Workshops
- Office of Financial Aid, U-M Child Care Subsidy Program

Policies Every Graduate Student Should Know
- Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities
- U-M Nondiscrimination Policy
- U-M Standard Practice Guide, Discrimination and Harassment
- U-M Standard Practice Guide, Sexual Harassment
- Faculty-Student Relationships Policy

Handling Allegations of Misconduct by Rackham Graduate Students

Dispute Resolution

Discrimination and Sexual Harassment
- Rackham Graduate School, Discrimination and Harassment, Policies
- Office of Institutional Equity, Non-Discrimination Policy Notice
- What You Should Know About Sexual Misconduct, Bias Incidents, Ethnic Intimidation, Discrimination, Discriminatory Harassment: A Resource Guide for Graduate Students

Rights of Students to Intellectual Property

- [U-M TechTransfer, Student Ownership Policy](#)

Graduate Student Organizations
- [Rackham Graduate School, Student Organizations](#)
- [Rackham Student Government (RSG)](#)
- [Graduate Rackham International (GRIN)](#)
- [Students of Color of Rackham (SCOR)](#)
- [U-M Central Student Government (CSG)](#)
- [Graduate Employees Organization (GEO)](#)

Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT)
- [Rackham Graduate School, Support for Teaching](#)
- [U-M Graduate Teacher Certificate](#)
- [CRLT, Resources on Faculty Mentoring](#)

Professional Development
- [Rackham Professional Development Workshops](#)
- [Rackham Professional Development](#)
- [Mentoring Others Results in Excellence (MORE)](#)

Assistance for International Graduate Students
- [U-M International Center](#)

Assistance with English Language
- [U-M English Language Institute](#)
- [U-M Sweetland Center for Writing](#)

Statistical Services for Graduate Students
- [Consulting for Statistics, Computing, and Analytics Research (CSCAR)](#)

Appendix B: Sample Timeline of Tasks and Deadlines

June and July

Tasks

- Review your program's budget and plan for any adjustments needed or shortfalls the program may face.
- Confirm dates of Rackham Fall Welcome, International Center orientations, and your program's new student orientation, and invite incoming students to attend.
- Plan campus recruiting events for the fall and any recruitment at conferences or elsewhere.
- Set your program's goals for the coming year and determine initiatives to achieve these.
- Review and update your program's student handbook and distribute it to all students.

Deadlines

- Provide Rackham Admissions with any changes to application requirements, deadlines, or materials for the upcoming application season.

August

Tasks

- Review materials for your new student orientation and ready them for distribution.
- Review admission deadlines, admission committee membership.
- Review and update admission offer letters.
- Discuss with program colleagues and the admissions committee the planned enrollment goals and recruiting efforts.
- Determine the status of students on academic probation or who have taken a leave of absence, or who may be reinstated after an emergency mental or physical health withdrawal so you are ready and prepared for transitions in September.
- Prepare the report on your program's use of Block Grant funds, due in early September.
- Welcome and orient incoming students. Ensure that they know where to find information about policies, requirements, and resources. Encourage them to attend the Rackham Welcome and Resource Fair.

Deadlines

- Deadline for returning to Rackham OARD the report confirming approval of students who applied to complete master's degrees and graduate certificates in the spring/summer.
- Submit to Rackham your annual reporting on Rackham Merit Fellowships.

September

Tasks

- If you are new in your position, or want a refresher, take part in the workshop for new faculty directors of graduate degree programs offered by Rackham's deans.
- Ensure that all active students are registered for the fall term, including students returning from leaves of absence.

- Review your program's procedures for nominations for faculty and student awards administered by Rackham for graduate education excellence, and confirm the nomination deadlines which occur from November through January: Distinguished Dissertation Awards, Distinguished Graduate Mentor Awards, Rackham Master's Mentoring Awards, D'Arms Faculty Awards for Distinguished Graduate Mentoring in the Humanities, and Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Awards.
- Familiarize yourself with procedures and deadlines for nominating students for fellowships, grants, and scholarships, including those administered by Rackham. Deadlines occur throughout the fall and winter terms.

Deadlines
- Important deadlines at the end of the third week of term:
  - grace period ends for doctoral students completing their degrees with a spring/summer registration
  - requests are due for personal leaves of absence and extramural study
  - forms are due for advancing students to candidacy
- Submit to Rackham your annual report on the program's use of Block Grant funds during the previous academic year.

October

Tasks
- Attend Rackham's Chairs and Directors Meeting.
- Meet with the admissions committee to discuss enrollment goals and criteria for holistic review of applications.
- If relevant for your program, begin review of applications for winter term admissions.

Deadlines
- Nomination deadlines for Rackham International Student Fellowships and Rackham Non-Traditional Fellowships.
- Deadline for recommending students to Rackham for admission for the winter term.

November

Tasks
- Complete review of winter term admission applications and notify Rackham Admissions and applicants of decisions.
- Work with Rackham Admissions on the visa process for admitted international applicants.

Deadlines
- Deadline for all doctoral degree requirements to be completed for students to receive degree at Winter Commencement; see Rackham OARD webpage for date.

December

Tasks

- Determine the status of students on academic probation or who have taken a leave of absence, or who may be reinstated after an emergency mental or physical health withdrawal so you are ready and prepared for transitions in September.
- Begin review of applications for spring, summer, and fall admissions.
- Receive notice from Rackham about the allocation your program may get for Rackham Merit Fellowships.
- Discuss plans with faculty for funding students in the next academic year.
- Review guidelines or attend information session about the Rackham Merit Fellowships, Rackham Engineering Awards, Rackham Science Awards, and Rackham Master's Awards.

January

Tasks

- Continue to review applications for spring, summer and fall term admissions.
- Receive notification from Rackham about your program's current year Block Grant Allocation.

Deadlines

- Important deadlines at the end of the third week of term:
    - Grace period ends for doctoral students completing their degrees with a fall registration.
    - Requests are due for personal leaves of absence and extramural study.
    - Forms are due for advancing students to candidacy.
    - Deadline for returning to Rackham OARD the report confirming approval of students who applied to complete master's degrees and graduate certificates in the fall term.
- Nominations due for Rackham Pre-doctoral Fellowships, Barbour Scholarships, and Lipschutz, Host, and Smith Awards.

February

Tasks

- Complete review of fall term admission applications and notify Rackham Admissions and applicants of decisions.
- For international applicants, inform the Rackham Admissions about any program funding commitments in order to start the student visa process.
- Process appointments for GSRA and GSI positions that are open for next year.

Deadlines

- First round of nominations is due for Rackham Merit Fellowships, Rackham Engineering Awards, Rackham Science Awards, and Rackham Master's Awards.

March

Tasks

- Attend Rackham's Chairs and Directors Meeting.
- Continue to inform applicants and Rackham Admissions of admission decisions.
- Organize events for admitted students to visit campus.

- Continue to work with Rackham Admissions on the visa process for admitted international applicants.
- Provide Rackham Admissions with any changes to application requirements, deadlines, or materials for the upcoming application season.

Deadlines
- Second round of nominations is due for Rackham Merit Fellowships, Rackham Engineering Awards, Rackham Science Awards, and Rackham Master's Awards.

April

Tasks
- Update placement data of program alumni.

Deadlines
- Final confirmation of all admission offers; applicants must respond with decisions about admission offers by April 15.
- Deadline for all doctoral degree requirements to be completed for students to receive degree at Spring Commencement; see [Rackham OARD webpage for date](#).

May

Tasks
- Faculty complete an annual review of each student's progress, provide written feedback to students. Keep the written feedback on file.
- Review your admissions season to see what worked well and what might be improved. Plan strategy, budget, and events for recruiting next year's cohort.
- If you are stepping down as program director, prepare a detailed timeline and other materials for your successor.
- Form committees for the upcoming year—admissions, fellowship review, GSI hiring, etc.
- Notify the [Rackham Dean's Office](#) of any changes in faculty and staff for the administration for your program so that contact lists are up-to-date.

Deadlines
- Deadlines at the end of the third week of spring term:
  - grace period ends for doctoral students completing their degrees with a winter registration
  - forms are due for advancing students to candidacy.
- Deadline for returning to Rackham OARD the report confirming approval of students who applied to complete master's degrees and graduate certificates in the winter term.