

# **Rackham Handbook for Faculty Directors of Graduate Programs**



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## Preface

Rackham uses the term graduate chair to refer to the faculty member or members designated as leader(s) of the graduate program by a department, school or college. This community of graduate chairs is one of Rackham's primary partners in advancing the excellence of graduate education. This handbook is meant as a reference for you in your role as primary chair or director for Rackham programs and is designed to help you find resources at Rackham and across the University to support the excellence and well-being of our graduate community.

Dean Solomon also sends a monthly newsletter to department and graduate chairs sharing timely information and events across Rackham, including a series of orientation meetings for graduate chairs and directors that focuses on discussions and resources available to assist in faculty leadership in their important roles.

As a member of the graduate faculty, graduate chairs promote and uphold the [Statement of Faculty Values, Privileges, and Responsibilities](#) which inspire and guide faculty who are central to making the University a world leader in graduate education.

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.

The responsibilities of the graduate chair typically include:

- Providing leadership to promote excellence in graduate education
- Leading a faculty graduate committee
- Attending to program climate to ensure there is inclusivity and a sense of belonging
- Recruiting and admitting a diverse group of 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

We hope this handbook will help you in this important work. For quick reference, Appendix A contains a list of helpful contacts at Rackham and across the university and Appendix B contains a sample timeline of tasks and deadlines common to graduate chairs.

## Part 1: Leading the Graduate Program

The graduate chair oversees the many and varied aspects of a graduate program, from administrative imperatives to strategic directions, and they help set the tone for the program's outreach and climate. 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 Rackham and in the school or college of the program.

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.

Fostering a positive sense of community is in every component of the graduate program from how recruitment is handled to alumni engagement, from including graduate students in the decision-making of a program to messaging the professional expectations of the discipline. A positive community must involve the entire graduate community: students, staff, faculty, and alumni. As graduate chair, you set the tone for the sense of community and engagement for each of these stakeholders by including them in departmental activities, organizing events, encouraging interaction and creating structures for support and feedback. Rackham's [Faculty Allies](#) can be a resource in this important work.

Rackham supports the work of programs by providing 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. We hold regular events to convene graduate chairs on broad themes and host ad hoc office hours to dive deeper into issues of specific interest. We regularly contribute to the graduate coordinators' forum to help them in their support graduate programs. Finally, [Rackham Program Review](#) offers a chance to periodically share with Rackham your concerns and accomplishments and to work together to improve graduate education.

Responsibilities of graduate chairs include:

- Managing the formation of the annual student cohort that is:
  - of high quality, with scholarly interests aligned to those of the faculty
  - diverse in demographic backgrounds, experiences, 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 meaningful, transparent, 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 that is equitable, transparent, and continues to the expected time to degree
- 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 career outcomes of graduates and aiding and tracking their career outcomes 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

## **Administering the Graduate Program**

The graduate chair plays a central role in the overall administration of the graduate program. Some important components can include overseeing department communications, including a handbook and website, and leading the program's graduate committee.

### **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***

It is helpful to work 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:

- Welcome and overview that highlights the values/culture of the program
- Learning objectives
- Internal policies and procedures (changing mentors, progress/probation)
- School/College policies with links to relevant sites
- Overview of Rackham academic policies with links to relevant sites



- Candidacy details (objective of preliminary exams, format, preparation, assessment)
- Internal and external funding opportunities, including GSI/GSRA appointments and funding from the department, school/college, and Rackham
- Committee opportunities or other program engagement opportunities for students
- Annual review form for assessing student progress
- A description of mentoring and the program's written mentoring plan
- Jobseekers file (including student profiles)
- Resources (student clubs, CRLT, CAPS)
- Directory of who to contact for what

### ***Maintain the Program's 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 career outcomes of graduates will make it of interest to your alumni.

### **Leading the Program's Graduate Committee**

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

- Setting priorities (community development; recruitment including cohort size, diversity, selectivity; resource allocation; rigorous program assessments, etc.) and promoting overall 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
- Creating and updating the process for written mentoring plans for PhD students
- 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
- Supporting a positive climate
- 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

## **Rackham Program Review**

The purpose of the Rackham Program Review is to strengthen the collaboration among Rackham, the faculty responsible for graduate programs, and the other schools and colleges. This collaborative process helps to identify opportunities to improve graduate education. The process led by Rackham complements the expertise of the program's 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 itself, meeting with associate and assistant deans from Rackham, and is responsible for responding to the recommendations from the review. Each new graduate chair can benefit from reviewing the data about his or her own program prepared for the last review, the letter summarizing the discussions, and the plans from the program to address the recommendations. The most recent RPR letter, along with the graduate program's response, can be found online via the [Rackham Graduate Program Hub](#).

**Mid-Winter: Rackham Notifies Graduate Programs of Review and Current Students Surveyed**  
Programs are notified of the upcoming review and current graduate students are surveyed on their experience within the graduate program.

### **Early Fall: Rackham and Graduate Program Leadership – Meeting #1**

The goal of this first meeting is to discuss how the plans from the last review have been realized, the success and challenges of the program, responses to data shared (career outcomes and the survey of graduating doctoral students), as well as the future direction of the field.

### **Late Fall: Rackham, Associate Deans of Schools/Colleges and Graduate Program Leadership – Meeting #2**

The purpose of the second meeting is to discuss additional data shared (current student survey, recruitment, admissions, progress, and completion) and how it aligns with the program's goals and measures of success. Program quality is principally in the hands of the faculty, and Rackham may be able to share expertise or provide services to assist faculty initiatives.

### **Early Winter: Deans Meetings and Final Letters**

At this third and final meeting in the Program Review process, the dean of Rackham and the dean of the school or college discuss the strengths and opportunities of the graduate programs that participated in the Rackham program review as highlighted in the draft letter that summarizes the fall conversations. This conversation focuses on how to collaborate in supporting the next steps to improving the quality of the graduate program. At the conclusion of this meeting, letters are finalized and sent to the department chair, graduate chair, and the dean of each participating graduate program in early winter.

### **Early Spring: Program Leadership Responses to Letters**

Graduate program leadership is asked to provide a written response to address the recommendations in the final letters.

## **Proposing a New Graduate Program and Changing or Suspending Existing Programs**

As graduate chair, you might develop ideas for how to change the graduate curriculum to better address student needs, faculty interest, or trends in your discipline. Most new graduate degrees must be approved by the Rackham Executive Board before the program can be advertised and new students admitted. Likewise, major changes, including requests for an admissions moratorium or program closure, require review and approval. In any of these circumstances, please contact Emily Swafford at [swafford@umich.edu](mailto:swafford@umich.edu).

Rackham's [guidelines](#) on new and revised programs also contains information on:

- Certificates of graduate study
- Dual degree programs
- Rackham Interdepartmental Programs (Rackham IDPs)
- Sequential or concurrent undergraduate/graduate programs
- Distributed (online or distance) degree programs
- Dual degree programs with other institutions

## **Part 2: Building the Graduate Cohort**

Your program should have a recruitment plan which are tied to the goals of the various stages; from attracting the best students (applications), to establishing holistic admissions processes (offers), to encouraging acceptance (yield). Recruitment is a year-round process and increasingly competitive even for the most highly-ranked programs. Attracting, selecting, and enrolling the best prospects are critical to academic reputation, improved completion rates, and appropriate time to degree. Careful enrollment planning is also needed to develop suitably-sized, focused and diversified cohorts that takes into account available funding, research and teaching needs, and the anticipated career outcomes for graduates.

The Partnerships for Access Community and Excellence ([PACE](#)) team is the umbrella for recruiting activity. We will also highlight other areas/initiatives within Rackham that may be of use.

## **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. Though it's easy to forget, not all admitted applicants are familiar with the variety of ways in which they might fund their graduate educations, 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—proven to be the most effective way to determine which applicants, on the basis of their preparation, skills and interests are the best match or fit with program or departmental resources. By carefully weighing strengths, achievements, and the ways in which an applicant might contribute to the educational environment of the graduate degree 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 from U-M graduate programs that use this process.

Maintaining personal contact with admitted students can substantially improve acceptance rates. Personal contact with those who have received it (from the graduate chair, appropriate program faculty, program administrators, and current graduate students) will make it much more likely that students will accept your offer of admission. Such efforts may include e-mail, social media, or personal phone calls to discuss graduate life at the University of Michigan and to answer any questions.

## **Promoting Diversity**

Actively recruiting diverse cohort of graduate students from groups underrepresented into your graduate student population is a key part of building a robust cohort. You may use a variety of strategies, including encouraging broad departmental involvement in outreach to attract applicants from underrepresented backgrounds, inviting prospective students to campus, attending relevant events on campus or nationally, and identifying faculty and current graduate students who are interested in helping you to recruit underrepresented students.

## **Rackham Resources**

Your faculty and current graduate students are the best recruiters for your program and Rackham can collaborate with you in your efforts including funding, prospective student data, promising practices, summer research programs, and general information about U-M and applying to graduate school.

## **Partnership for Access Community and Excellence (PACE)**

Rackham has a variety of resources for recruiting underrepresented domestic students, coordinated by our Partnership for Access, Community and Excellence (PACE).

The PACE team builds and strengthens partnerships with U-M graduate programs, Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), and Rackham Merit Fellowship (RMF) eligible students from the undergraduate stage through doctoral completion. Our work is guided by the goals of creating access to higher education and sustaining supportive communities at U-M to help students fulfill their potential and goals of excellence.

### ***Rackham Merit Fellowship***

[The Rackham Merit Fellowship](#) is the single largest source of funding from Rackham for incoming students who meet the eligibility requirements. There are other smaller targeted fellowships; full descriptions are in the [funding section of Rackham's website](#).

### ***Summer Research Programs***

Our summer research programs bring promising RMF eligible students to campus to work with your faculty on current research. The Summer Research Opportunity Program ([SROP](#)) is a 9-10 week program for rising juniors and seniors interested in social sciences, physical or natural sciences, and engineering programs. The Michigan Humanities Emerging Research Scholars ([MICHHERS](#)) program is a 2-week program for rising seniors, bachelor's degree holders and those currently in terminal M.A. programs in the humanistic social science fields.

### ***Rackham Aspiring Fellows***

The newest PACE program is the Rackham Aspiring Fellows (RAF) program intended to be a bridge to strengthen student's applications into SROP and MICHHERS. RAF is a year-long program for rising sophomores and juniors from minority serving institutions (MSIs) who also work with your faculty on current research. In addition, RAF also pairs faculty from U-M with the MSI to build a partnership across campuses.

### ***Recruitment Grants***

These [grants](#) are available to support the innovative efforts of programs to recruit a highly qualified and diverse student community. Grants can support activities such as helping to identify individuals who should be in your applicant pool to pre-enrollment efforts that support incoming students as they begin to make their transition into graduate school. Proposals are due in early May for a late June notification.

### ***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 and are happy to share those with you. Rackham's website has a registration page for prospective students. That information is routinely loaded into M-Pathways. Our staff will show you how to use the systems to search on prospects and to send targeted communications. Contact Cherie Dotson at 734-764-9854 or [crdotson@umich.edu](mailto:crdotson@umich.edu) for more information.

### ***Other Recruiting Resources***

When you are making offers to prospective students, we encourage you to include reference to funding resources available from Rackham to all graduate students for attendance at professional conferences and for student research. Our website also 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.

### ***Faculty Allies***

The designated [faculty ally for diversity](#) works with the Graduate School at the program level on issues of recruitment, admissions, retention and completion, and serve as contacts on diversity issues for students within their own programs.

International students contribute in important ways to the overall diversity of graduate programs. The **International Center** has services and workshops to acclimate and assist international students and, along with the Rackham Graduate Admissions Office, can help answer questions related to visa and immigration concerns that might arise during recruitment.

### **Rackham Graduate Admissions Office**

The Rackham Graduate Admissions Office works with programs to facilitate the best possible service to each applicant from the submission of application materials to registration for classes. Rackham Graduate Admissions supports the process in the following ways:

- Advises applicants, graduate program staff and faculty on policy and campus wide procedures and university services
- Ensures a systematic approach to the collection of application materials
- Upon recommendation for admission, evaluates transcript authenticity, accreditation of the institutions, international transcript grade conversion, and bachelor's degree equivalency
- Manages the application data and decisions using the M-Pathways student administration system
- Issues the immigration forms required by international students who seek to enroll using a F-1 or J-1 visa

## **Part 3: Guiding Students Through Their Degree Programs**

### **Getting Students Started**

The graduate chair plays a central role in helping students through graduate study. In academic matters, the chair 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 have a tradition of orienting new graduate students in order to create community, provide information, share the culture and values in the program and get students off on the best start. These orientations are done in many different ways and are most useful when the activities are well-designed and up-to-date. Rackham provides an annual "Fall Welcome" ceremony in late August and the [Rackham Welcome website](#) provides student facing resources for incoming students. We encourage programs to organize events where orientation material is re-shared at pertinent moments in students' trajectories. Remember, too, that many are new to the University, and

most new to graduate education. What's familiar to those in your program may be baffling to those beginning the first year.

### **Additional Resources**

- The [English Language Institute](#) [ELI] is a helpful resource for students who need acclimation to teaching or research activities in English.
- [The International Center](#) has services to acclimate and assist new students, including Mandatory Immigration Check-Ins, the International Center Summer Orientation, and a variety of workshops aimed at international students.

### **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. Doctoral students complete their background check during the summer, prior to their first term of 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.

### **Developing Good Mentoring Relationships**

Maintaining effective mentoring relationships is a priority in graduate education; graduate chairs are critical to the initial matching of students to advisors and overseeing the creation and maintenance of effective mentoring relationships. The graduate chair is positioned to guide the process of identifying and assigning advisors for graduate students. Both faculty and students seek guidance to understand their respective responsibilities in the mentoring relationship. The graduate chair can assist by helping to set standards and clear definitions in matters such as: how they will communicate with each other and how often; how mentors and students can resolve conflicts; and how they can make use of available resources.

One of the most valuable methods of establishing and maintaining a good mentoring relationship is the use of a shared plan between faculty and student. Such a plan lays out a set of responsibilities and expectations for both parties in the mentoring relationship. Discussing the creation of a written mentoring plan 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, three Rackham guides are available: [How to Mentor Graduate Students](#) for faculty and [How to Get the Mentoring You Want](#) for students, as well as [How to Implement Written Mentoring Plans](#), a resource specifically created for graduate chairs.

Another resource on our campus for building and sustaining these relationships is [the MORE initiative](#). This was designed by faculty here to develop tools and provide guidance with advising and mentoring graduate students. MORE sponsors workshops and programs, and has a helpful website that addresses a range of relevant topics.

## **Overseeing Annual Reviews of Student Progress**

The faculty should review the academic progress of each graduate student at least once a year and the graduate chair is often responsible for organizing such a system. 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 will benefit students enormously. Regular review can function as an early warning system for emerging difficulties and provides an opportunity for students to share any underlying personal problems that may be affecting work.

In each graduate program faculty should be explicit about their common expectations about what constitutes satisfactory academic progress at each stage of graduate study, and should share that information with all students. From the outset of graduate study, each student should be familiar with the satisfactory academic progress standards established by his or her graduate program and the Graduate School. Providing an annual review of progress, and routinely documenting and sharing with each student a constructive critique of that individual's efforts, provides a year-by-year record of how the student is meeting those standards. In the unfortunate case that a student is unable to make satisfactory progress, you will have established a record of the faculty's consistent efforts to advise the student.

## **Guiding Professional Development**

Both in master's programs and doctoral programs, graduate education benefits from students' exposure to a wide range of experiences. Among these are professional development activities geared to each stage of degree work and career preparation. Faculty, in their roles as mentors and advisors, may be positioned to introduce graduate students to the most suitable workshops, conferences, etc. Many resources are available on campus—for example, at the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching, English Language Institute, University Library, Sweetland Center for Writing, and many others—and we hope you will encourage your students to participate in these opportunities when that is appropriate.

Rackham also offers opportunities to advance the professional development of University of Michigan graduate students. To that end, the Professional Development and Engagement (PDE) team coordinates a variety of programs (such as the Doctoral Intern Fellowship Program, DEI Professional Development Certificate, Program in Public Scholarship, Preparing Future Faculty, and more), workshops, funding, career counseling, as well as opportunities to connect with Rackham alumni. For further information, visit the [PDE website](#) or contact the team at [rack-prof-dev@umich.edu](mailto:rack-prof-dev@umich.edu).

Rackham staff are available to facilitate workshops and presentations to advance graduate student professional development and climate. To request a workshop or presentation, please fill out our [request form](#).

## **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:

- [Registration](#)
- [Doctoral Degrees](#)
- [Master's Degrees](#)
- [Dual degree programs](#)
- [Certificates](#)
- [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 assists faculty and students by making sure they 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.
- [Library Guide to Microsoft Word for Dissertations](#) describes the features of Microsoft Word to make formatting the dissertation easier.
  - [DMA Formatting Guidelines](#) provides additional information for DMA dissertations.
- [Completing the Doctoral Degree Requirements](#) provides students with a step-by-step description of what to do both before and after the oral defense.

## **Assisting Students with Funding**

The principal sources of funding for most graduate students come from the department, program, school or college, and 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 meet some of the financial needs of students. At the University level, some additional sources of funding are available for master's and doctoral students. Information on [funding from Rackham, the University of Michigan and external sources](#) is outlined on the Rackham website.

In all Ph.D. programs, students receive 12-month full funding for four years or more through a combination of fellowships, teaching, or research assistantships. In addition, students are eligible to apply for additional University funding, e.g., Rackham Predoctoral Fellowships, Institute for the Humanities, or Barbour Scholarships. Students should be encouraged to apply for support from federal agencies as well as private foundations and other external funders that support graduate students. When students are successful in competing for external support, Rackham Graduate School partners with graduate programs to provide [cost sharing](#) to ensure that students are fully supported.

The graduate chair is a critical source of information for both students and faculty in the effort to make sure that students have adequate funding and that the program's funding procedures are complete, clear, and fair. Information is available in the [Resources section of this handbook](#), providing sources of funding available to support graduate education and suggestions on ways to address funding challenges in your program and for your individual students. This section has information about:

- Rackham Administered Fellowships, Grants, and Scholarships
- GSI, GSRA, and GSSA appointments
- Emergency Funding
- Funding for Financial Shortfalls
- Rackham Student Research Grants
- Rackham Conference Travel Grants
- Rackham Cost Sharing

## **Career Outcomes of Graduates**

The goal of any degree program is to launch graduates into successful and fulfilling careers. The graduate chair can be of great service by assisting faculty and students in the job search process, monitoring available options in and out of the academy, and by providing information about graduating students to prospective employers. Though the resources needed will vary by discipline, here are a few common ones:

- Provide a “going on the job market” workshop that is specific to your discipline, with attention to the timing of the market in your field.
- Invite alumni to participate in a panel about different kinds of jobs in your field or discipline.
- From students who have been successful on the job market, collect examples of CVs, cover letters, and teaching portfolios, and make 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 special issues involving students. These may include unprofessional behavior on the part of faculty or students, misunderstandings between students and faculty on academic or personal matters, and various sorts of student adversity, often involving health, mental health, and overall well-being. Occasionally, it is necessary to deal with the death of a student or faculty member and the repercussions of the loss in the community.

Sources of advice and support are available to assist in dealing with these issues, and this section is intended to serve as a guide to resources on campus that can assist the graduate chair in dealing with problems that arise and to help the chair prevent such problems in the first place. Rackham has also developed a resource, “Program Leadership in Cases of Climate Concerns,” which outlines other types of concerns that may arise and which may require program communication. This resource can be found online via the [Rackham Graduate Program Hub](#).

There are many at the University who can assist you in the role as chair, especially in offering resources and support for mental health and well-being, conflict resolution and personal development when a graduate student is moving into the next stage of study, research, or career advancement; see the resource listing in Appendix A.

### **Health, Mental Health, and Well-Being**

Faculty and staff members are often on the front line in dealing with student health, mental health, and well-being concerns. These concerns may include problems with scholarly work, difficult relationships with advisors or other faculty and staff, disruptive behavior or personal concerns related to disability status, accommodations or financial needs. The desired outcome in supporting [graduate student mental health](#) and well-being concerns is to take 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 services that are free, confidential, and available to currently enrolled students. Services include: grief counseling for individuals, couples and groups; consultation to students, faculty, staff, and caregivers; assistance with referrals to community resources, and crisis interventions. Many schools and colleges also have embedded CAPS counselors available for graduate students, including Rackham. Your dean’s office may also have resources to support students with mental health and well-being questions or concerns.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities often need more flexibility, and sometimes accommodations, in order to succeed in graduate education. If the student elects to share disability status information, respond with care and refer them to the most appropriate resources. Graduate students who require academic accommodations because of a documented disability may get assistance from [Services for Students with Disabilities](#). Graduate students who require accommodations to fulfill their obligations as graduate student instructors or as graduate student research assistants may get assistance from Rackham. Rackham Graduate Student and Program Consultation Services provides [employment or appointment related accommodations](#) and can be contacted for consultation about accommodations.

### **Grade Grievances**

Individual schools and colleges have grade grievance policies. Please become familiar with your school or college policies.

## Academic Probation and Warnings

Graduate programs should immediately notify students in writing when their performance falls below an acceptable level. Students who fall below the GPA requirement of the program or Rackham may be placed on academic probation. Students with a cumulative GPA that falls below a B (3.0 on a 4.0-point scale) may be placed on academic probation. During the probationary term the student will not be awarded a graduate degree or certificate and cannot transfer credit to a Rackham master's program, be advanced to candidacy, or be allowed to change their program. Upon the recommendation of the graduate chair, and with the consent of the Rackham Graduate School, a student may be given an opportunity to correct the scholastic and/or academic deficiency. Details on academic probation are outlined in [section 3.5 of the Rackham Academic Policies](#).

Aside from a “below minimum academic requirement” GPA, students who are failing to make satisfactory academic progress or are not in good standing in a program, may be eligible for probation.

When drafting a probation letter, consider including the following to ensure the student is fully aware of the reason for probation and the expectations moving forward:

- Reference or link the program handbook that outlines academic standing and probation
- Reference and link to Rackham's Academic Policy regarding probation
- Share support resources with the student like the Dean of Students Office and Graduate Student and Program Consultation Services so the student has resources for support
- Clearly list the terms of the probation and timeline for reaching those terms
- Outline the steps to appeal the probation decision, if applicable.

## 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.

Students and advisors should work together on a shared list of expectations and working norms. Even with such expectations and norms, conflict can occur within an advising relationship. Support from Rackham's Graduate Student and Program Consultation Services can be offered to help discuss the concerns and/or facilitate a process by which both parties can have their needs addressed.

## 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 the Rackham Resolution Officer at [rackham-adr@umich.edu](mailto:rackham-adr@umich.edu).

## **Academic Dismissal**

Clearly articulated procedures and careful record-keeping safeguard the rights of both students and faculty in cases where a student is unable or unwilling to meet the academic expectations of the program. Rackham outlines expectations for Academic Progress, Probation and Dismissal in [section 3 of Rackham Academic Policies](#).

The following is a summary of issues that arise when considering a dismissal of a graduate student for academic reasons.

- Students who are not making satisfactory academic progress should have an opportunity to return to good academic standing by completing satisfactory work within a deadline that is explained in advance. Students should receive a probation letter indicating the possibility of termination at least one term prior to the term the termination will take effect. A student will not normally be dismissed from a Ph.D. program without at least one term of probation.
- A student may not have financial support terminated for academic reasons in mid-term; the advisor or graduate chair should provide a probation letter that gives advance warning of one term that funding will be terminated without improvement.
- If the student has not been able or willing to return to good standing within the agreed upon time frame, the faculty should consider dismissal on academic grounds.
- The faculty in the program have a collective responsibility for making decisions about academic dismissals. This should never be the decision of a single faculty member. Thus each program should have a clear process for making these decisions that reflects a program-wide perspective. This process should involve at a minimum the student's advisor, the faculty director of the program, and at least one other faculty member who is involved in policy or admissions in the program. After full review of the case, the committee may decide to dismiss, or to impose other academic sanctions. To ensure fairness and avoid bias, unnecessary grievances or litigation, the program-level process should provide written notification of the decision to the student (and possibly a copy to the advisor), the reasons for it, the effective date, and appeal options available to the student.
- In general, academic dismissals should take effect at the end of an academic semester in which the student is enrolled.

The decision to dismiss a student for academic reasons rests with the faculty in the student's graduate program. However, only Rackham has the authority to make the dismissal official. The staff at the Rackham Graduate School will process the dismissal upon the written recommendation from faculty leadership in the graduate program involved in the dismissal process. Students also have the right to appeal the dismissal decision if they believe there was an issue with the application of program policy, via the Academic Dispute Resolution process outlined above.

## **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 at [rackham-adr@umich.edu](mailto:rackham-adr@umich.edu).

## **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 the Equity, Civil Rights and Title IX Office (ECRT). Prohibited conduct includes any instance of sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, sexual assault, stalking, intimate partner violence, or retaliation.

Assistance with reporting to the University may be obtained from the [Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center \(SAPAC\)](#) or the University of Michigan Police Department (734-763-3434). SAPAC provides free and confidential crisis intervention, advocacy, and support for students who are survivors of sexual assault and misconduct and also offer a 24-hour crisis line 734-936-3333.

The [Prevention Education, Assistance and Resources](#) department (PEAR, under ECRT) provides presentations, workshops, professional development, and resources for Ann Arbor and Michigan Medicine faculty and staff. PEAR also offers consultations with faculty and staff leaders and assists units as they holistically respond to sexual misconduct in their communities. In addition to supporting the creation of unit level sexual and gender-based harassment and misconduct prevention plans, PEAR will work closely with the SAPAC to develop a comprehensive prevention plan for the entire campus.

## **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 Office of The Vice President for Research (OVPR), provides useful information about University policies and procedures for these issues.

## Personal Grievances

Students may contact Rackham's Graduate Student and Program Consultation Services (GSPCS) concerning allegations or perceptions of grievances, as well as to consult around reporting mechanisms, support resources, and resources for addressing the personal grievances. Campus referrals may include:

- 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](#) (OSCR) provides a variety of programs and services designed to support a safe, just and peaceful community, and to help Michigan students learn how to manage and resolve conflict peacefully. OSCR offers a full-spectrum menu of conflict resolution pathways and is the preferred referral for student-to-student concerns.
- The [Center for the Education of Women+](#) (CEW+) provides counseling and educational programs to women and men regarding academic, career and life issues, conducts social research on policy and gender issues, and advocates for improved policy and practice.
- The [Spectrum Center](#) provides a range of 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 student [Ombuds Office](#) is a place where student questions, complaints and concerns about the functioning of the University can be discussed.

## Addressing Disruptive Non-Academic Behavior

Violations of the University's non-academic misconduct policies, including harassment, assault, theft, cyber-bullying, and other violations of the University's [Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) are handled by the Office of Student Conflict Resolution (OSCR) which administers campus-wide policies and procedures for such incidents. For questions about whether a student's disruptive behavior rises to the level of misconduct under University policy, contact the Office of Student Conflict Resolution at [oscr@umich.edu](mailto:oscr@umich.edu).

When a student's behavior does not violate University policy (including but not limited to, the *Statement*), but does disrupt the work of other students, faculty or staff, the program may take steps to address these issues with the student to resolve them.

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 other students, faculty or staff, 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 (using specific examples) and the impact it has on others;
- 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 be causing the behaviors of concern or for advice about how to talk with students who are concerned about another student's behavior, contact the Associate Dean of Students in the Dean of Student's Office at 734-764-7420.

If you need immediate assistance in responding to a threat, contact the U-M Police Department at 734-763-1131 or dial 911. Off campus locations should dial 911.

You might conclude that the student needs additional support. See the additional resources listed in Appendix A, or contact the Graduate Student and Program Consultation Services (GSPCS) at 734-764-4400 or [rackham-gspcs@umich.edu](mailto:rackham-gspcs@umich.edu).



# Appendix A

## Resources

### Contact List of Key Rackham Offices by Topic

Topic	E-mail
Academic degree requirements, records, dissertations	<a href="mailto:oard.questions@umich.edu">oard.questions@umich.edu</a>
Academic policies and procedures	<a href="mailto:RackhamDeansInfo@umich.edu">RackhamDeansInfo@umich.edu</a>
Admissions, applications, fees, I-20s, and DS 2019s	<a href="mailto:rackadmis@umich.edu">rackadmis@umich.edu</a>
Budget funding transfers	<a href="mailto:RackhamFF@umich.edu">RackhamFF@umich.edu</a>
Changes to current term registrations	<a href="mailto:registrar@umich.edu">registrar@umich.edu</a>
Changes to prior term registrations	<a href="mailto:oard.questions@umich.edu">oard.questions@umich.edu</a>
Conflict resolution, student concerns and problems	<a href="mailto:rackham-gspcs@umich.edu">rackham-gspcs@umich.edu</a>
Counseling and Psychological Services	<a href="mailto:caps-uofm@umich.edu">caps-uofm@umich.edu</a>
<i>OR 24 hour crisis line</i>	734-936-5900 / <a href="#">U-M Psychiatric ER</a>
Dean's Office	<a href="mailto:RackhamDeansInfo@umich.edu">RackhamDeansInfo@umich.edu</a>
Facilities (Rackham room scheduling and assistance)	<a href="mailto:RackhamScheduling@umich.edu">RackhamScheduling@umich.edu</a>
Fellowships, student funding sources	<a href="mailto:RackhamFF@umich.edu">RackhamFF@umich.edu</a>
Funding sources for faculty	<a href="mailto:RackhamDeansInfo@umich.edu">RackhamDeansInfo@umich.edu</a>
Institutional Research and reporting	<a href="mailto:rackhamir.questions@umich.edu">rackhamir.questions@umich.edu</a>
Recruitment	<a href="mailto:rackham-pace@umich.edu">rackham-pace@umich.edu</a>
Student employment at Rackham	<a href="mailto:rackhamhr@umich.edu">rackhamhr@umich.edu</a>

Visit [Rackham's website](#) for a complete listing of contacts.

### 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)
- [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](#)

### **Discrimination and Sexual Harassment**

- [Rackham Graduate School, Discrimination and Harassment, Policies](#)
- [Equity, Civil Rights, and Title IX \(ECRT\), Non-Discrimination Policy Notice](#)

### **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 \(CAPS\)](#)
- [Physical and Mental Health Resources at U-M/Ann Arbor Community](#)
- [MiTalk](#)

### **Student Funding**

- [Rackham Graduate School, Funding](#)
- [Rackham Graduate Student Research Grant](#)
- [Rackham Conference Travel 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 and Gender-Based Misconduct](#)
- [Rackham Graduate School, Graduate Student Parental Accommodation Policy](#)
- [Faculty-Student Relationships Policy](#)
- [Student Organizations](#)
- [Rackham Graduate School, Student Organizations](#)
- [Rackham Student Government \(RSG\)](#)
- [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](#)

### **Rackham Registration Policies**

- [Rackham Graduate School, Graduate Programs and Registration Policy](#)
- [Rackham Graduate School, Ph.D. Students and Registration Policy](#)

### **Dispute Resolution**

#### **Professional Development**

- [Rackham Graduate Student Success 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**

- [The Center for Statistical Consultation and Research \(CSCAR\)](#)

#### **Rights of Students to Intellectual Property**

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

## **Appendix B**

### **Sample Timeline of Selected Tasks and Annual Cycle of Rackham Deadlines for Faculty Directors of Graduate Programs**

#### **June and July**

- Review your program's budget and plan for any adjustments needed or shortfalls the program may face.
- Confirm the dates of the Rackham Fall Welcome, the International Center's orientations, and for your program's new student orientation. Invite incoming students to attend the appropriate events.
- Plan the recruiting events you'll hold on campus in the fall or any recruitment at conferences and other venues.
- Define your program's goals and determine any related program initiatives for the coming year.
- Review your program's student handbook and make any needed revisions. It then should be easily available to all students in the program.

### ***Rackham Deadlines***

- The grace period ends with the conclusion of the spring half-term for doctoral students completing their degrees with a winter registration.
- You should provide the Admissions Office with any changes you wish to make in your application deadlines, requirements, or materials.

### **August**

- Review materials that will be used in your program's new student orientation so you can make sure they're ready for distribution.
- Review your program's admissions deadlines, committees, and admission offer letters; update the letter content as needed.
- Discuss with your colleagues and the admissions committee your planned enrollment goals and recruiting efforts.
- Determine the status of students in your program who are on Academic Probation or have taken a Leave of Absence so you will be ready to take any needed action next month.
- Prepare your program's report on your use of Block Grant funds as this will be due early next month.
- Welcome incoming students and hold an orientation for them. You can use this opportunity to ensure that they know where to find information about policies, requirements and resources. Encourage them to attend the Rackham Welcome and Resource Fair.

### **September**

- If you are new to the director position, or feel the need for a refresher, take part in the workshops for new faculty directors of graduate degree programs offered by Rackham's deans.
- If you are involved in faculty and student award nominations, review the procedures used by your program and confirm the deadlines for nomination. The eleven awards administered by Rackham have deadlines in November through March.
- Ensure that all active students are registered for the fall term, including students who have returned from leaves of absence.
- Familiarize yourself with fellowships, grants and scholarships, including those administered by Rackham, for which your program submits a nomination on behalf of the student(s) for a competition or allocated award. Deadlines occur throughout the fall and winter terms.

### ***Rackham Deadlines***

- You will be asked to submit a report on your use of Block Grant funds from the previous academic year.
- The forms required for students to Advance to Candidacy are due within the first week of the term.
- Three important deadlines fall at the end of the third week of term:
  - the grace period ends for doctoral students completing their degrees with a spring/summer registration;
  - requests for Leave of Absence and Extramural Study are due;

- probation decisions must be submitted.

## **October**

- Attend the Chairs and Directors Meeting held at Rackham.
- Meet with your program's admissions committee to review enrollment goals and criteria for holistic review of applications.
- Begin to review applications for winter term admissions if this is applicable to your program.

### ***Rackham Deadlines***

- There are nomination deadlines for three sources of funding: Rackham International Student Fellowships, Rackham Non-Traditional Fellowships, and Grants for the Global Engagement of Doctoral Education.

## **November**

- Complete the review of applications for the winter term and notify applicants of your program's decision.

### ***Rackham Deadlines***

- The deadline falls in this month for final degree conferral decisions for Ph.D. students completing requirements during the fall term.
- This is the time to inform winter term applicants and the Admissions Office of your decisions.
- For international applicants, this is the time to inform the Admissions Office of program funding for the winter term that will be provided to start the student visa process.

## **December**

- Determine the status of students in your program who are on Academic Probation or have taken a Leave of Absence so you will be ready to take any needed action next month.
- Begin to review applications for spring, summer and fall term admissions.
- Discuss with your program's faculty the plans for funding your students in the next academic year.

### ***Rackham Deadlines***

- The nominations are due for Rackham Humanities Research Fellowships.
- The deadline falls this month to submit final degree conferral decisions for master's and certificate fall graduation applications.

## **January**

- Continue to review applications for spring, summer and fall term admissions.

### ***Rackham Deadlines***

- The nominations are due for Rackham Predoctoral Fellowships.
- The forms required for students to Advance to Candidacy are due within the first week of the term.
- Three important deadlines fall at the end of the third week of term:

- the grace period ends for doctoral students completing their degrees with a fall registration;
- requests for Leave of Absence and Extramural Study are due;
- probation decisions must be submitted.

## **February**

- Process appointments for the GSRA and GSI positions you have open for next year.
- Inform applicants and the Admissions Office of your decisions.
- For international applicants, inform the Admissions Office of the program funding to be provided in order to start the student visa process.

### ***Rackham Deadlines***

- The first competition nomination deadline occurs for Rackham Merit Fellowships and Rackham Master's Awards.
- For international applicants, inform the Admission Office of program funding that will be provided to start the student visa process.

## **March**

- Attend the Chairs and Directors Meeting held at Rackham.
- Continue to inform domestic applicants and the Admissions Office of the program's admission decisions. Organize events for admitted students to visit campus.
- Continue to work with the Admissions Office on the student visa process for international applicants who have been admitted.
- Remember that all applicants to whom you have extended offers have until April 15 to inform you of their final decision.

### ***Rackham Deadlines***

- The second competition nomination deadline occurs for Rackham Merit Fellowships and Rackham Master's Awards.
- Begin to inform applicants and the Admission Office regarding admission to your program.
- For international applicants, inform the Admission Office of program funding that will be provided to start the student visa process.

## **April**

- Make certain you have heard from all those to whom you extended an offer.
- Update your alumni career outcome data.

### ***Rackham Deadlines***

- All Rackham Merit Fellowship allocation nominations must be entered and awarded by April 15
- The deadline falls in this month for final degree conferral decisions for Ph.D. students completing requirements during the winter term.

## May

- Convene all faculty to complete an annual review of each student's academic progress, provide written feedback to students, and keep the written feedback on file.
- Review your admissions season to see what worked well and what might be improved. Plan your strategy, budget and events for recruiting your next cohort.
- Prepare a detailed timeline and other materials for use by your successor if you are stepping down.
- Form your committees for the upcoming year—admissions, fellowship review, GSI hiring, etc.

## *Rackham Deadlines*

- The deadline falls this month to submit final degree conferral decisions for master's and certificate winter graduation applications.
- The forms required for students to Advance to Candidacy are due within the first week of the term.
- Two important deadlines fall at the end of the third week of spring/summer term:
  - requests for Leave of Absence and Extramural Study are due;
  - probation decisions must be submitted.
- Notify the [Rackham Dean's Office](#) staff of any changes in faculty and staff administration for your program in order to update contact lists.