



University of California, Merced
Graduate Students' Rights and Responsibilities
(UCM Graduate Student Association - 2020-2022)

Preamble:

The University of California, Merced is committed to the success of graduate students as scholars and contributors to the research and educational missions of the university. This document asserts the rights and responsibilities of graduate students as integral members of the university community.

- 1. Graduate students should have access to information about the requirements, policies, procedures, and norms of their degree programs, including coursework, examinations, theses, dissertations, and normative times to degree.**
 - 1.1. These requirements should be communicated upon entrance to the graduate program, and available on specified program and Graduate Division websites.

- 2. The University and its graduate students should adhere to the terms of employment contracts negotiated between the university and the union representing them as employees.**
 - 2.1. Graduate students, faculty, administrators and staff involved in graduate student employment should know the contractual terms as relevant to them.

- 3. Graduate students supported by non-employment fellowships should be afforded autonomy in pursuing their research interests and directions as indicated by the terms of the fellowship.**
 - 3.1. The University should strive to provide financial support for graduate students on full fellowships (i.e. those including tuition and stipend support) that is at least comparable to the financial support provided to teaching assistants.

- 4. All parties involved in graduate studies should adhere to relevant university, county, state, and federal health and safety guidelines and requirements.**
- 5. All students, faculty, staff, and administrators involved in graduate education should adhere to the University's Principles of Community, and should be treated equitably and with respect and professionalism..**
- 6. Graduate students have the right to receive timely evaluations of their academic progress based on program requirements and norms, and communicated between the faculty and graduate students.**
 - 6.1. Reports of decisions on evaluations including annual, oral examinations and prospectus defenses shall be provided according to University and campus policies and procedures.
 - 6.2. Graduate students should be given the opportunity to correct shortcomings in academic progress when they are first identified and communicated. Faculty should provide timely guidance and advice on how to correct shortcomings.
 - 6.3. Graduate students should be given the opportunity to provide feedback to chairs and deans about graduate advising and program operations and quality, without fear of retribution or retaliation, and with confidentiality to the extent possible under mandated reporting requirements.
- 7. Graduate students should have the benefit of advising from one or more faculty, including the chairs of their degree programs, at all times while enrolled in graduate studies.**
- 8. Procedures for matching graduate students with primary advisors should be communicated clearly, along with guidance in selecting candidacy and dissertation committee members.**
 - 8.1. Advisors and advisees are responsible for making their best efforts to establish and maintain a healthy professional relationship, and to seek guidance from mentors, committee members, faculty and staff, including guidelines maintained by the Graduate Division and Graduate Council on managing healthy professional relationships between faculty and graduate students.
 - 8.2. Students should have a reasonable expectation to pursue the course of study and research agreed upon between the student and primary advisors.

- 8.3. Advisors and advisees have the right to terminate the advisor-advisee relationship without fear of retribution, and the responsibility to seek guidance and understand the process and need for time to find a new advisor. All parties are responsible for understanding that the University does not guarantee the availability of a new advisor.
 - 8.4. The graduate program, school, and Graduate Division should help graduate students find new primary advisors when necessary. Graduate students have both a right and a responsibility to identify potential advisors within their program of study who match with their research interests.
- 9. Graduate students should have the intellectual and physical resources needed to pursue research activities as supported by the faculty and their primary advisors, and they should have access to career and professional development resources for both academic and non-academic professional pathways.**
- 9.1. These resources should include disciplinary and interdisciplinary training as appropriate, access to information about professional associations and conferences, job interview training, and standards of conduct and professional ethics.
 - 9.2. Graduate students' positionality and vulnerability, lack of authority, lack of power, and/or experience should not be exploited by any members of the University.
- 10. Graduate students have the right to co-authorship in publications involving significant contributions of ideas or research work from the student.**
- 10.1. Authorship status should be agreed upon as early as possible in the course of a research project, and should adhere to disciplinary norms of authorship. Authors should understand that authorship status may change over the course of a project if warranted by changes in intellectual contributions relative to any initial agreements.
- 11. Graduate students and their representatives should be able to provide input to decision-making processes relevant to graduate education in their programs, on campus, and in the UC system.**
- 12. Graduate students have the right to be free from bullying, discrimination, sexual harassment, gender-based violence, intimidation, and/or retaliation. The University of California has a responsibility to create and maintain a**

community where all individuals can work and learn together in a safe and inclusive environment.

- 12.1. Graduate students should have the freedom to express their views on campus and without fear of retaliation, and without disrupting research and educational activities for members of the community.
- 12.2. All members of the graduate community should be respected as individuals, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, nationality, religious beliefs, disability, or political orientation.

13. Graduate students should be able to follow all University policies and procedures without fear of retribution or retaliation.

14. Graduate students should have opportunities to form clubs and organizations according to University policies and procedures, and with available resources.

- 14.1. Graduate students have the right to join the collective bargaining unit that has been authorized to represent them.
- 14.2. Graduate students have the right to participate in activities sponsored by their student organizations without faculty/staff interference.

15. Graduate students are responsible for professional conduct in all aspects of their education, research, and community engagement.

- 15.1. Graduate students should respect and uphold all relevant university policies and procedures.
- 15.2. Graduate students are responsible for providing accurate and truthful reporting of research results and to uphold codes of conduct in research methodology and scholarship.
- 15.3. Graduate students are responsible for knowing and adhering to all deadlines imposed by the university, school, and their respective departments, as they pertain to their enrollment, academic standing, and teaching or research responsibilities.

16. Graduate students are responsible for endeavoring to advance to candidacy within “normative time” as defined by the graduate program.

- 16.1. Graduate students are responsible for completing all coursework and program requirements in accordance with the expectations established by their instructors and programs of study.

- 16.2. Graduate students should ask questions that promote their understanding of the academic requirements and the financial arrangements of their specific graduate program.
- 16.3. Graduate students should take the initiative in accessing any necessary resources for mental and physical well-being, to optimize their academic achievement and their contribution to the university overall.

- 17. Graduate students have the responsibility to seek out, learn, and adhere to the requirements, policies, procedures, and norms of their degree programs.**

- 18. Graduate students have a responsibility to understand their role in the development of the professional relationship between faculty mentor and graduate student mentee, including having an awareness of time constraints and other demands imposed by faculty members and program staff.**
 - 18.1. Graduate students should recognize that each faculty member has their particular area(s) of expertise, and if desired, students should seek mentorship and advice from their committee members and other faculty, instructors, and researchers as needed.
 - 18.2. Graduate students are responsible for communicating regularly with faculty mentors and advisors, especially in matters related to research and academic progress. Graduate students should work with advisors and mentors to determine expectations about communications and meetings.

Supplemental Resources:

1. Policies Applying to Campus Activities, Organizations and Students (PACAOS)- Policy on Student Conduct and Discipline
 - a. <https://policy.ucop.edu/doc/2710530/PACAOS-100>
2. PACAOS 30.00-Policy on speech and Advocacy
 - a. <https://policy.ucop.edu/doc/2710523/PACAOS-30>
3. PACAOS 140.00- Guidelines Applying to Nondiscrimination on the basis of disability
 - a. <https://policy.ucop.edu/doc/2710534/PACAOS-140>
4. PACAOS 150.00- Student-related Policy applying to nondiscrimination on the basis of sex
 - a. <https://policy.ucop.edu/doc/2710535/PACAOS-150>
5. PACAOS 170.00- Policy on University Obligations and student rights
 - a. <https://policy.ucop.edu/doc/2710537/PACAOS-170>
6. PACAOS 70.00 Policy on Registered Campus Organizations
 - a. <https://policy.ucop.edu/doc/2710527/PACAOS-70>
7. PACAOS 120.00- Policy on student participation in governance
 - a. <https://policy.ucop.edu/doc/2710532/PACAOS-120>
8. PACAOS- Appendix C: Nondiscrimination policy statement for university of california publications regarding student-related matters
 - a. <https://policy.ucop.edu/doc/2710540/PACAOS-Appendix-C>
9. Office for the Prevention of Harrassment and Discrimination
 - a. <https://ophd.ucmerced.edu/policieslaws/doe-title-ix-regulations>
10. UC Statement of Ethical Values & Standards of Ethical Conduct
 - a. https://www.ucop.edu/ethics-compliance-audit-services/_files/stmt-stds-ethics.pdf
11. UC Merced- Campus policies
 - a. <https://policies.ucmerced.edu/>
12. UC Faculty Code of Conduct (APM 015)
 - a. https://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programs/_files/apm/apm-015.pdf