

Having an understanding of our mutual expectations is key to the success of a graduate mentoring relationship. While each student is different, this document provides a foundation on which we can build our relationship. This is meant to be a dynamic document that will evolve over time with student input. This current document is built from expectations in peer labs, specifically from Chelsea Specht, previously the Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University.

*My expectations of graduate students:*

1. I expect that you will seek my advice on issues related to your professional and academic development (like choosing classes, TAships, research directions, funding opportunities, conferences, collaborations) and I expect that you will seriously consider this advice.
2. I expect that you will use your own judgment about taking that advice. For example, if I suggest a conference to you and after looking at it, you honestly don't think it looks up your alley, I expect you to go with your gut and look for a different place to present your research. Ultimately, it's your graduate education and you are the driver. Come back and tell me though, so I can think about how to modify my advice for your particular future.
3. I expect that you will pursue research that has some overlap with my expertise and interests. Otherwise, I will not be in a solid position to mentor you and help you have success. If your interests shift away from the themes of the lab, I expect that you will inform me and we can discuss options.
4. I expect honesty from you. I will not judge you for not knowing something or for breaking something in the lab; everyone has different educational backgrounds and everyone breaks something from time to time. I expect you to be honest with me and with other members of the lab; you all depend on each other for success and trust is key.
5. I expect you to be resourceful. Many things 'stick' better when you have to work through a problem to fully understand a solution. And I don't know all the answers anyway (nor do I always have the money to fix it)! So by all means, ask questions, sometimes I'll have an answer and sometimes I will point you to fruitful paths for answering those questions.
6. I expect that you will respect my time as I respect yours. If we have a meeting scheduled, I expect you to be on time or to let me know if you will be late.

7. I expect you to be a full part of this lab community. Graduate students are the lab members (besides me) with the longest terms and are really the heart of the lab. So I expect you to be at lab meetings (on time), to participate fully in those meetings (by presenting, asking questions, bringing snacks when it's your turn), to come to and help organize lab social events, to take part in at least some of our outreach events, to help us host visiting speakers, to help with joint lab tasks, to be present in the lab during working hours, etc. I also expect that you will be supportive of each other -- say hello to your labmates, help (if you have time, or schedule time) when they ask, be welcoming to newcomers, be respectful and cherish each other's contributions. Similarly be respectful of other's time.

8. I expect you to tell me when you can't do one of these things. You are typically juggling just as many things as I am and sometimes have to say no. This is fine and I expect you to do this. For example, if you are staying home to write, let me know. And let others in the lab know who may depend on your presence.

9. I expect that you will usually respond in a timely fashion (24 hrs if during the work week) when I email you. I also expect that you will tell me when you will be out of town for extended periods, in case lab issues come up and we are looking for you. When possible, ask before you make your arrangements to go out of town in case there is something critical during that time.

10. I expect you to invest time in the success of the lab, not just in your own research. Running a lab is a huge collective effort, and we all contribute to our collective success. For example, you might be the one to set up the lab meeting schedule, organize hazardous waste pick-up, order supplies, refill the paper towels, organize the social calendar, do the dishes, clean the break room, etc. No one does these things for us, so look around, see what needs doing, and pitch in. Or ask if someone who seems overtasked needs help. I will know and I will appreciate your efforts.

11. I expect that you will discuss issues of authorship of publications, presentations and talks with me before presenting/submitting. Typically, PIs contribute intellectually and monetarily to student projects and are listed as senior authors. However, if a project did not involve my effort in these ways, I would not expect authorship (and in fact if you do side projects that don't involve me, that's great. But see #3 above.)

12. I expect you will actively pursue funds to support your research, even if it is in line with ongoing projects in the lab. This is easily one of the most important aspects of your training -- learning how to sell your ideas -- and it takes lots of practice. I expect you to start in your first year and to continue to apply as needed to support your work. Your success in garnering grants will also be one of the main features (beyond your publications) that any future employers will consider, at least in research-related careers.

This does not mean that I won't help with paying for your research -- but it does mean that I need to see that you are putting in effort to support yourself.

13. I expect you to mentor an undergrad or high school student at least once during your tenure. If you are here in graduate school, there's a good chance that a graduate student mentored you while you were an undergrad, and this is the time to return the favor (and also to figure out if you want to advise students as part of your career). However, I expect you to keep an eye on your time and not donate it all to undergrad mentoring. It can be a hard balance, but that's academia. I also expect you will use me as a resource to help with issues that may come up with your mentees, good and/or bad. I expect you will promote them and advocate for them - as I do for you - when it comes to nominations for awards for undergraduate research, authorship on papers, etc.

Note: These expectations are specific to me and to our lab, but the expectations of the graduate program also apply. Be aware of the graduate progress reports and rules specific to your graduate program, and let me know when you need to schedule meetings, get signatures, etc.

### **Your expectations of me:**

1. You can expect to meet with me regularly (roughly weekly or every other week during the semester and by appointment during the summer). I think it's important that you have regular one-on-one time with me. Not everyone needs it, but it's something you can and should feel comfortable asking for.

2. You can expect me to ask for your honest feedback about the lab, your graduate experience, and your perception of me as a mentor. I can't improve anything that you don't tell me about.

3. You can expect me to give you my honest feedback about your progress. I am here to support you in every way possible and giving you feedback is one of the most important ways to promote your success. You can also expect me to try to understand how you best respond to feedback, and deliver in a way that I feel will be most effective. Feel free to let me know if a particular method works best for you.

4. You can expect me to provide timely feedback on your grants and papers. Three weeks turn-around time is fair unless it is particularly gnarly. Please make sure to plan accordingly.

5. You can expect me to listen to your concerns and help you solve problems. Some problems need to be strong-armed and when that is the case, I will gladly step in. It's my job. I strive to be your strongest and most consistent advocate.

6. You can expect me to write letters of recommendation for you, given advance notice. If it's a sort of letter I've never written before or the first time I've written a letter for you at all, please **give me three weeks lead time** because I need to find a 6-8 hour block of time to write you a good letter. After I have written you a letter for a particular type of application or scholarship, **a week's lead time** is sufficient to ask me to send another (I will tailor the letter I already wrote).

7. You can expect me to help you network. I will write emails to introduce you to people in the field and I will connect you to people at meetings. I will also guide you in knowing what to expect from these interactions (having an 'elevator speech', asking them questions, ect.). These things more important than you think in getting a position after your degree.

8. You can expect me to work very hard with you on your posters and talks. These are your face to the research community and if the audience is giving you their time, you want to make the most of it, so I will give you my time to make your talk or poster effective and engaging.

9. You can expect me to keep a rough eye on your timeline. Ultimately, you are responsible for making sure you hit the deadlines, but I will help you plan things out so that events like your qualifying exam doesn't 'sneak up' on you.

10. You can expect me to help you find funding sources. I will send you all sorts of opportunities and you will decide what to pursue.

11. You can expect me to work as hard toward your success as you do. The harder you push, the harder I will push to help.

12. You can expect me to ensure that you have a safe and supportive environment in which to work. If you have any concerns about the climate in the lab, I want to know as soon as possible.\* In this context, it's important to know that, as a faculty member, I am a mandatory reporter, which means I must report any instances of harassment or abuse. However, all information remains confidential unless you chose to release it.

13. You can expect me to provide a model of professionalism in academia, and you can look to me for guidance on issues related to conflicts of interest, equity and fairness, ethical research, and mentoring.

14. You can expect me to help you find other resources and other mentors when you need additional support beyond my abilities.

**In general, things I would like:**

Graduate school is a unique opportunity for you to develop a unique set of talents and skills, and I expect you to be motivated and engaged. You should often find yourself working on your research on weeknights and/or weekends (which may include reading or writing). As a rule of thumb, I suggest a minimum of about 40 hours a week of productive research in the lab or field. This suggested time does include grant writing and manuscript writing/editing, but does not include time spent on non-work related e-mail, coursework, or social activities, though I understand it will be less than 40 hours/ week in weeks when students are teaching and/or taking 2+ classes.

I would like you to treat your graduate scholarly environment as a priority. I expect you to be safe, respectful and responsible to yourself and those around you, and to prioritize your research and your scholarly advances and value the laboratory (the people, the space, and the equipment) that supports these advances.

I would like you to read the primary literature in your area of study. You should read articles in scientific journals that are relevant to your work, in the general area of your work, or that look interesting to you. Although I will point you to relevant journals and/ or articles, do not rely on me exclusively to point you to all relevant articles-- read broadly on your own, too. Form journal clubs when you feel peer reading would be useful.

I would like you to let me know when you will not be in the lab during times when your presence is anticipated (daily 9-5 or 10-6 ish). This should be updated each semester with your teaching/coursework obligations, and should be updated on a daily basis if you are engaged in any other activity that prevents you from being in lab (field work, writing from home, etc). I strongly encourage you to maintain and update your Outlook Calendar.

I would like Ph.D. students to have submitted at least 1 first-author peer-reviewed paper for publication before I sign off on their dissertations. Two would be even better. These publications must be from research done while in our lab pursuing a PhD, not prior work.

I would like you to become at least minimally proficient in at least one computer programming language (e.g., Perl, Python, R).

I would like you to become an active member of the Plant-Insect Group and attend on average ~1 departmental seminar per week (they don't all have to be in the same series) and strongly encourage you to participate in at least some departmental social activities.

### **General:**

I will treat you as a priority. I prefer to have scheduled meetings as it helps me to prepare and be effective, and it reduces the chances of me losing my train of thought if interrupted. But if you come to talk with me with something time-sensitive, even without warning, and I am working on something not time-sensitive, I will immediately be available to you. You have my email and phone and are free to use both to contact me during work hours and after-hours (you absolutely may email or text me at home). If there is an emergency, I will make myself immediately available.

I will advise you on how to proceed according to the career path that you select (e.g., how to get a postdoctoral position, academic job, etc.). Alternatively, if I am not as familiar with the career path you have chosen, I will refer you to people and/or resources that can help to guide you.

While you are in my lab, I will read and comment on any manuscripts, grant applications, or other written materials you give me within three weeks. Your grants and manuscripts are a priority for me; thus, it will generally be in much less time than that, but even at my busiest I can guarantee within three weeks. Please get these to me **at least one month before any deadline** so we have ample time to go back and forth on drafts. If you are working on grants, assume that we will go back and forth at least 4-8 times, so allow extra time for that process of revising to occur prior to the deadline – **typically 2 months at least**. I prefer not to wait until the last minute, and expect you to respect that preference of mine. I ask for **more than 3 weeks for dissertation draft comments**, as I need to see and comment on these before they go out to the rest of your committee.

I will provide you with resources for your research if they are available to me, your project has been approved, the expense is reasonable given the laboratory priorities, and you are actively pursuing further funding for it. Similarly, I will work within the best of my abilities to provide funding for regional and national conferences, provided you are presenting and actively pursue independent funding. Please be aware in both cases that funding in the lab is regularly and legally connected with specific projects and I am working within those constraints, therefore justification must be proved to me for me to allocate those funds.

If there is a conference you wish to attend, you need to discuss it with me and provide your justification within enough time to for me to review and edit your abstract before the submission deadline. **I will need at least 1 week**, so please plan accordingly.

Upon request, I will give you copies of recommendation letters that I write for you. If I cannot accurately tell you about your performance, then I am not doing my job as an advisor.