

Mutual Expectations

Of Graduate Students and Advisors or M.A. Thesis/Ph.D. Dissertation Supervisors
Department of Religious Studies, University of Iowa
(Rev. 02/02/2022)

General Expectations

Successful graduate studies depend on the commitment of both students and faculty, and on their ability to work together. Graduate students strive for academic excellence, relevant skill-building, and general collegiality, and advisors observe best practices in graduate education on behalf of students and advisees. Students and advisors maintain a learning environment that is intellectually stimulating, mutually respectful, emotionally supportive, and characterized by clear and consistent communication.

Advisors' Expectations of Graduate Students

1. Graduate students have primary responsibility for fulfilling their degree requirements, observing deadlines, and graduating in a timely manner.
2. Graduate students will be knowledgeable about the policies and requirements of the Religious Studies graduate program and the Graduate College.
3. M.A. students will consult and follow the **M.A. Program Book** and the **Benchmarks and Guidelines for M.A. Success**. Ph.D. students will consult and follow the **Ph.D. Program Book** and the **Benchmarks and Guidelines for Ph.D. Success**.
4. Graduate students will meet regularly with their advisors, be forthcoming about additional direction they may need, be responsive to feedback, and provide their advisors with frequent updates on their progress toward degree. A required Individual Development Plan (**IDP**) will facilitate effective communication.
5. Graduate students will work with their advisors to select their advisory committees, as described in the program books. Students will meet with their committees at least annually and be responsive to advice and constructive criticism from committee members.
6. Graduate students will regularly attend and participate in departmental events, such as colloquia, invited lectures, and conferences, which are part of the department's educational program.
7. Graduate students who write M.A. theses or Ph.D. dissertations will work with their advisors and committees to develop strong research projects. They will develop and seek to follow timelines for each phase of the work, with the aid of an IDP. Students will consult with their advisors if they fall behind schedule.
8. Graduate students have primary responsibility for career development following the completion of their degrees. Students will seek assistance from all available resources, including their main advisors, committee members, career counseling services, and other mentors.

Expectations of Graduate-Student Advisors

1. Advisors are committed to the education and training of their graduate students as future members of the academic profession or followers of alternative and preferred professional paths.
2. Advisors will help to plan and direct their graduate students' steady progress through the program and be knowledgeable about the requirements and deadlines of the Religious Studies graduate program and the Graduate College.
3. Advisors will meet one-on-one with advisees on a regular basis and be available to discuss any issues related to graduate students' research, teaching, opportunities, progress in the program, and individual career goals.
4. Advisors will provide timely, detailed, and useful feedback on their students' written work and respond positively to students' requests for further clarification.
5. Advisors will meet with their students each semester to recommend classes that align with the students' research and/or career goals, including classes that are taught in other departments.
6. Advisors will help students compile reading lists that lay a strong foundation in chosen areas of study and prepare students for required exams.
7. Advisors will help their graduate students to select the members of their committees (as described in the program books) and encourage students to seek out advice and support from their committee members, as well as other relevant members of the faculty. Advisors will ensure that students' committees meet at intervals specified by the Religious Studies graduate program.
8. Advisors will encourage their graduate students to attend professional meetings. They will advise students on the presentation of papers. Advisors will also encourage graduate students to publish in academic journals or elsewhere, as consistent with students' goals.
9. Advisors will not require graduate students to perform tasks unrelated to their academic and professional development.
10. Advisors will assist their students in finding employment following graduation, if desired. Advisors will provide letters of recommendation and be accessible for advice and feedback on career advancement strategies.