

Director of Graduate Study

Orientation to the DGS Role & Resources

Table of Contents

[Director of Graduate Study](#)

[Orientation to the DGS Role & Resources](#)

[1. Role of the Director of Graduate Study](#)

[1.1. Liaison to the Graduate School](#)

[1.2. Recruitment](#)

[1.3. Admissions and enrollment planning](#)

[1.4. Student orientation and onboarding](#)

[1.5. Funding and appointments](#)

[1.6. Advising](#)

[1.7. Academic policies](#)

[1.8. Mentorship](#)

[1.9. Professional and career development](#)

[1.10. Student engagement and wellbeing](#)

[1.11. Grievance process](#)

[1.12. Academic planning, program management and assessment](#)

[2. Resources for DGSes](#)

[2.1. Data](#)

[2.2. Communication](#)

[Appendices](#)

[A. Mentoring Toolkit](#)

1. Role of the Director of Graduate Study

1.1. Liaison to the Graduate School

The Director of Graduate Study (DGS) is a faculty member chosen by their program to coordinate activities related to graduate education, typically including recruitment, retention, and supporting student success and career advancement.

In broad scope, the Graduate School expects that the Director of Graduate Study will:

- provide leadership on graduate education topics and issues within their program,
- serve as a faculty liaison to the Graduate School and communicate relevant policies and programs to graduate faculty, the program chair, and graduate students,
- ensure that program policies regarding graduate students are fair, effective, and consistently applied, and
- serve as a point of contact and information source for master's and/or doctoral students in the program.

This guide for Directors of Graduate Study, describes the expectations related to the role and highlights information and resources that might be useful. Please note that this document is meant to outline common DGS responsibilities, but department and program structures vary. Therefore, each DGS should work with their department or program chair to ensure all matters in this document are addressed, but they are not always necessarily the responsibility of the DGS.

In addition to the substantive areas described below, there are several logistical/practical aspects of serving as the liaison to the Graduate School:

Meetings

Directors of Graduate Study are expected to attend the DGS meetings hosted twice annually by the Graduate School. These meetings occur every fall and spring, and may be a plenary meeting, meeting by academic division, or another format that best accommodates the content to be shared. If a DGS cannot attend, they are encouraged to send a proxy (which could be another faculty member or the Graduate Program Coordinator/Manager).

Contact lists

As effective communication between the Graduate School and graduate programs is essential, DGSes are expected to coordinate with the Graduate Program Coordinator/Manager to ensure that roles and contact information are kept up to date in the Graduate School's [Unit Directory](#). Each program should have individuals assigned to the following roles at all times, unless otherwise indicated:

- Admissions Contact - Faculty or staff member responsible for overseeing or coordinating department admission recommendations.
- Coordinator - Staff member responsible for coordinating the progress of graduate students pursuing a graduate degree within the program.
- Department/Unit Chair - Faculty member responsible for administering and managing the activities crucial to the department/unit mission.

- Director of Graduate Study – Faculty member who provides leadership on graduate education topics within the program and serves as the primary contact for academic requirements and campus resources for graduate students.

For more information about the Unit Directory, role definitions, and instructions on how to update it, please see the kb about the [Unit Directory](#). Accurate listing of these roles is important because the directory is used to populate G-Groups that the Graduate School uses to communicate with relevant groups.

Update program information annually

The DGS is expected to work with the Graduate Program Coordinator/Manager to ensure that program curriculum, degree requirements, milestones, probation criteria, and program policies are updated annually in the [Graduate Guide](#), program handbook, and program website. See section [1.12. Academic planning, program management and assessment](#) for more information.

Email communication

The Graduate School utilizes the DGS Google group to communicate important messages. Please pay particular attention to emails sent to this group from the UW-Madison Graduate School Dean. The Graduate School relies on DGSes to convey important information to graduate faculty within their program. This includes email updates about policy changes, calls for nominations/proposals, notifications about new resources, and more. The Graduate School dean, leadership team, and staff depend on the DGS to relay relevant information to their programs.

Other opportunities to engage

If you are interested in engaging more with the Graduate School, you can consider pursuing other types of roles on the [Graduate Faculty Executive Committee](#) or Graduate School Data Advisory Group (contact jenna.alsteen@wisc.edu).

1.2. Recruitment

DGSes typically coordinate efforts to recruit a broad pool of prospective graduate applicants to the program. This includes ensuring that current admission information is available on the program's website, responding to inquiries from applicants, overseeing visit days, and more. Depending on the program, some DGSes may also develop a recruitment strategy, which may include activities like traveling to recruitment events, outreach to prospective applicants on "name exchanges," etc.

The Graduate School offers a variety of [recruitment resources and guidance documents](#) to assist graduate programs in recruiting and onboarding graduate students. These include videos

featuring current graduate students, information about life in Madison, information about UW-Madison's competitive recruitment packages including benefits information, and more.

Programs should feel free to use these materials to answer questions and recruit their next cohort to UW-Madison:

- [Graduate Assistantship Benefits Overview](#) PDF for printing
- Investing in Graduate Assistants [webpage](#) and [one-page flyer](#) for printing for prospective graduate students
- [Recruitment video](#) for visit days or social media, or for graduate students who cannot visit in person
- [UW-Madison Graduate Reputation](#) PDF for printing
- [Inclusion Focused Graduate Recruitment](#)
- and [much more in our KB](#)

Fee Grants

One recruiting tool available to programs and departments is application fee grants. There are two types of fee grants available to eligible applicants; Graduate School fee grants and Program fee grants. For more information on fee grants and how a program can purchase a program fee grant, see the [Fee Grant Application Overview](#).

1.3. Admissions and enrollment planning

The DGS leads admissions and enrollment planning to develop admissions practices that reflect the program's mission and goals while taking into account funding availability, research and teaching needs, and student career goals. This includes collaborating with the department chair, admissions committee, faculty reviewers, and the Graduate Program Coordinator/Manager to:

- Ensure application evaluation is consistent among reviewers,
- Application evaluation is aligned with program goals, and
- Decisions are communicated to applicants in a timely and professional manner.

Initial admission recommendations are made by the graduate program(s) to which an applicant applied; the Graduate School issues the official offer of admission. Graduate programs have flexibility in how they review applications and make admission recommendations. However, programs must review every submitted application per Graduate School policy [UW-1249](#). Programs should make their admission policies and practices as clear as possible so prospective students know what to expect, what the components of a successful application are, and how applications will be evaluated.

Graduate programs must adhere to the [April 15th resolution](#), providing applicants until April 15th to accept offers of admission that are accompanied with a financial offer.

The Graduate School maintains a dedicated KnowledgeBase topic about admissions at kb.wisc.edu/grad/admissions. Important KBs within this section include:

- [Graduate Admissions and Funding Communication Framework](#)
 - [Example Notice of Recommendation with funding](#)
 - [Example Notice of Recommendation without funding](#)
- [Admissions Timeline and Central Communications](#)
- [Deadlines for processing international and domestic applications](#)
- [Guidelines for graduate student participation in admissions committees](#)
- [Slate processes and documentation](#)

The Graduate School developed the [Holistic Admissions Toolkit](#) as part of a collaborative, multi-institutional effort with other Big Ten universities in 2023. This evolving resource serves as a guide to enhancing holistic review practices in your program. Holistic review practices play a critical role in building a successful cohort of students.

Some components of the toolkit include:

- [Admissions committees](#): Guidance on establishing admissions goals, guiding principles, and criteria for making admission decisions. These resources include a timeline of activities that should be part of effective admissions practices.
- [Evaluation rubrics](#): How to develop a classification system that employs consistent evaluation criteria across committee members and across applications. This section of the toolkit describes best practices and offers examples.
- [Interviewing](#): Reasons to include an interview in the admissions review and ways to create an equitable interview process that is effective for your program.
- [Long-Term Enrollment Planning](#): Long-term enrollment planning is essential for maintaining program strength and resilience amid evolving challenges in graduate education.

We value your partnership in refining the resources available by informing us of any additional materials and resources that would benefit your program. Any requests for additional resources can be sent to admissionstaff@grad.wisc.edu.

1.4. Student orientation and onboarding

Providing information to new students is important for setting program expectations, providing a welcoming environment and setting students on a path to success.

Communication with new admits: Graduate programs can help ensure that newly admitted graduate students have access to necessary information by sending just-in-time resources in the months or weeks leading up to their first semester. The Graduate School also supports this through the [Graduate Student Life microsite](#) tailored to new graduate students, as well as [communication](#) with applicants and new admits.

In-person orientation: Many programs and departments host welcome, orientation, and training activities for their new graduate students arriving on campus. The DGS often oversees the development and implementation of orientation activities for new graduate students as an important part of supporting their transition to graduate student life. Orientations can focus on success as a student, but can, and should, also be created for expectations of those in teaching assistant, research assistant, or project assistant positions.

To support programs and reduce redundancy, the Graduate School hosts the large, centralized [New Graduate Student Welcome](#) (NGSW) event at the start of the fall semester, at which new master's and doctoral students can attend a large campus and community resource fair, participate in Q&A with panels of current graduate students, hear welcome remarks from campus and Graduate School leadership, and attend a reception for attendees to meet other new graduate students from all over campus. NGSW is always held on the Wednesday before the fall semester start of classes from 11:00 am to 4:30 pm at Union South. The Graduate School asks programs *to avoid scheduling their local orientation or training events at that time* and to encourage their graduate students to attend NGSW and take advantage of all that the event has to offer.

Orientation for graduate students in online programs: The Graduate School also offers orientation resources for new master's and doctoral students enrolled in fully online graduate programs. This information, which they can access on demand prior to the start of the semester, will help introduce online students to the campus resources that are available to them and to strategies for successful online learning. This includes a [Welcome from Campus Leaders](#) and [Online Student Resource Fair](#), which is part of our [Graduate Student Life microsite](#) for new students. The fair provides a list of resources that are available to students in online programs. These are great resources to share in the week or so leading up to the start of the program.

Orientation Agenda: The agenda for the 2026 [New Graduate Student Welcome](#) is as follows:

New Graduate Student Welcome

Wednesday, August 26, 2026 | 11 am – 4:30 pm | Union South

The Graduate School invites all newly admitted graduate students to participate in the New Graduate Student Welcome event each year.

New Graduate Student Welcome is an opportunity to hear from the Graduate School and campus leaders, get advice from a panel of current students about grad student life, learn about the many campus and community resources available to you, and meet other new graduate students from across campus.

New students receive an email invitation in early July with information about registering for New Graduate Student Welcome.

11 am – 1 pm: Resource Fair

Meet representatives from campus and community services that support graduate students to succeed at UW–Madison. Learn about their resources and pick up some swag on your way through the fair.

11:10 or 11:55 am: Resource Flash Talks

Hear directly from staff about the ways their offices can help you find and apply for funding, use databases and other tools to gather information related to your research, write better and smarter, and develop your professional and career-related plans and skills.

- Writing Center
- Libraries and Grants Information Collection
- Software Training for Students
- Office of Student Assistance and Support
- McBurney Disability Resource Center
- University Health Services
- Graduate School

1:15 – 2:15 pm: Graduate Student Panels – Question & Answer Session

A panel of seasoned graduate students will answer the large and small questions you have about everything from what can make your graduate student life easier and less stressful to establishing and maintaining relationships with faculty and staff in your program.

- Master's Student Panel: For students whose final degree goal is a master's degree
- Doctoral Student Panel: For students whose final degree goal is a doctoral/PhD degree (even if currently enrolled in a master's plan)

2:30 – 4:30 pm: Welcome Remarks & "Meet and Greet" Reception

Campus leadership will welcome graduate students to the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

- Dean of the Graduate School
- Provost
- Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

The Welcome Remarks will be followed by a "Meet and Greet" Reception at 3 pm. Refreshments will be served.

Orientation materials: The Graduate School prepares a [collection of materials about campus resources](#) for programs to use during orientation activities. The topics covered in these materials include mental health, professional and career development, graduate student assistance and support, and more. Graduate programs are encouraged to print their own flyers, or they may request printed materials from the Graduate School on a limited basis. DGSes should ask their Graduate Program Coordinators/Managers to watch for an email from the Graduate School on this topic each June.

1.5. Funding and appointments

After being admitted, appointments and funding offers are made by the specific graduate program(s). Funding offers may include support for the following: research assistant, project assistant, teaching assistant, fellow or trainee appointments. **Doctoral programs must provide a written funding commitment covering four or five years, and MFA programs must provide a three-year commitment.** These commitments are contingent upon satisfactory academic progress, successful fulfillment of graduate assistantship duties, and the continued availability of funds. Multi-year funding statements should be explicit and include details such as the total funding package, minimum appointment percentage, duration of support, and any conditions governing continued funding. If a funding commitment includes external fellowships or awards, the department should clearly communicate that such funding is considered part of the student's funding commitment. Receipt of external fellowship or award funding does not automatically extend the duration of the department's funding commitment beyond the original commitment period. Any extension beyond the original commitment period is at the discretion of the department. Programs are not required to guarantee multi-year funding to master's students.

Graduate School funding support

Many academic programs receive funding to support graduate students from the Graduate School. Some annual opportunities include:

- [Graduate Student Support Competition](#) (GSSC) - the Graduate School allocates resources each fall to PhD and MFA academic programs to recruit prospective students, offer fellowships/supplements to prospective and current students, and support research-related travel for current students. Programs decide who is responsible for submitting this application, and it is often led by the DGS. The call for applications is

typically sent to programs in early September, the application is due in mid-October, and decisions are announced by mid-December.

- **[Graduate Research Scholars \(GRS\) Fellowships](#)** - Graduate Research Scholar (GRS) Communities are organized by the various schools and colleges within UW–Madison that offer fellowship support. GRS Fellows are part of a vibrant network of scholars that fosters connection, collaboration, and shared growth throughout their graduate journey. GRS fellowships are competitive and merit-based fellowship opportunities. Please contact your appropriate GRS contact for additional information about the GRS fellowship nomination process.
- **Kemper Knapp fellowship** - Eligible academic programs may nominate incoming PhD-, DMA-, or MFA-bound students for the Kemper Knapp fellowship. Nomination information is shared with DGSEs and coordinators in late winter/early spring. For more information about the Kemper Knapp fellowships, contact funding@grad.wisc.edu.
- **Individual fellowships and support** - Various donors provide funding to support graduate students. The Graduate School coordinates with graduate programs to carry out the selection process in alignment with the donor's preferences and the award's terms and conditions. In most cases, graduate programs are invited to nominate a student for consideration. However, depending on the specific funding guidelines, some opportunities may be advertised in WiSH for students to apply directly.

Learn more about the Graduate School's fellowship competitions and funding opportunities on our website at grad.wisc.edu/funding. Please contact us at funding@grad.wisc.edu if you would like to have a one-on-one or small group meeting to discuss funding matters.

External fellowships

The Graduate School strongly supports students efforts to obtain external fellowships. Fellowships provide students with independent resources to conduct research and may provide opportunities to engage in other professional development activities. For more information on the Graduate School's current efforts to support graduate students in securing external funding and other financial resources, please visit our [Fellowships webpage](#).

If a student receives an external fellowship that does not provide full coverage of tuition costs and health benefits, the fellowship may be eligible for cost-share funding from the Graduate School provided it meets the criteria outlined in the [Cost-Sharing for Individual External Pre-Doctoral Fellowship Shortfalls](#) policy. For eligible fellowships, the graduate program may submit a request for funding by following the process detailed in the KB document [Cost-Sharing for Individual External Pre-Doctoral Fellowship Shortfalls](#).

Graduate programs are encouraged to connect with the department research administrator and the Graduate School Office of Access, Engagement and Funding before signing/completing any fellowship award agreements.

Graduate assistantships (TAs, PAs, RAs) and stipend rates

Graduate assistantships are a common form of funding for enrolled graduate students. There are three categories of assistantships: Teaching Assistantships (TAs), Research Assistantships (RAs) and Program/Project Assistantships (PAs). Find up-to-date [information on graduate assistantships](#) and approved stipend rates on our website.

While the Graduate School does not directly administer graduate assistantships, it does set the campus minimum stipend and approve assistantship stipend rates for each graduate program. You can view the policies and procedures around Graduate Assistantships at hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp.

Student research grants competition (SRGC)

The Graduate School administers this competition to support students who need to travel to conduct or present their research, with funds provided by the Vilas Trust. Eligibility may vary depending on available resources. Please consult the [SRGC webpage](#) for additional eligibility information.

Two types of SRGC awards are currently offered:

1. **Conference presentation funds** - available to students who are presenting their research - this could include oral or poster presentations, panels, or other mechanisms to disseminate scholarly work as appropriate for the field;
2. **Research travel awards** - available to students who need to travel to conduct research. This does not include travel to conferences/trainings unless the primary purpose of the travel is for data collection.

Additional information, deadlines, and steps to apply are available on the [SRGC webpage](#).

1.6. Advising

The [Graduate School advisor policy](#) requires all graduate students to have a faculty advisor. DGSes are in a position to be a program resource to offer guidance and help current students select or change their advisor. When an advising change is proposed by either the advisor or student, we encourage both parties to communicate with the DGS about any concerns in relation to the student's request to change advisors. DGSes should ensure that all faculty are following Graduate School policy [UW-1250](#), providing each enrolled PhD student with an annual written assessment on their progress to degree.

The DGS can also be a person who can be approached for private and difficult issues that a student may not want to share for various reasons with their immediate advisor. It is encouraged that you be clear with the student your mandatory reporting obligations, or other information you may not be able to keep private. You may need to refer the student to other offices or investigatory options if relevant, but you should consult with campus colleagues such as the Graduate School, The Office of Student Assistance & Support, or your chair if additional guidance is needed.

1.7. Academic policies

Directors of Graduate Study should have a general familiarity with graduate education policies and procedures. The Graduate School [Academics website page](#) has information regarding policies, including a link to the [Graduate School policies located in the UW Policy Library](#) (e.g. [enrollment requirements](#), [committee makeup](#), [five year rule](#), [incomplete grades](#), etc.) and information on academic processes (e.g. overload requests, audit requests, late enrollment, etc.).

International students have additional academic requirements due to federal regulations based on their visa status. For more information about international student requirements, visit the [current students section](#) of the [International student services website](#).

1.8. Mentorship

Directors of Graduate Study are well positioned to lead and develop effective and evidence-informed mentorship practices within their programs. Their leadership is critical to fostering a culture of effective and inclusive mentorship. DGSes can foster a culture of high quality mentorship within their program by taking the following actions.

Mentor training for faculty and staff

Encourage or require mentoring skill development and enhancement. UW-Madison has training available to advance mentoring practice for individual faculty and staff or for a department, division or school/college.

-
- The Wisconsin Institute for Science Education and Community Engagement (WISCIENCE) offers [Advancing Research Mentoring Practice \(ARMP\)](#) each semester for faculty and staff in STEM fields, WISCIENCE can also collaborate with STEM

departments who have identified improvement of mentoring practices as part of their plan to create culture change. Contact Nancy Ruggeri (nruggeri@wisc.edu).

- The Center for Teaching, Learning & Mentoring (CTLM), consults with programs to provide customized research mentor training for faculty and staff in the humanities, arts, and social sciences. Contact Jeff Guarneri (guarneri@wisc.edu).

Graduate student mentee training

Request a workshop in your department for early stage graduate students on how to work proactively with mentors, offered by the Delta Program in the Graduate School. Contact Jules Whitaker (jawhitak@wisc.edu). Graduate students can also visit the microcourse "[A Graduate Student Guide to Working with Faculty Advisors](#)."

Mentor recognition

Recognize outstanding faculty and graduate students mentors by nominating them for an existing campus award or creating your own.

[Read about these ideas and more in the Mentoring Toolkit.](#)

1.9. Professional and career development

Directors of Graduate Study play a crucial role in the professional and career development of graduate students in their program. DGSes can connect students with resources such as funding opportunities, workshops, seminars, and networking events relevant to their research and career goals. This connection can come in the form of referral to existing campus resources, such as those listed below, and/or in the form of creating new curricular offerings or professional development opportunities.

A few noteworthy professional and career development resources, with which DGSes should be familiar, include:

- The [Graduate School Office of Professional Development](#), together with campus partners, hosts over 500 professional development events, which can be found through [DiscoverPD](#) and the school's [events calendar](#). Skill areas include:
 - [Career planning](#) - Browse the free memberships and tools available to graduate students to build skills, explore career options, and more.
 - [Communicating research](#) - the Three Minute Thesis® is a competition in which students explain their research to a lay audience.
 - Grant writing - The [Funding Forward](#) program provides participants with a structured introduction to the nuts and bolts of writing funding proposals and more.

- Dissertation support - The UW–Madison Writing Center and the UW–Madison Graduate School sponsor two [Dissertation writing camps](#) in winter and spring. Acceptance in the program is competitive, and participation is limited to 20 dissertators per camp.
- The [Delta Program in the Graduate School](#) promotes the development of a future national faculty that is committed to implementing and advancing effective teaching and research mentoring practices for diverse student audiences. The Delta Program offers workshops, courses, an [Internship program](#), a [Graduate/Professional Certificate in Higher Education Teaching and Learning](#), and [Research mentor learning communities](#).
- UW Libraries Micro-courses are short, nongraded courses focused on a specific topic that graduate students can complete at their own pace. Each course is interactive and incorporates challenges throughout the lessons. Topics include:
 - [A Graduate Student Guide to Working with Faculty Advisors](#)
 - [Copyright & Fair Use, Graduate Research](#)
 - [Grants & Funding](#)
 - [Including & Navigating Race in the Classroom](#)
 - [Introduction to Intellectual Property](#)
 - [Introduction to Patents](#)
 - [Introduction to Research Data Management](#)
 - [Literature Reviews in the Sciences](#)
 - [Reflecting on Social Justice Foundational Concepts](#)
 - [Responsible Data Planning, Use, and Sharing](#)

1.10. Student Engagement & Wellbeing

- The [Bridge and Build Community](#) series hosted by the Graduate School Office of Access, Engagement & Funding aims to support graduate students at UW–Madison from an array of life experiences and backgrounds overcoming hardship and challenges in their educational opportunities. Bridge and Build Community events are open to all UW graduate students dedicated to fostering a thriving community of inclusive excellence. The Bridge and Build Community series offers community building and networking opportunities and promotes academic, professional, and personal growth through development of supportive peer networks that help graduate students successfully navigate graduate studies.
- [Graduate Research Scholars Communities](#) - Graduate Research Scholar (GRS) Communities are organized by the various schools and colleges within UW–Madison to

support graduate students. GRS Communities bring students together throughout their graduate school career for a range of social, academic, professional development, and research-related activities. GRS Communities also offer a wealth of assistance to program participants through individual advising and referrals to campus resources. Academic programs should contact the leaders of their affiliated GRS community to learn of important timelines and how students are selected for the programs, as each community has its own process and policies.

DGSes can help ensure that graduate students and faculty in their programs are aware of resources and campus services available to support mental health and wellbeing. Often, graduate students do not realize that University Health Services serves graduate students, or that mental health counseling may be covered by their health insurance plan. Below are a few highlighted resources. Watch for semesterly communication from the Graduate School about mental health resources and relay this to your students.

- [Health and wellness resources](#)
- [Mental health resources](#)
 - UHS 24/7 Crisis Line: 608-265-5600 (option 9)
- [Suicide prevention training](#)
 - [Finding community](#)
 - [Ways to get involved](#)
- Graduate and Professional Student Assistance Specialist: The Graduate School and the Office of Student Assistance and Support jointly support a staff position focused on graduate student needs. [Elaine Goetz-Berman](#) serves in this role, which includes support, advocacy, and resource referral for graduate students. Elaine's approach to working with graduate students centers on her specialized knowledge about the unique academic and personal challenges they face. Elaine also works closely with faculty & staff in graduate programs to consult on issues of concern to graduate students.

1.11. Grievance process

All programs must have a grievance process that students can use if they have a complaint about treatment or a program decision. The grievance process must be detailed in the "Policies" section on the program Guide page. As some programs list the Director of Graduate Study as having a "grievance advisor" role, all Directors of Graduate Study should be familiar with their program's grievance process.

Graduate students have two levels of appeal when they disagree with the outcome of a grievance or academic decision made at the program or department level. First, an appeal can be made to

the school/college. If the student feels they need an additional appeal, a final appeal can be made to the Graduate School after the school/college appeal has concluded.

On the Graduate School's [Grievances and appeals](#) website are a list of resources for students and faculty to review.

1.12. Academic planning, program management and assessment

To best understand the academic structure on campus, visit the visualization [UW-Madison's Academic Structure](#). This illustrates how programs are embedded in departments and schools/colleges, hold tuition attributes and divisional membership, and more.

Each school/college has an academic planning council/committee (APC). Contact your school/college academic planner for more information. Many graduate program actions that are approved through a school/college APC are then presented to the Graduate Faculty Executive Committee (GFEC). GFEC exercises the powers of the graduate faculty with respect to establishing, reviewing, and modifying graduate degree programs, named options, doctoral minors, graduate/professional certificates, and capstone certificates. These actions include participating in and approving all graduate program 3-year check-ins and program reviews.

- The GFEC is also responsible for setting standards for admission and degree requirements and engaging in strategic planning discussions, such as graduate student recruitment, professional development, and mentorship. GFEC also discusses other relevant graduate education policy concerns.
- These meetings are open for attendance, and if your programs are on the agenda, we recommend you attend. For new program proposals or major changes to programs, the lead faculty or representative of the program will be invited to speak at the meeting. When program reviews, or program responses to reviews, are shared at GFEC, attendance from the program itself is not required, but recommended.
- Please visit the Graduate School's website for [current committee members](#) and [meeting agendas and minutes](#).

[Academic program review](#) is required of all programs on a ten-year cycle. New programs must complete the Graduate School [Three-year Check-in](#), and then an institutional five-year program review, before proceeding on the ten-year cycle. In addition to academic program review, academic program assessment plans must be reported to the Division of Teaching and Learning. View [Academic Program Assessment Plans – Guidelines and Templates](#) to learn more about reporting requirements and who to contact with questions.

Review all [Guide](#) pages for the programs in your department.

- Be sure to click on each tab for each program and review the content. Do you understand the admissions requirements? Would you be able to explain to a student the degree requirements based on what is stated in Guide? Are all policies implemented correctly by faculty?
- If you need to make changes to any content in Guide, contact your school/college dean's office/academic planner. Some content can be changed more easily via email, while "governed" content (admissions, requirements, policies, etc.) must be changed using a Lumen Programs proposal.
 - [Guide: Editing Based on Content Type](#)
 - [Guide: Editing Governed Tabs](#)
 - [Guide: Editing Non-Governed Tabs](#)
 - [Guide: Editing Directory Information](#)

The [Graduate Student Tracking System \(GSTS\)](#) is utilized by many programs to advise students on degree requirements being completed. Although it is not used to clear degrees in the same way our campus utilizes DARS, it is similar in that each program has a report that tracks graduate student progress toward degree completion.

For questions related to academic planning, structure, and program review, contact Graduate School Assistant Dean Jenna Alsteen (jenna.alsteen@wisc.edu).

2. Resources for DGSes

2.1. Data

Faculty and staff can access a wide variety of campus data resources related to graduate education at UW–Madison including data reports, interactive data visualizations, and data queries. The Graduate School [data resources webpage](#) is a great place to start. All of the resources referenced below are on this webpage.

The [Graduate School Explorer](#) contains aggregate data on admissions, enrollment, degree and program completion rates, and doctoral career outcomes. The Graduate School's KB provides [more information about the data in the dashboard](#).

The [Graduate Admissions Competitor Landscape](#) visualization presents data on the national postsecondary institutions competing with UW–Madison graduate programs for new student admissions.

The Graduate School administers and reports on the results of [three required student surveys](#): the Doctoral Exit Survey, the Master's Exit Survey, and the Doctoral Student Experience Survey. To view the student response data, click on the [corresponding survey visualization in the KB](#).

UW–Madison has provided name and degree information of doctoral and postdoctoral alumni from the past 15 years to Academic Analytics. With that information, they have completed manual web searches to compile the [Doctoral Student and Postdoc Outcomes Data](#) visualization. The data includes employment industry, location, title, and salary and is filterable by degree, degree year, school/college, and department/program.

For more detailed data, you can also use [Data Resources for Campus Users](#) that complement some of the tools above and also provide new information.

The [data KnowledgeBase](#) also has further detailed information regarding the resources above. For questions related to graduate student data, contact Graduate School Assistant Dean Jenna Alsteen (jenna.alsteen@wisc.edu).

2.2. Communication

Find contact information for Graduate School leadership at:

- [Contacts – Graduate School | UW–Madison – UW–Madison](#)
- [Communications and Connections: Who to Call in the Graduate School \(by Function\)](#)
- [Communications and Connections: Who to Call, Graduate School \(by first name\)](#)

Graduate School Office

608-262-2433 | gsacserv@grad.wisc.edu

217 [Bascom Hall](#), 500 Lincoln Drive, Madison, WI 53706

Front Desk Hours:

Monday – Friday

10 am – 3 pm

See section [1.1. Liaison to the Graduate School](#) for additional communication information.

Appendices

A. Timeline of typical DGS activities over academic year

[add here]

B. Mentoring Toolkit

Effective academic mentorship has been [shown to improve](#) graduate student persistence, research productivity, and career satisfaction, and UW–Madison is home to a nationally-recognized [research mentor training curriculum](#), in which a growing number of faculty, academic staff, postdocs, and graduate students have participated. National funding agencies (e.g. NIH and NSF) are beginning to require that faculty and academic staff, particularly training grant PIs, participate in this ongoing skill development.. In addition to mentorship training, consider the following actions to foster a culture of high quality mentorship within your program.

Align student/mentor expectations through a mentor-initiated expectation documents, compacts, or contracts, along with student-initiated Individual Development Plans.

Mentor-initiated examples Facilitate alignment of student/mentor expectations through use of mentor-initiated expectation documents, compacts, or contracts.	
The Science of Effective Mentorship in STEMM (Online Guide V 1.0)	This evidence-based online guide helps faculty build more intentional, equitable, and effective mentoring relationships. It highlights the shared responsibility among university leaders, program directors, mentors, and mentees, offering practical tools to strengthen mentorship at both the institutional level and the one-on-one relationship level.
Compact Between Biomedical Graduate Students and Their Research Advisors	This resource offers a framework for aligning the graduate student mentor-mentee relationship.
Ten simple rules for developing a mentor-mentee expectations document	This article provides guidelines for creating a document that outlines mutual expectations to enhance the mentor-mentee relationship, covering aspects like communication, responsibilities, and lab operations to improve productivity and reduce conflicts.

Student-initiated career planning examples

Facilitate alignment of student/mentor expectations through use of student-initiated Individual Development Plans.

UW-Madison Individual Development Plan (IDP) resources	This webpage includes IDP templates, tools, resources, and guidance to help graduate students and postdoctoral researchers assess their skills and goals, develop actionable plans, and communicate these plans with their mentors.
IDP for Humanities and Social Sciences	ImaginePhD is a free online career exploration and planning tool for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars in the humanities and social sciences.
IDP for Biological and Physical Sciences	myIDP is a web-based career-planning tool, hosted by the AAAS, tailored to meet the needs of graduate students and postdocs in the sciences.
Career Planning for Early Career Scientists	Graduate students and postdocs can learn how to create effective and achievable goals using the Individual Development Plan as a framework for career planning in this course.
ChemIDP	This online resource guides chemical sciences students and postdocs through various immersive IDP activities, offering practical tips and strategies.

Additional mentorship resources

Mentoring Resources for Mentors from the Council of Graduate Schools	These resources, curated by the Council of Graduate Schools, provide valuable insights for mentors at any stage.
Equity-Minded Mentoring Toolkit	This toolkit promotes equity-focused mentoring emphasizing active learning, continuous reflection, and customized practices.
How to Mentor Graduate Students: A Guide for Faculty	This guide from the University of Michigan Rackham Graduate School offers comprehensive advice on effective mentoring practices, addressing topics such as building mentoring relationships, fostering professional development, and navigating challenges in graduate education.

National Research Mentoring Network	The NRMN shared innovative, evidence-based practices to enhance mentoring relationships nationwide, aiming to increase participation from underrepresented groups in biomedical research.
---	---

Improving faculty and staff mentoring UW-Madison has evidence-based training available to advance mentoring practice and help catalyze culture change within departments, divisions, or school/colleges.	
Arts, humanities, and social sciences	Contact Jeff Guarneri (guarneri@wisc.edu) at the Center for Teaching, Learning & Mentoring (CTLM).
Biological and physical sciences	Contact Nancy Ruggeri (nruggeri@wisc.edu) at Wisconsin Institute for Science Education and Community Engagement (WISCIENCE).
Graduate Student Mentee Training (in-person or online, synchronous)	Request a workshop in your department for early-stage graduate students on how to work proactively with mentors, offered by the Delta Program in the Graduate School. Contact Jules Whitaker (jawhitak@wisc.edu).
Graduate Student Mentee Training (online, asynchronous)	Graduate students can also visit the microcourse " A Graduate Student Guide to Working with Faculty Advisors. "

To provide feedback on this handbook, [please click here](#).