

Graduate Student/Advisor Expectations - Marine Biology General Departmental Version

This document was developed by the Marine Biology faculty to communicate expectations for graduate students within the Marine Biology Department. This document may have been slightly tailored toward the individual faculty member's expectations. Any such deviations are highlighted in this document.

Advisors and students are expected to read the CFOS Graduate Student Handbook and know the contents. This document is a source of information and can be the basis of discussions between students and their advisors. Ask questions of your advisor if you have them.

1. Graduate Committee Meetings – Students are required to hold one graduate committee meeting each academic year; however, two meetings a year are preferred to keep the committee engaged and updated. Students should take a leadership role in scheduling these committee meetings or any additional meetings, as the student deems necessary. At the first meeting, students are required to give a 20-30 minute PowerPoint (or similar) presentation of their proposed research project, which should include a study background, objectives and hypotheses, methodology, and timeline. Thereafter, committee meetings should focus on updating the committee on research activities, which may include an overview of results, a discussion of methodology, a change in focus, etc. It is the student's responsibility to work with their advisor to ensure that committee meeting reports are complete, and accurately reflect the student's progress and understanding of expectations. Students should take a leadership role and primary responsibility for adhering to all departmental and graduate school deadlines, including timely submission of all required forms (see Graduate Student Handbook and CFOS or Grad School website).

2. Publication, Presentation, Proposal Writing – Typical expectations are that a thesis contains at least one (MS) or three (PhD) publishable chapters, in a state close to journal submission. All students are expected to strive toward publishing their thesis or dissertation chapters within six months of graduation. Ideally, at least one chapter in a PhD dissertation has been submitted to a peer-reviewed journal or is close to submission by the time of the defense. Students are also expected to provide text and figures for use in reports for funding agencies, as appropriate for specific situations and funding sources. Students are expected to publicly present their research multiple times throughout their graduate program, particularly at national and international conferences. The student and advisor will work together to identify funds to support the associated travel costs. Students are expected to submit a minimum of one proposal during their tenure. Discuss the venue and/or agency with the advisor ahead of application.

3. Review and Communication – To allow sufficient time for review, all thesis or dissertation chapters, manuscripts, proposals, posters, abstracts, requests for letters of recommendation, etc. need to be submitted to your advisor and/or committee members at least 2 weeks before the due date. Students can expect feedback within 2 weeks unless notified by the advisor beforehand about potential delays. Also, students should notify their advisor/committee

members of upcoming deadlines/due dates (e.g., fellowship or grant applications). Students and their advisors are expected to meet agreed-upon deadlines, e.g., thesis/dissertation chapter submission and review.

Students and their advisors will have one-on-one meetings, as collectively deemed necessary and agreed upon, to discuss research, coursework, career objectives, etc. Clear and open lines of communication are important. Students are required to attend lab meetings and should make every effort to attend CFOS seminars. Please feel free to talk to advisors about research successes, updates, and struggles. In addition, advisors will always strive to listen and/or provide advice and support when presented with students sharing aspects or struggles in their personal life. Naturally, such information is confidential, however, discussions with Title IX implications must be reported by the advisor.

4. Data and Data Management – All of the data that students collect, analyze, or otherwise produce are the sole property of the University of Alaska Fairbanks, such that interpretable copies of all data, analyses, and associated software programs must be left with the advisor before graduation. Students should communicate with their advisor to determine the data repository and frequency of updates and backups.

A computer cannot typically be provided for graduate work. In cases where a computer is available for dedicated use during the graduate degree, it is university property and must be returned to the advisor at the end of the graduate degree, unless agreed to otherwise.

5. Research Project – For all projects, specific research components may be required as stipulated by the funding source or collaborating agency. However, students may be able to develop other aspects of their projects within their area of interest, provided that objectives fit within the logistical and funding constraints of the study. Discuss ideas with the advisor.

6. Being a Graduate Student is a Job – Students should plan and coordinate all vacation/personal travel and personal days (i.e., time off) with their advisor in a manner that will not compromise their research project or other responsibilities associated with their graduate program. There is no paid leave associated with a graduate student position. (Refer to the Graduate Student Handbook, Section “Time Off”).

7. Advisor-provided Funding Support – The student stipend/salary, tuition, fees, and health insurance may be covered via an assistantship (teaching or research). The nature and duration of available funding must be discussed between the student and their advisor and agreed upon before starting the degree program. Such intentions and/or agreements should be recorded via email exchange. It may become necessary to seek additional funding to assist with tuition and stipend/salary support (see #2 and the need to submit additional proposals by the student). Regardless of additional funding, the total stipend/salary caps for the academic year (20hrs/wk) and summer (40 hrs/wk) remain.

If the student is funded by a teaching assistantship (TA) or research assistantship (RA), they are required to work 20 hours per week, on average, during the academic year, and may work and be paid a stipend/salary up to 40 hours per week during the summer. The summer stipend amount is dependent on the availability of funding and should be discussed with the advisor.

Coursework, including study and homework time, is not part of a graduate student's job duties and does not count toward the working hours expected for a TA or RA. Many graduate projects may at times require effort beyond a typical 40-hour week, particularly during field activities.

Graduate student duties will be outlined in a contract document and will differ for TAs or RAs. TAs are focused exclusively on supporting classroom or lab instruction and grading, thus may have little relationship to the student's graduate project. The tasks to be performed during an RA may or may not be associated with the graduate student's thesis research and are subject to an advisor's discretion. In all cases, graduate students should follow the stipulations associated with their funding as identified in their contract letter. The expectation is that a graduate student is located at the home institution of their advisor and that they are available to perform required tasks unless otherwise agreed with the advisor. Failure to meet any of the contractual stipulations can ultimately lead to funding being revoked and/or dismissal from the specific research project, which can subsequently lead to losing access to associated data (see #4).

8. Conflict Resolution – If conflicts arise between a student and their advisor, or among lab members, that cannot be resolved through direct communications between the parties involved, parties may seek advice from the Department Chair. In cases where it is not appropriate to approach the chair (e.g., the advisor IS the chair), the Associate Dean of Academics and the CFOS Dean are also available as resources. Students should keep in mind that all of their committee members are also available to help address conflicts or serve as sounding boards if the student is unsure how to approach a problem or disagreement.

If a third-party mediator is necessary, both the student and their advisor should be made aware, so that both parties can take the necessary steps to address the issue at hand. Furthermore, the topic of mediation should be clearly articulated in written communication, so the advisor and student have a sense of what topic requires mediation. The person who will fulfill the role of mediator will be agreed upon before the meeting, and may also include the Associate Dean of Academics and the CFOS Dean. We approach conflict resolution using the [non-violent communication](#) modality.

Additional MS Expectations for Marine Biology or Oceanography

- By the end of the first year, the graduate student has formed a solid research plan (5-10 page proposal) and an advisory committee.
- The student has annual committee meetings, where the research plan is reviewed and if necessary, revised. A revision of the research plan is outlined in the annual committee report and a revised proposal is attached to the annual paperwork, if applicable.
- Students are expected to undertake their proposal presentation and take their written comprehensive exams after completion of their required core courses
- Students are expected to present their work at least at one statewide or national conference during their tenure
- Students are expected to engage in a field component/experience and are encouraged to develop proficiency in a laboratory skill/technique

- Students are expected to effectively communicate their discoveries in a written, scientific format (i.e., thesis)
- Students are encouraged to submit one manuscript to a peer-reviewed journal before they graduate
- Students are encouraged to participate in outreach and teaching activities as the professional development of these skills may be very important in future careers

Additional PhD Expectations for Marine Biology or Oceanography

- By the end of the first year, the graduate student has formed a solid research plan (5-10 page proposal) and an advisory committee.
- The student has annual committee meetings, where the research plan is reviewed and if necessary, revised. A revision of the research plan is outlined in the annual committee report and a revised proposal is attached to the annual paperwork, if applicable.
- Students are expected to take their comprehensive exams within the first three years of their graduate studies.
- Students are expected to present their research plan (=proposal presentation) to the faculty, students, and staff within their second year through a public seminar (e.g., CFOS seminar).
- Students are expected to give at least one public presentation in addition to the dissertation defense within the College during their tenure to present preliminary results of their work (ideally, mid-way through their studies, separate from proposal presentation and final defense).
- Students are expected to present their work at least at one statewide or national conference during their tenure.
- Students are expected to have at least one manuscript submitted to a peer-reviewed journal before they defend their thesis/graduate.
- We encourage PhD students to participate in outreach and teaching activities as the professional development of these skills may be very important in future careers.