

B.U. Dept. of Biology – Master's Student / Research Advisor Expectations May 2026

The goal of these guidelines is to establish clear expectations on the part of both Master's students and research mentors in order to form a positive and productive scientific relationship over the course of M.S. training. The interpretation of these guidelines may differ across labs, and should be clarified through discussions between individual students and their advisors.

As a Graduate Student, I will strive towards:

- **Taking primary responsibility for successful completion of my degree;** being dedicated to my education through my efforts in the classroom, lab, or my fieldwork; maintaining a high level of professionalism, self-motivation, engagement, scientific curiosity, and ethical standards.
- **Devoting the time and effort needed to be scientifically productive** and accomplish my research goals in a timely manner.
- **Being knowledgeable of the policies and requirements of my program, school, and institution,** and meeting these requirements, including teaching responsibilities.
- **Complying with the letter and spirit of all institutional policies,** including program milestones, safe lab practices, and animal/human-research policies.
- **Working with my advisor to develop a thesis project,** including a timeline for each phase of my work, and strive to meet established deadlines.
- **Working with my advisor to select a thesis committee;** being responsive to advice and constructive criticism.
- **Participating in lab meetings, seminars and journal clubs** that are part of my educational program.
- **Meeting regularly with my advisor** to provide them with updates on my results and progress, and to discuss my workload in lab, teaching, and courses.
- **Meeting yearly with my advisor** and lab group to discuss any outstanding questions about lab-specific policies, review general lab goals of the previous year, and create goals for the next year.
- **Meeting individually with my advisor to discuss the contents of my annual report** and progress toward my target degree.
- **Acting as a good lab citizen;** share lab responsibilities and use resources carefully and frugally; maintain a safe and clean lab space, and show respect, tolerance, and collegiality to all personnel.
- **Maintaining detailed, organized, complete, and accurate lab notebooks and electronic and other data records.** Original notebooks and all tangible research data are the property of Boston University but with my advisor's permission I may take a copy of my notebooks and data files after completing my thesis. On leaving the lab, I will leave all of my data files and research lab materials in an organized form, so that these data and research materials can be easily found and accessed by my advisor and others in the lab.
- **Discussing policies on authorship and meeting attendance with my advisor,** and working with them to submit all relevant research results for publication in a timely manner.
- **Participating in R.C.R. training** and apply those guidelines in my own research, and complying with all grant agency and BU policies.
- **Discussing both lab and BU policies on work hours, sick leave and vacation with my advisor,** and consulting my advisor and notifying lab members in advance of planned absences.
- **Acknowledging that career development after my degree is primarily my responsibility,** and seeking guidance from my advisor, career counseling, thesis committee, other mentors, and any other resources available.

As a Research Advisor, I will strive towards:

- **Supporting the student's research project:** working with the student to help them identify a promising research topic; planning and directing the project, setting reasonable and attainable goals, and establishing a timeline for completion. I will discuss with each student how their individual scientific interests overlap with the long-term direction of my lab's research, and with constraints imposed by external funding. After agreeing on a thesis topic, I will strive to support each student's research project to the best of my ability.
- **Leading by example** and facilitating training in skills needed to be a successful scientist, such as oral and written communication, grant writing, lab management, animal and human research policies, ethical conduct, and scientific professionalism.
- **Life-long career advising**, including education and training as a practicing scientist or related career.
- **Being knowledgeable of requirements and deadlines** for the program and institution, including teaching requirements, human resources guidelines, grant agency and university training policies, and guide the student through their program.
- **Provide sufficient support for research supplies and access to equipment**, as the laboratory's research funding allows, in order for each student to conduct their thesis research.
- **Providing advice on finding appropriate grant/fellowship opportunities**, and provide constructive feedback on applications.
- **Providing input on selecting an appropriate thesis committee.**
- **Holding regular one-on-one meetings** to discuss progress in research, courses, and teaching (if applicable).
- **Holding yearly meetings with students** to discuss any outstanding questions about lab-specific policies, review lab goals of the previous year, and create goals for the next year.
- **Holding yearly individual meetings to discuss the contents of annual reports** and degree progress within two weeks of submission.
- **Expecting the student to share common lab responsibilities** and utilize resources carefully and frugally.
- **Encouraging attendance at scientific meetings** and attempting to secure and facilitate funding for this purpose.
- **Not requiring the student to perform tasks** that are unrelated to their scientific training, professional development or source of funding, or to the broader success of their laboratory environment.
- **Discussing authorship issues;** acknowledging the student's scientific contributions to work in my lab, and working with the student to publish their work in a timely manner.
- **Discussing intellectual property issues** related to disclosure, patent rights and timing of publishing research discoveries.
- **Providing for every student under my supervision an environment that is intellectually stimulating, supportive, safe, and free of harassment.**
- **Providing career advice and assisting in finding a position following graduation;** providing letters of recommendation for their next phase of professional development that are honest and objective, and being accessible to give advice and feedback on career goals.
- **Being familiar with, and following, university policies regarding graduate student work hours, sick leave and vacation;** informing my advisees in advance of planned absences.
- **Being equitable and accessible; offering an encouraging, supportive, and respectful scientific environment throughout the student's time in my lab;** helping to foster professional development and encouraging critical thinking, skepticism and creativity.