



Statement of Mutual Expectations For Graduate Research Assistants and Supervisors

By providing professional experience and mentorship, graduate assistantships are an integral part of the education of graduate students. A Statement of Mutual Expectations (SME) outlines in writing the nature of an assistantship and its supervision. It is not a formal contract, but rather a structured conversation to ensure that a graduate student and their supervisor share a clear understanding of what to expect from each other. The Graduate School requires supervisors to meet with the student at the start of their assistantship and at least once a year going forward, and are encouraged to use this template to structure this meeting and to record the understanding. Given the wide variety of research, administrative, and teaching assistantships, this template is meant to be customized as needed.

Student Name
Student ID Number
Assistantship Title
Avg. hours/week
Preferred work days/hours
Start Date
End Date

Supervisor Name
Supervisor Title
Supervisor Email
Supervisor Phone
Student Email
Student Phone
Preferred? (Mark one.) Email / Phone

Responsibilities of Assistant: Include the most important duties of the assistantship. Potential topics include specific responsibilities, goals, deliverables (if any) and how they are to be submitted.

Responsibilities of Supervisor: Specify the responsibilities of the supervisor. Potential topics include how the graduate assistant will receive continuing guidance and support, times when the supervisor will be available to meet, any training schedule, and supplies to be made available.

Scheduling: When the assistantship is to be performed, including work hours, regularly scheduled meetings, degree of flexibility in work schedule, and personal and sick leave procedures. What times the graduate assistant



does not have to be responsive and which holidays the graduate assistant has off (religious and important cultural holidays should be observed). Expected peak times in workload.

Worksites: Locations where the assistantship is to be performed. If a significant portion of the responsibilities will be satisfied remotely, supervisors should provide guidance on expectations and limitations.

Health and Emergency Protocols: In the event of a serious health issue or other emergency, what protocols should be followed? This can include emergency contact information, policies on covering for an assistant or supervisor during an unexpected absence, position-relevant considerations, etc.

Procedures and Best Practices: Required training, standard methods, required record-keeping, security protocols, and/or procedures for ordering supplies. Any necessary accommodations due to a disability and procedure for access.

Professional Development, Publishing, and Individual Development Plan: Relevant research policies should be highlighted here, including who owns research data, who can utilize research data, policies and expectations on the publication of research data, etc. Topics include skills to be developed during the appointment, training resources other than those provided directly by the supervisor, whether publications will result from the student's work and, if so, expectations for authorship, and/or expectations for travel. See <https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/policies/school-policies/#text> for further guidance on co-authorship for faculty-student interactions and collaborations.



Organizational Culture: Considerations such as office space, workspace, dress codes, appropriate titles and means of address, and/or team norms.

Resolving Conflicts & Grievance Processes: If an assistant has a conflict or grievance with their supervisor or a fellow team member, who should they contact? What departmental policies should they be aware of? Please note that this section is intended to guide assistants in resolving their grievance in a manner that the Graduate School describes as “locally, collegially, and informally,” but is not intended to supplant the formal grievance processes. See <https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/policies/policies-graduate-assistantships/#text> for additional information on Grievance Procedures.

Other comments:

Please note that all graduate assistantships are subject to University of Maryland policies and procedures as set forth in the Graduate Catalog: academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/policies/policies-graduate-assistantships. Nothing in the SME should contradict them, but if they do, the Graduate Catalog policies and procedures govern.

We have met in person or synchronously online to review and discuss this agreement on the date noted below. The graduate assistant was given an opportunity to ask and receive answers to any questions about the assistantship:

Student Signature
Date

Supervisor Signature
Date

If meeting online, you can save the document as a PDF and then add your digital signatures. For instructions visit helpx.adobe.com/reader/using/sign-pdfs.html