

# Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities 2014-2015

## A. Office of the University Ombudsman

The ombudsman is designated by the university to function as an impartial and neutral resource to assist all members of the university community. The ombudsman provides information relating to university policies and procedures and facilitates the resolution of problems and grievances through informal investigation and mediation. The office does not replace or supersede other university grievances, complaint or appeal procedures but is another avenue available to graduate students who wish to seek assistance in resolving concerns related to their graduate program. The contact information for the University Ombudsman's Office can be found at <http://www.wsu.edu/~ombuds/>

## B. Student Conduct

The University seeks fair and expeditious action on academic and conduct issues. Resolutions must uphold the highest standards of academic freedom and integrity, while honoring the rights and dignity of all individuals in the University community. The Graduate Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities describes policies and guidelines pertaining to academic advancement and related grievance procedures, and provides links to important resources regarding student conduct, academic dishonesty, discrimination, sexual harassment and drug and alcohol policies. Student disciplinary proceedings for misconduct, including plagiarism and cheating, are covered by the policies and procedures in the Washington Administrative Code and in the Student Conduct Code.

The *Standards of Conduct for Students* can be downloaded from the Office of Student Standards and Accountability website: <http://conduct.wsu.edu/>

The Graduate Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities was revised in July 2006 and again in 2009; it appears in its entirety in Section E at the end of this chapter, and can be downloaded from: <http://gradschool.wsu.edu/policies-procedures/>

## C. Student Rights of Appeal Related to Academic Work

1. **Appeal of Course Grades.** Graduate students should refer to the WSU Academic Regulations, Rules 104 and 105 if they have a complaint about instruction or grading. This document can be found at <http://registrar.wsu.edu/academic-regulations/>. If the student wishes to appeal a grade that has led to a decision that the student be dismissed from the Graduate School (for academic deficiency or examination failure, for example), the student should make every effort to file his/her appeal as soon as possible and to work through the grade appeal process in a timely manner. Formal grievances submitted to the Graduate School regarding dismissal due to a failed examination or academic deficiency will not be delayed due to the grade appeal process; formal grievance decisions made by the Dean. If the student's grade is changed due to a grade appeal decision made after the formal grievance process has been completed, then the program chair may request that the Dean of the Graduate School review the case based on the grade change and make a determination regarding reinstatement.

2. **University Grade Appeals Board.** The University Grade Appeals Board, an official committee of the

University President, functions to review academic grade appeals forwarded by any departmental chair, dean, Graduate School Dean, or university ombudsman. A detailed description of this committee and its processes may be found at <http://president.wsu.edu/office/presidential-committees/academic-grade-appeals-board.html>.

3. **Preliminary and/or Final Examination Committee Decisions.** In most cases of examination failure, the student is given an opportunity to take a second and final examination. In these cases the Graduate School will send an official representative to preside over the second examination to protect the rights of the student, faculty, and program. The Graduate School has trained a group of willing faculty members (Graduate Mentor Academy) in the appropriate procedures to be followed for a second examination. The Graduate School's examination procedures must be followed to schedule the second examination. These procedures are outlined in Chapters 7 and 8 of this manual. If the student fails the examination a second time, he/she will be dismissed from the Graduate School. The student may appeal the decision by filing a formal grievance with the Graduate School. For details, see Section E, Part 3 of this chapter.

In some cases of first examination failure, the student may not be given an opportunity to take a second and final examination. In these exceptional cases, the first examination must have had a representative from the Graduate Mentor Academy (appointed by the Graduate School) present for the oral examination and/or balloting meeting (if no oral examination was given). If this representative confirms that the examination process was fair and proceeded according to Graduate School policy, and if the representative agrees with the faculty committee and program chair that a re-examination is not an appropriate disposition of the case, then the Dean of the Graduate School will review the case and make the final determination whether or not to re-examine the student. The student may appeal the decision by filing a formal grievance with the Graduate School. For details, see Section E, Part 3 of this chapter.

#### **D. Students' Rights to Privacy**

Information specific to students' rights and protections under the Federal Education Right to Privacy Act, as implemented by Washington State University may be found at <http://registrar.wsu.edu/ferpa>.

#### **E. Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities**

The Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities document describes procedures for channeling graduate student complaints, grievances, and concerns to faculty, staff and administrators for appropriate action. In conjunction with this document, graduate students must adhere to the Graduate School's Policies and Procedures available on the Graduate School's website: <http://gradschool.wsu.edu/>. While these rights and responsibilities outline the complaint process, students are encouraged to use the Graduate School Deans for guidance and advice on conflicts that may arise at any point during their course of study at the University.

This document covers policies and guidelines pertaining to academic advancement and grievances only. Student disciplinary proceedings for misconduct including plagiarism and cheating are covered by the policies and procedures in the Washington Administrative Code and in the Student Conduct Code. For disciplinary matters, please view on-line the information at the following links:

- Student Conduct Standards: <http://conduct.wsu.edu/>

- Student Conduct Policy Violations: <http://conduct.wsu.edu/policies/>
- Student Conduct Code Procedures: <http://conduct.wsu.edu/policies/>
- Academic Integrity Standards and Procedures: <https://academicintegrity.wsu.edu/>
- Alcohol and Drug Policy: <http://conduct.wsu.edu/policies/>

In all instances, the University seeks fair and expeditious action on academic and conduct issues. Resolutions must uphold the highest standards of academic freedom and integrity, while honoring the rights and dignity of all individuals in the University community.

## **Part 1: Students with Disabilities.**

The Graduate School is committed to providing equal opportunity in its services, programs, and employment for individuals with disabilities. The Graduate School is proactive in promoting an attitude of respect for and sensitivity to the needs and abilities of persons with disabilities. Academically qualified students with disabilities will be provided with access to the individualized assistance that is consistent with the student's needs and the essential requirements of the program or course of study in which the student is enrolled.

The Graduate School is committed to providing appropriate assistance to help graduate students be successful in the curriculum. Reasonable accommodations are available for students with accommodations and services that they need.

### **Requesting Reasonable Accommodations**

Graduate students with identified disabilities should contact the Access Center before the semester that they plan to attend to initiate the accommodations process. Accommodations are unique for each individual and some require a significant amount of time to prepare for, so it is essential that students notify the Access Center as far in advance as possible. Students with a disability that is identified during the semester should contact the Access Center as soon as possible to arrange for an appointment and a review of their documentation by an Access advisor. All accommodations must be approved through the Access Center located on each campus (Pullman: Washington Building, Room 217, and Spokane: Student Affairs in the Student Academic Center, Room 130). All students requesting reasonable accommodation must meet with the instructor prior to or during the first week of the course to review all proposed accommodations in relation to course content and requirements. Exceptions to this time frame will be granted only upon a showing of good cause.

### **Working with the Access Center**

- Submit [documentation](#) of disability to the Access Center; if you have questions about what type of documentation is needed, please call to speak with an Access advisor.
- Schedule an appointment with the Access advisor following the submission and review of your documentation to determine appropriate accommodations.
- Promptly notify the Access Center of any problems in receiving the agreed-upon accommodations.
- Stop by at least once each semester to keep your registration with the Access Center and your accommodations current.

The Access Center can be reached at (509) 335-3417 or <http://accesscenter.wsu.edu/>. The website has additional information regarding documentation guidelines & types of accommodations.

## **Part 2: Complaints by and/or against Members of the University Faculty, Administration, or Students.**

Any graduate student who believes that he or she has been subjected to unlawful discrimination, including sexual harassment, or who believes his or her rights have been violated by a member of the academic community, is strongly encouraged to contact the Office for Equal Opportunity (<http://oeo.wsu.edu/>). If the complaint involves discrimination or harassment by a student, a complaint may also be filed with the Office of Student Standards and Accountability (<http://conduct.wsu.edu/Default.asp>).

### **Discrimination and Harassment**

The University's policy prohibiting discrimination and sexual harassment can be found at: <http://hrs.wsu.edu/dshp> along with resources and contact.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

Students and faculty share in the responsibility of upholding and protecting academic honesty standards within the University. At Washington State University, all cases of academic dishonesty or academic misconduct, including cases of plagiarism, will be handled according to the process in Washington Administrative Code (<http://conduct.wsu.edu/>). Through this process, the offending student will get notice of his or her offense and an opportunity to respond. The Code of Student Conduct covers cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty including but not limited to the following:

- unauthorized collaboration on assignments,
- facilitation of dishonesty including not challenging academic dishonesty,
- obtaining unauthorized knowledge of exam materials,
- unauthorized multiple submission of the same work or sabotage of others' work,
- knowingly furnishing false information to any University official, faculty member, or office,
- forgery, alteration, or misuse of any University document, record, or instrument of identification.

For a complete definition of academic dishonesty, see <http://registrar.wsu.edu/academic-regulations/>

With the advent of the internet and other information sources, further discussion of plagiarism is warranted. Webster's New World Dictionary defines plagiarism as taking "the ideas, writings, etc. from another and pass(ing) them off as one's own". Doing this is a clear example of academic dishonesty and, in fact, is a type of stealing. The person who wrote the original material worked hard to gain the appropriate expertise and also worked hard to express these ideas cogently. Furthermore, if you copy or plagiarize another's work, you are not learning and you are not advancing your own academic pursuits. Failure to properly cite other work is another form of plagiarism. If you cite other work, even when you rephrase it in an independent manner, you must follow conventional practices of good scholarship with proper citations. Your professors can help with this, if they are asked. It is, however, your responsibility as a graduate student to learn the proper manner to cite references and other sources of information in your discipline. The consequences of plagiarism are typically harsh as it is considered a form of cheating.

In the event that a graduate student becomes aware of any incidents of academic dishonesty, the graduate student should report the incident to the appropriate faculty member. The faculty member is then responsible for contacting the Office of Student Standards and Accountability for appropriate due process to determine whether a violation took place and the sanction(s) to be imposed. Sanctions imposed may include failure of the class or dismissal from the graduate program. Cases of academic dishonesty may also be reported to the Graduate School.

### **Part 3: Graduate and Professional Student Grievance Procedures for Academic Progress and Other Complaints.**

The graduate student grievance process may involve several steps depending on the nature of the grievance. There are many avenues available to Washington State University graduate and professional students to resolve differences that may arise during the pursuit of an advanced degree. In general, the operational principal that should be followed is to maintain open communication at the most immediate point of access and to work upwards from there when appropriate. This means that the student should work with their major professor or advisor to resolve matters if possible. The next level would be the Department Chair or School Director. If the complaint involves a complex or multi-campus issue, the Dean of the College may get involved at this point in the process. There are cases, of course, where this is difficult. In these cases, graduate and professional students should make an appointment with one of the Associate Deans of the Graduate School for further advice. An important role of the Graduate School is to serve as an impartial arbitrator in these matters and to provide advice to both students and faculty that will result in the student continuing in good academic standing.

#### **Informal Grievance Procedures**

- 3.1 Students are encouraged to first consult with their faculty advisor.
- 3.2 If the advisor is unable to resolve the problem the student is encouraged to discuss the problem with the department/program chair, director, and/or faculty liaison.
- 3.3 If the grievance cannot be resolved at the department or program level, the student should contact one of the Associate Deans of the Graduate School, or any person of the Graduate School designated by the Dean to hear student grievances (the Dean's designee).
- 3.4 The Associate Dean or Dean's designee will review the grievance and, at his or her discretion, will recommend possible actions for resolution to the student as well as to the department/program chair, director, college dean, and/or faculty liaison. If the student is not satisfied with the resolution, he/she may file a formal grievance.

#### **Formal Grievance Procedures**

In some instances such as those related to academic and employment issues (e.g. failed examinations, termination of assistantship, etc.), the student may wish to appeal a specific academic decision made by the departmental or program faculty.

- 3.5 The student must make a formal grievance request to the Dean of the Graduate School in writing, with signature (email is not sufficient). Formal appeals must be filed within 15 (fifteen) calendar days following a notice of decision or within 15 calendar days after completing the Preliminary Grievance Procedures. The original decision will be held in abeyance while under appeal.
- 3.6 The Dean will assign these formal appeals to one of the Associate Deans for full consideration and recommendation.
- 3.7 If the Associate Dean deems it appropriate, the matter will be referred to an independent Committee on Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities (CGSRR) for consideration and formulating recommendations of action to the Dean of the Graduate School. The CGSRR will operate with due respect to the rights of graduate students, faculty, and administrators including the conduct of interviews, the right of all parties to review and address allegations, and the right to a fair hearing. The CGSRR will deliberate and render a recommendation to the Dean of the

- Graduate School or the Dean's designee within 60 days of being formed.
- 3.8 Recommendations for resolution of formal grievances will be acted upon by the Dean or the Dean's designee. A final decision will be made by the Dean of the Graduate School. The decision made by the Dean on academic matters is final.

### **Appeals**

The graduate or professional student may appeal the final decision of the Dean of the Graduate School to the Provost if the appeal is based on procedural irregularities. The written appeal to the Provost due to procedural irregularities must be filed within 15 calendar days following a notice of decision from the Dean of the Graduate School regarding the formal grievance. The Provost will not reopen cases for the purpose of re-investigating the grievance.

### **Professional Student Grievances**

Professional students within the College of Veterinary Medicine and the College of Pharmacy will follow College policies and procedures for the review of academic issues. Appeal of College level decisions can be made to the Graduate School.

*College of Veterinary Medicine Homepage:* <http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/>

*College of Pharmacy Ombudsman Website:*  
<http://www.pharmacy.wsu.edu/currentstudents/ombudsman.html>

*Carson College of Business:* <https://business.wsu.edu/>

Other programs also may have their own grievance procedures that should be followed before utilizing the Graduate School's grievance procedures.

## **Part 4: Satisfactory Progress towards Degree**

Graduate students are expected to make satisfactory progress in their studies and are responsible for meeting the Graduate School's continuous enrollment policy, general academic requirements, and the specific requirements associated with their degree (see the Graduate School's Policies and Procedures Manual). Programs may have additional requirements, and students are expected to contact their program director and/or faculty advisor for information on these requirements.

## **Part 5: Scholarship and Research**

The following is information regarding data that graduate students may collect during their research. (For Responsible Conduct of Research training, visit <http://myresearch.wsu.edu>.)

### **Data Ownership**

In general all data collected at WSU is the property of WSU. It is useful to distinguish between grants and contracts. Data collected with grant funds remains under the control of WSU. Contracts typically require the researcher to deliver a product or service to the government or industry sponsor, and the product or service is then owned and controlled by the sponsor (government or industry). WSU and principal investigators have responsibilities and obligations regarding research funds and data collection.

- 4.1 Before data is collected the PI and project personnel should clearly understand who owns the data, who has the right to publish, and what requirements or obligations are imposed on the researcher or WSU.
- 4.2 Whenever a graduate student or postdoc leaves the lab a similar agreement should be negotiated between the PI and the graduate student or postdoc.
- 4.3 Collaborative research agreements regarding data ownership and use should be agreed to (in writing) prior to the collection of the data. In general, each member of the team should have continued access to the data/materials (unless a prior agreement was negotiated).

#### **Data Collection**

Data collection must be well-organized and detailed. The laboratory notebook (bound sequentially numbered pages, with signatures and dates) is often key to keeping daily records. Detailed records help establish good work practices, provide a history of your ideas, avoid fraud or misconduct charges, defend patents, and provide a valuable resource for your own work.

#### **Data Storage and Protection**

Once data has been collected it must be stored and protected to be of future use. Data storage must be done in such a way that results and conclusions can be clearly discerned from the data and materials that have been archived. The data and materials must be protected so that research findings can be confirmed and/or reanalyzed by others. If data and materials are not properly stored and protected they could significantly reduce the value of the research (or even render the research worthless).

For additional information on the Universities data policies see  
[http://www.wsu.edu/~forms/HTML/EPM/EP8\\_University\\_Data\\_Policies.htm](http://www.wsu.edu/~forms/HTML/EPM/EP8_University_Data_Policies.htm)