

# TOP 10 TIPS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS



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## **You need more than one advisor.**

Advisors can answer questions or direct you to the right answers for navigating your graduate degree program requirements. One advisor should be a faculty member that you feel comfortable talking to and asking questions—it may not be the first person you try. One advisor should be personnel in your program. They handle most of the paperwork you'll ever have to file. In addition, it is always a good idea to know who serves in the role of graduate director for your degree program. Get to know these important people in your degree program.

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## **You need at least one mentor.**

One type of mentor will help you to better understand what quality looks like in your discipline. Another type of mentor can help you to learn about career possibilities and to target what is best for you. It is possible that a faculty member serving as your advisor also may be a mentor, but maybe not. It is important to have at least one mentor who can provide you with the guidance you need in your discipline.

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## **You are responsible for your graduate degree program requirements.**

As a graduate student, you are responsible for your graduate degree requirements. The Graduate School website, Graduate Studies Bulletin, and other resources, such as progress to degree information, your graduate degree program's website, and your program's graduate student handbook are key resources for you to use to understand your degree requirements.

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## **Get help crafting a Program of Study.**

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## **Ask for help.**

Don't flounder; ask for help when you have questions, if you are uncertain about what to do, and any time you need it. The team in the Graduate School and your graduate degree program are here to help you. Ask us! If you have a disability for which accommodations can be made for you to be successful, register. If you have a personal issue, discuss it confidentially with your advisor(s), mentor(s), and/or instructor(s) so that they know your performance may be impacted. If something has happened and you can document it, keep records (e.g., car accident, surgery, death certificate/memorial program, etc.). If you do not know what to do, it may help to talk to the Ombudsman in the Graduate School, Mr. Dale Moore. If you need help with your mental and emotional health, access campus resources

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## **Get connected.**

Joining groups will enhance your graduate experience and broaden your perspective on the world. Being connected may help with financial opportunities too. The Graduate Student Association and Black Graduate Student Association are two graduate student-led groups focused on enhancing the graduate student experience and offer many ways to connect with other graduate students.

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## **Look for additional professional development opportunities.**

The Graduate School offers several professional development offerings. These are not intended to compete with offerings by your graduate degree program, which are best suited to meet your discipline-specific needs, but are instead designed to complement those offerings with high-quality, innovative professional development programming and to prepare graduate students for a variety of meaningful career options after degree. Professional development events are posted on the Graduate School events calendar, circulated by email each semester, and posted on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn). In addition, the Center for Teaching Excellence, Career Center, Office of Fellowships and Scholar Programs, and Office of the Vice President for Research offer professional development programming for graduate students.

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## **Looking for funding opportunities.**

One of the most commonly asked questions from graduate students relates to funding – paying for graduate school. The Graduate School website includes a list of funding sources. However, your graduate degree program may offer graduate assistantships for research and/or teaching. Make it known that you are interested in a position. In addition, the Office of Fellowships and Scholar Programs and Office of the Vice President for Research offer funding resources for graduate students through various programs.

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## **Final work check.**

Take another look at #3 on this list. Then, know that there are instances when things get lost. This is why it is important for you to maintain a copy of important paperwork related to your graduate degree program. Follow up to ensure what you submit yields the action you seek (e.g., transfer of credit requests). This may be as simple as checking with the graduate director in your degree program or may entail touching base with your department's program coordinator in the Graduate School.

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## **Check your transcript.**

At the start of the semester, confirm that you are registered in all the courses you believe you should be in for the semester. At the end of each semester, confirm that a grade has been submitted for all the courses in which you were registered. Confirm the grades match up with what you expected, or find out why they differ. It is much easier to address discrepancies sooner rather than later.

