

ADVISER RELATIONSHIP

Graduate Student-Faculty Adviser Relationship

2.1. Overview

High-quality graduate education depends upon the professional and ethical conduct of the participants. Although Illinois Institute of Technology is composed of many distinct disciplinary cultures, its faculty and students together form a community of scholars. As such, they have complementary responsibilities for upholding academic standards and sustaining a creative and collegial environment.

2.2 Guidelines

Focused on the professional academic relationship between faculty advisers and graduate students, the following guidelines are based on the collective experience and wisdom of a number of major research universities. Their purpose is to encourage a heightened awareness of—and conscious commitment to—practices that faculty and students here and elsewhere routinely follow as a matter of common sense, courtesy, and basic honesty. Although a few of these guidelines have more direct relevance to some fields than to others, most are applicable across the entire disciplinary spectrum.

Faculty advisers should:

1. **Serve as intellectual and professional mentors to their graduate students, by:**
 - a. Helping students develop interpretive, writing, oral, quantitative, or other relevant professional skills required by the discipline.
 - b. Helping more advanced students design research programs that take advantage of their individual interests and strengths, and that can be completed in a timely manner.
 - c. Encouraging, by example and precept, a dedication to high-quality teaching.
 - d. Encouraging faculty-graduate student collaborations which entail the sharing of authorship or rights to intellectual property developed in research or other creative or artistic activity.
 - e. Providing students with evaluation of their progress and performance in regular (at least twice a semester) and informative ways. It is especially important for faculty to provide students with timely and candid advice when their performance is deficient or their lack of progress might prevent them from attaining the desired degree.
2. **Be knowledgeable concerning the academic and non-academic policies that pertain to graduate students, including:**
 - a. Helping students understand the requirements and timetable that each must meet, including coursework, languages, research tools, specific research responsibilities, examinations, and thesis or dissertation.
 - b. Discussing laboratory, studio, or departmental authorship policy with graduate students in advance of entering into collaborative projects.
 - c. Drawing students' attention to university policies and requiring that they be followed.
3. **Prepare students to be competitive for employment, by:**
 - a. Promoting free inquiry and the free exchange of information, subject to the university's policies regarding secrecy and confidentiality of research.
 - b. Informing faculty of conflicts and working toward a clear resolution.
 - c. Interacting with faculty, staff, and other students in a mature, professional, and civil manner.
 - d. Acknowledging student contributions to research presented at conferences, in professional publications, or in applications for copyrights and patents.
 - e. Encouraging graduate students to participate in professional meetings, to perform, or providing a realistic view of the field and the current job market and making use of professional contacts for the benefit of their students.
4. **Maintain a high level of professionalism, including:**
 - a. Excusing themselves from participating in committee decisions regarding any student with whom they have a relationship that could result in a conflict of interest.
 - b. Never impeding a graduate student's progress toward the degree or toward employment in order to benefit from the student's proficiency as a teaching or research assistant.
 - c. Interacting with students, staff, and faculty colleagues in a professional and civil manner, and in accordance with university policies.

Graduate students should:

1. **Understand faculty advisers' central role, as well as their constraints. This includes:**
 - a. Recognizing that the faculty adviser provides the intellectual and instructional environment in which the student conducts research, and, through access to teaching and research funds, may also provide the student with financial support.
 - b. Recognizing that the faculty adviser is responsible for monitoring the accuracy, validity, and integrity of the student's research, and for ensuring that the contributions of all participants in the research are properly acknowledged in any publications. For these reasons and because the quality of that research reflects on the student, the faculty adviser, and the university, students should

always consult with their advisers before attempting to publish the results of work carried out under the adviser's direction and/or in the adviser's studio or laboratory.

- c. Being aware of time constraints and other demands imposed on faculty members and program staff.
- d. Communicating regularly (at least twice a semester) with faculty advisers, especially regarding matters related to research and progress with the degree program.

2. **Take primary responsibility for informing themselves of the regulations and policies governing their financial aid, degree and course requirements, and research activities. This may involve:**

- a. Consulting departmental notes or guidelines for graduate students, the Student Handbook, and the Illinois Institute of Technology Graduate Catalog.
- b. Seeking clarification from the faculty adviser when they are uncertain about the precise meaning or application of a regulation or policy statement.

3. **Exercise high professional standards in all aspects of their work. This includes:**

- a. Observing the university's policy on scientific misconduct. This policy applies to researchers in all disciplines and to students as well as faculty and staff.
- b. Maintaining absolute integrity in taking examinations and in collecting, analyzing, and presenting research data.
- c. Taking special care to preserve the data collected during experiments or noted during research (with precise identification of sources) in order to avoid future confusion or disputes about access or ownership.
- d. Acknowledging the contributions of the faculty adviser and other members of the research team to student's work in all publications and conference presentations. It is also appropriate to acknowledge the sources of financial support (students should familiarize themselves with the statement on academic authorship discussed in Section 2.3 (p. 2)).
- e. Maintaining the confidentiality of the faculty adviser's professional activities and research prior to presentations or publication, in accordance with existing practices and policies of the discipline.
- f. Informing faculty of conflicts and working toward a clear resolution.
- g. Interacting with faculty, staff, and other students in a mature, professional, and civil manner in accordance with university policies.

2.3 Academic Authorship

An individual's place in the list of authors of a work may or may not be a meaningful signal about the degree of contribution: in some fields the authorship sequence is rich in meaning, elsewhere it may be entirely empty. Even within a discipline, customs vary: in most biological papers, the sequence of authors is in approximate order of extent of contribution, and at least one leading journal extracts all meaning from sequence by requiring alphabetical listing of authors. But those complexities only underscore the importance of establishing sound principles for determining co-authorship and provide further reason for extreme care by faculty members. While we understand the need to respect the nuances that readers (including prospective employers) will derive from author sequence in a journal article, it does seem that as a prima facie matter, each co-author of a work is accountable for its authenticity and quality. Shared credit should entail shared responsibility. Where, by custom or agreement, that is not the case—in fields where ten or more names regularly appear on a single paper as co-authors, for example, or where the work is collaboration between scholars from different fields who lack intimate knowledge of one another's areas—some explicit disclosure of that fact would seem desirable.

- Principal investigators and senior faculty have special responsibilities to assure the overall cohesiveness and validity of the publications on which they appear as co-authors.
- All authors in a group effort have a shared responsibility for the published result and should have the opportunity to review all sample preparation procedures and data, as well as all data acquisition and analysis procedures.
- Each author in a group effort should have access to the manuscript prior to its being submitted for publication, and should agree to his or her inclusion as a co-author. All the participants in the program should know that the paper is being prepared for publication.
- Early in the project, each research group should define appropriate practices for the maintenance of data.

Faculty Handbook Appendix S (Authorship) discusses these principles by discipline and policies concerning authorship.