



Tips for Success

Departments must choose students carefully. Good quality admission decisions lead to good quality results. Once admitted, a student has both rights as well as responsibilities.

Ideally, a supervisor should be appointed at the time of the student's arrival at the University of Alberta, and a permanent supervisor should be appointed within the first 12 months. The timely, clear identification of a supervisor has been proven to be one means of facilitating success.

1. Hold regular meetings. Document those meetings (paper file or email)
2. If applicable, discuss funding on a regular basis to make sure that the reality and the student's expectations are the same.
3. For doctoral students, pay attention to the three-year rule for all program requirements, other than the thesis: see Calendar, section 204.7.1
4. Provide regular evaluations of a graduate student's progress and academic performance. Define the terms on which you will hold meetings with the student for purposes of evaluation and feedback.
5. Be honest when work is under par. Address problems early. Dealing with inadequate academic performance can be difficult, but it is in no-one's best interests to prolong a program of study when success is unlikely.
6. Assist the student in developing a plan with clear milestones and deadlines. Work with the student to ensure completion on a timely basis.
7. Advise the student on how to define a manageable research topic, develop a research plan, write the thesis, and prepare for the defence.
8. Discuss the degree of independence expected of the student.
9. Try promoting a flexible process that focuses on scholarship and develops critical and independent thought. Intellectual debate and challenge should be encouraged and supported. Intellectual debate is a fundamental component of university activity. Every effort should be made by both the student and the supervisor to recognize and acknowledge that a robust element of academic challenge and questioning is a normal, and indeed, healthy aspect of the student-supervisor relationship" (**CAGS Guidelines 2008**). See also the **Krogman Report**. Both documents are provided under Resources.
10. Provide mentorship by providing guidance on such matters as scholarship applications, presenting at conferences and getting published, and on general professional development. Aim to facilitate the development of the student as a junior research colleague.