

UC San Diego

PROGRAM IN MATERIALS SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

Mentoring Standards (Advisor/Advisee Relationship)

Purpose of this Document

The goal of this document is to guide faculty (Advisors) and graduate students (Advisees) as they grow and evaluate their Advisor/Advisee relationship.

The Program in Materials Science and Engineering (MATS) is comprised of faculty from several different academic departments and multiple Schools at UC San Diego. The intention of this document is not to set requirements or mandate a particular advising style or group structure, but to provide guidance. Advisors' styles differ and different students thrive under different styles.

This document does not capture everything that can or should be done to promote a good Advisor/Advisee relationship. It is a living document, and it will be updated periodically as needed.

Setting Expectations

While the Advisee is ultimately responsible for their progress through the MATS program, the Advisor bears responsibility for providing guidance and feedback, as well as setting clear short- and long-term goals for their Advisees. When in doubt, Advisees should connect and ask their Advisors to clarify expectations.

Expectations of the Advisor

- Set a scientific direction for their Advisees and work with them to define an appropriate project;
- Provide timely feedback to Advisees on their research activities and performance;
- Provide appropriate resources and infrastructure to execute the proposed research;
- Create an environment that is supportive, safe, and free from harassment.

Expectations of the Advisee

- Understand the requirements of the MATS degree program (<https://matsci.ucsd.edu/graduate-studies>) and take responsibility for completing them in a timely fashion. Advisors and MATS staff are available to assist in answering questions;
- Be mindful of degree time limits and appropriate progress towards degree completion (plans for Senate Exam, completion of research expectations and the Dissertation/Final Defense);
- Effectively communicate research progress and challenges in a timely fashion;
- Communicate hardships to Advisor so solutions can be identified and implemented collaboratively;
- Be responsive to Advisor expectations and deadlines;
- Identify multiple informal mentors for various professional development activities, recognizing the primary research advisor may not be the best suited mentor for specific career paths or opportunities;
- Identify appropriate professional development opportunities and discuss potential participation with Advisor.

Accountability and Evaluations

Advisors will provide feedback on Advisee progress each academic year during the spring quarter. This is an opportunity for Advisors and Advisees to communicate alignment of expectations and identify steps that can help the Advisee succeed. In this evaluation, it is encouraged to discuss advising needs. Details on spring evaluations are available at:

<https://grad.ucsd.edu/academics/progress-to-degree/spring-evaluations.html>

Providing and Accepting Feedback

Providing and accepting thoughtful, constructive, respectful, actionable and timely feedback is essential to developing the skills necessary to earn a PhD. Advisees must be open to receiving and learning from that feedback.

Advisor Availability

Advisors have a responsibility to be available to their Advisees to provide feedback in a consistent and timely manner. Advisees should be able to rely on advisor's feedback and guidance and help through their PhD program.

MATS expects Advisors to make advising their Advisees a top priority, since, in taking on a graduate student, the Advisor commits to providing high-quality, consistent advising. This entails meeting with their Advisees regularly.

University Policies and Principles of Community

The Program in Materials Science and Engineering, including faculty, students and staff, are bound by the policies and principles of community of UC San Diego.

Additional details can be found at:

[**https://ucsd.edu/about/principles.html**](https://ucsd.edu/about/principles.html)

[**https://blink.ucsd.edu/instructors/advising/misconduct.html**](https://blink.ucsd.edu/instructors/advising/misconduct.html)

[**https://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programs/_files/apm/apm-015.pdf**](https://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programs/_files/apm/apm-015.pdf)

Advisee Resources for Addressing Problems

The preferred way to address any issues is to have a conversation with your Advisor, since they have the most direct influence over your experience in the PhD program and are most familiar with you, your work, and other factors affecting you.

There are other options if you prefer to talk to someone else:

MATS Program Director, Prof. Olivia A. Graeve (matscidirector@ucsd.edu)

MATS Graduate Advising Staff (mats-advising@ucsd.edu)

JSOE Associate Dean for Students ([**https://jacobsschool.ucsd.edu/about/leadership**](https://jacobsschool.ucsd.edu/about/leadership))

You can also discuss issues with the MATS Graduate Student Council

([**https://www.matsgrads.com/**](https://www.matsgrads.com/)) or the UC San Diego Graduate and Professional Student Association ([**https://gpsa.ucsd.edu/**](https://gpsa.ucsd.edu/)).