

Best Practices for Graduate Assistant Supervisors

Basics of GA Supervising

- Provide early & ongoing training in multiple modalities (written materials, verbal instructions, shadowing others)
- Require new GAs to participate in the Graduate School's [online GA orientation training modules](#)
- Establish open line of communication & discuss preferred methods to communicate
- Clarify expectations for responsibilities, work schedule, what to do when the unexpected arises (GAs average work hours on a monthly basis cannot exceed 10/20 hours per week, based on appointment)
- Require GA to turn in timesheet to supervisor on monthly basis
- Review timesheets for accuracy & retain in department
- Be approachable & responsive
- Ensure opportunities for feedback early & often (verbal & written)

Supervising Best Practices

- Hire the right student - be specific on qualifications needed, conduct interviews, verify basic skills
- Weekly or bi-weekly standing meetings to discuss progress on goals, questions, upcoming projects (1:1 or group format)
- Provide challenges to encourage growth while also providing support structures to meet those challenges
- Ask questions to solicit feedback (training, resources available, their experiences in the role)
- Address mistakes or deficiencies immediately: verbal conversation followed up with written summary that is provided to GA
- Clarify priorities – rank them in writing when multiple projects occurring simultaneously
- Provide opportunities to discuss how current role can enhance career development (can utilize the Individual Development Plan module in the Graduate Student Mentoring Agreement form found on [Graduate Student Forms website](#))

Performance Concerns

- Address immediately – have verbal conversation & summarize in writing via an email to GA
- If performance concerns persist, clarify specific actions that must occur to remedy situation, and document in writing where both parties sign and retain a copy

- If several attempts to remedy are unsuccessful, document that position may be terminated by specific date without resolution of specific actions (at this stage, also inform Jill Smucker, Director of Graduate Education in the Grad School)
- Exceptions to the above multi-step process: complaints or concerns involving egregious or harmful behaviors, such as sexual harassment, discrimination, any illegal activity, academic or research misconduct, etc. Contact the Graduate School immediately with such concerns.