



**National Association of Graduate-Professional Students
Student Bill of Rights**

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Preamble: To promote a more productive climate between ourselves and our faculty and to define our role in the university as a whole, we, the graduate and professional students of the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS), claim the rights enumerated below. These are basic rights common to all graduate and professional students. They form a foundation upon which faculty and students can build a genuine intellectual community.

1. Graduate and professional students are to be considered members of a scholarly community, and as such, they have a right to collegial and respectful treatment by faculty members.
2. Graduate and professional students have a right to study and work in an environment free of exploitation, intimidation, harassment and discrimination based on characteristics such as gender, race, religion, age, sex, color, disability, sexual orientation or expression, gender identity or expression, citizenship, mental health, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs and affiliations.
3. Given that graduate and professional students have many rights and are free as other members of society to express their views and to participate in the political processes of the academic community and the community at-large.
4. Graduate and professional students have the right to clear and specific written requirements for achieving an advanced degree.
 - These requirements should be provided to graduate and professional students upon their admission into a graduate and professional program and/or emphasis.
 - No changes in degree requirements should affect students previously accepted into the graduate and professional program and/or emphasis except at their option.
 - Program course requirements should be offered on a regular basis so as to not interfere with timely completion of degree.
 - Prospective and currently enrolled graduate and professional students have a right to know and should be informed of the normative time to degree and average time to degree within a specific graduate and professional program and/or emphasis.
 - Prospective and currently enrolled graduate and professional students have a right to know a program's student attrition rate and, if available, the predominant reasons for lack of program completion except in instances where confidentiality is threatened. Student access to statistical information on graduate and professional programs should not interfere with the privacy rights of other students.
 - Advertised program courses should be available on a regular basis. Graduate students should have the ability to enroll in classes offered by any other relevant graduate program, provided space is available and they meet the prerequisites.



5. Graduate and professional students have a right to an accurate description of availability and the likelihood of ongoing financial and resource support within their program and/or emphasis.
 - Prospective and currently enrolled graduate and professional students should be provided a thorough description of the requirements and qualifications necessary for student employment, training and financial support within their departments and/or emphases at the university.
 - All graduate and professional programs and/or emphases should have clearly written policies regarding the distribution of financial support and academic employment.
 - All policies concerning support of graduate and professional students should be implemented in a consistent and understandable way.
 - Graduate and professional students should be provided with appropriate work space (i.e., office, study, and/or lab space).
 - Wellness support services should be readily available to graduate and professional students.
6. Graduate and professional students have a right to be judged by the faculty of their department in accordance with fair procedures, in matters of employment and promotion, solely on the basis of the graduate and professional students' professional qualifications and conduct.
7. Graduate and professional students have a right to respectful mentorship.
 - Graduate and professional students should have their progress toward achieving an advanced degree evaluated in an objective manner and based on criteria that are understood by the graduate and professional students and advisors.
 - Annual progress reports should be written by graduate and professional students. Evaluations of the annual reports should be factual, unbiased, specific, and should be shared with students within a reasonable period of time.
 - A written evaluation of performance on qualifying and comprehensive examinations should be provided to students.
 - Graduate and professional students should receive regular feedback and guidance concerning their academic performance through a mutually agreeable schedule of conferences with their advisors/chairs/mentors.
 - Graduate and professional students should be given a fair opportunity to correct or remedy deficiencies in their academic performance with agreed upon timetables for resolution.
 - Any intent to dismiss a student from a graduate and professional program and/or emphasis for academic reasons must be preceded by a warning, which includes relevant performance information, well in advance of actual dismissal.
 - Any intent to discontinue an advisors/chairs/mentors relationship with a graduate and professional student must be preceded by a warning within a realistic period of time.
8. Graduate and professional students have a right to co-authorship in publications involving significant contribution of ideas or research work from the student consistent with the generally accepted standards of their fields of study. The student should receive first authorship for publications which are comprised primarily of the creative research and writing of the student when consistent with the conventions of the field.



9. Graduate and professional students have a right to have their privacy respected in their communications with faculty, staff and administration.
10. Graduate and professional students have a right to refuse to perform tasks that are not closely related to their academic programs or professional development.
11. Teaching assistants and teaching associates have a right to appropriate teacher training.
 - Graduate and professional students deserve fair and equitable working conditions and benefits.
 - All graduate and professional programs and/or emphases should implement a structured training program for their teaching assistants and teaching associates.
 - All graduate and professional programs and/or emphases should outline the expectations of a graduate and professional student teacher, and the ways in which those expectations can be achieved, for their teaching assistants and teaching associates.
 - Appointments are to be made in compliance with the “20-Hour Rule”.
12. Graduate and professional students have a right to professional training. This should include but not be limited to information about professional associations, conferences, mock interviews, job opportunities and publishing articles in journals.
13. Graduate and professional students have a right to share in the governance of the University.
 - All departments, graduate and professional programs and/or emphases should include graduate and professional students representatives in the decision-making process where appropriate.
14. Graduate and professional students should have representatives on all campus-wide committees, with voting privileges where appropriate, according to the guidelines of shared governance.
15. Graduate and professional students have a right to clearly defined official grievance procedures and informal complaint procedures at the department and campus-wide levels. Each department should have grievance procedures.
 - Consistent with this right, graduate and professional students have a right to procedures appropriate to the nature of the case and the severity of the potential discipline.
 - When a formal hearing is required, a graduate and professional student has a right to the following minimum procedural standards to assure a fair hearing.
 - ⇒ The opportunity for a prompt and fair hearing, upon the request of the student at which the university shall bear the burden of proof, and at which the student shall have the opportunity to present documents and witnesses and to confront and cross-examine witnesses presented by the university. No inference, however, shall be drawn from the silence of the accused.
 - ⇒ A record of the hearing; an expeditious written decision based upon the preponderance of evidence, which shall be accompanied by a written summary of the findings of fact.
 - ⇒ An appeal.
16. A student's grade in a course would be determined only by academic achievement consistent with the aims and content of that course. At the beginning of the course, the instructor should make known the factors that will be considered in determining the grade



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such as class attendance, class participation, papers, examinations, projects and/or presentations. Graduate and professional students have a right to challenge their term grades if those grades are based upon criteria other than course performance or are perceived as biased.

- Student's grades should be kept confidential in accordance with FERPA and university policies.
17. Graduate and professional students are expected to behave in a professional manner, respecting their fellow graduate students, as well as undergraduate students, faculty, staff and administrators, and in general conduct themselves in a manner befitting an ethical and honest academic colleague.
 18. Graduate and professional students have a right to be free of reprisals for exercising these rights.