

# Graduate Students' Rights and Responsibilities University of California, Irvine

(UCI Graduate Council - April 20, 2004)

## Preface

Students<sup>1</sup> are members of both society and the academic community with attendant rights and responsibilities. ([UC/UCI Student Policy Manual](#), section 101) The purpose of this document is to outline some of these rights and responsibilities, and to provide references to the policies that define them.

This document covers UC and UCI policy, but is not exhaustive. In particular, graduate students may also have other rights and responsibilities associated with the academic program in which they are enrolled. Academic units are responsible for providing graduate students with all information on such rights. Students are also expected to request such information should it not be made readily available.

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## Rights

Graduate students who are registered at the University of California, Irvine have the following rights:

- To be free from discrimination in matters relating to admission, access, and treatment in University programs and activities. ([UC/UCI Student Policy Manual](#), Appendix C)
- To be involved in the governance of both administrative and academic areas of the university. ([UC/UCI Student Policy Manual](#), sections 120 and 70)
- To be assured of reasonable confidentiality in their communications with professors except in circumstances relating to violation of University policies.
- To refuse to perform tasks if those tasks are not related to their course of study or their own professional or academic development.
- To be informed of the options for financial support available to them, and the eligibility requirements for each. Sources for this information include the [UCI Office of Graduate](#)

[Studies](http://www.rgs.uci.edu/) (<http://www.rgs.uci.edu/>), the [UCI Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships](http://www.fao.uci.edu/) (<http://www.fao.uci.edu/>), and students' academic units.

- To be informed of the criteria for, and terms of, employment as Teaching Assistants/Associates (TAs) and Graduate Student (Assistant) Researchers (GS(A)Rs). Sources for this information include the [TA union contract](http://www.rgs.uci.edu/grad/staff/union.htm) (<http://www.rgs.uci.edu/grad/staff/union.htm>), the [Academic Personnel Manual](http://www.ap.uci.edu/employment/student.html) (<http://www.ap.uci.edu/employment/student.html> and <http://www.ucop.edu/acadadv/acadpers/apm/apm-110.pdf>) and the [Graduate Advisor's Handbook](#), "Graduate Student Academic Appointments".
- To have all academic decisions affecting their academic standing, including the assignment of grades, based upon academic considerations only, and administered fairly and equitably under policies established by the Academic Senate. In professional curricula, such decisions may include consideration of performance according to accepted professional standards. ([UC/UCI Student Policy Manual](#), section 171.09)
- To be provided with well-defined criteria for completion of degree requirements at the time of admission. ([Graduate Advisor's Handbook](#), "Academic Advisement and Evaluation")
- To be advised in a timely manner of all changes in the rules, policies, and procedures related to their academic program. ([Graduate Advisor's Handbook](#), "Academic Advisement and Evaluation")
- To be required to complete only the degree requirements which were published in the [UCI Catalogue](#) at the time of admission. (If the requirements should change after the student's admission, some degree programs may give the student the option of fulfilling the new requirements instead.)
- To be informed of their degree program's policy on normal and maximal times to degree.
- To be asked to complete program milestones (comprehensive and qualifying exams, advancement to candidacy, dissertation/thesis topic defense, dissertation/thesis final defense) at times which are in accordance with departmental policy.
- To regular evaluations of their progress toward their degree objective. ([Graduate Advisor's Handbook](#), "Academic Advisement and Evaluation")
- To make progress toward their degree goal without undue delay on the part of faculty.
- To make certain decisions independently of their faculty advisors. This right is subject to restrictions imposed by the university and the student's department/program, such as the policies on satisfactory progress and time-to-degree. These include the right to:
  - Choose a thesis/dissertation advisor.
  - Choose a thesis/dissertation topic. A student's advisor can veto a topic that is outside his/her area of expertise.
  - Be consulted on the membership of their research committee.

Note: Just as a student has the right to choose an advisor, an advisor also has the right to decline a request to serve in that capacity. Also, if a student and advisor cannot agree on one of these points, either may choose to sever the advisor/advisee relationship. In particular, these rights do not force an advisor to retain a student who refuses to accept the advisor's guidance in these matters. It is also important to note that these rights do not force a degree program to retain a student if no qualified individual is willing or able to act as the student's advisor.

- To be free from University discipline for actions committed involuntarily or under duress. However, violations committed under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or illegal substances will be subject to discipline. ([UC/UCI Student Policy Manual](#), section 171.06)
- To be able to access their academic file as specified by the [UC/UCI Student Policy Manual](#), section 130.40.
- To be informed of policies and procedures for procuring on-campus housing, including information on availability, expected time on wait list, limitations on stay (including restrictions, if any, imposed by academic policies), and restrictions on eligibility.
- To be consulted on matters affecting both the academic and nonacademic experiences of students, and especially those decisions which directly affect their welfare, through drawing upon official student representation, as well as additional means for seeking student input as appropriate. ([UC/UCI Student Policy Manual](#), sections 171.01 and 171.02)
- To request an investigation into a possible conflict of interest if the student's advisor has a financial interest as defined in Section 028 of the Academic Personnel Manual in an outside entity related to a project on which the student is working ([http://www.ap.uci.edu/APM/APM\\_intro.html](http://www.ap.uci.edu/APM/APM_intro.html)). Additional sources of information on this and other types of conflict of interest may be found at the following websites: the Office of Graduate Studies, "[Conflict of Interest \(COI\) in Graduate Education](#)", <http://www.rgs.uci.edu/grad/staff/coi.htm>, the [UCI Graduate Advisor's Handbook](#), the [UCI - Conflict of Interest Home Page](#) and the [UC/UCI Student Policy Manual](#)
- To have access to basic outpatient health care services on any University of California campus, under conditions that apply to students registered on that campus. ([UC/UCI Student Policy Manual](#), section 171.15)
- To be informed of all these rights upon enrolling at UCI.

Students with disabilities also have additional rights that are outlined in the Academic Senate Manual's [Academic Policy for Handicapped Students](#).  
[http://www.senate.uci.edu/9\\_IrvineManual/3ASMAAppendices/Appendix06.html](http://www.senate.uci.edu/9_IrvineManual/3ASMAAppendices/Appendix06.html)

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## Responsibilities

Student conduct is governed by policies described in the [UC/UCI Student Policy Manual](#). Graduate students should be aware of the expectations for their behavior as students, and of their responsibilities as instructors regarding the behavior of their students.

- Graduate students should become familiar with the general provisions of UCI's student conduct policies. In addition to the [UC/UCI Student Policy Manual](#), other sources for this information include the [UCI Academic Senate Manual](#), the [UCI Administrative Policies and Procedures](#), the RGS website ([OGS: Current Students - Index](#)), and the appendices of the [UCI Catalogue](#) (<http://www.editor.uci.edu/03-04/appx/appx.2.htm>) and <http://www.editor.uci.edu/03-04/appx/appx.3.htm>). Among the policies of concern are those dealing with:

- [academic honesty](#) ([http://www.senate.uci.edu/9\\_IrvineManual/3ASMAppendices/Appendix08.html](http://www.senate.uci.edu/9_IrvineManual/3ASMAppendices/Appendix08.html);
  - integrity in research (<http://www.rgs.uci.edu/rig/irindex.htm>)
  - [sexual harassment](#) (<http://www.policies.uci.edu/adm/pols/700-16.html>)
  - [computer and network use](#) (UCI Catalogue)
  - [hazing](#) ( " " )
  - [student conduct and discipline](#) ( " " )
  - [principles of community](#) ( " " )
  - [substance abuse](#) ( " " )
  - [weapons](#) ( " " )
  - [discrimination](#) ( " " )
- Graduate students are expected to report their research results accurately and honestly, and to uphold ethical norms in their research methodology. (<http://www.rgs.uci.edu/rig/irindex.htm>)
  - Teaching Assistants/Associates and lecturers may wish to review the [Faculty Code of Conduct](#) ([http://www.senate.uci.edu/9\\_IrvineManual/3ASMAppendices/Appendix03/A3index.html](http://www.senate.uci.edu/9_IrvineManual/3ASMAppendices/Appendix03/A3index.html))
  - All international students new to UCI are required to check in with the [UCI International Center](#) (<http://www.ic.uci.edu>) when they arrive in Irvine. Students should bring their I-20/DS-2019, passport with visa stamp, and I-94 card and address information if available.
  - Students who violate University policies and procedures may be subject to disciplinary procedures published in the [UC/UCI Student Policy Manual](#), Section 103.
  - University employees (including graduate students serving as TAs, lecturers, or GSRs) who violate University policies and procedures may be subject to disciplinary procedures published in the [Academic Personnel Manual](#), the [Staff Personnel Programs Manual](#), the [Manual of the Academic Senate](#), or the collective bargaining agreements as appropriate. ([UC/UCI Student Policy Manual](#), section 40.20)
  - ALSO NOTE: Consent to remain on campus may be withdrawn pursuant to the procedures set forth in [Section 900-20 of the UCI Policy and Procedures Manual](#) implementing Penal Code Section 626.4 and 626.6. ([UC/UCI Student Policy Manual](#), section 40.20)

## Guidelines

Certain aspects of the experience of being a graduate student are not matters of formally defined policy, but are reflections of UCI's academic, social, and professional cultures. This section gives some guidelines on these matters.

- Generally, a professor should not discuss a student's performance or behavior with other students. Discussion of the student's performance among faculty should be limited to the student's academic performance and qualifications as a graduate student.

- Graduate students can usually expect to be listed as a co-author of publications which involve significant contributions of ideas or research work from the student. However, specific practices may vary by discipline and academic unit.
  - Graduate students are expected to devote an appropriate amount of time and energy toward achieving their degrees within the standards for "normal time" that apply to their degree program.
  - Graduate students are expected to take the initiative in asking questions that promote their understanding of academic requirements, University policy, and financial support.
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## Resources (Documents and Organizations)

The organizations and documents listed below may be of use in helping graduate students to understand University policies that relate to their rights and responsibilities:

- Departmental Graduate Counselors and the Associate Dean for Graduate Affairs in the [Office of Graduate Studies](#)
- [UC/UCI Student Policy Manual](#) (section 170.00): fees (including refund schedules), privacy policies, disclosure of information, "time to degree" policies
- [UCI Graduate Advisor's Handbook](#): information on academic policies and related administrative procedures, including but not limited to:
  - transfer of credit
  - residency issues
  - leave of absence/part-time enrollment
  - academic appointments and graduate student employment
  - academic standards
  - examinations
- [UCI Catalogue Appendix](#): information on access to, and release of, student records
- [UCI Associated Graduate Students](#): the official representative body for all graduate students and professional students at UC Irvine (<http://www.ags.uci.edu/>)
- [UCI Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity](#): policies and procedures regarding discrimination, retaliation and sexual harassment (<http://www.eod.uci.edu/>)
- [UCI International Center](#): information and assistance for international students, faculty, and visiting researchers (<http://www.ic.uci.edu/>)
- UCI Disability Services Center (<http://www.disability.uci.edu/>): information and assistance for students with disabilities.

## Resolving Conflicts

The organizations listed below assist in resolving disputes within the University community:

- Office of Graduate Studies: gives guidance on formal and informal methods of resolving conflicts. (<http://www.rgs.uci.edu/grad/students/grievance.htm>)
- [UCI Ombudsman](#): independently, objectively, and confidentially assists in mediating and resolving conflicts. (<http://www.ombuds.uci.edu/>)

- [UCI Mediation Program](http://www.mediate.uci.edu/): a volunteer program for dispute resolution, facilitated through the Ombudsman Office. (<http://www.mediate.uci.edu/>)
- [UCI TA Union](http://www.uaw2865.org/) - the UAW (International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America [UAW] AFL-CIO and its Local Union 2865) represents UCI graduate students that have teaching assistantship, reader, or tutor appointments (whether or not they are members of the union). (<http://www.uaw2865.org/RIGHTS.html>, <http://www.uaw2865.org/grievances.html>)
- [UCI Dean of Students](http://www.dos.uci.edu/): investigates allegations of physical abuse, threats of violence, or conduct that threatens the health or safety of any person or university property (<http://www.dos.uci.edu/>)

Problems relating to academic policies should be resolved at the level of the academic unit where possible. If this is not possible, such problems should be addressed in accordance with the [Student Academic Grievance Procedures](http://www.senate.uci.edu/9_IrvineManual/3ASMAAppendices/Appendix02/A2.index.html) ([http://www.senate.uci.edu/9\\_IrvineManual/3ASMAAppendices/Appendix02/A2.index.html](http://www.senate.uci.edu/9_IrvineManual/3ASMAAppendices/Appendix02/A2.index.html)).

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## References

Some of the material in this document refers to, or has been excerpted from, the following sources:

- [UC Policies Applying to Campus Activities, Organizations, and Students \[UC/UCI Student Policy Manual\]](http://www.ucop.edu/ucophome/coordrev/ucpolicies/aos/toc.html) (<http://www.ucop.edu/ucophome/coordrev/ucpolicies/aos/toc.html>)
- [UCI Academic Senate Manual](http://www.senate.uci.edu/9_IrvineManual/IDManual.index.html) ([http://www.senate.uci.edu/9\\_IrvineManual/IDManual.index.html](http://www.senate.uci.edu/9_IrvineManual/IDManual.index.html))
- [UCI Administrative Policies and Procedures](http://www.policies.uci.edu/adm/alphaindex.html) (<http://www.policies.uci.edu/adm/alphaindex.html>)
- [UCI Associated Graduate Students' website](http://www.ag.s.uci.edu/) (<http://www.ag.s.uci.edu/>)
- [UCI Catalogue](http://www.editor.uci.edu/catalogue/) (<http://www.editor.uci.edu/catalogue/>)
- [UCI Glossary of Frequently Used Terms](http://www.rgs.uci.edu/grad/staff/grad_rights.pdf) ([http://www.rgs.uci.edu/grad/staff/grad\\_rights.pdf](http://www.rgs.uci.edu/grad/staff/grad_rights.pdf))
- [UCI Graduate Advisor's Handbook](http://www.rgs.uci.edu/grad/staff/grad_hdbk.pdf) ([http://www.rgs.uci.edu/grad/staff/grad\\_hdbk.pdf](http://www.rgs.uci.edu/grad/staff/grad_hdbk.pdf))
- [UCI Mediation Program website](http://www.mediate.uci.edu/) (<http://www.mediate.uci.edu/>)
- [UCI Office of Graduate Studies](http://www.rgs.uci.edu/grad/students/index.htm) (<http://www.rgs.uci.edu/grad/students/index.htm>)
- [UCI Ombudsman website](http://www.ombuds.uci.edu/) (<http://www.ombuds.uci.edu/>)
- [UCI TA Union website](http://www.uaw2865.org) (<http://www.uaw2865.org>)

**NOTE:** The documents listed above are understood to contain the official versions of the policies discussed in this document. If there is a discrepancy between material in this document and the referenced source document, the source is assumed to be correct.

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## Footnote

1. The term "student" means an individual for whom the University maintains student records and who: (a) is enrolled in or registered with an academic program of the University; or (b) has completed the immediately preceding term and is eligible for re-enrollment, including the recess periods between academic terms; or (c) is on an approved educational leave or other approved leave status, or is on filing-fee status. ([UC/UCI Student Policy Manual](#), section 14.40)