

## UMCES Statements of Mutual Expectations

These forms should be completed annually by the graduate student and their faculty advisor(s) and supervisor(s). Section 1 should be filled out by all graduate students and their academic advisor(s). Section 2 should be filled out if the student is a Graduate Assistant (GA), by the student and their GA supervisor(s). In many but not all cases, the academic advisor(s) will be the same as the GA supervisor(s). Please return these forms to the UMCES Vice President for Education Office at [education@umces.edu](mailto:education@umces.edu) by October 15<sup>th</sup> for students who matriculated in the fall semester and by March 15<sup>th</sup> for students who matriculated in the spring semester. Initial meetings should occur within the first 6 weeks of the student's first semester at UMCES. These forms will be kept confidential but will be made available to the student and/or advisor(s)/supervisor(s) as needed.

### Section 1: Advisor-Student Annual Discussion Form

Fostering a positive and communicative relationship between advisor and student is an essential element in the support and success of students in graduate school. This Statement of Mutual Expectations (SME) is a written document that outlines the expectations of both parties in key areas of their relationship. It is not a formal contract, but rather is meant to ensure that a graduate student and their advisor have a clear understanding of what to expect from each other. The questions below are presented as a guide for conversation between the faculty advisor and student regarding communication, goals, and expectations. The form should be submitted after discussing the questions and recording responses together. The form should be updated annually, and responses modified as necessary. If a student is co-advised, UMCES encourages both faculty advisors to meet with the student to fill out this form.

Student Name	
Advisor Name(s)	
Applicable Time Period of Agreement	

<b>What are the student's and advisor's expectations for mentoring style? (hands-on, independent, etc.)</b>



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**How often should the advisor and student expect to meet? Are there specific times or days that are better or worse?**

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**How will the advisor and student foster respectful, productive feedback? Are there any sensitivities or preferences that differ between advisor and student?**

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**What are the preferred forms of communication between advisor and student? (Written, verbal, in-person, text, email, phone, video, etc.)**

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**Are there any additional skills or areas of professional development outside of coursework or research that would be beneficial or desirable (reviewing, serving on committees, outreach, teaching, etc.)? How much time should be spent on these activities? Should these activities be considered as work or personal time?**

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**Additional topics discussed.**

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**The advisor and student have met in person or synchronously online to review and discuss this form on the date noted below.**

Student Signature	
Date	

Advisor Signature(s)	
Date	

If meeting online, you can save the document as a PDF and then add your digital signatures. For instructions visit [helpx.adobe.com/reader/using/sign-pdfs.html](https://helpx.adobe.com/reader/using/sign-pdfs.html)



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## Section 2: Statement of Mutual Expectations for Graduate Assistants and Supervisors

Graduate assistantships can be an integral part of the education of graduate students, who learn from the professional experience and mentorship. This Statement of Mutual Expectations (SME) is a written document that outlines the nature of an assistantship and its supervision. It is not a formal contract, but rather a structured conversation to ensure that a graduate student and their supervisor have a clear understanding of what to expect from each other. **UMCES requires that supervisors meet with the student at the start of their assistantship and at least once a year going forward, and we encourage supervisors to use this template to structure this meeting and to record the understanding.** Given the wide variety of research, administrative, and teaching assistantships, this template is provided as a suggested format that can be customized as needed. Not every question will be relevant to all assistantships.

Student Name	
Supervisor Name	
Start Date	

Avg. hours/week	
Supervisor Title	
End Date	

<p><b>Responsibilities of Assistant:</b> Include the most important duties of the assistantship. Potential topics include specific responsibilities, goals, deliverables (if any), and how they are to be submitted. Also include additional laboratory or UMCES-specific duties, including open houses, events, and other obligations if applicable.</p>

<p><b>Responsibilities of Supervisor:</b> Specify the responsibilities of the supervisor. Potential topics include information on how the graduate assistant will receive continuing guidance and support, times when the supervisor will be available to meet, training schedule, supplies to be made available, etc.</p>



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**Scheduling:** When the assistantship is to be performed, including work hours vs. course or thesis/dissertation work, regularly scheduled meetings, degree of flexibility in work schedule, university holidays, and personal and sick leave procedures.

**Worksites:** Locations where the assistantship is to be performed. If a significant portion of the responsibilities will be satisfied remotely, supervisors should provide guidance on expectations and limitations.

**Procedures and Best Practices:** Required training, standard methods, required record-keeping, security protocols, and/or procedures for ordering supplies (including necessary hardware or software).

**Professional Development and Individual Development Plan:** Topics include skills to be learned during appointment (if any), training resources other than those provided directly by the supervisor, whether publications will result from the student's work and, if so, expectations for authorship, and/or expectations for travel.

**Organizational Culture:** Considerations such as office space, workspace, dress codes, and/or team norms.



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<b>Other Comments:</b>

Please note that all graduate assistantships are subject to the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science policies and procedures related to Graduate Assistantships and nothing in the Statement of Mutual Expectations may contradict them:

[http://www.umces.edu/sites/default/files/III711UMCES\\_0.pdf](http://www.umces.edu/sites/default/files/III711UMCES_0.pdf)

**We have met in person or synchronously online to review and discuss this agreement on the date noted below. The graduate assistant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the assistantship:**

Student Signature	
Date	

Supervisor Signature	
Date	

If meeting online, you can save the document as a PDF and then add your digital signatures. For instructions visit [helpx.adobe.com/reader/using/sign-pdfs.html](http://helpx.adobe.com/reader/using/sign-pdfs.html)