



University of Maryland  
CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

Office of the  
Vice President for Education

Horn Point Laboratory  
2020 Horns Point Road  
Cambridge, MD 21613  
Tel: 410-221-8429  
lsanford@umces.edu  
www.umces.edu

## UMCES Mutual Expectations

This form should be completed annually by the graduate student and their faculty advisor(s). Section 1 should be filled out by all graduate students and their advisor(s). Section 2 should be filled out only if the student is a Graduate Research Assistant. Please return this form to the UMCES Vice President for Education Office at [education@umces.edu](mailto:education@umces.edu) by October 15<sup>th</sup> for students matriculating the fall and by March 15<sup>th</sup> for students matriculating the spring. This form will be kept on file for an as-needed basis.

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

Fostering a positive and communicative relationship between the advisor and student is an essential element in the support and success of students in graduate school. UMCES is committed to encouraging this effort. The questions below are presented to guide a conversation between the faculty advisor and student regarding communication, goals, and expectations. These discussions should be revisited annually and modified if necessary. If a student is co-advised, UMCES encourages both faculty advisors to meet with the student and fill out this form.

**1. What is the advisor's mentoring style? What is the student's learning style? (Hands-on, independent, etc.)**

Advisor:

Student:

**2. How often should the advisor and student expect to meet?**

Advisor:

Student:

**3. How do the advisor and student provide and accept feedback?**

Advisor:



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Student:

**4. What is the advisor and student’s preferred communication style? (Text, email, phone)**

Advisor:

Student:

**5. Are there any additional skills or areas of professional development outside of coursework that the student or mentor would encourage? Any committees or clubs in which the student or advisor has an interest?**

Advisor:

Student:

**6. Additional topics discussed.**

**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	
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)

## 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. A 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 will 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 an editable document that supervisors can customize as needed.

Student Name	
Supervisor Name	
Start Date	

Avg. hours/week	
Supervisor Title	
End Date	

**Responsibilities of Assistant:** 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.

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**Responsibilities of Supervisor:** 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.

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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)