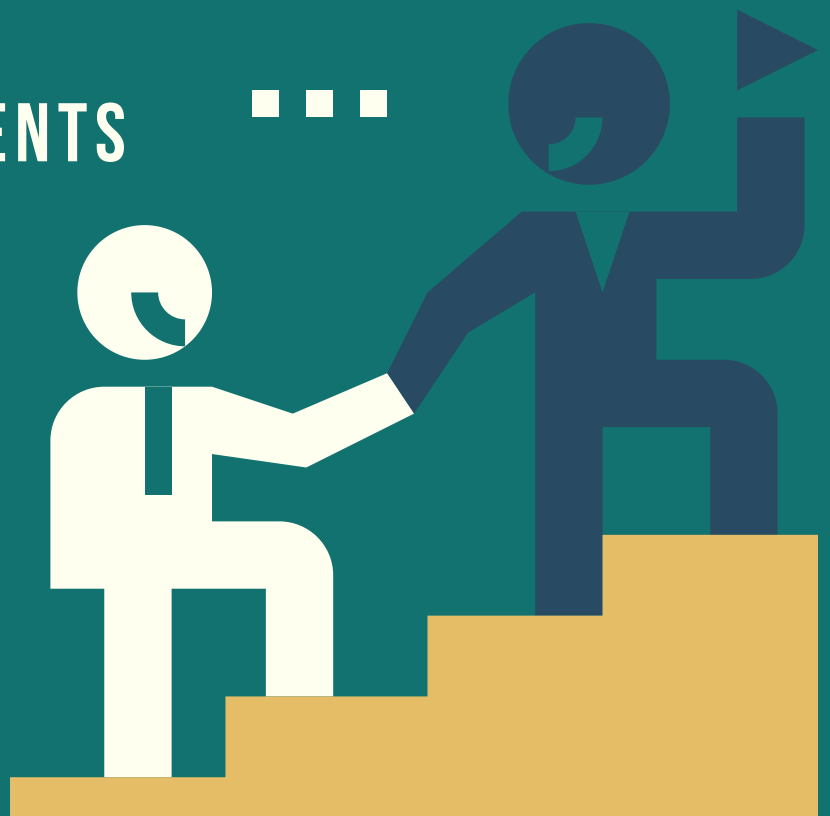


GRADUATE STUDENT MENTORING GUIDE

A GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

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Acknowledgments

The Graduate School at Vanderbilt University has adapted the content to fit Vanderbilt's resources and policies while keeping the spirit of the original guide. We thank the University of Michigan for their efforts in developing such a valuable resource for their students and faculty and making it available for adaptation.

The Rackham Graduate School's mentoring guide for graduate students, Graduate Student Mentoring Guide, has proven to be a popular item for two decades; it has been requested, adopted, and adapted by graduate students, faculty, and staff around the country. The first handbook was created by Jane London and Glenda Haskell in 1999, and since that time, many Rackham contributors have updated the guide based on new scholarship and resources related to mentoring.



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INTRO



The goal of the *Graduate Student Mentoring Guide* is to improve the quality of advising and mentoring available to our graduate students, as well as providing resources for both graduate students and faculty. This initiative remains a top priority for Vanderbilt. People often use the terms advisor and mentor interchangeably, but they are not the same. This guide will clearly define the multiple roles that faculty will have in your professional and academic development. It encourages you to develop a mentoring relationship with your advisor, set clear expectations with your advisor, and cultivate a team of mentors to get the support you need during graduate school. A team of mentors is essential to your success in graduate education, and you will want to identify multiple mentors to support your development.

ACADEMIC LIFE COACH

The Academic Life Coaches assist Graduate School students and postdoctoral scholars in their academic and professional development during their time at Vanderbilt. The Academic Life Coaching program was created to support students and postdocs by offering individual coaching and group programming around effective time and stress management, resilience, conflict resolution, navigating academic relationships, and juggling work/life responsibilities.

Consider contacting the Academic Life Coaches, if you need:

- Someone to listen to and have a discussion with about your concern
- Strategies for better productivity and/or progress, including goal setting, time management, and prioritizing
- Knowledge of and assistance accessing resources available to graduate students and postdocs on campus
- Assistance working through an issue with a colleague, advisor, or supervisor
- Clarification concerning a university, departmental, or program policy
- To explore the formal options available for addressing your concern

The Academic Life Coaches have programming and appointments available in multiple locations across campus to best serve all Graduate School students and postdocs. Visit <https://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/lifecoach/> for updates on programs and offerings throughout the semester.



WORKING WITH FACULTY - ADVISORS, SUPERVISORS, DISSERTATION CHAIRS, AND MENTORS



As an undergraduate student, your goal was to be a consumer of knowledge. In graduate school, you are now expected to become a producer of new knowledge. Graduate school provides you with the professional training to learn the knowledge and skills you need to succeed in your chosen discipline. You come to graduate school with your own unique research and career interests, and multiple individuals will need to support you in achieving your scholarly goals. Faculty play a critical role in your graduate education, and they will serve in a range of roles to support you along the way. In building a supportive team of faculty, it is important to note that there may be some significant overlap between these roles. For instance, a faculty advisor who also supervises your lab or a faculty advisor who becomes your dissertation chair and so on.

The Council for Graduate School's guide for great mentoring in graduate school (Lunsford & Baker, 2016) defines four key roles that faculty play: faculty advisor, supervisor, dissertation chair, and mentor.

Academic Advisor

Academic advising for graduate students is provided in several different ways during the course of the degree program; the particular format depends upon the program. Every doctoral student and many master's students will formally be assigned a faculty advisor, though you may not be involved in the selection process depending on your program's norms. In some cases, this faculty advisor will have a research interest that is similar to your own. Your faculty advisor is likely to play a variety of roles, but their central contribution is to assist you as you navigate your degree. This includes understanding:

- your degree requirements
- department policies and milestones
- Vanderbilt policies
- the norms of your department and discipline

Supervisor

Over the course of your graduate career, some faculty will become your supervisor and provide guidance on research and/or teaching. As your supervisor, they will oversee your work in that specific context (lab, teaching, research project, etc.) and provide you with work-related feedback.

Dissertation/Committee Chair

As you move towards candidacy, you will select a member of the faculty in your department to serve as the chair of your dissertation committee who will oversee the completion of your dissertation. In some programs and departments, this role is fulfilled by your faculty advisor. This person provides final approval of your completed dissertation, in consultation with the other faculty members who will serve on your dissertation committee.

Mentor

The roles of a mentor are different from those of an academic advisor, supervisor, and dissertation chair. To understand the contributions of a mentor, we can consider the multifaceted definition of mentors as individuals who (Alvarez et al., 2009; Paglis et al., 2006):

- Take an interest in developing another person's career and well-being.
- Advance academic and professional goals in directions most desired by the individual.
- Tailor mentoring styles and content to the individual, including adjustments due to differences in culture, ethnicity, gender, and differences in the student experience.

While faculty advisors, supervisors, and dissertation chairs can certainly be mentors, effective mentoring requires going beyond guidance on academic progress or singular research projects. The role of a mentor is centered on a holistic commitment to advancing your scholarly and personal development.

Beyond imparting knowledge and skills, mentoring is important to graduate students because of the knowledge and skills that are shared and also because of the many other aspects of professional socialization and personal support that are needed to facilitate success in graduate school and beyond. Ballantine and Jolly-Ballantine (2015) outline three important aspects of mentorship that we discuss in detail in this guide: psychosocial, instrumental/task, and networking support. Mentors can benefit you in each of these areas.

In addition to these areas of support, mentors can help navigate common challenges that graduate students face during their time in graduate school. For example, many students experience feelings of isolation, impostorism, and stress during graduate school, as well as challenges balancing work demands with personal commitments. Regardless of what challenges you face in graduate school, mentors can provide psychosocial support and serve as role models.

WHY YOU NEED MULTIPLE MENTORS

Even the most excellent faculty mentor will not be able to meet all of your professional needs. Research on graduate mentoring has shown that very few individual mentors were able to meet all of their mentees' needs in all areas, i.e., instrumental/task, psychosocial, and networking support (Ballantine and Jolly- Ballantine, 2015). For that reason, we recommend that you identify a team of mentors to help you get the full range of mentoring support that you need. At a large research university like ours, it is your responsibility to seek out and engage multiple mentors. Some departments or disciplinary organizations may have formal mentoring programs, which are structured with explicit expectations for the mentor and mentee. However, you can build a network of mentors and get the support that you need from a range of individuals. Your team could and should comprise of faculty, peers, university staff, and professionals outside of the university working in career fields that interest you.

How to Assemble a Team of Mentors

It is important to be proactive in assembling your team of mentors. Start the selection process by undertaking a reflective self-appraisal of your goals and motivations. To accomplish this task, you must understand your unique needs as a graduate student before you can recognize who might meet those needs. Ask yourself:

- What were/are my objectives in entering graduate school?
- What type of training do I desire?
- What are my strengths?
- What skills do I need to develop?
- What kinds of research or creative projects will engage me?
- What type of careers might I want to pursue?

All graduate students bring a range of experiences and skills from their previous academic, professional, and personal experiences. It is helpful for you to reflect on these previous experiences and what you have found most helpful in the past. For example, some graduate students may prefer not to be closely managed and to have more autonomy in their work. Other students may prefer to receive more explicit direction and have frequent check-ins. The more aware you are of your needs, the better you can seek them out.

Prioritize what you need from your mentors. The framework by Ballantine and Jolly-Ballantine (2015) outlines psychosocial, instrumental/task, and networking competencies as key areas for potential mentoring support. As a graduate student, you should weigh the importance of these various competencies differently depending on your needs when selecting a member of your mentoring team.

Consider what types of support you hope to receive from each of your mentors in these three categories.

I would want a mentor to be someone who...

Task/instrumental support

- Helps me to set work-related goals and priorities
- Fosters my competence in learning the knowledge and skills of the discipline
- Explains the norms of the department/program, the university, and the field/discipline
- Shares information about their research
- Recommends academic and professional development activities that will build my skills and benefit my future career
- Provides expert critical feedback
- Talks to me about my career options and job preparation
- Helps me to deal with technical and research-related challenges
- Gives me feedback on my job documents (e.g., curriculum vitae, resume, teaching statement, etc.)

Psychosocial support

- Provides encouragement and support
- Affirms and encourages the connection of my social identity to my discipline
- Attends formal mentoring events with me
- Is available for regular meetings
- Is respectful and supportive when giving constructive feedback
- Gives recommendations on managing and integrating my work with other life commitments (e.g., family, community commitments, self-care, hobbies, etc.)
- Shares resources with me for my social and emotional well-being

Networking support

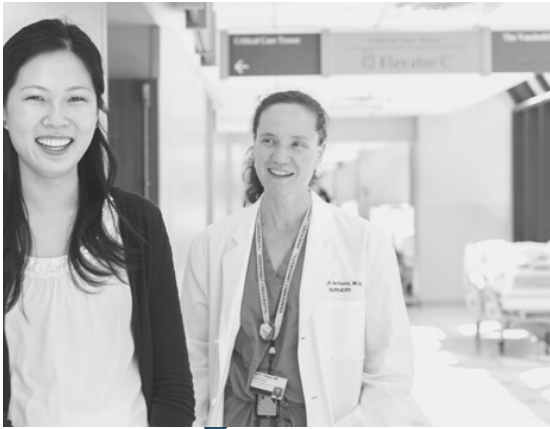
- Attends educational events, such as lectures, conferences, talks, or other university events with me
- Connects me to collaborators for research projects
- Attends local, regional, and national professional meetings with me
- Provides advice on how to network
- Introduces me to individuals in their professional network
- Connects me to job opportunities (Research assistantships, internships, etc.) during my time as a student
- Serves as a reference and advocate for me during my job search process as I complete my degree
- Helps me prepare and practice for job interviews



Once you identify your most critical wants and needs, you can begin to narrow who might best be able to support you in developing the capacities you want and need. If you want to develop in areas related to your academic scholarship beyond where your advisor's strengths lie, that might best happen with other faculty mentors. You can identify potential faculty mentors within or outside your department by using various formal and informal means. For example, familiarize yourself with professors' work to gain a sense of their past and current interests and methodologies. Immerse yourself in departmental academic and social activities to see how faculty interact with colleagues and graduate students. Enroll in classes taught by faculty who most interest you and attend their public presentations to learn about their work. Finally, ask advanced graduate students about their advisors and mentors. Share your interests and ask them for suggestions about whom you should consider for mentorship. You will benefit from having at least three or four faculty members who are knowledgeable about your work and can speak to its strengths and value to the field. A faculty mentor network can also serve as your safety net if one of the professors leaves the university, or issues develop between you and a single faculty mentor.

In selecting your team of mentors, you may also consider your social identities. Unfortunately, graduate students from historically marginalized social groups are more likely to encounter stigmatizing campus climates, such as experiences of microaggressions, discrimination, tokenization, and/or isolation in less diverse departments or departments perceived as having less equitable environments. Research (Porter et al., 2018) shows that doctoral students from underrepresented backgrounds also encounter additional burdens of emotional and diversity labor in higher education. Scholars have also found that having mentors that share salient social identities with you—race, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, etc.—can be helpful to graduate students, particularly students with historically marginalized social identities. For example, the Alliance for Graduate Education for the Professoriate Study of five midwestern, selective public institutions showed that graduate students who self-identified as an underrepresented racial minority with same-race mentors in their department reported higher quality faculty mentoring practices. Examples of high-quality mentoring practices included providing critical expert feedback, setting high expectations, and building the mentee's competence (Chavous, 2019). Good outcomes can also be accomplished with allies or making connections outside the institution through organizations, conferences and other opportunities for networking.

At the same time, shared identity does not guarantee good mentoring happens or that someone with a shared identity will automatically be able to mentor you. Moreover, you may not have access in your department to a faculty mentor who shares your salient identities. Effective mentoring can happen across differences (Ortiz-Walters & Gilson, 2005), especially when those differences are explicitly discussed and when graduate students' social and cultural identities are affirmed and connected to the discipline.



Seek out mentors who are attuned to the needs of historically marginalized groups, avoid “one-size fits all” or “colorblind” mentoring approaches (McCooy, Winkle-Wagner, and Luedke, 2015), and invest in developing their own intercultural competence. Shared attitudes, beliefs, and values can help establish similarities across social identity differences in mentoring relationships, as well (Hernandez, Estrada, Woodcock, & Schultz, 2017).



You may also want to develop in areas outside of your department. For example, if you want to expand your competencies related to teaching, the Center for Teaching may be best equipped to mentor and support you. Similarly, you may have interests in several potential future careers. If you are interested in careers beyond the professoriate, it would be wise to identify mentors in the other career fields that interest you. Your team of professional mentors need not be limited to faculty mentors, especially if you are interested in careers other than a tenure-track faculty role at a place like Vanderbilt University. Finally, peer mentors can also be part of your mentoring team. Note that peers cannot fill in for faculty in key ways, such as writing letters of recommendation, research supervision, etc. That said, peer mentors can show you the ropes, help you navigate department policies, share unwritten department expectations and norms, provide socio-emotional support, give first-round feedback on research or writing, form academic support or writing accountability groups with you, and point you to useful resources. Peers will be your future disciplinary colleagues and should be considered an integral part of your mentoring team.



Carefully selecting a team of mentors appropriate to your personal and professional needs increases the likelihood that you will have the professional experiences and support you desire.

UNDERSTANDING FACULTY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As noted above, many members of your mentoring team will be faculty. It's valuable to understand the multiple roles and responsibilities that faculty have to help you set reasonable expectations for your mentoring relationships. Some of the professional responsibilities faculty may have include: teaching undergraduate and graduate courses, advising undergraduate and graduate students, serving on master's theses and dissertation committees, researching, working on creative projects, writing grant proposals, writing books and articles, reviewing the work of their students and colleagues, serving on departmental and university committees, and fulfilling duties for professional organizations. The pace of these demands does not let up over time.

Junior faculty face the additional pressure of preparing for tenure review, which means they have to be engaged in a very active research agenda. As faculty become more senior, and their national and international prominence increases, the demands for their time and energies only grow. In addition, like graduate students, faculty have personal interests and commitments outside of their work, such as to family and their communities.

When selecting a faculty mentor, ask about the faculty member's plans at the university and their availability to meet with you for progress check-ins. Does the faculty member plan to be away from the department for extended periods (on sabbatical, on a research project that requires travel, for parental leave of absence, etc.)? Sabbaticals and extended absences from the department are typical in faculty life. Do not be discouraged from selecting a mentor who will not be available for the entire duration of your graduate work. However, do keep in mind whether and how your mentors will be available to support you during critical junctures of your graduate student career, such as during your qualifying exams, your prospectus defense, etc.



DEVELOPING CLEAR EXPECTATIONS WITH YOUR ADVISOR/DISSERTATION CHAIR

Healthy professional working relationships, especially with your faculty advisor, are a significant determinant of your success as a graduate student. With such a wide range of possible roles (supervisee/supervisor, advisee/advisor, dissertation writer/dissertation chair, etc.), it is critical that both you and your advisor/dissertation committee chair clearly communicate the expectations you have for one another. Your advisor/dissertation committee chair will likely have a set of expectations for how they will interact with you, how they will be able to support you, and what you need to accomplish in order to obtain your degree. However, these expectations will vary among faculty and you will need to have ongoing conversations about their expectations as you progress through your degree and your dissertation.

For example:

- How and in what form can you expect to receive an assessment of your general progress?
- What does your advisor/dissertation chair consider to be a normal workload? How many hours should you be spending each week on your research/scholarship?
- What professional development activities does your advisor/dissertation chair expect you to participate in?
- When requesting a reference, what information does your advisor/dissertation chair need, how much lead time do they require, and how do they prefer to be reminded of deadlines?

One valuable exercise to make these expectations explicit is the process of developing shared expectations together and writing them down. These documents should be designed to clarify expectations around things such as meeting times, how to handle time away from campus (e.g., conference travel, vacation, etc.), and your timeline for graduating. There is tremendous value in completing this document at any stage in your relationship with your advisor and dissertation chair. It is particularly helpful to do so early in your relationship and revisit it annually. Your needs and goals are likely to change over time, such as when you transition to candidacy.



A useful resource for ideas and templates in having conversations with faculty about expectations is the CIMER Project's Entering Research. This is an evidence-based, active learning curriculum designed to level the research playing field for undergraduate and graduate research trainees from historically underrepresented groups, introduce trainees to the culture of research, support development of the skills trainees need to successfully navigate the research training environment and their mentoring relationships, and create a more welcoming research environment for all trainees. Though the curriculum was originally developed for use with trainees across science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medical (STEMM) disciplines, it is easily adaptable across academic disciplines. The Academic Life Coaches utilize these exercises in much of their programming about communication and conflict, as well as building confidence and independence as a researcher. We have included some exercise templates in the Appendix of this guidebook.

Realistically, situations do arise which may hinder the timely completion of your degree work, such as the birth of a child or a personal or family crisis. If this happens during your graduate school career, be sure to take the initiative and contact your advisor or dissertation chair. Discuss your context, provide them with the information you feel they need to know and discuss your new proposed timeline for completing your degree. Be sure the revised plan is realistic and that you can meet the new deadline. Please consult Vanderbilt's academic policy if you consider a leave of absence and see the appendix for a list of campus offices that can provide additional support (financial support, emergency funds, counseling, etc.). Feel free to reach out to an Academic Life Coach if you need help navigating the situation.

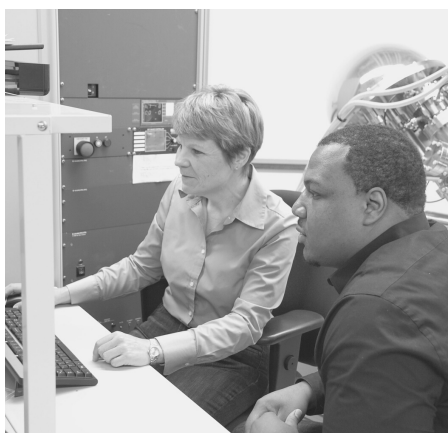
WHAT TO DO IF PROBELMS ARISE WITH YOUR ADVISOR, SUPERVISOR, OR DISSERTATION CHAIR

Conflicts occasionally arise between graduate students and the faculty they work with, either their academic advisor, their research supervisor, or their dissertation chair. Unlike mentors, who can be informal supporters of your development, the relationships between advisors, supervisors, and dissertation chairs are more formalized.

For example, other demands on the faculty may hinder their ability to meet with you or provide prompt feedback on your work. This can lead to inadequate advising or supervision. If this happens repeatedly, you should talk about this directly with the faculty member. It is important that you try to work our any differences directly with them. Do this in person, when it first becomes evident that there is a problem.

Despite discussing the challenges, you may find that you need to develop a strategy that keeps your work on schedule while also maintaining the working relationship. Other members of your mentoring team can assist you in developing an effective strategy to address your challenges, including other graduate students who work with this faculty member, departmental staff such as the graduate coordinator, and your other faculty mentors. You may find it helpful to talk with an Academic Life Coach to verbally process and discuss how to have these conversations with your advisor, supervisor, or dissertation chair.

Unfortunately, research (Braxton et al., 2011) also shows that faculty do in some cases engage in inappropriate behaviors, including disrespect toward student efforts, misappropriation of student work, sexual misconduct, harassment, whistle-blowing suppression, or directed research malfeasance. If you are not able to resolve issues with a faculty member serving you in some formal capacity (i.e., advisor, supervisor, dissertation chair) on your own, or if they are engaging in inappropriate behavior, you can talk to the Director of Graduate Studies for your program or your Department Chair. At any point, you can also contact an Academic Life Coach about ideas and strategies for resolving conflicts or addressing inappropriate behaviors. The Academic Life Coaches provide safe, private spaces to discuss ideas, strategies, and options for resolving conflicts or addressing inappropriate behaviors.



Graduate students may also experience an employment-related conflict or concern with their PI or instructor.

All faculty, many staff, and some students are “mandatory reporters” – including the Academic Life Coaches, who are mandatory reporters - and are legally obligated to report any allegations of sexual misconduct (assault, harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking and child abuse) and any suspected discrimination (about age, race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, national or ethnic origin, sex/gender, sexual orientation, disability, genetic information, military status, familial status or other protected categories under local, state or federal law) to Vanderbilt’s Title IX Coordinator (615-322-4705). This means that students who discuss such things with their peers should note that most Vanderbilt staff and faculty do not have blanket confidentiality. Students should be aware of mandatory reporting status so they can (1) have a choice about reporting and (2) be made aware of confidential resources on campus. If you want or need to talk with a confidential resource about your experience, you may contact (1) Project SAFE; (2) The University Counseling Center; (3) The University Chaplain (if functioning in a pastoral role).





CHANGING ADVISOR AND/OR DISSERTATION CHAIR

You may find that the faculty member you thought would be best for advising your course selection, guiding your research, and chairing your dissertation committee is not, in fact, the right fit for you. This can happen for a range of reasons, from a shift in intellectual interests to inappropriate behavior on the part of an advisor. Regardless of your reason for wanting to change advisors, do not panic. Enter the process of changing your advisor/dissertation chair with professionalism.

Here are some basic guidelines.

- Seek the advice of another trusted faculty member and/or other professional staff to determine whether it is in fact desirable to change your advisor/dissertation chair. This is especially true if the relationship has a long history or if it occurs at the dissertation phase of your career.
- Think through the most diplomatic, respectful way to express to your advisor/dissertation chair—and to others—why you would like to make this change.
- Before you make any decisions about discontinuing the relationship, talk with your Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) about the process of changing advisors and other faculty that may be able to advise you or chair your committee. If you and your DGS feel it is appropriate, you may want to approach another suitable faculty member and inquire about the prospect of them serving as your advisor or dissertation chair. Avoid saying anything negative about your past advisor/dissertation chair and explain your desire to change only in professional terms.
- When you decide to make a change, be sure to inform your advisor/dissertation chair promptly, no matter how awkward this may be. Be sure that you try to work out any differences directly with them. If you owe them any work, be sure to discuss this and arrange a schedule for completing all outstanding obligations.
- Be sure to complete or update any formal paperwork (e.g., the Dissertation Committee Form if you are making changes to the composition of your committee).
- Remember you can always contact a Graduate School Academic Life Coach if you consider changing your advisor/dissertation chair.

CONCLUSION

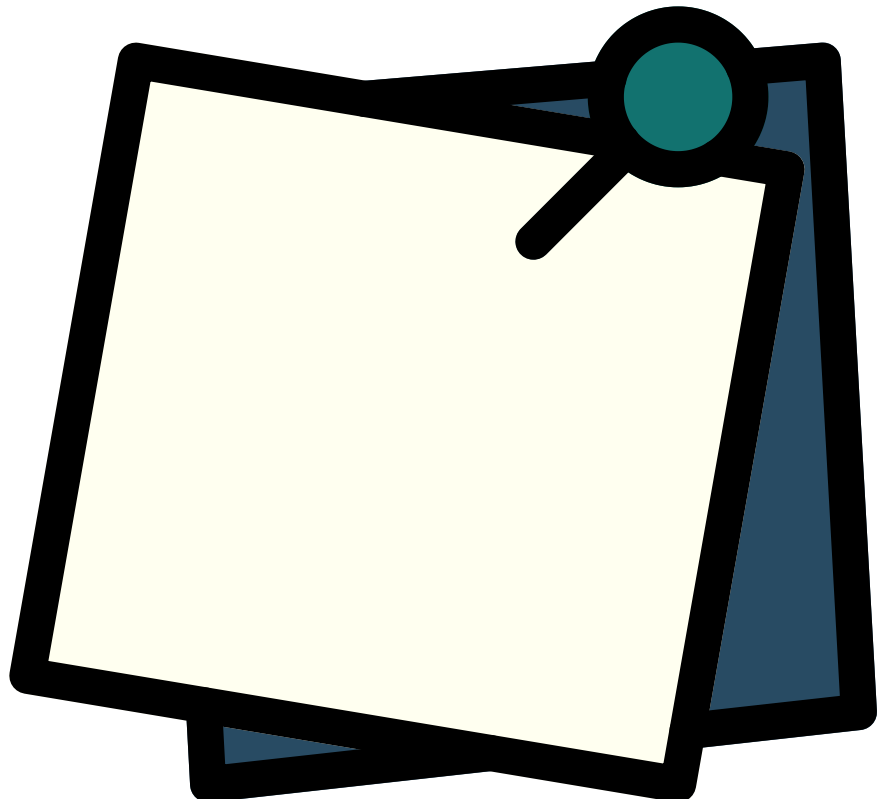
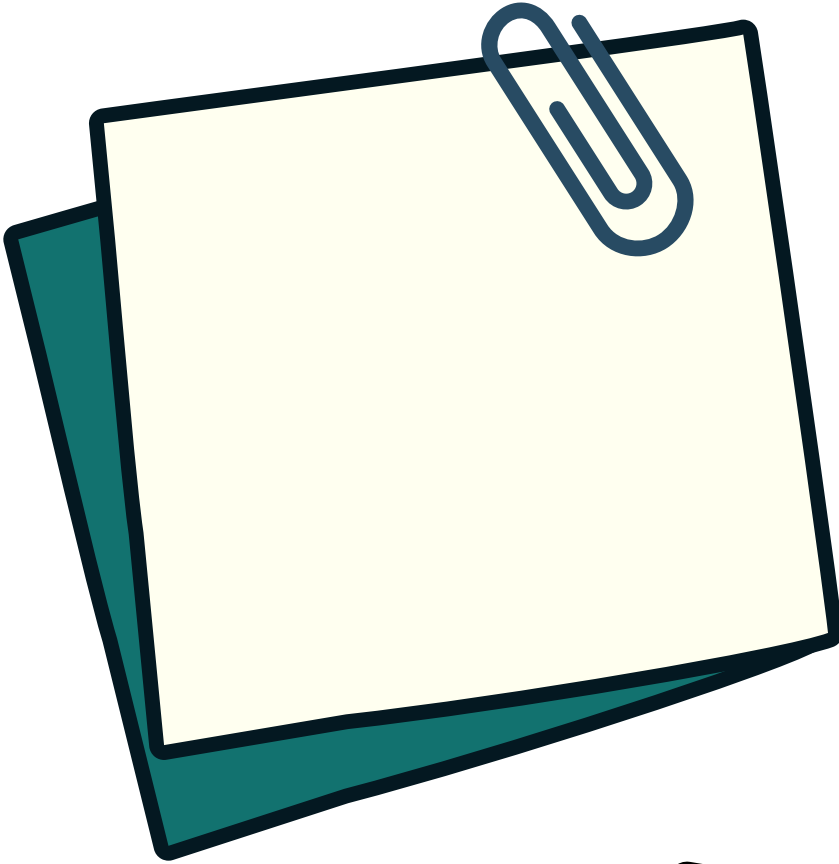
Effective mentoring is good for mentors, good for graduate students, and good for the academy. Your mentors are there to support you with your challenges and celebrate your successes; assist as you navigate the unfamiliar waters of a graduate degree program; and provide a model of commitment, productivity, and professional responsibility. During the graduate experience, your mentors will guide you toward becoming independent creators of knowledge. They will prepare you to become a colleague as you complete the degree program and move on to the next phase of your professional life.

We have provided here an overview and guidelines that should help you to cultivate the mentoring relationships that will sustain you during your graduate experience. To learn more about mentoring resources at Vanderbilt University connect with an Academic Life Coach.

At the end of this guide, we have included a list of readings related to the scholarship on mentoring, the CIMER templates, mentoring map, and a list of additional support resources at Vanderbilt University.



QUICK WRITE - WHAT ARE SOME ACTION ITEMS FOR YOU TO CONSIDER AFTER READING THIS GUIDE:



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APPENDIX

A. DEVELOPING SHARED EXPECTATIONS: STEM AND SOCIAL SCIENCES FOCUS

(SELECT AND ADAPT FROM THESE SUGGESTED TOPICS, AS RELEVANT TO YOUR DISCIPLINE)

Communication and meetings:

What is the best way/technology to get a hold of each other? What is the appropriate time frame to expect a response?

When do you plan to meet (be as specific as you can), is an agenda required, how long will the meeting be?

Student's role on the project: Describe student's primary area(s) of responsibility and expectations (e.g., reading peer-reviewed literature, in-lab working hours, etc.).

Participation in group meetings (if relevant): Student will participate in the following ongoing research group meetings. What does this participation look like?

Tentative papers on which student will be an author or coauthor: Discuss disciplinary norms around authorship; list the papers and the likely order of student's authorship, e.g., first, second, etc.

Opportunities for feedback: In what form and how often can the student expect to receive feedback regarding overall progress, research activities, etc.? How much time is needed by the mentor to provide feedback on written work, such as chapter and publication drafts?

Professional meeting(s) that the student will attend and dates: What funding is available to attend these meetings?

Networking opportunities: Discuss additional opportunities to network (e.g., meeting with seminar speakers, etc.)

Time away from campus: Discuss expectations regarding vacations and time away from campus and how best to plan for them. What is the time-frame for notification regarding anticipated absences?

Funding: Discuss the funding model and plans for future funding (e.g., internal and external fellowships, training grants); discuss any uncertainty in future sources of funding and contingencies.

A. COMPLETION OF PROGRAMMATIC MILESTONES AND OTHER MILESTONES (AS APPLICABLE):

Milestones	Year 1			Year 2			Year 3			Year 4			Year 5			Year 6		
	F	SP	SU	F	SP	SU	F	SP	SU	F	SP	SU	F	SP	SU	F	SP	SU
Qualifying Exam																		
Preliminary Exam																		
Candidacy Exam																		
Dissert. Comm. Mtg.																		

Place an X in terms designated for milestones. F=Fall, SP=Spring, S=Summer. Other milestones might include: Conference presentation; peer-review publication, etc.

Target semester defense and graduation:

Professional goals: Identify short-term and long-term goals, and discuss any steps/resources/training necessary to accomplish the goals.

Skill development: Identify the skills and abilities that the student will focus on developing during the upcoming year. These could be academic, research, or professional skills, as well as additional training experiences such as workshops or internships.

Other areas: List here any other areas of understanding between the student and mentor regarding working relationship during the student's tenure.



B. DEVELOPING SHARED EXPECTATIONS: HUMANITIES FOCUS
(SELECT AND ADAPT FROM THESE SUGGESTED TOPICS, AS RELEVANT TO YOUR DISCIPLINE)

Communication and meetings:

What is the best way/technology to get a hold of each other? What is the appropriate time frame to expect a response, including when either faculty or graduate student is away from campus?

When do you plan to meet (be specific)? How is the agenda decided? How long will the meeting be?

How are the next steps identified after a meeting? How do you agree on action items?

Professional goals: Identify short-term and long-term goals, and discuss any steps/resources/training necessary to accomplish the goals.

Mentee’s role in meeting programmatic milestones: How should the mentee approach potential committee members? If there is a conflict, who should the mentee contact?

Milestones	Year 1			Year 2			Year 3			Year 4			Year 5			Year 6		
	F	SP	SU	F	SP	SU	F	SP	SU	F	SP	SU	F	SP	SU	F	SP	SU

Agree on and populate your program’s milestones. They might include: completing required coursework, assembling dissertation committee, qualifying paper/exam, dissertation committee meeting, developing reading list/prospectus. Place an X in terms designated for milestones. F=Fall, S=Spring, S=Summer.

Participation: How should the mentee allocate time to group/departmental seminars and what are expectations for contributing to the intellectual life of the department?

Discuss disciplinary norms around authorship: Tentative projects on which student will be an author or coauthor; discuss the format for publication and presentation.

Opportunities for feedback:

In what form and how often can the student expect to receive feedback regarding overall progress and other professional activities (teaching, outreach, and presentation skills)?

At which stages in the drafting, editing, and revising process can the student expect to receive this feedback? Does the type of feedback differ depending on the stage of writing?

How far ahead of time should the student circulate work to the mentor and/or other committee members? Is there a particular order in which the student should send work to the various faculty members? How much time is needed by each of the faculty members to provide feedback?

How should feedback from multiple committee members be coordinated— especially if the readings and reactions contradict one another?

B. DEVELOPING SHARED EXPECTATIONS: HUMANITIES FOCUS

Skill development: Identify the skills and abilities that the student will focus on developing during the upcoming year. These could be writing, teaching, research, mentoring, or professional skills, as well as additional training experiences such as workshops or internships.

Professional meeting(s) that the student will attend and dates: What funding is available to attend these meetings?

Time away from campus: Discuss expectations regarding vacations and time away from campus and how best to plan for them. What is the time frame for notification regarding anticipated absences?

Funding: Discuss the funding model and plans for future funding (e.g., internal and external fellowships, training grants); discuss any uncertainty in future sources of funding and contingencies.

Target semester defense and graduation:

Other areas: List here any other areas of understanding between the student and mentor regarding working relationship during the student's tenure.



CIMER "ALIGNING MENTOR & TRAINEE EXPECTATIONS "

Learning Objectives

Trainees will:

- Understand that their expectations of their research mentoring relationship may be different from their mentors.
- Establish an open line of communication with their mentor in order to address any differences and align their expectations.

Assignment

1. Answer the questions on the Graduate Research Trainee Expectations worksheet.
2. Meet with your mentor to discuss the questions and to align your goals and expectations for the research experience. Send the Research Mentor Expectations worksheet to your mentor before the meeting so that they can prepare.
3. Trainees and mentors should tailor their discussion to the specific needs of their relationship.
4. After the discussion, complete the Mentor-Trainee Expectation document together

Adapted by E. Frazier, C. Pfund, and A. R. Butz from Branchaw, Pfund & Rediske (2010). Entering Research: A Facilitator's Manual. New York: WH Freeman & Company, and from Pfund, Wassarman & Skarlupka (2014). Establishing your Mentoring Relationships for CMB, Biophysics and Nutritional Sciences. Branchaw, J. L., Butz, A. R., & Smith A. (2018). Entering Research (2nd ed.). New York: Macmillan.

Graduate Research Trainee Expectations

1. Why do you want to do research?
2. What are your career goals? How can this research experience and the mentor–trainee relationship help you achieve them?
3. What would success in this research experience look like to you? What would you like to achieve:
 - a. By the end of your 1st year?
 - b. By the end of your 3rd year?
 - c. By the time you complete your degree?
4. How many hours per week and at what times/days do you expect to work on your mentor's research?
5. What other commitments or obligations will you have during graduate school (group meetings, teaching, family, religious, community, etc.)? How many hours will these take? How will you schedule around these commitments?
6. Assuming a good fit, how long do you expect to work with this research group?
7. What, if any, specific technical or communication skills do you expect to learn as part of the research experience?
8. How do you learn best (written procedure, verbal instructions, watch and repeat, etc.). What can your mentor do to help you learn the techniques and skills in a timely manner that you need to be successful in your research lab? What can you do before you start in the lab to allow you to be successful in this research group?
9. Once you are trained in basic techniques, the goal should be to gain independence. What can you do to gain independence in your research? How long do you expect this transition to take?
10. What role do you want your mentor to take throughout your graduate career? For example, would you prefer that your mentor is hands-on throughout your graduate work? Or do you prefer a more hands-off approach to being supervised?
11. How will you document your research results? Is there a specific protocol for keeping a laboratory notebook in your research group?

Graduate Research Trainee Expectations Continued

12. To whom do you expect to go to if you have questions about your research project? Does your mentor expect you to come solely (or first) to them, or should you feel free to ask others in the research group? If others, can your mentor identify those in the group who would be good resource people for your project?

13. Are you comfortable with the methodology used in the lab? Does it involve the use of animals, for example? Does it involve lengthy field trips where you might be isolated with other researchers for weeks at a time? How do you feel about that?

14. Is the research that you will be involved in confidential? Are you allowed to discuss your project with other individuals outside of your laboratory?

15. What role will your mentor play in the development of your writing skills? Will they provide feedback and guidance on numerous drafts or will they only want to provide feedback on the final draft? If your mentor only wishes to read final drafts of writing, are there others in the lab who are willing to provide feedback on earlier drafts?

16. Do you know all the institutional safety or ethics training that is required to work in your research project? Discuss the required training with your mentor and establish a deadline by which you should complete it.

17. If you have previous research experience, what skills do you expect to bring to your new research group?

Research Mentor Expectations

1. Why do you want to mentor a graduate researcher?
2. What are your research goals? How can this research experience and the mentor–trainee relationship help you achieve them?
3. What would success for your trainee look like to you? What would you like your trainee to achieve:
 - By the end of their 1st year?
 - By the end of their 2nd year?
 - By the end of their 3rd year?
 - By the time they complete their research?
4. How many hours per week and at what times/days do you expect your trainee to work on your research?
5. Assuming a good fit, how long would you like your trainee to remain with the group?
6. What, if any, specific technical or communication skills do you expect your trainee to learn as part of the research experience?
7. What level of independence do you expect your trainee to achieve, once basic techniques are learned? What can your trainee do to gain independence in research? How long do you expect this transition to take?
8. What is your mentoring approach? Once your trainee has learned the techniques and procedures used in your lab do you prefer to watch your trainee closely, walking them through all the steps or do you prefer a more hands-off approach?
9. How will your trainee document research results? Is there a specific protocol for keeping a laboratory notebook in your research group?
10. To whom should your trainee go if they have questions about your research project? Do you expect them to come to you solely (or first), or should they feel free to ask others in the research group? If others, who would be good resource people for your project?
11. What are your expectations for your trainee's level of comfort with the methodology used in the lab. For example, does your research involve working with animals, lengthy field trips, or working in isolation with other researchers, and is your trainee comfortable with this?

Research Mentor Expectations Continued

12. Will the research that your trainee will be involved in be confidential? Are they allowed to discuss your project with other individuals outside of your laboratory? What are your expectations?
13. What role will you play in the development of your trainee's writing skills? Will you provide feedback and guidance on numerous drafts or do you only want to provide feedback on the final draft? If you are only willing to read final drafts of writing, are there others in the lab who are willing to provide feedback on earlier drafts?
14. Discuss the institutional safety or ethics training that is required for your trainee to work on your research project and establish a deadline by which they should complete it.
15. If a student has previous research experience, is there anything that you need to share about this research group that is unique and that the student should be aware of?

Mentor - Graduate Trainee Expectations Agreement

Trainee (print)_____ Mentor (print) _____

This agreement outlines the parameters of our work together on this research project.

1. Our major goals are:

A. proposed research project goals –

B. trainee's personal and/or professional goals -

C. mentor's personal and/or professional goals –

2. Our shared vision of success in this research project is:

3. We agree to work together on this project for at least ___ years

4. The trainee will work at least ___ hours per week on the project during the academic year, and ___ hours per week in the summer. In addition, the trainee is expected to _____

5. The trainee will propose their weekly schedule to the mentor by the _____ week of the semester.

If the trainee must deviate from this schedule (e.g. to study for an upcoming exam), they will communicate this to the mentor at least (weeks/days/hours) before the change occurs.

6. On a daily basis, our primary means of communication will be through (circle all that apply):
face to face/phone/email/instant messaging/_____

7. We will meet one-on-one to discuss our progress on the project and to reaffirm or revise our goals for at least ___ minutes time(s) per month

a. (Circle one): It will be the (trainee's/mentor's) responsibility to schedule these meetings.

b. In preparation for these meetings, the trainee will:

c. In preparation for these meetings, the mentor will:

8. At these meetings, the mentor will provide feedback on the trainee's performance and specific suggestions for how to improve or progress to the next level of responsibility through a

a. written evaluation

b. a verbal evaluation

c. other

Mentor - Graduate Trainee Expectations Agreement

9. The trainee is expected to participate in the following (e.g. journal club, teaching commitments, etc.)
10. When learning new techniques and procedures, the mentor will train the trainee using the following procedure(s) (e.g. write out directions, hands-on demonstration, verbally direct as trainee does procedure, etc.):
11. The proper procedure for documenting research results (laboratory notebook) in our research group is:
The notebook will be checked _____ (e.g., weekly/monthly).
12. If the trainee gets stuck while working on the project (e.g. has questions or needs help with a technique or data analysis) the procedure to follow will be:
13. The standard operating procedures for working in our research group, which all group members must follow and the trainee agrees to follow, include: (e.g. require institutional training wash your own glassware, attend weekly lab meetings, reorder supplies when you use the last of something, etc.)
14. The mentor and trainee have agreed on a mentoring approach which consists of
15. The mentor and trainee have discussed the methodology used in the lab in detail and trainee understands what is expected of them.
16. The mentor agrees to read and revise the trainees research writing according to the following procedure:
17. The trainee agrees to not present any of the research findings from this laboratory in any shape or form without the explicit consent and approval of the mentor.
18. Other issues not addressed above that are important to our work together:

By signing below, we agree to these goals, expectations, and working parameters for this research project

Trainee's Signature

Date: _____

Mentor's Signature

Date: _____

Professor's Signature

Date: _____

GRADUATE STUDENT MENTORING MAP*

ACADEMIC

ADVISING

RESEARCH/SCHOLARSHIP GUIDANCE & SUPPORT

SUBSTANTIVE FEEDBACK

ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES

NAME

PROFESSIONAL

INTELLECTUAL COMMUNITY

SPONSORSHIP

CAREER GUIDANCE

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

WELL-BEING

ROLE MODELS

SAFE SPACE

PERSONAL & EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

FRIENDS

FAMILY

OTHER

Academic

- **Advising:** Individuals who provide guidance on course selection, degree and program requirements, and milestones
- **Research/Scholarship Guidance and Support:** Individuals who support and guide research and scholarship activities (advisor, dissertation committee, other faculty, lab members, etc.)
- **Substantive Feedback:** Individuals who provide feedback that advances work in a meaningful way such as feedback on written drafts, oral presentations, etc.
- **Access to Opportunities:** Individuals who provide connections to internal and external opportunities such as teaching, fellowships, additional professional development experiences, internships, etc.

Professional

- **Intellectual Community:** Individuals who promote intellectual growth and creativity through the open exchange of ideas both inside and outside of your department (peers, faculty, etc.)
- **Sponsorship:** Individuals who provide direct connections to opportunities (e.g., job interviews, speaking engagements) using their influence and networks
- **Career Guidance:** Individuals who support job planning and preparation which can include career exploration, job application materials review, interview preparation
- **Public Engagement and Outreach:** Individuals who identify and encourage participation in volunteer opportunities that have impact beyond the university such as lectures to broader public, diversity, equity, and inclusion, etc.

Well-Being

- **Role Models:** Individuals whose behavior, example, or success you want to emulate
- **Safe Space:** a place or environment that fosters confidence and protects from exposure to discrimination, criticism, harassment, or any other emotional or physical harm
- **Personal and Emotional Support:** Individuals who help you thrive while fully experiencing the diverse range of human emotions, experiences, and vulnerabilities
- **Friends**
- **Family**
- **Other:** individuals/groups/organizations that are supportive of your mental and physical well-being

RESOURCES AT VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

RESEARCH, WRITING, AND TEACHING

Academic Life Coach (ALC)

The Academic Life Coaches assist Graduate School students and postdoctoral scholars in their academic and professional development during their time at Vanderbilt. Academic Life Coaching was created to support students and postdocs through individual coaching and group programming around effective time and stress management, resilience, conflict resolution, navigating academic relationships, and juggling work/life responsibilities.

010 Alumni Hall and satellite offices

Web: <https://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/lifecoach/>

Career Center

The Career Center serves undergraduate, and graduate students enrolled full-time in all Vanderbilt schools and colleges, and they also provide career coaching to recent graduates (0-2 years out). They provide students with ongoing opportunities to learn about and explore professional opportunities, including career coaching, workshops, career panels, career fairs, field trips, and more.

Student Life Center, 2nd Floor 310 25th Ave.
South, Suite 220

Phone: 615-322-2750

Email: careercenter@vanderbilt.edu

Web: <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/career/>

Center for Student Well-Being (CSW)

The mission of the Center for Student Wellbeing at Vanderbilt University is to create a culture that supports the personal development and academic success of students using an integrative, holistic framework. Through inclusive and collaborative programming, support services, and campus initiatives, the Center cultivates engagement in lifelong wellbeing practices that enhance students' ability to thrive within the Vanderbilt community and beyond.

1211 Stevenson Center Lane

Phone: 615-322-0480

Email: healthydores@vanderbilt.edu

Web: <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/healthydores/>

Center for Teaching (CFT)

The Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching promotes university teaching that leads to meaningful student learning. Offerings are available to any members of the Vanderbilt community interested in developing their teaching practices.

1114 19th Avenue South 3rd Floor

Phone: 615-322-7290

Email: cft@vanderbilt.edu

Web: <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/>

English Language Center (ELC)

The Vanderbilt University English Language Center supports the university's internationalization, diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts through engaging English for Academic and Professional language instruction and targeted resources for international students, faculty, staff, and scholars who use English as an additional language. Their goal is to help you achieve the most from your Vanderbilt experience by providing innovative, high quality, individualized English-language instruction.

1208 18th Avenue South

Phone: 615-322-2277

Email: elc@vanderbilt.edu

Web: <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/elc/>

RESOURCES AT VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

RESEARCH, WRITING, AND TEACHING

Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines

These guidelines provide students at Vanderbilt University with essential information about how to prepare and submit theses and dissertations in a format acceptable to the Graduate School. You can either explore the guidelines by topic on the website or review the complete Format Guidelines document.

Web: <https://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/academics/theses/index.php>

The Writing Studio

At the Writing Studio, you have the opportunity to meet individually with trained consultants to talk about any writing project or concern. Their services are free and confidential for any member of Vanderbilt's scholarly community.

1801 Edgehill Avenue Suite 112

Phone: 615-343-7722

Email: writiing.studio@vanderbilt.edu

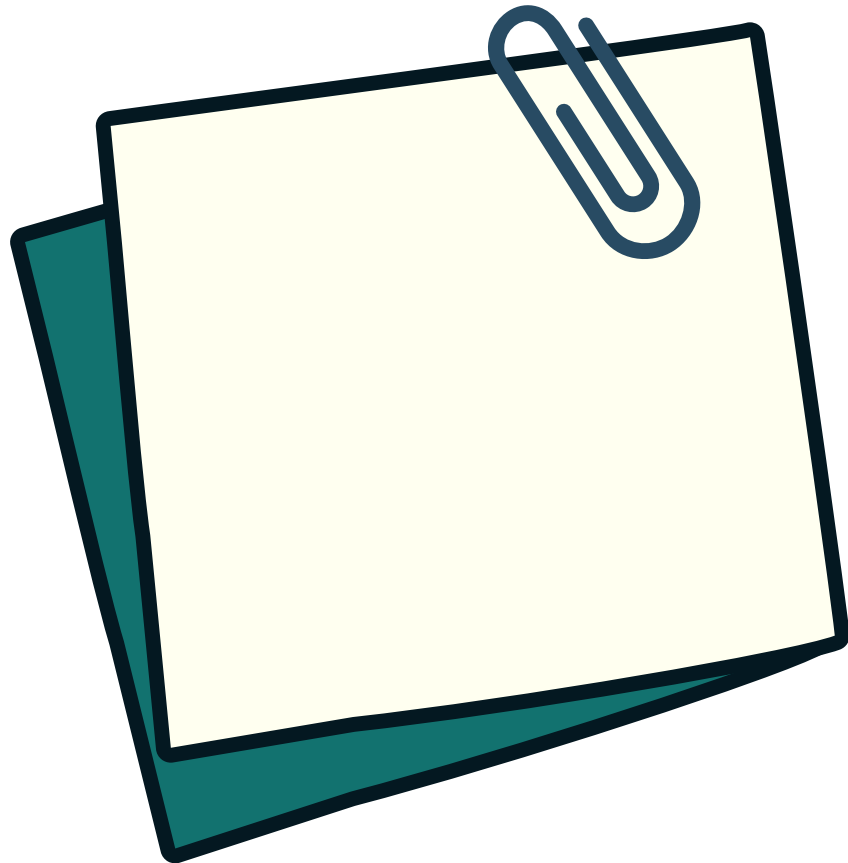
Web: <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/writing/>

VU Libraries

Vanderbilt University has multiple libraries available for students. Please consult the information below to find the library that is best suited for your needs.

Web: library.vanderbilt.edu

Libraries Available: Biomedical, Central, Divinity, Fine Arts Gallery, Law, Management, Music, Peabody, Science, & Special Collections.



RESOURCES AT VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Academic Life Coach (ALC)

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010 Alumni Hall

Web: <https://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/lifecoach/>

Center for Student Well-Being (CSW)

The mission of the Center for Student Wellbeing at Vanderbilt University is to create a culture that supports the personal development and academic success of students using an integrative, holistic framework. Through inclusive and collaborative programming, support services, and campus initiatives, the Center cultivates engagement in lifelong wellbeing practices that enhance students' ability to thrive within the Vanderbilt community and beyond.

1211 Stevenson Center Lane

Phone: 615-322-0480

Email: healthydores@vanderbilt.edu

Web: <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/healthydores/>

Office of Student Care Coordination (OSCC)

The Office of Student Care Coordination, part of the Student Care Network at Vanderbilt, is the central and first point of contact for any undergraduate, graduate, or professional student who may have an academic, personal, emotional, medical, and/or other concern.

Rand Hall, Suite 305

Phone: 615-343-9355

Email: studentcare@vanderbilt.edu

Web: <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/carecoordination/>

Project Safe

Project Safe serves as a central resource for those impacted by sexual and intimate partner violence and can assist with navigating the University's resource and support network.

Alumni Hall Third Floor

Phone: 615-322-7233

Email: projectsafe@vanderbilt.edu

Web: <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/projectsafe/>

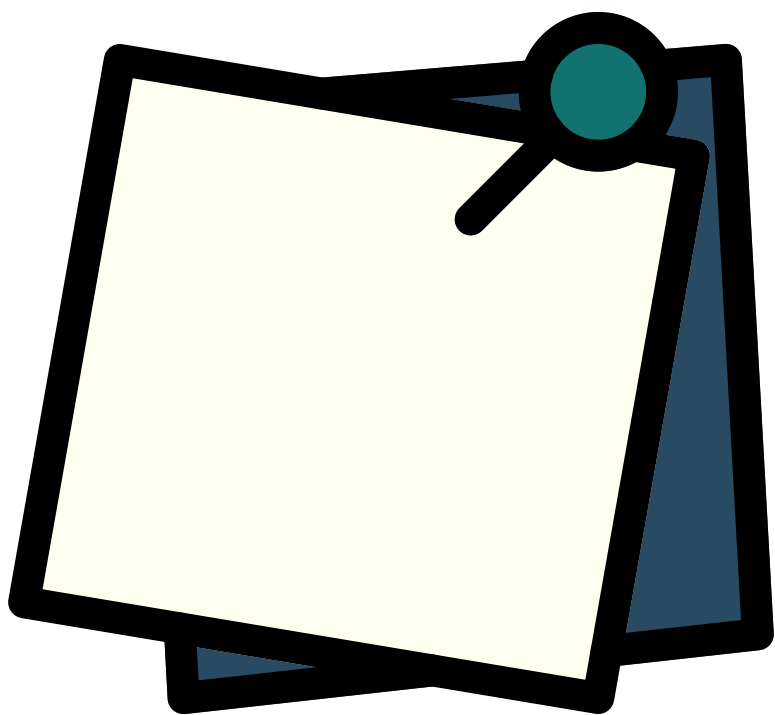
Student Health Services (SHC)

The Student Health Center's mission is to enhance the academic experience of students by providing quality primary healthcare services in a nurturing and cost-effective manner. All of their physicians and nurse practitioners have chosen college health as their area of expertise and interest, and are dedicated to meeting the unique health care needs of the student population. Whether you are sick or injured, managing a chronic health problem, or working to develop a healthier lifestyle, the VU SHC is here to help.

1210 Stevenson Center Lane

Phone: 615-322-2427

Web: <https://www.vumc.org/student-health>



University Counseling Center (UCC)

The UCC supports the mental health needs of Vanderbilt students, encouraging their work toward their academic and personal goals. Their highly skilled and multidisciplinary staff develop evidence-based treatment plans tailored to each individual's unique background and needs by working together with students, campus partners, and community providers. The UCC also emphasizes prevention and education through collaboration and consultation focused on the development of the skills and self-awareness needed to excel in a challenging educational environment.

2015 Terrace Place

Phone: 615-322-2571

Web: <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/ucc/>

**Vanderbilt University Police Department
(VUPD)**

601 23rd Ave S

Non-Emergency — Call **(615) 322-2745** or 2-2745

EMERGENCY — Call 911 or from off-campus, call
(615) 421-1911

Web: <https://police.vanderbilt.edu/>

Vanderbilt Psychiatric Hospital (VPH)

1601 23rd Ave S

Phone: 615-327-7000

Web: <https://www.vanderbilthealth.com/service-line/behavioral-health>

RESOURCES AT VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

IDENTITY & INVOLVEMENT

Black Cultural Center (BCC)

The Mission of the Black Cultural Center (BCC) is to enhance the Vanderbilt experience of Black students, faculty, and staff by providing effective programming and resources to address the academic, cultural, well-being, and social needs of the community we serve. The BCC is an essential resource for Vanderbilt and the greater Nashville community that seeks to highlight Black history, accomplishments, and culture. Our programs and partnerships promote greater cultural understanding, allyship, and appreciation for equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Bishop Johnson Center

Phone: 615-322-2524

Web: <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/bcc/>

Equal Opportunity and Access (EOA)

Vanderbilt University is committed to equal opportunity and affirmative action throughout the institution. EOA provides a range of services that support Vanderbilt's commitment to fairness, equity, access and respect:

1. Monitor the University's compliance with applicable equal opportunity and affirmative action laws and regulations.
2. Advocate for equal opportunity and affirmative action for all persons.
3. Encourage and promote the recruitment and retention of qualified people from diverse backgrounds.
4. Provide religious accommodations and reasonable accommodations to qualified persons with disabilities.
5. Conduct unbiased reviews of discrimination and harassment complaints.
6. Provide education and training about EEO/AA, discrimination, harassment, diversity, disabilities, harassment and sexual misconduct.

2100 West End Avenue

Phone: 615-343-9336

Email: eoavanderbilt.edu

Web: <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/eoa>

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

The Office for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion endeavors to help make Vanderbilt University a leading learning institution where achieving equity, diversity, and inclusion are its highest priorities as it trains global citizens who will contribute to the development of a better nation and world.

401 Kirkland Hall

Phone: 615-343-2644

Email: edi@vanderbilt.edu

Web: <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/diversity>

International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS)

International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) fosters the education and development of non-immigrant students and scholars to enable them to achieve their academic and professional goals and objectives. ISSS provides advice, counseling, and advocacy regarding immigration, cross-cultural, and personal matters. ISSS supports an environment conducive to international education and intercultural awareness via educational, social, and cross-cultural programs.

Sarratt Student Center

2301 Vanderbilt Place Suite 100

Phone: 615-322-2753

Email: issvanderbilt.edu

Web: <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/issv>

RESOURCES AT VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

IDENTITY & INVOLVEMENT

The Office of LGBTQI Life

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex Life at Vanderbilt University is a cultural center, a place of affirmation for individuals of all identities, and a resource for information and support about gender and sexuality. LGBTQI Life serves all members of the Vanderbilt community, including students, faculty, staff, and alumni, by creating educational, cultural, and social opportunities. The office also supports and advises LGBTQ2S+-related campus groups and activities.

2304E Vanderbilt Place

Phone: 615-322-3330

Email: lgbtqi@vanderbilt.edu

Web: <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lgbtqi/>

Title IX - Equal Access

Vanderbilt University is committed to equal opportunity and to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all members of the University community (including students, faculty, staff, postdocs, and trainees), guests, and visitors.

110 21st Avenue South

Baker Building, Suite 975

Phone: 615-343-9004

Email: titleix@vanderbilt.edu

Web: <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/title-ix/>

Women's Center

The Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center is an affirming space for women and for all members of the Vanderbilt community that actively resists sexism and all forms of oppression by providing resources and educational programming.

2304D Vanderbilt Place, Franklin House

Phone: 615-322-4843

Email: womenctr@vanderbilt.edu

Web: <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/womenscenter/>

