

LAB ADVISING STATEMENT SUMMARY

for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Fellows

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I am providing you with this statement of advising philosophy to enhance communication and transparency in our working relationship. It is intended to supplement our ongoing interactions and informal discussions and not to stand as a set of rigid requirements. I recognize that there is individual variability among my students in their backgrounds and aspirations. My goal is to work with you to maximize your individual strengths and to help you develop the skills to succeed in your career. I am happy to discuss with you any or all of the items in the list below. This is a working document, and will be updated through feedback and accumulated experiences.

Note: This statement was adapted from a statement of adviser philosophy distributed by Scott Lanyon, Dean of the Graduate School, and then adapted by Gordon Legge, Psychology DGS, as well as Moin Syed in the University of Minnesota Department of Psychology. Scott, Gordon, and Moin invited faculty to edit and use their text in their own statements of adviser philosophy. Anyone is free to borrow from this document as they wish, so long as they provide similar attribution to me, Moin, Scott, and Gordon. This document is continuously updated, and the version you see here will always be the most up to date.

Guiding Philosophy and Career Paths

My job as an advisor is to help my advisees to be successful in their chosen career. I can't do that if I don't know what career is desired. I want my advisees to let me know the range of career paths in which they are interested at the earliest possible date. I also recognize that career paths change through graduate school. My default advising model is to ensure you are getting experiences in all aspects of training (research, teaching, service/advocacy, and clinical work, as appropriate) so that you have the background to pursue different options when the time comes. This approach may include recommending things that you may not be enthusiastic about at the time, but may come to see as a viable career path years down the road (e.g., teaching). Discussions about your career plans will be included as part of the annual review process, but advisees should feel welcome to bring up the issue whenever they are compelled to do so (and I will do likewise).

Although our training program is clearly designed to prepare you for an academic career, I am very well aware that not all of you will go that route. *I will support you in whatever career path you choose, whether it is academic or not.* I will do my best to help my advisees obtain the experiences and skills needed to succeed in those various careers.

Diversity

Students who I work with represent vast diversity with respect to race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender, sexuality, immigrant generation status, nationality, religion, and worldview, among other dimensions of diversity. As an advisor I strive to understand and respect your

position and perspectives and how they inform your work. At the same time, I strive to push you to recognize your own biases and the role that they play (for better or for worse) in your work. I hope that our relationship will be an ongoing conversation in which we are able to communicate openly about our differences of opinion and learn from each other's perspectives.

Mental Health

Your well-being is extremely important to me. It is useful for us to be on the same page about potential barriers to your progress through the program. These barriers can include not only setbacks in research, but also setbacks in health. Thus, to the extent that you are comfortable sharing, I encourage you to let me know if you are experiencing mental health struggles. Graduate students often go through ups and downs that can influence their motivation and productivity for long stretches of their time in the program; this is *not* something you should feel guilty about. I am always open to talking about these kinds of challenges and am committed to supporting your global well-being, both within and beyond the context of your career progress.

Conduct

Open science. I am committed to a continual process of updating and refining lab procedures to ensure greater transparency in our research. This includes spending time creating proper data files, making data open for other researchers unless doing so is not feasible (e.g., sensitive data, identifiable data), conducting all analyses using syntax (even when using SPSS) that is saved to the project folder on the shared drive, pre-registering all studies, and explicitly rejecting questionable research practices (e.g., selective reporting of variables, removal of cases, inclusion of unjustified control variables, etc.). All lab members are expected to conduct their research according to these principles.

Time management. This document makes it clear that I expect a lot of my advisees. The less time efficient a person is, the more hours/week it will take to meet those expectations. Therefore, I expect my advisees to learn and to practice good time management. I am happy to discuss strategies for time management including methods for prioritizing tasks.

The autonomy that comes along with an academic career is simultaneously a privilege and a challenge. Outside of scheduled obligations (e.g., meetings, fixed deadlines), you are welcome to work whenever and wherever you wish, as long as you are making steady progress on your projects. I also support you spending time on your personal life outside the lab, and I view breaks from work (e.g., on weekends, holidays, and during breaks between terms) as absolutely essential to your long-term wellbeing and productivity. If you receive an email from me during the evening or weekend, I certainly don't expect you to respond to it immediately.

I generally block time to complete larger and/or more cognitively-demanding tasks (e.g., writing, editing, reviewing experimental design documents) several days in advance. Thus, I prefer for us to agree upon specific times for me to edit your drafts of documents. If you then find that you need an extension, please let me know immediately. This makes it more likely that I can quickly find an alternative free block of time.

Relationships with other advisees. My advisees always learn a tremendous amount from each other. Therefore, I expect my advisees to develop a strong professional relationship with other people in my lab and in their graduate program. This relationship should be supportive, not competitive. Early career students should seek out the advice of late career students and postdocs. In turn, late career students and postdocs should be generous in providing advice.

Human subjects. My advisees must abide by all TCPS 2 standards (https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique_tcps2-eptc2_2018.html) and University requirements for working with human subjects. It is essential for all members of the lab to be respectful of our research subjects and to comply with all of the principles of informed consent.

Resolving conflicts. Communication is key to minimizing conflicts. For example, this document is an effort to clearly communicate my expectations to reduce misunderstandings between my advisees and me. If you have concerns about your interactions with me or with anyone else, please don't hesitate to raise them. If you are uncomfortable speaking with me, you can also speak to the graduate advisor, the Department Chair, or the UBC Office of the Ombudsperson for Students. If you wish a conversation to remain anonymous, be sure to indicate that at the start of the conversation.

Meetings and Consultation

Lab meetings. I expect my advisees to attend lab group meetings that we jointly schedule (typically once every 2 weeks) unless they have some unavoidable conflict. During the summer we typically meet less often as a group. Summer is generally a time of relative independence.

Area workshop. All health area graduate students are expected to attend the health area workshop. Area workshops are typically scheduled once every 2 weeks during the academic year. Each graduate student is expected to give at least one workshop presentation each year. These are valuable opportunities to receive feedback from members of other labs. Postdocs in my lab are also strongly encouraged to attend and give workshop presentations.

Individual meetings. I expect my advisees to meet with me regularly. I typically meet for about one hour each week with each of my first and second-year students. As you advance through the program, we can revisit whether we prefer to stick to this schedule or meet on a less-frequent or on an *ad hoc* basis. To make our scheduled meetings as efficient as possible, please send me an agenda in advance of the meeting. Sending me a meeting summary and list of next steps after an individual meeting is optional, but can sometimes be helpful as well.

Communication. I am available for in-person and videoconference meetings, as well as by email. My office phone is not a reliable way to reach me. I ask that all graduate students and RAs in my lab check and respond to emails within 24 hours (except on weekends/holidays). I also strive to respond to my incoming emails within 24 hours. However, due to the large volume of emails that I receive and competing demands on my time, it can take me more than a day to respond. Thus, my preference is to resolve more complex issues “live” (in person, via phone, or over videoconferencing).

Independence

Although we will typically have several points of contact during the week, I expect my advisees to work without daily input or guidance from me. My general approach is for you to “figure it out” on your own, but contact me for support if you are stuck. Indeed, I am available for consultation, but you are expected to use your own good judgment. If an advisee needs input from me in order to move forward, it is their responsibility to seek me out or schedule a meeting. I am happy to initially provide more regular guidance to advisees who are not accustomed to working independently, but by the time they leave the university I expect them to be able to function as independent researchers and teachers.

Working in Other Labs and Switching Advisors

The Health area in our department uses a one-on-one apprenticeship model and each student typically has one primary advisor. However, you are also welcome to work in other research labs during your time in graduate school. In fact, I encourage it, as working in other labs helps you diversify your research experience, exposes you to different mentoring styles and lab operations, and allows you to build relationships with other faculty who might serve on your committees and write you letters of recommendation. Please consult with me first if you are considering a collaboration with another faculty member, so that we can discuss whether it is feasible within the context of your other activities and obligations. If you are funded (by me or someone else) to work on a specific project, then that work must be your priority.

Changing advisors is permitted for personal or professional reasons. However, such a change must be mutually agreeable to all parties: student, original advisor, and new advisor. Ideally, a change would occur relatively early in a student's graduate career (first or second year), but this need not be the case. Students also have the option of adding a secondary advisor at any point. Doing this could make a lot of sense if a student's interests wind up aligning with another faculty member's expertise, but the student does not wish to make a full change of advisors.

Publications and Authorship

Publishing is essential for most career paths followed by my advisees. I expect my advisees to work on manuscripts for publication continuously from the beginning of their graduate school career. By the time they graduate I expect my advisees to have multiple publications in the pipeline (published, in press, in review, in preparation). Ideally, you would have one first-authored paper for each year of your program plus some additional co-authored papers. This is aspirational, and not often achieved, but doing so would make you competitive for whatever job you were interested in (assuming the papers are high quality, which is expected).

I am constantly involved in writing several manuscripts at a time, some of which involve colleagues at other universities. Some of these papers will not involve student advisees. My general approach is to invite students to work on such papers when it is clearly related to their expressed interests and I have a sense that they can contribute to the paper. In this regard, it is very important that you communicate your interests to me, those that are both ongoing and emerging. It is difficult for me to direct papers your way when I don't know your interests!

Authorship. Resolving authorship arrangements early is essential if we are to maintain positive relationships with our colleagues. If I have had significant involvement in a research project (developing the original idea, collecting data, analyzing data, and/or writing a portion of the manuscript or editing the manuscript), then I expect to be listed as an author. I prefer to decide roles and authorship early in collaborations. This decision can be altered by mutual agreement at a later date if roles have changed. Usually, the first author has played the lead role in the project execution and will take the lead in writing the manuscript and overseeing the revision process. I expect the first author to retain primary responsibility for the publication process even after leaving my lab. The same general procedure applies to authorship for conference presentations as well.

Any decision to add an author must be discussed first with the current co-authors (whose roles may need to be adjusted). The first author's judgment and input about who should be included on a manuscript is of critical importance to these decisions; that said, please do not offer anyone a co-authorship on any project being conducted in my lab before consulting with me.

Funding

Stipends. Graduate students who are admitted to our department are guaranteed funding for up to six years (2 years MA; 4 years PhD). The nature of that funding (TA, RA, Fellowship) is often unpredictable, but there will be funding. Nevertheless, I expect my advisees to write and submit fellowship proposals whenever possible (e.g., CGS-M, CGS-D and Vanier for graduate students; Tri-Council, Banting, and MSFHR for postdocs). Writing such proposals is excellent experience and receiving such fellowships increases a student's competitiveness for future fellowships and jobs.

Research Funding. Funding the research of my advisees is a joint responsibility between them and me. Grant proposal writing is a critically important skill regardless of career path pursued. Therefore, I expect all my advisees to be active in writing proposals for both university and external funding opportunities. Advisees may be asked assist in the preparation of federal grants (CIHR, SSHRC, NSERC) or grant reports that fund my lab. I also expect my advisees to apply to at least one or two graduate student grants (e.g., from UBC, Psi Chi, CPA, APA Division 38) per year to help cover the cost of their research. By the time my advisees graduate I expect them to be capable of preparing their own research grants. I am happy to advise you on which funding opportunities might be a good fit with your research; I also encourage you to use our lab's database of grant templates.

Travel funding. Developing a professional network is essential, regardless of career path. I expect all my advisees to attend national and international meetings and to report on their research at those meetings. You should aim to attend one or two conferences per year. If the funds are available in my active grants, I will provide funding that covers your membership and registration fees, flights, and shared accommodation at one conference per year. There are other UBC and external travel funding sources that you should apply to support additional conference or workshop travel. I am happy to chat with you about how to strategize your conference attendance and obtain funding.

Dissertation

The dissertation is your final project prior to receiving the PhD. Rather than conceiving of it as a discrete and monumental experience, you should think of it as the next stage of your developing program of research. That is, from entry to the program you will be working towards developing a coherent program of research of your own. You are not expected to know what this is or what it will look like right from the beginning of graduate school! Rather, it is an evolving process that takes shape over time. Generally speaking, I expect students to be reasonably clear about their research focus by the end of the second PhD year.

The dissertation itself should be a well-designed study or set of studies that clearly addresses gaps in the existing research base. It should be written up as a journal article (or set of articles) so that it will be ready to submit for publication shortly after the final defense. The topic of the dissertation will be determined by the student, in consultation with me as advisor.

Coursework and Research Background

I expect my advisees to have, or to develop while at the university, a solid background in the concepts and skills that their research and career path require. Students are generally free to choose their own elective courses. I do, however, expect all students to be well versed in a range of methods for research design and analysis, and they should take as many methods and

statistics courses as their schedule allows. Students are also expected to develop excellent proficiency in SPSS for database management and analysis and at least one other program, such as R, Stata, and/or Matlab.

Original literature. Regardless of career path, a current knowledge of the literature is essential. Therefore, I expect my advisees to devote some time each week reading relevant literature that is both specific/directly related to their research interests and of broad relevance to the field. A few ways that I suggest for following recent developments include (1) signing up for journal article alerts, (2) signing up for Google Scholar alerts, and (3) following discussions on relevant blogs (e.g., datacolada.org), Facebook groups (e.g., Psychological Methods discussion group), and Twitter. Following a reasonable number of these can help you stay up to date in our field.

Teaching

Teaching is a tremendous way to learn to communicate complex concepts to a non-specialist audience. I expect all my advisees to be involved in teaching. If you are (or become) interested in a teaching-focused career path, you should proactively seek out opportunities to TA or teach at least one new course per year. This will create a substantial demand on your time, but the diversity of experience is excellent training for the heavier and more diverse course loads of faculty at primarily teaching colleges, and it will make you a more competitive applicant for such positions. Even if you are not primarily interested in a teaching-focused career path, you should expect to TA a few times, and also to mentor multiple directed studies and honours students, during your time as a graduate student. These first-hand experiences with teaching and mentoring undergraduate students are invaluable for your career development. If you are interested in giving a guest lecture in one of my courses, please let me know.

Mentoring Undergraduates

Graduate students and postdocs in my lab work typically work with multiple undergraduates (directed studies, honours students, and volunteer research assistants (RAs)). Working closely with undergraduates is a great way to develop mentorship and supervision skills.

Interviewing and hiring RAs. Please inform me before you begin seeking a new RA. I may first suggest that we ask an RA from another project who has a low workload cover your short-term project needs. After you have confirmed with me that it makes sense to hire a new RA, check that any applicants whom you plan to interview meet our lab's minimum requirements (listed on the lab website) for GPA and coursework. Beyond these minimum requirements, you are free to hire whomever you deem to be the best fit. Please let me and the lab manager(s) know if you hire a new RA. The lab manager(s) will send the new RA a lab orientation document and links to standardized training modules (e.g., ethics, safety) that the RA should complete before beginning work in the lab.

Day-to-day management. All RAs working in the lab are expected to adhere to the guidelines detailed in the RA orientation documents. Let me know if you would like guidance on providing constructive feedback to your RAs, or if you need me to step in to help resolve problems. Conflicts are generally easier to resolve when they are discussed sooner rather than later.

On occasion, asking RAs to split their hours across multiple supervisors or projects can support more efficient project progress and enhance the RAs' experience in the lab. Thus, although RAs can and do sometimes work exclusively with one graduate student or postdoc in the lab, I encourage lab members to have a collaborative mindset about how they engage with RAs.