**Mentorship Agreement**

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

**Purpose**

The College recognizes that effective mentoring is especially critical during the thesis and dissertation writing stage. This agreement is a tool intended to support positive mentoring relationships, the objective evaluation of progress, and completion of the degree in a timely manner.

The Agreement must:

* Be part of an extended and ongoing conversation between the student and their advisor(s) and should be discussed and agreed upon by all parties to that conversation.
* Clearly outline expectations for the student. At a minimum, it should address the following questions:
  + - What will be considered good academic progress toward the thesis/dissertation for this student each semester? What are the key milestones and the timeline for completion?
    - What is expected of the student in terms of professional practice (e.g., what should the student do to prepare for meetings with the advisor(s) and/or committee; what is the appropriate way to submit draft materials)?
    - What happens if the student doesn’t meet these expectations as discussed and agreed upon with the advisor? That is, what are the consequences?
* Clearly outline expectations for the advisor(s). It should make clear to the student what the advisor(s) agree(s) to do (e.g., turnaround time on feedback, frequency of meetings, nature and extent of comments/suggestions for revision).
* Establish a **realistic** timeline for progress that takes into account past performance, the work that remains, the amount of time the student can reasonably dedicate to thesis/dissertation work, and circumstances that have impacted timely progress thus far.
* **Serve as the basis for formally evaluating student progress, including:**
* **The final grade for thesis/dissertation hours each semester.** In cases where progress is less than what was agreed upon with the advisor and/or may cause delays in timely degree completion, a grade of LP is warranted. In cases where no progress is made that would move the project forward, an NP is warranted. Consequences of receiving one or more LP or NP should follow the department’s internal SP/LP/NP grading policy. For more information about grading expectations for thesis/dissertation hours, see the College’s [Grading Regulations](https://catalog.ku.edu/liberal-arts-sciences/#regulationstext:~:text=Grading%20of%20Thesis%20and%20Dissertation%20Hours%20(and%20Approved%20Equivalents)) in the academic catalog.
* **The annual student evaluation.** The [Good Academic Standing policy](https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/good-academic-standing) establishes that an annual evaluation of student progress is required for all graduate students. The mentorship agreement and progress, or lack of progress, made should be included as a part of this review.
  + **Be revisited on a regular basis (each semester or annually) and adjusted as appropriate.** Adjustments should apply to future semesters, not the current semester (i.e. the grade issued for the semester should be based on expectations in place when the semester began).

**Expectations for Usage**

**Recommended** upon completion of coursework**:** Faculty are strongly encouraged to use this mentorship agreement for students who have completed coursework requirements and have identified a primary advisor. During this period, the mentoring agreement template may be modified to meet the needs of the student or department-specific requirements.

**Required** within 2 Years of Maximum Time to Degree: If a student is within two years of exhausting their [degree time limits](https://coga.ku.edu/degree-time-limits) and have not scheduled their final defense, completion of this mentoring agreement is required by [[College policy](https://catalog.ku.edu/liberal-arts-sciences/#graduateadvisingmentoringtext).](https://catalog.ku.edu/liberal-arts-sciences/#graduateadvisingmentoringtext:~:text=Mentorship%20Agreements) In this case, the mentoring agreement template may not be modified, and a copy of the executed agreement must be filed with the College.

**Process for Completion & Submission (When Required)**

Departments will be notified annually by the College of students who will exhaust their maximum time to degree within the following two academic years. Students identified on the report are required to complete an agreement with their advisor as outlined above by the end of the first week of classes the first semester the agreement is required (i.e. first semester of their penultimate year within their maximum time limits).

EXAMPLE: For a student who will be out of time to complete the degree after summer 2027, the executed agreement must be submitted to the College by the end of the first week of classes Fall 2025.

Once executed, the agreement must be submitted to the College via the Progress to Degree (PTD) system to record completion.

If the agreement is not submitted by the end of the first semester of classes, an enrollment hold will be placed to prevent enrollment the following term. The enrollment hold will be lifted once the agreement is received.

**I. Mentorship Agreement Participants:**

**Student Name:**

**Advisor Name:**

**Department: (e.g., Molecular Biosciences)**

**Program: (e.g., Microbiology PhD)**

**II. Progress to Date:** Outline in detail all work that has been completed toward the thesis or dissertation.

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**III. Extenuating Circumstances:** Describe any circumstances that have caused delays or barriers to progress thus far (e.g., issues related to lab equipment, advisor on sabbatical, funding delays, changes in advisor or dissertation topic, personal emergencies or medical conditions, etc.).

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**IV. Resolution:** Describe how this agreement will support the student's progress in light of the delays or barriers identified in the prior section.

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**V. Communication & Engagement:** Describe, in detail, expectations for communications, meetings, and engagement for the student, advisor, and any other parties (e.g. committee members, secondary mentors). Both advisor and student should discuss and come to an agreement on the following:

* How often will you meet?
* What is the preferred method of communication outside of meetings? What is the expected response time for communications? (May be different for advisor and student, but both should be included in the agreement.)
* What is the expected turnaround time for the advisor to provide edits or feedback after receiving a draft?
* How and when will the student’s committee or other mentors provide feedback or evaluate student progress?
* How should they prepare for meetings with the advisor and/or committee?
* What else should the student know about expectations (sometimes implicit) of a student at the thesis or dissertation stage?

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**VI.  Advisor Monitoring and Support (to be completed by the faculty advisor):** Please explain how you will support the student and monitor their progress, both at the milestone checkpoints and throughout a given semester. What interventions will you implement if the student falls behind on a milestone before the end of a given semester? (e.g., increase frequency of meetings).

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**VII. Completion Timeline:**

Please provide a detailed list of all tasks required for the student to make satisfactory timely progress toward degree completion. For each task, provide the semester and date it should be completed. List tasks corresponding to the various stages of research, drafts, revisions, exam/defense, and final submission of all required documentation. See the Registrar’s [approved academic calendars page](https://registrar.ku.edu/academic-calendar) for key semester deadlines and end dates.

NOTE: This timeline should be **realistic** and take into account extenuating circumstances and barriers that may have prevented progress. In exceptional cases, a truly realistic timeline to completion might extend beyond the student’s maximum allowable time to complete their degree. In those cases, this mentorship agreement timeline should only include milestones and deadlines to be met within the student’s allowable degree time limits. If the student has not completed by the end of their allowable time, a petition for a time limit extension is required. Progress made while under this mentorship agreement will be taken into account and may impact the College’s decision as to whether additional time is approved.

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| Semester | What task(s) is the student expected to complete by the end of the semester? If specific deadlines are required throughout the semester, specify those. | How will you (advisor) support the student’s completion of these tasks? |
| *EXAMPLE:*  *Fall 2024* | *e.g. Draft of Chapter 3, integrate revisions, submit with revisions. Draft of chapter 3 due Oct 20, 2024. Final draft due end of semester, Fri, Dec 13, 2024.* | *(explain advisor role in, for example, analysis of date, turnaround time for this work, ensuring resources are provided.)* |
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**By signing below, all parties acknowledge that they understand and agree to the processes outlined in the Purpose section and agree to adhere to the expectations outlined in this agreement.**

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Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Advisor Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Chair approval – Required only when DGS is also student’s primary faculty advisor:*

Department Chair Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_