

## University of Maryland

### STATEMENT OF MUTUAL EXPECTATIONS FOR

#### GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANTS AND FACULTY SUPERVISORS

A Statement of Mutual Expectations (SME) is a written document that outlines the fundamental duties of the graduate research assistant and describes the responsibilities of the graduate research assistant and certain processes related to the assistantship. Its purpose is (1) to assist the graduate research assistant in better understanding his/her duties, how to fulfill them and how to meet the supervisor's expectations and (2) to better assist the supervisor with oversight and supervision of the graduate research assistant, and how to facilitate a successful graduate research assistantship for the student. The Graduate School recommends that a SME be prepared at the start of every graduate research assistantship, and for continuing assistantships, updated at least annually. All graduate research assistantships are subject to University of Maryland (UM) policies and procedures as set forth in the Graduate Catalog. Graduate research assistants are not employees, the SME is not a contract, and nothing in the SME supersedes UM policies. In the event of a conflict between UM policies and the SME, UM policies control.

The SME is intended to be a flexible document that provides a structure to help both the graduate research assistant and supervisor understand the nature and obligations of the graduate research assistantship; because of the great diversity of assistantships at Maryland, some of sections of the standard document may not be applicable to all assistantships. Suggested sections to include in the SME are as follows:

**Responsibilities of Research Assistant:** Include the most important duties of the assistantship. Potential topics would be: specific responsibilities, goals, deliverables (if any) and how they are to be submitted.

**Responsibilities of Supervisor:** Specify the most important responsibilities of the supervisor (with regard to the assistantship). Potential topics would be: information on how the graduate research assistant will receive continuing guidance and support, times when the supervisor will be available, supervisor office hours, training schedule, a description of the process for project design, how the graduate research assistant will be supervised, procedures for ordering supplies.

**Scheduling:** When the assistantship is to be performed, including work hours, regularly scheduled meetings, degree of flexibility in work schedule, and/or vacation and holiday procedures.

**Procedures and Best Practices:** Required training, standard methods, key contacts, required record-keeping, safety and security protocols, and/or procedures for ordering supplies.

**Professional Development and Individual Development Plan:** Topics include skills to be learned during appointment (if any), training resources other than those provided directly by the supervisor, whether academic publication is expected or desired as a part of the assistantship, and/or potential expectations for travel.

**Organizational Culture:** Considerations such as office space, work space, dress codes, appropriate titles and means of address, and/or team norms.

#### **Graduate School Policies:**

[http://apps.gradschool.umd.edu/catalog/assistantship\\_policies.htm](http://apps.gradschool.umd.edu/catalog/assistantship_policies.htm)

#### **Useful Resources:**

Department of Environmental Safety: <http://des.umd.edu>

Disability Support Services: <http://counseling.umd.edu/DSS/>

Institutional Review Board (IRB): <http://www.umresearch.umd.edu/RCO/New/index.html>

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC):  
<http://www.umresearch.umd.edu/IACUC/index.htm>

Individual Development Plan (IDP) tool offered by AAAS: <http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/>

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**Graduate Research Assistant:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Period of time of Graduate Research Assistantship covered below:** \_\_\_\_\_

This Statement of Mutual Expectations (SME) is intended to describe and clarify the duties, responsibilities, and procedures that make for a productive appointment as a Graduate Research Assistant. All graduate research assistantships are subject to University of Maryland (UM) policies and procedures as set forth in the Graduate Catalog. Nothing in this SME supersedes UM policies. See [http://apps.gradschool.umd.edu/catalog/assistantship\\_policies.htm](http://apps.gradschool.umd.edu/catalog/assistantship_policies.htm). In the event of a conflict between UM policies and this SME, University policies control.

**Responsibilities of Graduate Research Assistant** (e.g., specific duties, goals, deliverables, reporting)

**Responsibilities of Supervisor** (e.g., availability, project design, supervision, office hours, training)

**Scheduling** (e.g., work hours, meetings, vacation and holiday procedures)

**Procedures and Best Practices** (e.g., training, standard methods, safety and security protocols, ordering)

**Professional Development and Individual Development Plan** (e.g., skills, training, publication, travel)

**Organizational Culture** (e.g., office space, work space, dress codes, titles and means of address)

**Other Notes:**

**We have met in person to review and discuss this agreement on the date noted below. The GRA was given an opportunity to ask and receive answers to any questions about the assistantship:**

**Graduate Research Assistant**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_