

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO – DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS

Faculty-Student Mentorship Agreement

[To graduate students:] When selecting your faculty supervisor, you are initiating the central professional relationship of your graduate studies. This step should only be taken after careful consideration not only of the topic of study, but also of the supervisory style of your prospective advisor. This form is intended to guide an open discussion of key aspects of the advising practices of the faculty member who may serve as your mentor for the years to come.

[To faculty:] A clear agreement on how you and a student will work together will serve as foundation for a successful supervisory relationship. The discussion topics below concern expectations that, when unspoken, have often led to conflict. Please take the time for discussing these nine topics before confirming your role to the Graduate Office.

Instructions: Please discuss each of the following points and check them off to confirm that they have been discussed, before completing and submitting this form. The form may be submitted by either the advisor or the advisee; it should be sent to grad@physics.utoronto.ca, cc-ing the advisor (if submitted by the student) or cc-ing the advisee (if submitted by the faculty member).

- Communication: What method is best for contacting the supervisor? the supervisee?
- Regularity of contact: How frequently will one-on-one meetings occur? Who should take the initiative to schedule them? What are other avenues of regular contact?
- Professional standards: Respect for coworkers, safety training, best lab-book / documentation practices, organized workspace (desk and/or lab), on-time arrival for meetings and seminars.
- Vacation: [SGS guidelines](#) specify a right to 15 business days of personal time off per year for PhD students, and the Department suggests 10 business days of personal time off for MSc students. How far in advance should this be scheduled, and how should they be communicated to the supervisor?
- Participation: What are typical work hours for members of the research group? Can students work from home, or is physical presence in the Department critical? What seminars should students attend?
- Classes: How many classes are expected? Are there particular key courses?
- Conference attendance: How many conferences per year is typical for students? Which conferences? Are all travel, registration, and meal expenses reimbursed for such travel?
- Graduation: What is required to complete a PhD? Is there a minimum number of papers? Do those need to be first-author papers?
- Confirmation in group: Is a continuation of supervision contingent upon review -- e.g., at the end of the first year, or until another date? If so, what is the criterion for continuation beyond that point?

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Student name

Supervisor name

Links to additional resources

- The Physics department graduate office maintains an online [Graduate Student Handbook](#) which includes advice about how to choose a supervisor, and further questions for initial discussions.
- The SGS has a [page of resources to address supervision](#) and mentorship; see also the [Centre for Graduate Mentorship & Supervision](#)
- See also Chris Matzner's [an advice page](#) (written Astro, but much of it applies to Physics graduate students as well). Relevant here is the section, “Starting research”.
- Professionalism: [UofT Statement on Prohibited Discrimination and Discriminatory Harassment](#); [Reporting discrimination or harassment](#); [Departmental inclusivity statement](#)
- Health: An updated list of resources is maintained on the [Physics Department Health and Wellness page](#)