

Instructions for Completing the Friedman School Compact Between Doctoral Candidates and their Dissertation Committee

Completion of the Compact between Doctoral Candidates and their Dissertation Committee is required for all Friedman School doctoral students.

The Compact, which can be found in the both the Student and Faculty sections of the Friedman School website, describes a set of guiding principles toward a common understanding of commitments between the doctoral student and the student’s dissertation advisor, dissertation committee members and in some cases other research mentors. In signing this compact, the student and the dissertation chair acknowledge these principles and agree to take primary responsibility for pursuing these goals. Each committee member (and optionally, other research mentors) agrees to support that effort and provide additional mentorship following the principles and mutual commitments described in the Compact.

The Compact should be discussed by the doctoral student and dissertation advisor when an agreement is reached to work together on the doctoral research project. The student should discuss the Compact with all faculty members who will serve on the dissertation committee and, if desired and applicable, other faculty relevant to the student’s doctoral research. Signatures should be obtained after discussion between the student and each faculty member. Alternatively, or in addition to individual discussions, the student or faculty may request that the Compact be discussed at the first dissertation committee meeting when all are present, and signatures obtained at that time.

Once signed by the student and all relevant faculty members, the student should retain a copy of the Compact, provide electronic or paper copies of the Compact to all signers, and submit a copy to the Office of Student Affairs.

Compact Between Doctoral Candidates and their Dissertation Committee¹ **Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University**

Doctoral training entails formal education in one or more specific disciplines and apprenticeship supervised by one or more qualified investigators who act as mentors. Key features of successful mentorship include the provision of:

- Scientific training and guidance towards fulfillment of the student's career goals,
- Role models who uphold the highest standard of ethics and responsible conduct, and
- Financial, logistical or other support for students' participation in research.

Attention to each of these dimensions of doctoral training is needed for students to become successful independent professionals, scientists and educators, and in turn to mentor others in the future.

This compact provides a set of guiding principles toward successful mentoring in the context of a dissertation committee. In signing this compact, the student and their committee chair will take primary responsibility for pursuing these goals, while each committee member will support that effort and provide additional mentorship following these principles and mutual commitments. Students may also develop mentoring relationships with other faculty who are not dissertation committee members. These faculty members may also benefit from reading and signing this compact to acknowledge a shared understanding of these principles, and a mutual commitment to the specific responsibilities detailed below.

This Compact is intended to serve as a guide only. It cannot and is not intended to address all circumstances related to the mentoring relationship, nor is the information contained in this document intended to constitute an express or implied contract, a promise for any specified time, or a guarantee of benefits or working conditions.

Any student or faculty member seeking more information about these guidelines or who would like to raise any questions or concerns may the Friedman School Academic Dean for Education by phone, email, or in person.

Guiding Principles for Doctoral Training

1. Institutional Context

Institutions that train doctoral students must be committed to establishing and maintaining high-quality training programs with the highest scientific and ethical standards. Institutions should work to ensure that students who complete their programs

¹ *Adapted by the Friedman School from the Sackler School/Tufts University compact, and the recommendations of the Association of American Medical Colleges Group on Graduate Research, Education, and Training.*

possess the foundational skills and values that will allow them to mature into independent scientific professionals. Institutions should provide:

- Relevant course offerings and research opportunities in the students' field
- Appropriate training in the ethical conduct of research
- Appropriate oversight regarding program integrity, length of study, finances and other conditions
- Tools to assist the student in defining professional and career goals, reasonable assistance with attaining these goals, and a mechanism to regularly assess progress towards these goals
- Effective mechanisms to follow individual students' progress and regularly assess outcomes
- Clear and fair grievance procedures for students, staff and faculty
- Suitable recognition for faculty involved in training doctoral students

2. Individual Attention

Effective mentoring is crucial for graduate school trainees as they begin their scientific careers. Faculty mentors must commit to dedicating substantial time to graduate students to ensure their scientific and professional development. A relationship of mutual trust and respect should be established between mentors and graduate students to foster healthy interactions and encourage individual growth. Effective mentoring should include:

- Listening actively to students, and responding attentively to their needs
- Teaching effectively to build students' scientific knowledge and skills
- Providing appropriate research opportunities for students to acquire and practice the scientific method
- Providing regular feedback in the form of praise and constructive criticism to foster individual growth
- Imparting knowledge and advice regarding professional life and career paths
- Exemplifying the highest ethical standards
- Recognizing the contributions of students in publications and intellectual property
- Guiding students in their preparation of research proposals and obtaining their own grant support

3. Support for a Broad Range of Career Choices

The student's institution, doctoral program, and individual mentors should provide effective and regular training for academic and, as relevant, non-academic careers including but not limited to foundations, government and industry. This training should be provided in a manner that will allow the student to appreciate, navigate, discuss, and develop their career choices.

Commitments of Doctoral Students

- **I acknowledge that I have the primary responsibility for the successful completion of my degree.** I will be committed to my graduate education and will demonstrate this by my efforts in the classroom and my research group. I will maintain a high level of professionalism, self-motivation, engagement, scientific curiosity, and ethical standards.
- **I acknowledge that I have the primary responsibility for defining goals for professional development.** I will complete an initial Individualized Development Plan (IDP) as provided by the Friedman School and recognize that I am encouraged to discuss elements of this plan with my dissertation advisor, committee and other mentors.
- **I will meet regularly with my research advisor(s) and provide him/her/them with updates on the progress and results of my all of my activities, including research, didactic activities, and other activities not specifically related to my dissertation research.**
- **I will work with my research advisor(s) to develop a dissertation project.** This will include establishing a timeline for each phase of my work. I will strive to meet the established deadlines and will insure that my research advisor(s) is/are aware of these deadlines.
- **I will work with my research advisor(s) to select an appropriate dissertation committee.** I will commit to meeting with this committee according to program guidelines. I will be responsive to the advice of and constructive criticism from my committee.
- **I will attend and participate in research group meetings, seminars and journal clubs that are part of my educational program.**
- **I will be knowledgeable of the policies and requirements of my graduate program, graduate school, and institution.** I will commit to meeting these requirements, including those that pertain to the dissertation research and other responsibilities.
- **I will comply with all institutional policies, including academic program milestones.** I will be aware of and comply with both the letter and spirit of all

institutional safety practices, including those for human research, animal use, and laboratory research.

- **I will participate in and meet requirements for my institution's Responsible Conduct of Research Training Program and practice those guidelines in conducting my dissertation research.** This training may be required by some funding sources, but is recommended for all doctoral students.
- **I will be a good research group citizen.** I will take part in shared responsibilities and will use resources carefully and frugally. I will be respectful of, tolerant of, and work collegially with all personnel.
- **I will maintain detailed, organized, and accurate records of research activity.** I am aware that my original records and all tangible research data are the property of my institution but that I am able to take a copy of my notebooks with me after I complete my dissertation. I will provide records of research activities to the relevant research advisor at any time so that my progress can be assessed.
- **I will abide by institutional policies regarding work hours, sick leave, and vacation and will discuss these with my research advisor(s).** I will consult with the relevant advisor and notify fellow research group members in advance of any planned absences and as soon as possible upon unplanned absences.
- **I will abide by any additional policies associated with my funding mechanism(s).**
- **I will discuss policies on authorship and attendance at professional meetings with my research advisor(s).** I will work with my advisor(s) to submit all relevant research results that are ready for publication in a timely manner prior to my graduation.
- **I acknowledge that I have the primary responsibility for my career development following the completion of my doctoral degree.** I will seek guidance from my dissertation committee chair, other research advisors and also seek additional resources for advice on career planning and professional development.

Commitments of Committee Chairs, Members and Other Research Advisors

The below principles apply to dissertation committee chairs and many principles may also apply to dissertation committee members or other research mentors. The doctoral student

should discuss each faculty member's role with each individual faculty member and/or with the committee as whole (preferably during the first dissertation committee meeting).

- **I will be committed to the research project of the doctoral student.** I will help to plan and direct the student's project, set reasonable and attainable goals, and provide guidance to establish a timeline for completion of the project.
- **I recognize the possibility of conflicts between the interests of externally funded research programs and those of the graduate student, and will strive to minimize interference with the student's pursuit of his/her dissertation research.**
- **I will be committed to meeting one-on-one with the student on a regular basis to optimize student research progress. I will establish and honor a schedule of regular meetings with the student.**
- **I will strive to provide financial resources for the doctoral student as appropriate and according to my institution's guidelines, in order for him/her to conduct and complete dissertation research.**
- **I will be knowledgeable of, and guide the doctoral student through the requirements and deadlines of the graduate program as well as those of the institution, including, but not limited to, dissertation research, progress reports, committee meetings and applicable Human Resources guidelines.**
- **I will lead by example and facilitate the training of the student in complementary skills needed to be a successful professional and scientist, such as oral and written communication skills, grant writing, lab management, animal and human research policies, the ethical conduct of research, and scientific professionalism.** I will strive to accommodate the student's efforts to gain experience in teaching if that is consistent with the student's career goals.
- **I will expect the student to share common research group responsibilities and utilize resources carefully and frugally.**
- **I will not require the student to perform tasks that are unrelated to his/her training program and professional development.**
- **I will discuss authorship policies with the graduate student.** I will acknowledge the graduate student's scientific contributions to the work in my research group. I will

work with the student to publish his/her work in a timely manner and will provide other opportunities for publication as appropriate.

- **I will discuss intellectual policy issues with the student with regard to disclosure, patent rights and publishing research discoveries.**
- **I will encourage the student to attend scientific/professional meetings and make an effort to secure and facilitate funding for such activities.**
- **I will provide career advice and assist in finding a position for the student following his/her graduation.** I will provide honest letters of recommendation for his/her next phase of professional development. I will also be accessible to give advice and feedback on career goals.
- **I will strive to provide for every graduate student under my supervision an environment that is intellectually stimulating, emotionally supportive, safe, and free of harassment.**

We, the undersigned, have read these guidelines and our signatures below signify our understanding of, and our readiness to comply with the principles and commitments described above.

	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Printed Name</i>	<i>Date</i>
<i>Doctoral student:</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>Committee Chair:</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>Committee Member:</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>Committee Member:</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>Committee Member:</i>	_____	_____	_____

For optional use by other research advisors:

<i>Other Advisor:</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>Other Advisor:</i>	_____	_____	_____