

JOINT PROGRAM IN SURVEY METHODOLOGY

GRADUATE STUDENT MENTORSHIP POLICY

The Joint Program in Survey Methodology (JPSM) is a scholarly community whose aim is to create an environment conducive to learning. This is accomplished through the promotion of responsibility and encouragement of honesty, integrity, and respect among students, faculty and staff ensuring that all act in accordance with our standards while supporting individual rights. We are committed to the principles of truth, objectivity, fairness, honesty, and free inquiry, which include the freedom to express careful and reasoned criticism of data and opinion. Each member of the JPSM community is expected to assume the obligations of responsible citizenship.

JPSM will be guided by the value statement and key elements of mentoring posted on the UMD [graduate school mentoring guide](#). Here are a few points specific to JPSM mentoring:

Mentoring Before Entering JPSM Graduate Program

Prior to the start of Fall semester, JPSM will organize an orientation session for the incoming graduate students. In the orientation session, students will receive a variety of relevant information, including the program policies, responsibilities, expectations, resources, administrative matters, and assistantship responsibilities. In these sessions, new students will get an opportunity to informally interact with the JPSM Director, Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) and Graduate Coordinator (GC), current students, and faculty.

Mentoring After Entering JPSM Graduate Program

The Graduate Coordinator (GC) will serve as the primary mentor for the master's students. The GC will assist students in various administrative and logistical matters, course selection, registration matters, and internship placements in the Washington DC area. Each MS student is assigned a faculty advisor with whom they are encouraged to meet at least once each semester.

Each incoming Ph.D. student will be assigned an academic advisor who is a member of the graduate faculty and will serve as the PhD student's primary mentor. PhD students will meet their academic advisor (in-person or via video communication) at least once per semester until the student finds a thesis advisor. Regular meetings are intended to enhance the student's comfort level in seeking advice.

During the student's program, Ph.D. students will meet faculty and advanced PhD students both inside and outside JPSM through various JPSM events such as the PhD seminar offered each semester, the weekly "lunch and learn" program, the JPSM annual distinguished lecture, and the JPSM/PSDS joint seminar series. These are all opportunities for students to benefit from interactions with multiple potential mentors, including more senior students

JPSM PhD students are required to fill out a self-evaluation form every spring. The academic advisor or thesis advisor(s) leads the discussion of a student's progress in the May meeting of the JPSM faculty. Feedback from this meeting is then communicated to the student in writing by the JPSM Director. This input from the entire faculty is intended to help the student stay on track.

Mentoring by Thesis Advisor(s)

A student may choose one or two thesis advisors one of whom may be their academic advisor.

It is critical that there is a good working relationship between the student and his/her advisor(s). Establishment of clear lines of communication between the student and his/her advisor(s) on important aspects of a student's graduate studies (e.g., coursework, research, teaching, and overall well being) is important for a successful student-advisor relationship. Both the faculty and the student should expect each other to be responsive to their communications. Expectations around responsiveness should be established early on in the advising relationship.

The thesis advisor can help the student establish milestones between candidacy and completion of their degree and encourage effective use of time. The advisor(s) should meet the student at least twice per semester (in-person or via video communication) and review student progress.

Academic and non-academic needs vary among students. Advisors will respect the specific needs of the student and may refer students to appropriate campus support service if deemed necessary.

Changing Thesis Advisors

For various reasons, at any point in the student's PhD program, the student and/or the advisor may request a reassignment of the student to a new thesis advisor. The JPSM director and DGS, in consultation with the student and current advisor, will find a new advisor for the student and discuss and help implement a transition plan.

Research and Graduate Assistant Expectations

Each supervisor and GA must fill out the Statement of Mutual Expectations for Graduate Assistants and Supervisors at the start of their assistantship and submit it to the Graduate Coordinator. The supervisor and GA should meet at least once a year going forward about the expectations of the assistantship. Supervisors will provide clear and timely communication on the status of funding and any expected changes. It is recommended that supervisors have a discussion about authorship of any scientific papers they are planning to publish.

Equity and Inclusion

We recognize that there are many dimensions of diversity that come to play in the mentor-mentee relationship. These include but are not limited to: race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, international student status, disability status, and familial and professional responsibilities. To promote a vibrant intellectual environment, it is important to respect these differences and to empower students to apply the full range of assets from their identities to their graduate studies.