

# CAS Self-Assessment Guide

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GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENT  
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES  
2017

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Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education. (2017). *CAS self-assessment guide for Graduate and Professional Student Programs and Services*. Fort Collins, CO: Author.

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## GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

### CAS Contextual Statement

The American Association of University Professors (AAUP), the Association of American Universities (AAU), and the Council of Graduate Schools were among the earliest organizations to express concerns for the challenges encountered by graduate and professional students. Students themselves have also played an advocacy role. In response to action by Congress to eliminate tax-exempt status for graduate stipends, a group of student leaders founded the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS), a student-run national, non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life of graduate and professional students across the United States. Strong advocacy for this growing and often underserved population gained momentum in the mid-1990s when the higher education community began to recognize fully the unique needs, challenges, and experiences of graduate and professional students. Efforts to address those needs are complicated several factors:

- distinct types of degrees, including graduate (doctoral, master's, and certificate), professional, and more recently, the professional science masters; by reporting structure (centralized graduate office within the institution's graduate school or college or decentralized with student services handled within academic units)
- differences in the student populations served
- degree of collaborations with other institutional units that provide student and academic support services, such as international student life, counseling and psychological Services, and career services
- backgrounds of professional administrators
- differences in the student populations served
- demands for online programs and virtual support
- backgrounds of professional administrators of services for graduate and professional students.

These factors present unique challenges in the development of standards and guidelines for graduate and professional student programs and services and underscore the need for these standards.

To address the challenges of graduate and professional students and to better serve this population, several notable reports and publications appeared in the mid-1990's (Brandes, 2007). They included the Committee on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy's report, *Reshaping the Education of Scientists and Engineers*, recommending a more student-centered model of education with attention to diversity and student professional development (1995); as well as the first major monograph to address services for graduate and professional students, *Student Services for the Changing Graduate Student Population* (Logan & Isaac, 1995). In 2006, a second monograph, *Supporting Graduate and Professional Students: The Role of Student Affairs* (Guentzel & Elkins Nesheim) was published. Universities such as Harvard, Cornell, and Yale took the lead in the latter half of the 1990s by establishing graduate student centers and appointing student affairs professionals to lead them (Brandes, 2007). These new professionals in graduate student affairs provided the vision and impetus for the formation in 1999 of a knowledge community within NASPA (Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education) that continues today as the Administrators in Graduate and Professional Student Services (AGAPSS). Following NASPA's lead, ACPA (College Student Educators International) established its Commission for Graduate and Professional School Educators (Brandes, 2007), continuing today as the Commission for Graduate and Professional Student Affairs. In 2008, the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition published a monograph, *Graduate Students in Transition: Assisting Students through the First Year*.

The growing awareness of the unique needs of graduate and professional students led the authors of ACPA's and NASPA's seminal publication, *Learning Reconsidered: A Campus-Wide Focus on the Student Experience* (2004) to recommend that "faculty members, student affairs professionals, academic administrators, and representative

graduate students should work together to define strategies and resources that will support the comprehensive, holistic learning of graduate students” (p. 29). Other studies and findings, most notably Elkins Nesheim et al. (2007), also suggest that programs for graduate students are often most successful when delivered through partnerships between student affairs and academic affairs professionals. Essential to the success of many of these partnerships and collaborations is graduate school leadership (graduate deans, school or college deans), who will advocate for and support a coordinated effort to create meaningful and relevant professional development programs that meet graduate student needs (Denecke, Feaster, & Stone, 2017).

Much like the important work student and academic affairs practitioners do to create a supportive environment for students on the undergraduate level, similar efforts are needed on the graduate level, with a major emphasis on career and professional development. Studies have shown that those with graduate degrees earn higher salaries on average as well as face lower levels of unemployment, making this issue also one of individual prosperity (CGS & ETS, 2012). *The Path Forward: The Future of Graduate Education in the United States* (CGS & ETS, 2010) asserts that the need for graduate education, and the highly-skilled workforce it produces, is vital to our economic success and competitiveness as a nation and as a global leader. The report also calls attention to a major problem confronting graduate education: the challenge of identifying career paths to, during and after graduate school, especially for minorities and women. The 2010 report also documents other crucial areas graduate education must address: identifying pathways into graduate education and, once enrolled, the issues of attrition and time to degree completion that are crippling the potential success of countless graduate students.

As graduate and professional degree programs have become more interdisciplinary and as employers seek graduates with discipline-specific skills and skills that are transferable across multiple disciplines and careers, graduate and professional schools are turning their attention to transferable and academic career skills, according to Council of Graduate School findings (Denecke, Feaster, & Stone, 2017), to include: “communication and presentation, writing, mentoring, and leadership...research ethics...entrepreneurship...cultural competency and intercultural teamwork.” Examples include programs offered by universities such as Cornell (Pathways to Success Program), Michigan State (PREP Program) and the University of California, Davis (Grad Pathways Program) which focus on building core competencies and transferable skills. Virginia Tech’s Transformative Graduate Education has built inclusive interdisciplinary academic communities that include a variety of scholarly and extracurricular offerings in support of knowledge, leadership, scholarly inquiry, and social responsibility.

Other topics of emerging and continued importance in graduate and professional student programs and services include:

#### Structure/Organization/Attitudinal

- counteracting attitudes that institutions only need to attend to the basic academic experience of graduate and professional students; beliefs that graduate students do not require the student services provided to undergraduates or places and opportunities for community building, involvement, and social integration; the focus of many divisions of student affairs on the undergraduate experience, resulting in lack of resources to address needs of graduate students
- academic structural issues such as how best to deliver programs and services (e.g., orientation) while providing experiences that involve and engage students (online and on-site, commuter, full-time and part-time) and lead to their professional development; the differences and variety of organizational and reporting structures, services offered, and locations of offices responsible for the provision of services to graduate students
- sustaining inclusive and diverse environments for graduate and professional students
- building and sustaining inclusive global graduate communities
- addressing cultural and disciplinary differences that may arise in student-faculty interactions

- challenges in accessing and empowering the graduate student voice, establishing graduate-level student governance structures, and ensuring representation of graduate-level students in all aspects of institutional life
- the varied knowledge, backgrounds, and experiences of professionals responsible for providing services and support to graduate and professional students; how to work with the professional organizations and communities such as NASPA's AGAPSS, ACPA's Commission, and NAGAP to establish standards of practice for individuals with primary responsibility for student support services for graduate and professional students and for the programs and services they are charged to deliver

#### Recruitment/Retention/Enrollment Management

- recruitment of diverse, multicultural, and nontraditional graduate and professional student populations, with attention to students who are underrepresented based on their experiences and identities
- retention issues including attrition and time to degree
- issues of inadequacy of funding and financial aid for graduate and professional students whose needs are significantly different and often more complex and challenging than those of undergraduate students
- retention issues specific to institutional climate and cultural responsiveness to the needs of a diverse graduate and professional student population
- articulating the differences and promoting student understanding of types of degrees including master's, doctoral, professional, interdisciplinary, online, and certificate programs
- financial challenges including financial literacy and debt management (CGS, 2016) and lack of information on resources, leaving students to navigate complex systems to seek and obtain funding for advanced study

#### Transition/Personal Development/Engagement

- offering support services to specific populations such as underrepresented, first-generation, and non-traditional students whose career goals are often influenced by family, community, and cultural identity in addition to input from faculty and peers
- conducting research on the developmental needs of graduate students and application of developmental theories and recommended practices to this population
- addressing mental health, emotional, or stress-related needs including feelings of isolation and the impostor phenomenon that are common among graduate and professional students; groups of students feeling marginalized, e.g., underrepresented, international, nontraditional, and part-time students
- addressing issues of 'academic bullying' and harassment, including sexual harassment (Title IX)
- creating opportunities for discipline-specific and interdisciplinary socialization (i.e., graduate students from multiple disciplines meeting, interacting, socializing, and learning from one another)
- facilitating the availability of campus student organizations that focus on this population and the opportunity for graduate students to serve the campus community
- supporting graduate and professional student involvement with national organizations that advocate for students, such as the National Association of Graduate and Professional Students (NAGPS)

#### Professional and Career Development

- addressing issues of socialization to the profession including the advisor-advisee relationship, departmental issues, peer relationships, and mentorships
- demonstrating ethical and professional behavior, including plagiarism, writing, and responsible conduct of research
- addressing the lack of transparent career pathways including academic job shortages and decline in students pursuing academic careers; the teaching of soft skills such as written and oral communication, cultural and international competencies, and team-building; the creation of connections with alumni for professional development

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#### Contextual Statement Contributors

##### Current Edition:

Patricia Carretta, George Mason University, Retired, NACE

Lori Cohen, George Mason University

Karen DePauw, Virginia Tech

Susan Gardner, University of Charleston, NASPA-AGAPSS

Nicole Johnson, Virginia Tech, ACPA Commission for GPSA

Patricia Mulcahy-Ernt, University of Bridgeport, CRLA

Suzanne Ortega, Council of Graduate Schools

Lisa Sperling, University of Georgia, NAGAP

Katherine Zilmer, HECMA

##### Previous Editions:

Lisa Brandes, Yale University, NASPA-AGAPSS

Pat Carretta, George Mason University, NACE

Lori Cohen, George Mason University

Eva DeCoursey, George Mason University

Lisa Sperling, University of Georgia, NAGAP

Janice Sutera Wolfe, George Mason University

# INTRODUCTION AND INSTRUCTIONS

## CAS Self-Assessment Guide

The *Self-Assessment Guides* (SAG) translate functional area CAS standards and guidelines into tools for conducting self-study. Educators can use this SAG to gain informed perspectives on the strengths and deficiencies of their programs and services as well as to plan for improvements. Grounded in the reflective, self-regulation approach to quality assurance in higher education endorsed by CAS, this SAG provides institutional, divisional, departmental, and unit leaders with a tool to assess programs and services using currently accepted standards of practice.

The *Introduction* outlines the self-assessment process, describes how to complete a programmatic self-study, and is organized into three sections:

- I. Self-Assessment Guide Organization and Process
- II. Rating Examples
- III. Formulating an Action Plan, Preparing a Report, and Closing the Loop

The introduction is followed by the *Self-Assessment Worksheet*, which presents the CAS standards for the functional area and incorporates a series of criterion measures for rating purposes.

### I. Self-Assessment Guide and Process

CAS developed and has incorporated a number of common criteria that have relevance for each and every functional area, no matter what its primary focus. These common criteria are referred to as “General Standards,” which form the core of all functional area standards. CAS standards and guidelines are organized into 12 components, and the SAG workbook corresponds with the same sections:

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Part 1. Mission                     | Part 7. Diversity, Equity, and Access   |
| Part 2. Program                     | Part 8. Internal and External Relations |
| Part 3. Organization and Leadership | Part 9. Financial Resources             |
| Part 4. Human Resources             | Part 10. Technology                     |
| Part 5. Ethics                      | Part 11. Facilities and Equipment       |
| Part 6. Law, Policy, and Governance | Part 12. Assessment                     |

For each set of standards and guidelines, CAS provides a Self-Assessment Guide (SAG) that includes a recommended comprehensive self-study process for program evaluation. Seven basic steps to using a SAG are suggested for implementing a functional area self-study. The following self-study process is recommended.

<p>1. Plan the Process Map out steps for process, develop timeline, build buy-in with all stakeholders, and explicitly identify desired outcomes of the self-study</p>	<p>5. Develop an Action Plan Identify discrepancies, corrective action, and recommended steps (e.g., identify strengths, weaknesses, recommendations, benchmarks for achievement, resources, timeframe, and responsible individuals)</p>
<p>2. Assemble and Educate the Self-Assessment Team Determine who should be on the team and how to educate the team about the self-study process</p>	<p>6. Prepare a Report Identify audience for report(s); describe the self-study process, evidence gathering, rating process, and evaluations; summarize strengths and weaknesses; describe the action plan; and draft an executive summary</p>
<p>3. Identify, Collect, and Review Evidence Define what constitutes evidence; then gather, collect,</p>	<p>7. Close the Loop Put action plans into practice; work to navigate politics and</p>



manage, and review evidence	secure resources; identify barriers to overcome; and build buy-in to the program review results
<p>4. Conduct and Interpret Ratings Using Evaluative Evidence</p> <p>Clarify team’s rating criteria; employ a process for rating [small group, individual, staff]; negotiate rating differences; and manage group ratings</p>	

The first four steps in conducting self-assessment will lead you through planning your process, preparing your team, gathering evidence, and assigning ratings to the criterion measures.

- A. Plan the self-study process
- B. Assemble and educate self-study team(s)
- C. Identify, collect, and review documentary evidence
- D. Conduct ratings using evaluative evidence

*Step A: Plan the Self-Study Process*

Prior to beginning a program review, division and functional area leaders need to determine the area (or areas) to be evaluated and the reasons for the project. This may be dictated by institutional program review cycles or planning for accreditation processes, or it may result from internal divisional goals and needs. Explicitly identifying desired outcomes and key audiences for a self-study will help leaders facilitate a process that makes the most sense for the project.

Critical first phases of a program review include mapping out the planned steps for a program review and developing timelines. Leaders will also want to build buy-in with stakeholders of the functional area. In the initial planning stage of the self-study process it is desirable to involve the full functional area staff, including support staff members, knowledgeable students, and faculty members when feasible. This approach provides opportunity for shared ownership in the evaluation.

*Step B: Assemble and Educate the Self-Assessment Review Team*

The second step is to identify an individual to coordinate the self-assessment process. CAS recommends that the coordinator be someone other than the leader of the unit under review; this facilitates honest critique by the review team and enhances credibility of the final report. Once a leader is designated, members of the institutional community [e.g., professional staff members, faculty members, students] need to be identified and invited to participate. Whether a sole functional area or a full division is to be reviewed, the self-study team will be strengthened by the inclusion of members from outside the area(s) undergoing review.

In preparing the team for the self-study, it is imperative to train the team on the CAS standards, as well as self-assessment concepts and principles. CAS standards and guidelines are formulated by representatives of 43 higher education professional associations concerned with student learning and development. The CAS standards represent essential practices; the CAS guidelines, on the other hand, are suggestions for practice and serve to elaborate and amplify standards through the use of suggestions, descriptions, and examples. Guidelines can often be employed to enhance program practice. Following a long-standing CAS precedent, the functional area standards and guidelines—presented as an appendix to the self-assessment instrument—are formatted so that standards (i.e., essentials of quality practice) are printed in bold type. Guidelines, which complement the standards, are printed in light-face type. Standards use the auxiliary verbs “must” and “shall” while guidelines use “should” and “may.”

In this self-assessment instrument, the CAS standards have been translated into criterion measures and grouped into subcategories for rating purposes. The criterion measures are not designed to focus on discrete ideas; rather, the

measures are designed to capture the major ideas and elements reflected in the standards. For each of the 12 component parts, team members will rate clusters of criterion measures. If the assessment team decides to incorporate one or more of the guidelines into the review process, each guideline can be similarly translated into a measurable statement to facilitate rating.

As a group, the review team should examine the standards carefully and read through the entire self-assessment guide before beginning to assign ratings. It may be desirable for the team, in collaboration with the full staff, to discuss the meaning of each standard. Through this method, differing interpretations can be examined and agreement generally reached about how the standard will be interpreted for purposes of the self-assessment.

#### *Step C: Identify, Collect, and Review Documentary Evidence*

Collecting and documenting evidence of program effectiveness is an important step in the assessment process. No self-assessment is complete without relevant data and related documentation being used. It is good practice for programs to collect and file relevant data routinely, which can then be used to document program effectiveness over time. Available documentation should be assembled by the unit under review and provided to the review team at the outset of the study. The team may request additional information as needed as the review is conducted.

Documentary evidence often used to support evaluative judgments includes:

- *Student Recruitment and Marketing Materials*: brochures and other sources of information about the program, participation policies and procedures, and reports about program results and participant evaluations
- *Program Documents*: mission statements, catalogs, brochures and other related materials, staff and student manuals, policy and procedure statements, evaluation and periodic reports, contracts, and staff memos
- *Institutional Administrative Documents*: statements about program purpose and philosophy relative to other educational programs, organizational charts, financial resource statements, student and staff profiles, and assessment reports
- *Research, Assessment, and Evaluation Data*: needs assessments, follow-up studies, program evaluations, outcome measures and methodologies, and previous self-study reports
- *Staff Activity Reports*: annual reports; staff member vitae; service to departments, colleges, university, and other agencies; evidence of effectiveness; scholarship activities, and contributions to the profession
- *Student Activity Reports*: developmental transcripts, portfolios, and other evidence of student contributions to the institution, community, and professional organizations; reports of special student accomplishments; and employer reports on student employment experiences

In the SAG, each section provides recommended evidence and documentation that should be collected and compiled prior to conducting ratings. The evidence collected is likely applicable across numerous sections.

Raters can best make judgments about the program expectations articulated in the standards when they have a variety of evidence available. Multiple forms of evidence should be reviewed and reported in the narrative section of the SAG worksheets. Through the rating process, a self-study team may identify a need to obtain additional information or documentation before proceeding, in order to lend substance to judgments about a given assessment criterion. Evidence and documentation should be appended and referenced in the final self-assessment report.

*Step D: Conduct and Interpret Ratings Using Evaluative Evidence*

When the program review team has gathered and reviewed necessary evidence, they will be able to assign and interpret ratings to individual criterion measures, following three steps.

- 1) Rate Criterion Measures
  - a) Team members individually rate criterion measures based on their understanding of the evidence.
  - b) Team discusses and assigns collective ratings for criterion measures.
  
- 2) Provide Narrative Rationale
  - a) Document the reasoning and evidence for the rating assigned to each subsection, in the space provided for *Rationale*.
  - b) Explain what evidence has been collected and reviewed to support individual and/or team ratings and judgments.
  - c) Provide information for follow-up and relevant details about ratings (e.g., if *Partly Meets* is assigned as a rating, what aspects of the program or service do and do not meet which standards statements).
  
- 3) Answer Overview Questions (In the Instrument)
  - a) Respond, in writing in the space provided, to the *Overview Questions* that immediately follow the rating section of each of the 12 components.
  - b) Use answers to the *Overview Questions*, which are designed to stimulate summary thinking about overarching issues, to facilitate interpretation of the ratings and development of the self-study report.

Assessment criterion measures are used to judge how well areas under review meet CAS standards. These criterion measures are designed to be evaluated using a 4-point rating scale. In addition to the numerical rating options, *Does Not Apply* (DNA) and *Insufficient Evidence/Unable to Rate* (IE) ratings are provided. This rating scale is designed to estimate broadly the extent to which a given practice has been performed.

CAS CRITERION MEASURE RATING SCALE

DNA	IE	0	1	2	3
Does Not Apply	Insufficient Evidence/ Unable to Rate	Does Not Meet	Partly Meets	Meets	Exceeds

Under rare circumstances, it may be determined that a criterion measure used to judge the standard is not applicable for the particular program (e.g., a single sex or other unique institution that cannot meet a criterion measure for that reason). In such instances, raters may use a DNA rating and, in the self-study report, describe their rationale for excluding the practice in the criterion measure. The IE response can be used when relevant data are unavailable to support a judgment. When either the DNA or the IE ratings are used, an explanatory note should be provided in the report. Items rated with 0 should generate careful group consideration and appropriate follow-up action.

Program leaders may wish to incorporate additional criterion measures, such as selected CAS guidelines or other rating scales, into the procedures before the self-assessment process begins. Such practice is encouraged, and the SAG instrument can be amended to incorporate additional criterion measures for judging the program. In such instances, additional pages to accommodate the additional criterion measures may be required.

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Whatever procedures are used to arrive at judgments, deliberate discussions should occur about how to initiate the rating process and select the optimal rating strategy. In such discussions, it is expected that disagreements among team members will occur and that resulting clarifications will inform all participants. It is important that the team achieve consensual resolution of such differences before proceeding with individual ratings.

CAS suggests a two-tiered (individual and group) judgment approach for determining the extent to which the program meets the CAS standard. First, the self-assessment team members (and functional area staff members, if desired) individually should rate the clusters of criterion measures using separate copies of the CAS Self-Assessment Guide. In addition, they will need to document their reasoning and evidence for the rating assigned to each subsection in the space provided for *Rationale*. This individualized rating procedure is then followed by a collective review and analysis of the individual ratings.

The individual ratings should be reviewed, discussed, and translated into a collective rating by the team; then the team is ready to move to the interpretation phase of the self-assessment. Interpretation typically incorporates discussion among team members to assure that all aspects of the program were given fair and impartial consideration prior to a final collective judgment. At this point, persistent disagreements over performance ratings may call for additional data collection.

After the team review is completed, a meeting with relevant administrators, staff members, and student leaders should be scheduled for a general review of the self-assessment results. The next step, including discussion of alternative approaches that might be used to strengthen and enhance the program, is to generate steps and activities to be incorporated into an action plan. This step is best done by the unit staff, informed by the results of the review and, when feasible, in consultation with the review team. The Work Forms will guide this process.

## II. Rating Examples

### *Rating Standard Criterion Measures*

All CAS standards, printed in bold type, are viewed as being essential to a sound and relevant program or service that contributes to student learning and development. Many of the statements contained in CAS standards incorporate multiple criteria that have been grouped for rating purposes. Consequently, raters may need to judge several standards statements through a single criterion measure. Using the “Ethics” standards as an example, the following illustrates how criterion measures are grouped into subcategories for rating.

<b>Part 5. ETHICS</b>					
<b>Suggested Evidence and Documentation:</b>					
1. Program code or statement of ethics					
2. Ethics statements from relevant functional area professional associations					
3. Personnel policies, procedures and/or handbook					
4. Student code of conduct					
5. Operating policies and procedures related to human subjects research (Institutional Review Board, IRB)					
6. Minutes from meetings during which staff reviewed and discussed ethics					
<b>Criterion Measures:</b>					
<b>DNA</b>	<b>IE</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
Does Not Apply	Insufficient Evidence/ Unable to Rate	Does Not Meet	Partly Meets	Meets	Exceeds
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>5.1 Ethical Standards</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programs and services review applicable professional ethical standards and adopt or develop and implement appropriate statements of ethical practice.</li> <li>Programs and services publish and adhere to statements of ethical practice, ensure their periodic review, and orient new personnel to relevant statements of ethical practice and related institutional policies.</li> </ul> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>					
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>5.2 Statement of Ethical Standards</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statements of ethical standards specify that programs and services personnel respect privacy and maintain confidentiality in communications and records as delineated by privacy laws.</li> </ul>					

### *Using Guidelines to Make Judgments about the Program*

As discussed above, program leaders may wish to include selected *CAS Guidelines* to be rated along with the standards. To accomplish this, criterion measure statements must be written for the guidelines selected. The self-study team can readily create statements to be judged as part of the rating process. Programs generally considered in compliance with the standards especially can benefit by using guidelines because guidelines typically call for enhanced program quality.

Not all programs under review will incorporate guidelines to be rated as part of their self-studies. Even though the guidelines are optional for rating purposes, raters are strongly encouraged to read and review them as part of the training process. When *CAS Guidelines* or other criterion measures are rated, they should be treated as if they were standards.

### III. Formulating an Action Plan, Preparing a Report, and Closing the Loop

The final three steps in the self-assessment process help a review team and unit plan for and take action using the information garnered through the review of documentary evidence and rating process.

#### *Step E: Formulating an Action Plan*

Typically, the assessment process will identify areas where the program is not in compliance with the standards. Action planning designed to overcome program shortcomings and provide program enhancements must then occur. Following is an outline of recommended steps for establishing a comprehensive plan of action using the CAS self-assessment work forms. Space is provided in the SAG for recording relevant information.

- 1) Resolve Rating Discrepancies (Work Form A)
  - a) Identify criterion statements for which there is a substantial rating discrepancy.
  - b) Discuss these items and come to a resolution or final decision. Note any measures where consensus could not be reached.
- 2) Identify Areas of Program Strength (Work Form B)
  - a) Identify criterion measure ratings where *strength* in performance or accomplishment was noted (i.e., program exceeds criterion with a rating of 4).
- 3) Identify Areas for Improvement (Work Form B)
  - a) Identify criterion measures where program weaknesses (i.e., program shortcomings that fail to meet criterion measures, and received a rating of 0 or 1) were noted.
- 4) Recommend Areas for Unit Action (Work Form C)
  - a) Note items that need follow-up action for improvement and indicate what requires action.
  - b) This is the last form to be completed by the review team.
- 5) Prepare the Action Plan (Work Form D)
  - a) This step should be completed by the unit being reviewed.
  - b) Use the items requiring attention listed in Work Form C to formulate a brief action plan. The focus and intended outcomes of the next steps to be taken should be identified.
- 6) Write Program Action Plan (Work Form E)
  - a) List each specific action identified in the self-study that would enhance and strengthen services.
  - b) Determine the actions needed to improve for each practice.
  - c) Identify responsible parties to complete the action steps.
  - d) Set dates by which specific actions are to be completed.
- 7) Prepare Report
  - a) Prepare a comprehensive action plan for implementing program changes.
  - b) Identify resources (i.e., human, fiscal, physical) that are essential to program enhancement.
  - c) Set tentative start-up date for initiating a subsequent self-study.

#### *Step F: Preparing a Report*

To complete the process, a summary document should be produced that (a) explains the mission, purpose, and philosophy of the program; (b) reviews the outcome of the assessment; and (c) recommends specific plans for action.

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In addition, depending on the report's audience, describe the process, evidence gathering, ratings, and evaluations, and summarize strengths and weaknesses.

*Step G: Closing the Loop*

Finally, to close the loop on a program's self-study process, functional area staff members must implement the recommended changes to enhance the quality of their program. In this final step, the staff endeavors to put action plans into practice. In some cases, there will be institutional politics to be navigated; continued support from functional area leaders remains essential. Staff members will want to work collectively to secure resources, identify barriers to implementation, and build stakeholder buy-in to the results. CAS recommends that closing the loop on a self-study process be integrated into regular staff meetings, individual supervision, trainings, and annual reports. A key to successfully using program review in post-secondary student services is weaving the entire process, from planning through taking action, into the fabric of the functional area, departmental, and divisional culture.

# GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

## CAS Self-Assessment Guide

### Part 1: MISSION

#### Suggested Evidence and Documentation:

1. Current mission statement, brief description of how it was developed, and date of last review
2. Additional goals, values, and statements of purpose
3. Description and copies (if applicable) of where mission statement is disseminated (e.g., included in operating and personnel policies, procedures and/or handbook, hanging in office common space, on website, in strategic plan, and other promotional materials)
4. Institutional/divisional mission statements (e.g., map program mission to broader mission statements)
5. Any additional professional standards aligned with program/service (e.g., standards promoted by functional area organizations)
6. Institutional demographics, description of student population served, and information about community setting

#### Criterion Measures:

DNA	IE	0	1	2	3
Does Not Apply	Insufficient Evidence/ Unable to Rate	Does Not Meet	Partly Meets	Meets	Exceeds

#### 1.1 Program Mission and Goals

- The mission of Graduate and Professional Student Programs and Services (GPSPS) is to promote academic, personal, and professional growth and development of students enrolled in graduate and professional schools.
- Central to this mission, GPSPS collaborates and consults with institutional leadership, individuals, and departments essential to the success of graduate and professional students.

*Rationale:*

#### 1.2 Mission Implementation and Review

- GPSPS develops, disseminates, implements, and regularly reviews its mission.

*Rationale:*

#### 1.3 Mission Statement

- The mission statement is consistent with that of the institution and with professional standards; is appropriate for student populations and community settings; and references learning and development.

*Rationale:*

#### Overview Questions:

1. How does the mission embrace student learning and development?
2. In what ways does the GPSPS mission complement the mission of the institution?



3. To what extent is the mission used to guide practice?

Part 2: PROGRAM

Suggested Evidence and Documentation:

1. Program student learning and development outcomes, and brief description of how they were developed
2. List of current collaborations across the institution that facilitate student learning and development
3. Map of program activities and ways they connect to student learning and development outcomes
4. Map or report of outcome assessment activities, including results
5. Strategic plans program design and enhancement
6. Specifications or requirements (if applicable)

Criterion Measures:

DNA	IE	0	1	2	3
Does Not Apply	Insufficient Evidence/ Unable to Rate	Does Not Meet	Partly Meets	Meets	Exceeds

2.1 Program Information and Services

- Graduate and Professional Student Programs and Services (GPSPS) provides programs and services to meet the academic, personal, and professional needs and interests of graduate and professional students.
- GPSPS offers programs and services that promote
  - students’ continued cognitive, emotional, ethical, and social development
  - individual and community responsibility, academic integrity, and ethical practice
- GPSPS ensures student access to programs and services that
  - address students’ needs
  - provide opportunities for involvement and engagement with students, staff, and faculty members
  - facilitate community-building and social integration across disciplines
- GPSPS connects students with appropriate resources through collaboration and consultation with campus partners and external experts.

*Rationale:*

2.2 Program Contribution to Student Learning and Development

- GPSPS contributes to students’ formal education (the curriculum and co-curriculum), learning, and development.
- GPSPS contributes to students’ progression toward and timely completion of educational goals and preparation for their careers, citizenship, and lives.
- GPSPS identifies relevant and desirable student learning and development outcomes that align with the CAS Learning and Development Outcomes and related domains and dimensions.

*Rationale:*

2.3 Assessment of Learning and Development

- GPSPS engages in outcomes assessment, documents evidence of its impact, and articulates the role it plays in student learning and success.
- GPSPS uses evidence to create strategies for improvement of programs.

*Rationale:*

#### 2.4 Program Design

- GPSPS bases its work on intentional student learning and development outcomes.
- GPSPS reflects developmental and demographic profiles of the student population and responds to needs of individuals, populations with distinct needs, and relevant constituencies.
- GPSPS designs and delivers programs and services based on the needs and interests of students, including those underrepresented based on identity and experiences, such as veterans, students with family responsibilities, and students with disabilities.
- GPSPS uses data about their graduate and professional students and their experiences to tailor programs and services.
- GPSPS is delivered using multiple formats, strategies, and contexts and is designed to provide universal access.

*Rationale:*

#### 2.5 Collaboration

- GPSPS collaborates with others across the institution in ways that benefit students.
- Whether organized as a central office within the institution's graduate school; located within an academic department, school, or college; or offered in collaboration with other student and academic affairs offices, GPSPS works in close collaboration with others with expertise and resources to meet the needs and interests of graduate and professional students.

*Rationale:*

#### 2.6 Admissions

- GPSPS includes an admissions function or works closely with graduate or professional school admissions staff and faculty advisers to
  - ensure timely dissemination of information and materials
  - provide equal access for all prospective students interested in and capable of pursuing graduate or professional education at the institution
  - work with stakeholders to develop enrollment goals, related strategies, and resources that are needed to reach those goals
  - coordinate programs for prospective students on the realities of graduate education and deliberate educational planning

*Rationale:*

#### 2.7 Orientation

- GPSPS orients students to the academic unit, school/college, institution, and community.
- GPSPS collaborates with graduate or professional school colleagues and departments to ensure that orientation activities and information
  - facilitate the transition and integration of new students into the academic program, department, school or college, and institution
  - articulate the realities, norms, and expectations of graduate education
  - explain the role of advisors and other personnel and resources that support student success

- identify resources within the academic department, school/college, or institution that support research, field experiences, and internships
- identify relevant academic and administrative policies, laws, procedures, and programs
- introduce resources regarding student rights and responsibilities and reporting options
- identify institutional services and programs, including personal health, counseling, disability resources, safety and security, and technology resources
- introduce programs, services, and opportunities for professional and career development

*Rationale:*



## 2.8 Financial Aid and Funding

- GPSPS provides access or referral to comprehensive and accurate information about the costs of the degree, scholarships, assistantships, fellowships, and grants.
- GPSPS offers financial aid services or provides access or referral to appropriate staff and funding resources to
  - provide information and guidance on completing required financial aid and funding applications
  - ensure clear and transparent procedures and policies for awarding financial aid and funding
  - ensure timely delivery of financial aid and funding offered by the academic department, school/college, or institution
  - assist in locating and accessing emergency funds for students in crisis

*Rationale:*



## 2.9 Academic Support

- GPSPS assists students in adjusting to the academic demands of graduate or professional education or provides access or referral to appropriate faculty, staff, and resources that help inform student choices and decisions about academic work.
- GPSPS involves faculty and administrators in the process of designing academic support programs and services. These components are reflective of the needs and interests of students.
- GPSPS provides information and education about issues of academic integrity and the policies and procedures for resolving academic dishonesty and other ethical conduct issues.
- GPSPS advocates for supervision, information, guidelines, training, mentoring, and professional development on appropriate practices and policies to graduate and professional students involved in research, teaching, or clinical work.
- GPSPS assists or provides access to resources and services for students to overcome hurdles or barriers to academic success. GPSPS does so by
  - arranging, facilitating, or referring students to study, tutor, thesis, or dissertation writing groups
  - providing information and referral to programs to improve oral communication and conversation skills
  - providing information and guidance to students with concerns or issues involving their supervisors or assistantship; advising of policies and procedures for seeking recourse or resolution; and making appropriate referrals
  - referring students with disabilities to resources or personnel who can conduct assessments and arrange accommodations
  - directing students with personal concerns to counseling and psychological services and other

resources and programs on the campus or in the community

- o discussing and clarifying students' educational, career, and life goals, and directing them to resources or others who can help them assess the appropriateness of their academic program choice and advise on the selection of courses and other educational experiences

*Rationale:*

2.10 Career and Professional Development

- GPSPS offers or provides access or referral to resources that enhance the career and professional development of its students. Program components are reflective of the needs and interests of students, as well as academic and non-academic employers.
- GPSPS provides opportunities for students to develop the knowledge, skills, professional ethics, and values necessary to progress through the profession or career for which the graduate or professional degree program offers preparation.
- GPSPS disseminates information about graduation activities and actively participates in graduation ceremonies.

*Rationale:*

2.11 Transition, Personal Development, and Campus Engagement

- GPSPS ensures that students have access to programs and services to assist with the transition into graduate or professional education.
- GPSPS develops support systems for fostering retention, persistence, and graduation.
- GPSPS offers or provides access or referral to programs and resources that promote personal growth and development and campus engagement of its students.
- GPSPS program components reflect the needs and interests of students.
- GPSPS disseminates relevant information about campus services, programs, and current events in a variety of media and formats.
- GPSPS facilitates opportunities for community building and intercultural interaction within and across academic units.

*Rationale:*

2.12 Student Advocacy

- GPSPS works closely with student and academic affairs offices and the graduate or professional school to promote representation of graduate and professional students on all appropriate levels of campus planning, policy-making, budgeting, program delivery, and governance.
- GPSPS advocates for students and empowers students to advocate for themselves.

*Rationale:*

Overview Questions:

1. What are the most significant student learning and development outcomes of GPSPS?
2. What difference does GPSPS make for students who engage with it?
3. What is the demonstrated impact of GPSPS on student learning, development, and success?
4. How has collaboration in program development and delivery affected its impact or outcomes?
5. What changes or adjustments have been made as a result of assessment activities?

## Part 3: ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP

### Suggested Evidence and Documentation:

1. Program goals and outcomes
2. Operating policies, procedures and/or handbook
3. Personnel and student handbook(s), policies and procedures, and organizational chart(s)
4. Personnel position descriptions, expectations, and performance review templates
5. Periodic reports, contracts, and personnel memos
6. Annual reports by program leaders
7. Program leader resumes, including additional professional involvement
8. Strategic and operating plans
9. Needs assessment of program constituents
10. Report of professional development activities

### Criterion Measures:

DNA	IE	0	1	2	3
Does Not Apply	Insufficient Evidence/ Unable to Rate	Does Not Meet	Partly Meets	Meets	Exceeds

- 3.1 Organization Documents
- Graduate and Professional Student Programs and Services (GPSPS) has clearly stated and current goals and outcomes, policies and procedures, descriptions of personnel responsibilities and expectations, and clear organizational charts.

*Rationale:*

- 3.2 Actions of Leaders
- Leaders model ethical behavior and institutional citizenship.
  - Leaders with organizational authority provide strategic planning, management and supervision, and program advancement.
  - GPSPS leaders promote student representation in planning, policy-making, and decision-making on areas of concern to students.

*Rationale:*

- 3.3 Strategic Planning
- GPSPS leaders articulate a vision and mission, as well as set goals and objectives based on the needs of populations served, intended student learning and development outcomes, and program outcomes.
  - GPSPS leaders facilitate continuous development, implementation, and assessment of effectiveness and goal attainment congruent with institutional mission and strategic plans.
  - GPSPS leaders promote career and professional development and assessment of career and post-graduation outcomes of students.
  - GPSPS leaders promote environments that provide meaningful opportunities for student learning, development, and engagement.
  - GPSPS leaders develop, adapt, and improve programs and services for populations served and institutional priorities.
  - GPSPS leaders include diverse perspectives to inform decision-making.

- GPSPS leaders intentionally seek perspectives of diverse faculty, administrators, and students.

*Rationale:*

#### 3.4 Management

- GPSPS leaders plan, allocate, and monitor the use of fiscal, physical, human, intellectual, and technological resources.
- GPSPS leaders manage human resource processes including recruitment, selection, performance planning, and succession planning.
- GPSPS leaders use evidence to inform decisions, incorporate sustainability practices, understand and integrate appropriate technologies, and are knowledgeable about relevant codes and laws.
- GPSPS leaders assess and take action to mitigate potential risks.

*Rationale:*

#### 3.5 Supervision

- GPSPS leaders manage human resource processes including professional development, supervision, evaluation, recognition, and reward.
- GPSPS leaders empower personnel to become effective leaders and to contribute to the effectiveness and success of the unit.
- GPSPS leaders encourage and support collaboration across the institution and scholarly contributions to the profession.
- GPSPS leaders identify and address individual, organizational, and environmental conditions that foster or inhibit mission achievement.

*Rationale:*

#### 3.6 Program Advancement

- GPSPS leaders advocate for and actively promote the mission and goals of the programs and services.
- GPSPS leaders advocate for the needs of graduate and professional school students with administrators in positions of authority or influence for policies, events, funding, facilities, and other areas of concern to graduate and professional students.
- GPSPS leaders inform stakeholders about issues affecting practice.
- GPSPS leaders facilitate processes to reach consensus where wide support is needed.
- GPSPS leaders advocate for representation in strategic planning initiatives at divisional and institutional levels.
- GPSPS leaders advocate for identity-based communities as a key element in fostering student success.

*Rationale:*

#### 3.7 Collaboration

- GPSPS develops collaborative mechanisms, working groups, or relationships to coordinate their work to benefit all graduate and professional students.
- If the GPSPS is housed outside of the graduate or professional school, GPSPS reaches out to the leadership of the graduate school for support and coordination of programs and services.

*Rationale:*

Overview Questions:

1. Explain the extent to which GPSPS leader(s) are viewed as and held responsible for advancing the departmental mission.
2. Explain the opportunities and limitations present for GPSPS leader(s) as they seek to fulfill the program mission.
3. How do GPSPS leaders advance the organization?
4. How do GPSPS leaders encourage collaboration across the institution?
5. How are GPSPS leaders accountable for their performance?
6. How have GPSPS leaders empowered personnel and engaged stakeholders?

Part 4: HUMAN RESOURCES

Suggested Evidence and Documentation:

1. Program mission, goals, and outcomes
2. Operating policy and procedure manuals/statements for program and institution
3. Organizational chart(s)
4. Personnel handbook, position descriptions (including student employees, volunteers, and graduate students), expectations, and performance review templates
5. Annual reports, including data on student utilization and staff-to-student ratios
6. Association or benchmark reports on operations and staffing
7. Student and staff personnel profiles or resumes, including demographic characteristics, educational background, and previous experience
8. Reports on personnel, including student employees and volunteers, employment experiences
9. Training agendas and schedules
10. Statement of staffing philosophy
11. Professional development activities
12. Minutes from staff meetings at which human resources related standards were discussed and addressed

Criterion Measures:

DNA	IE	0	1	2	3
Does Not Apply	Insufficient Evidence/ Unable to Rate	Does Not Meet	Partly Meets	Meets	Exceeds

- 4.1 Adequate Staffing and Support
- Graduate and Professional Student Programs and Services (GPSPS) is staffed adequately to accomplish mission and goals.
  - GPSPS has access to technical and support personnel adequate to accomplish the mission.

*Rationale:*

- 4.2 Recruitment, Supervision, and Professional Development
- GPSPS establishes procedures and expectations for personnel recruitment and selection, training, supervision, performance, and evaluation.
  - GPSPS provides personnel access to education and professional development opportunities to improve their competence, skills, and leadership capacity.
  - GPSPS considers work/life options available to personnel to promote recruitment and retention.

*Rationale:*

4.3 Employment Practices

- Administrators of GPSPS maintain personnel position descriptions, implement recruitment and hiring strategies that produce an inclusive workforce, and develop promotion practices that are fair, inclusive, proactive, and non-discriminatory.
- Personnel responsible for delivery of programs and services have written performance goals, objectives, and outcomes for each year's performance cycle to be used to plan, review, and evaluate work and performance and update them regularly.
- Results of individual personnel evaluations are used to recognize personnel performance, address performance issues, implement individual and/or collective personnel development and training programs, and inform the assessment of programs and services.

*Rationale:*

4.4 Personnel Training

- Personnel, including student employees and volunteers, receive appropriate and thorough training when hired and throughout their employment.
- Personnel have access to resources or receive specific training on institutional and governmental policies; procedures and laws pertaining to functions or activities they support; privacy and confidentiality; access to student records; sensitive institutional information; ethical and legal uses of technology; and technology used to store or access student records and institutional data.
- Personnel are trained on how and when to refer those in need of additional assistance to qualified personnel.
- Personnel are trained on systems and technologies necessary to perform their assigned responsibilities.
- Personnel engage in continuing professional development activities to keep abreast of research, theories, legislation, policies, and developments that affect programs and services.
- Administrators ensure that personnel are knowledgeable about and trained in safety, emergency procedures, and crisis prevention and response, including identification of threatening conduct or behavior, and incorporate a system for responding to and reporting such behaviors.
- Personnel are knowledgeable of and trained in safety and emergency procedures for securing and vacating facilities.

*Rationale:*

4.5 Professional Personnel

- Professional personnel either hold an earned graduate or professional degree in a field relevant to their position or possess an appropriate confirmation of educational credentials and related work experience.

*Rationale:*

4.6 Interns and Graduate Assistants

- Degree- or credential-seeking interns or graduate assistants are qualified by enrollment in an appropriate field of study and by relevant experience.



- Degree- or credential-seeking interns or graduate assistants are trained and supervised by professional personnel who possess applicable educational credentials and work experience, have supervisory experience and are cognizant of the dual roles of interns and graduate assistants as students and employees.
- Supervisors of interns or graduate assistants adhere to parameters of students' job descriptions, articulate intended learning outcomes in student job descriptions, adhere to agreed-upon work hours and schedules, and offer flexible scheduling when circumstances necessitate.
- Supervisors and students both agree to suitable compensation if circumstances necessitate additional hours.

*Rationale:*

4.7 Student Employees and Volunteers

- Student employees and volunteers are carefully selected, trained, supervised, and evaluated; have access to a supervisor; and are provided clear job descriptions, pre-service training based on assessed needs, and continuing development.

*Rationale:*

Overview Questions:

1. In what ways are personnel qualifications examined, performance evaluated, and personnel recognized for exemplary performance?
2. How are professional development efforts designed, how do they support achievement of the GPSPS mission, and how do they prepare and educate staff on relevant information?
3. How has the staffing model been developed to ensure successful program operations?
4. Describe the GPSPS philosophy toward engaging graduate interns and assistants, and student employees and volunteers in the program human resource pool.

Part 5: ETHICS

Suggested Evidence and Documentation:

1. Program code or statement of ethics
2. Ethics statements from relevant functional area professional associations
3. Personnel policies, procedures and/or handbook
4. Student code of conduct
5. Operating policies and procedures related to human subjects research (Institutional Review Board, IRB)
6. Minutes from meetings during which staff reviewed and discussed ethics

Criterion Measures:

DNA	IE	0	1	2	3
Does Not Apply	Insufficient Evidence/ Unable to Rate	Does Not Meet	Partly Meets	Meets	Exceeds

5.1 Ethical Standards

- Graduate and Professional Student Programs and Services (GPSPS) reviews applicable professional ethical standards and adopts or develops and implements appropriate statements of ethical practice.
- GPSPS publishes and adheres to statements of ethical practice, ensures their periodic review, and orients new personnel to relevant statements of ethical practice and related institutional policies.

*Rationale:*

5.2 Statement of Ethical Standards

- Statements of ethical standards specify that GPSPS personnel respect privacy and maintain confidentiality in communications and records as delineated by privacy laws.
- Statements of ethical standards specify limits on disclosure of information contained in students' records as well as requirements to disclose to appropriate authorities.
- Statements of ethical standards address conflicts of interest, or appearance thereof, by personnel in the performance of their work and reflect the responsibility of personnel to be fair, objective, and impartial in their interactions with others.
- Statements of ethical standards reference management of institutional funds, appropriate behavior regarding research and assessment with human participants, confidentiality of research and assessment data, students' rights and responsibilities, and issues surrounding scholarly integrity.
- Statements of ethical standards include the expectation that personnel confront and hold accountable other personnel who exhibit unethical behavior.

*Rationale:*

5.3 Ethical Obligations

- GPSPS personnel employ ethical decision making in the performance of their duties.
- GPSPS personnel inform users of programs and services of ethical obligations and limitations emanating from codes and laws or from licensure requirements.
- GPSPS personnel recognize and avoid conflicts of interest that could adversely influence their judgment or objectivity and, when unavoidable, recuse themselves from the situation.
- GPSPS personnel perform their duties within the scope of their position, training, expertise, and competence and make referrals when issues presented exceed the scope of the position.

*Rationale:*

Overview Questions:

1. What is the GPSPS strategy for managing student and personnel confidentiality and privacy issues?
2. How are ethical dilemmas and conflicts of interest identified and addressed?
3. How are ethics incorporated into the daily management and decision-making processes of GPSPS?

Part 6: LAW, POLICY, AND GOVERNANCE

Suggested Evidence and Documentation:

1. Emergency procedures
2. Operating policies and procedures
3. Personnel policies, procedures and/or handbook
4. Institutional codes of conduct
5. Contracts
6. Copies of related laws and legal obligations
7. Resources of professional liability insurance

Criterion Measures:

DNA	IE	0	1	2	3
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Does Not Apply	Insufficient Evidence/ Unable to Rate	Does Not Meet	Partly Meets	Meets	Exceeds
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6.1 Legal Obligations and Responsibilities

- Graduate and Professional Student Programs and Services (GPSPS) is in compliance with laws, regulations, and policies that relate to their respective responsibilities and that pose legal obligations, limitations, risks, and liabilities for the institution as a whole.
- GPSPS has access to legal advice needed for personnel to carry out their assigned responsibilities.
- GPSPS informs personnel, appropriate officials, and users of programs and services about existing and changing legal obligations, risks and liabilities, and limitations.
- GPSPS informs personnel about relevant accrediting organizations and standards.
- GPSPS informs personnel about professional liability insurance options and refers them to external sources if the institution does not provide coverage.

*Rationale:*

6.2 Policies and Procedures

- GPSPS has written policies and procedures on operations, transactions, or tasks that have legal implications.
- GPSPS regularly reviews policies that are informed by best practices, available evidence, and policy issues in higher education.
- GPSPS has procedures, systems and guidelines consistent with institutional policy for responding to threats, emergencies, and crisis situations and disseminates timely and accurate information to students, other members of the institutional community, and appropriate external organizations during emergency situations.

*Rationale:*

6.3 Harassment and Hostile Environments

- GPSPS personnel neither participate in nor condone any form of harassment or activity that demeans persons or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

*Rationale:*

6.4 Copyright Compliance

- GPSPS purchases or obtains permission to use copyrighted materials and instruments and includes appropriate citations on materials and instruments.

*Rationale:*

6.5 Governance

- GPSPS informs personnel about internal and external governance organizations that affect programs and services.

*Rationale:*

Overview Questions:

1. What are the crucial legal, policy and, governance issues faced by GPSPS, and how are they addressed?
2. How are personnel instructed, advised, or assisted with legal, policy, and governance concerns?
3. How are personnel informed about internal and external governance systems?

**Part 7: DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND ACCESS**

Suggested Evidence and Documentation:

1. Diversity statements
2. Goals and objectives related to diversity, equity, and access
3. Training plans and agendas for personnel
4. Lists of programs and curriculums related to diversity, equity, and access
5. Personnel policies, procedures, and/or handbook (specifically statements against harassment or discrimination)
6. Facilities audit
7. Assessment results such as participation rates, demographics, campus climate, and student needs

Criterion Measures:

DNA	IE	0	1	2	3
Does Not Apply	Insufficient Evidence/ Unable to Rate	Does Not Meet	Partly Meets	Meets	Exceeds

- 7.1 Inclusive Work Environments
- Graduate and Professional Student Programs and Services (GPSPS) creates and maintains educational work environments that are welcoming, accessible, inclusive, equitable, and free from harassment.
  - GPSPS does not discriminate on the basis of ability; age; cultural identity; ethnicity; family educational history; gender identity and expression; nationality; political affiliation; race; religious affiliation; sex; sexual orientation; economic, marital, social, or veteran status; or any other basis included in institutional policies and codes and laws.

*Rationale:*

- 7.2 Structural Aspects of Equity, Access, and Inclusion
- GPSPS ensures physical, program, and resource access for all constituents; modifies or removes policies, practices, systems, technologies, facilities, and structures that create barriers or produce inequities; and ensures that when facilities and structures cannot be modified, they do not impede access.
  - GPSPS responds to the needs of all constituents served when establishing hours of operation and developing methods of delivering programs, services, and resources.
  - GPSPS recognizes the needs of distance and online learning students by directly providing or assisting them to gain access to comparable services and resources.

*Rationale:*

- 7.3 Ensuring Diversity, Equity, and Access
- GPSPS commits to and advocates for an inclusive and culturally-responsive environment for all graduate and professional students.
  - GPSPS advocates for sensitivity to multicultural and social justice concerns by the institution and its personnel.

- GPSPS collaborates with colleagues and departments across the institution to promote an inclusive campus climate free of discrimination, harassment, and other barriers to success.
- GPSPS establishes goals for diversity, equity, and access; fosters communication and practices that enhance understanding of identity, culture, self-expression, and heritage; and promotes respect for commonalities and differences among people within their historical and cultural contexts.
- GPSPS addresses the characteristics and needs of diverse constituents when establishing and implementing culturally relevant and inclusive programs, services, policies, procedures, and practices.
- GPSPS provides personnel with diversity, equity, and access training and holds personnel accountable for applying the training to their work.

*Rationale:*

Overview Questions:

1. How does GPSPS ensure constituents experience a welcoming, accessible, and inclusive environment that is equitable and free from harassment?
2. How does GPSPS address imbalance in participation among selected populations of students?
3. How does GPSPS address imbalance in staffing patterns among selected populations of program personnel?
4. How does GPSPS ensure cultural competence of its personnel to ensure inclusion in the program?
5. How does GPSPS encourage and provide opportunities for ongoing professional development for its personnel?

## Part 8: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Suggested Evidence and Documentation:

1. Promotional material (brochures/sources of information about the program, catalogs, brochures, staff and student handbooks)
2. Media procedures and guidelines
3. List and description of relationships with internal and external partners
4. Minutes from meetings/interactions with key stakeholders

Criterion Measures:

DNA	IE	0	1	2	3
Does Not Apply	Insufficient Evidence/ Unable to Rate	Does Not Meet	Partly Meets	Meets	Exceeds

### 8.1 Internal and External Populations

- Graduate and Professional Student Programs and Services (GPSPS) reaches out to internal and external populations to establish, maintain, and promote understanding and effective relations with those that have a significant interest in or potential effect on the students or other constituents served by the programs and services.
- GPSPS reaches out to internal and external populations to garner support and resources for programs and services, collaborate in offering or improving programs and services to meet the needs of students and other constituents and to achieve program and student outcomes, and engage diverse individuals, groups, communities, and organizations to enrich the educational environment and experiences of students and other constituents.
- GPSPS reaches out to internal and external populations to disseminate information about the programs and services.

- GPSPS works with the graduate college or professional school and with their student organizations to develop advisory councils or systems to facilitate communication and collaboration; to solicit feedback; and to make recommendations on student needs, programs, and services.
- GPSPS personnel advocate for the needs of the graduate student population and work in conjunction with the graduate or professional school and the graduate or professional student organizations.
- GPSPS personnel work collaboratively with colleagues in other graduate and professional programs at their institution and with departments (including enrollment services, international student services, career services, student affairs, academic support services, research and grants offices, development, and alumni affairs) for the purpose of developing strategies for connecting students to the larger community and positively affecting graduate student learning and professional development.

*Rationale:*

8.2 Marketing

- Promotional and descriptive information is accurate and free of deception and misrepresentation.

*Rationale:*

8.3 Procedures and Guidelines

- GPSPS has procedures and guidelines consistent with institutional policy to communicate with the media; distribute information through print, broadcast, and online sources; contract with external organizations for delivery of programs and services; cultivate, solicit, and manage gifts; and apply to and manage funds from grants.

*Rationale:*

Overview Questions:

1. With which relevant individuals, campus offices, and external agencies must GPSPS maintain effective relations? Why are these relationships important, and how are they mutually beneficial?
2. How does GPSPS maintain effective relationships with program constituents?
3. How does GPSPS assess the effectiveness of its relations with individuals, campus offices and external agencies?

Part 9: FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Suggested Evidence and Documentation:

1. Budgets and the budget process
2. Financial statements and audit reports
3. Student fee process and allocation (if applicable)
4. Financial statements for grants, gifts, and other external resources

Criterion Measures:

DNA	IE	0	1	2	3
Does Not Apply	Insufficient Evidence/ Unable to Rate	Does Not Meet	Partly Meets	Meets	Exceeds

9.1 Adequate Funding

- Graduate and Professional Student Programs and Services (GPSPS) has funding to accomplish its mission and goals.

*Rationale:*

9.2 Financial Planning and Implementation

- GPSPS conducts a comprehensive analysis to determine unmet needs, relevant expenditures, external and internal resources, and impact on students and the institution.
- GPSPS uses the budget as a planning tool to reflect commitment to the mission and goals of the programs and services and of the institution.
- Financial reports provide an accurate financial overview of the organization and provide clear, understandable, and timely data upon which personnel can plan and make informed decisions.

*Rationale:*

9.3 Policies, Procedures, and Protocols

- GPSPS administers funds in accordance with established institutional accounting procedures.
- GPSPS demonstrates efficient and effective use and responsible stewardship of fiscal resources consistent with institutional protocols.
- Procurement procedures are consistent with institutional policies, ensure purchases comply with laws and codes for usability and access, ensure the institution receives value for the funds spent, and consider information available for comparing the ethical and environmental impact of products and services purchased.

*Rationale:*

Overview Questions:

1. What is the funding strategy for GPSPS, and why is this the most appropriate approach?
2. How does GPSPS ensure fiscal responsibility, responsible stewardship, and cost-effectiveness?
3. If applicable, how does GPSPS go about increasing financial resources?

Part 10: TECHNOLOGY

Suggested Evidence and Documentation:

1. Technology policies and procedures
2. Equipment inventory

Criterion Measures:

DNA	IE	0	1	2	3
Does Not Apply	Insufficient Evidence/ Unable to Rate	Does Not Meet	Partly Meets	Meets	Exceeds

10.1 Current and Adequate Technology

- Graduate and Professional Student Programs and Services (GPSPS) has adequate technology to support achievement of its mission and goals.
- Use of technology complies with institutional policies and procedures and relevant codes and laws.

*Rationale:*

- 10.2 Use of Technology
- GPSPS uses current technology to provide updated information regarding mission, location, staffing, programs, services, and official contacts to students and other constituents in accessible formats.
  - GPSPS uses current technology to provide an avenue for students and other constituents to communicate sensitive information in a secure format, and enhance the delivery of programs and services for all students.

*Rationale:*

- 10.3 Data Protection and Upgrades
- GPSPS backs up data on a regular basis.
  - GPSPS articulates and adheres to policies and procedures regarding ethical and legal use of technology, as well as for protecting the confidentiality and security of information.
  - GPSPS implements a replacement plan and cycle for all technology with attention to sustainability and incorporates accessibility features into technology-based programs and services.

*Rationale:*

- 10.4 Student Technology Access
- GPSPS has policies on student use of technology that are clear, easy to understand, and available to all students.
  - GPSPS provides information or referral to support services for those needing assistance in accessing or using technology, provides instruction or training on how to use the technology, and informs students of implications of misuse of technologies.

*Rationale:*

Overview Questions:

1. How is technology inventoried, maintained, and updated?
2. How is information security maintained?
3. How does GPSPS ensure that relevant technology is available for all who are served by the program?
4. How does GPSPS use technology to enhance the delivery of programs, resources, services and overall operations?
5. How does GPSPS utilize technology to foster its learning outcomes?

## Part 11: FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

Suggested Evidence and Documentation:

1. Equipment inventory
2. Facilities audit and plans for renovations, additions, and enhancements
3. Capital projects, if applicable
4. Structural design or maps to show space allocation
5. Images of the space



Criterion Measures:

DNA	IE	0	1	2	3
Does Not Apply	Insufficient Evidence/ Unable to Rate	Does Not Meet	Partly Meets	Meets	Exceeds

- 11.1 Design of Facilities
- Graduate and Professional Student Programs and Services (GPSPS) facilities are intentionally designed and located in suitable, accessible, and safe spaces that demonstrate universal design and support the GPSPS mission and goals.
  - Facilities are designed to engage various constituents and promote learning.
  - The design of the facilities guarantees the security and privacy of records and ensures the confidentiality of sensitive information and conversations.

*Rationale:*

- 11.2 Work Space
- Personnel have workspaces that are suitably located and accessible, well equipped, adequate in size, and designed to support their work and responsibilities.
  - Personnel are able to secure their work.
  - GPSPS advocates for adequate office space, work-space, and equipment for research, teaching, and graduate assistants.
  - GPSPS advocates that research, teaching, and graduate assistants' work space be located where meaningful interactions with students, faculty members, and staff members may take place.

*Rationale:*

- 11.3 Equipment Acquisition and Facilities Use
- GPSPS incorporates sustainable practices in use of facilities and purchase of equipment.
  - Facilities and equipment are evaluated on an established cycle and are in compliance with codes, laws, and accepted practices for access, health, safety, and security.
  - When acquiring capital equipment, GPSPS takes into account expenses related to regular maintenance and life-cycle costs.

*Rationale:*

Overview Questions:

1. How are facilities inventoried and maintained?
2. How does GPSPS integrate sustainable practices?
3. How does GPSPS ensure that facilities, workspaces, and equipment are considered in decision-making?
4. How is GPSPS intentional about space allocation and usage?

## Part 12: ASSESSMENT

Suggested Evidence and Documentation:

1. Program goals, key indicators, outcomes, and related assessment data
2. Program student learning and development outcomes and related assessment data
3. Description of assessment cycle
4. Assessment plans and annual assessment reports

5. Minutes of meetings at which assessment activities and results discussed
6. Professional development activities to improve assessment competence

Criterion Measures:

DNA	IE	0	1	2	3
Does Not Apply	Insufficient Evidence/ Unable to Rate	Does Not Meet	Partly Meets	Meets	Exceeds

#### 12.1 Assessment Plan and Practice

- Graduate and Professional Student Programs and Services (GPSPS) develops an ongoing cycle of assessment plans, processes, and activities.
- GPSPS identifies programmatic goals and intended program outcomes as well as outcomes for student learning and development.
- GPSPS identifies and assesses the learning and development outcome domains and dimensions relevant to the GPSPS programs and services.
- GPSPS assesses how graduate and professional students experience the campus and what institutional and societal barriers they encounter.
- GPSPS documents progress toward achievement of goals and outcomes.
- GPSPS employs multiple measures, methods, and manageable processes for gathering, interpreting, and evaluating data.
- GPSPS employs ethical practices in the assessment process.
- GPSPS has access to adequate fiscal, human, professional development, and technological resources to develop and implement assessment plans.

*Rationale:*

#### 12.2 Reporting and Implementing Results

- GPSPS interprets and uses assessment results to demonstrate accountability and inform planning and decision-making.
- GPSPS uses data to guide program and services development.
- GPSPS reports aggregated results to respondent groups and stakeholders.
- GPSPS assesses effectiveness of implemented changes and provides evidence of improvement of programs and services.

*Rationale:*

Overview Questions:

1. What is the comprehensive assessment strategy for GPSPS?
2. What are priorities of the assessment program, and how are those developed?
3. How does GPSPS integrate assessment and evaluation into all aspects of daily operations (e.g., advising, event planning)?
4. How are tangible, measurable learning and program outcomes determined to ensure the achievement of GPSPS mission and goals?
5. How effective is the assessment strategy in demonstrating goal achievement and student learning?
6. How does GPSPS use assessment results to inform program improvement?
7. How does GPSPS share assessment results with relevant constituencies?
8. How does GPSPS support ongoing development of assessment competencies for personnel?

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*General Standards revised in 2014;  
GPSPS content developed/revised in 2008 & 2017*

## Work Form A – Rating Discrepancies

### INSTRUCTIONS:

This work form should be completed following a review of the individual ratings of the team members. Item numbers for which there is a substantial rating discrepancy should be discussed before completing the remaining work forms. Discrepancies among ratings should be identified, discussed, and reconciled for consensus.

Part	Discrepancies	Resolution/Final Decision
1. Mission		
2. Program		
3. Organization and Leadership		
4. Human Resources		
5. Ethics		
6. Law, Policy, and Governance		
7. Diversity, Equity, and Access		
8. Internal and External Relations		
9. Financial Resources		
10. Technology		
11. Facilities and Equipment		
12. Assessment		

## Work Form B – Strengths and Areas for Improvement

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

This work form should be completed following a review of the individual ratings of the team members. Examine the ratings of each criterion measure by the team members, and record the following in the form below:

- Strengths: Item number(s) for which all participants have given a rating of 3, indicating agreement that the criterion *exceeds* the standard.
- Areas for Improvement: Item number(s) for which all participants have given a rating of 0 or 1, indicating agreement that the criterion *does not meet* or *partly meets* the standard. Items rated IE for *insufficient evidence/unable to rate* should be listed here as well.

Note – Items not listed in one of these categories represent consensus among the raters that practice in that area is satisfactory, having been rated a 2, which indicates agreement that the criterion *meets* the standard.

Part	Strengths: Items that exceed the standard (consensus ratings = 3)	Areas for Improvement: Items that do not meet or partly meet the standard (consensus ratings = 0, 1)
1. Mission		
2. Program		
3. Organization and Leadership		
4. Human Resources		
5. Ethics		
6. Law, Policy, and Governance		
7. Diversity, Equity, and Access		
8. Internal and External Relations		
9. Financial Resources		

10. Technology		
11. Facilities and Equipment		
12. Assessment		

## Work Form C – Recommendations for Unit Action

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

This is the last form to be completed by the review team. List the items needing follow-up action for improvement and indicate what requires attention. The team or coordinator should consider including any criterion measure rated as being not met by the reviewers, as well as those with significant discrepancies that are not resolved by team discussion.

Part	Item Requiring Attention
1. Mission	
2. Program	
3. Organization and Leadership	
4. Human Resources	
5. Ethics	
6. Law, Policy, and Governance	
7. Diversity, Equity, and Access	
8. Internal and External Relations	
9. Financial Resources	
10. Technology	
11. Facilities and Equipment	
12. Assessment	

## Work Form D – Beginning the Action Plan

### INSTRUCTIONS:

This work form is for use by the staff of the unit being reviewed and is the first step in identifying the actions to be taken as a consequence of study results. Using the Items Requiring Attention listed in Work Form C, write a brief action plan that identifies the focus and intended outcomes of the next steps in to be taken in each area.

#### Part 1. Mission

#### Part 2. Program

#### Part 3. Organization and Leadership

#### Part 4. Human Resources

#### Part 5. Ethics

#### Part 6. Law, Policy, and Governance

#### Part 7. Diversity, Equity, and Access

#### Part 8. Internal and External Relations

#### Part 9. Financial Resources



Part 10. Technology

Part 11. Facilities and Equipment

Part 12. Assessment



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# GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

CAS Standards and Guidelines

## Part 1. MISSION

The mission of Graduate and Professional Student Programs and Services (GPSPS) must be to promote academic, personal, and professional growth and development of students enrolled in graduate and professional schools.

Central to this mission, GPSPS must collaborate and consult with institutional leadership, individuals, and departments essential to the success of graduate and professional students.

GPSPS must develop, disseminate, implement, and regularly review their missions, which must be consistent with the mission of the institution and with applicable professional standards. The mission must be appropriate for the institution's students and other constituents. Mission statements must reference student learning and development.

## Part 2. PROGRAM

Graduate and Professional Student Programs and Services (GPSPS) must provide programs and services to meet the academic, personal, and professional needs and interests of graduate and professional students.

Whether organized as a central office within the **institution's graduate school; located within an academic** department, school, or college; or offered in collaboration with other student and academic affairs offices, GPSPS must work in close collaboration with others with expertise and resources to meet the needs and interests of graduate and professional students.

GPSPS must use data about their graduate and professional students and their experiences to tailor programs and services.

GPSPS should offer inclusive programs that reflect the diversity of their students.

To achieve their mission, GPSPS must contribute to

- students' formal education, which includes both the curriculum and the co-curriculum
- student progression and timely completion of educational goals
- preparation of students for their careers, citizenship, and lives
- student learning and development

GPSPS should offer professional and career development and experiential education programs that complement the curriculum and contribute to students' building of core competencies and transferable skills.

To contribute to student learning and development, GPSPS must

- identify relevant and desirable student learning and development outcomes

- articulate how the student learning and development outcomes align with the six CAS student learning and development domains and related dimensions
- assess relevant and desirable student learning and development
- provide evidence of impact on outcomes
- articulate contributions to or support of student learning and development in the domains not specifically assessed
- use evidence gathered to create strategies for improvement of programs and services

## STUDENT LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT DOMAINS AND DIMENSIONS

Domain: knowledge acquisition, integration, construction, and application

- Dimensions: understanding knowledge from a range of disciplines; connecting knowledge to other knowledge, ideas, and experiences; constructing knowledge; and relating knowledge to daily life

Domain: cognitive complexity

- Dimensions: critical thinking, reflective thinking, effective reasoning, and creativity

Domain: intrapersonal development

- Dimensions: realistic self-appraisal, self-understanding, and self-respect; identity development; commitment to ethics and integrity; and spiritual awareness

Domain: interpersonal competence

- Dimensions: meaningful relationships, interdependence, collaboration, and effective leadership

Domain: humanitarianism and civic engagement

- Dimensions: understanding and appreciation of cultural and human differences, social responsibility, global perspective, and sense of civic responsibility

Domain: practical competence

- Dimensions: pursuing goals, communicating effectively, technical competence, managing personal affairs, managing career development, demonstrating professionalism, maintaining health and wellness, and living a purposeful and satisfying life

[LD Outcomes: See *The Council for the Advancement of Standards Learning and Development Outcomes* statement for examples of outcomes related to these domains and dimensions.]

GPSPS must be

- intentionally designed
- guided by theories and knowledge of learning and development

- integrated into the life of the institution
- reflective of developmental and demographic profiles of the student population
- responsive to needs of individuals, populations with distinct needs, and relevant constituencies
- delivered using multiple formats, strategies, and contexts
- designed to provide universal access

GPSPS must collaborate with colleagues and departments across the institution to promote student learning and development, persistence, and success.

GPSPS must offer programs and services that promote

- **students' continued cognitive, emotional, ethical, and social development**
- individual and community responsibility, academic integrity, and ethical practice

In support of successful degree completion and achievement of other academic goals, GPSPS must ensure **student access to programs and services that address students' needs; provide opportunities for** involvement and engagement with students, staff, and faculty members; and facilitate community-building and social integration across disciplines.

GPSPS must connect students with appropriate resources through collaboration and consultation with campus partners and external experts.

## ADMISSIONS

GPSPS must include an admissions function or work closely with graduate or professional school admissions staff and faculty advisers to

- ensure timely dissemination of information and materials
- provide equal access for all prospective students interested in and capable of pursuing graduate or professional education at the institution
- work with stakeholders to develop enrollment goals, related strategies, and resources that are needed to reach those goals
- coordinate programs for prospective students on the realities of graduate education and deliberate educational planning

## ORIENTATION

GPSPS must orient students to the academic unit, school/college, institution, and community.

GPSPS should work closely with those responsible for orientation to offer information in a variety of media and formats.

GPSPS must collaborate with graduate or professional school colleagues and departments to ensure that orientation activities and information

- facilitate the transition and integration of new students into the academic program, department, school or college, and institution

- articulate the realities, norms, and expectations of graduate education
- explain the role of advisors and other personnel and resources that support student success
- identify resources within the academic department, school/college, or institution that support research, field experiences, and internships
- identify relevant academic and administrative policies, laws, procedures, and programs
- introduce resources regarding student rights and responsibilities and reporting options
- identify institutional services and programs, including personal health, counseling, disability resources, safety and security, and technology resources
- introduce programs, services, and opportunities for professional and career development

GPSPS should provide information about student organizations and other formal or informal support groups and opportunities for involvement for graduate and professional students, and especially for underrepresented students.

GPSPS should employ the assistance of advanced graduate and professional students in planning and implementing the orientation program.

#### FINANCIAL AID AND FUNDING

GPSPS must provide access or referral to comprehensive and accurate information about the costs of the degree, scholarships, assistantships, fellowships, and grants.

GPSPS should assess or have access to data on the financial needs of graduate and professional students and advocate for additional funding and resources.

GPSPS must offer financial aid services or provide access or referral to appropriate staff and funding resources to

- provide information and guidance on completing required financial aid and funding applications
- ensure clear and transparent procedures and policies for awarding financial aid and funding
- ensure timely delivery of financial aid and funding offered by the academic department, school/college, or institution
- assist in locating and accessing emergency funds for students in crisis

GPSPS should collaborate with experts to provide information, programs, or services on financial literacy, debt management, investing, selecting employee benefits, income and other taxes, and insurance.

#### ACADEMIC SUPPORT

GPSPS must assist students in adjusting to the academic demands of graduate or professional education or provide access or referral to appropriate faculty, staff, and resources that help inform student choices and decisions about academic work.

GPSPS must involve faculty and administrators in the process of designing academic support programs and services. These components must be reflective of the needs and interests of students.

GPSPS should have access to and monitor student academic progress and achievement of goals and degree completion.

GPSPS must provide information and education about issues of academic integrity and the policies and procedures for resolving academic dishonesty and other ethical conduct issues.

GPSPS must advocate for supervision, information, guidelines, training, mentoring, and professional development on appropriate practices and policies to graduate and professional students involved in research, teaching, or clinical work.

GPSPS should consult and collaborate with faculty and administrators to

- provide information about grading and other policies; academic writing and citation style; the pace for learning; and other realities about academic demands and performance in their program of study
- provide information and education about issues of academic integrity and the policies and procedures for resolving academic dishonesty
- provide or arrange for programs on research methodologies, intellectual property, and research protocols, including institutional review board policies
- provide or arrange for professional development programs in teaching, presentation of research, academic and research integrity, thesis and dissertation preparation, grant writing, responsible ethical conduct of research, preparing future faculty, diversity training, and related topics

GPSPS must assist or provide access to resources and services for students to overcome hurdles or barriers to academic success. GPSPS must do so by

- arranging, facilitating, or referring students to study, tutor, thesis, or dissertation writing groups
- providing information and referral to programs to improve oral communication and conversation skills
- providing information and guidance to students with concerns or issues involving their supervisors or assistantship; advising of policies and procedures for seeking recourse or resolution; and making appropriate referrals
- referring students with disabilities to resources or personnel who can conduct assessments and arrange accommodations
- directing students with personal concerns to counseling and psychological services and other resources and programs on the campus or in the community
- **discussing and clarifying students' educational, career, and life goals**, and directing them to resources or others who can help them assess the appropriateness of their academic program choice and advise on the selection of courses and other educational experiences

GPSPS should encourage the development of faculty- and peer-advising and mentoring programs, and should collaborate with academic programs on orientation and training for faculty, staff, and peer-advisers responsible for advising and mentoring students throughout their graduate/professional program experience.

## CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

GPSPS must offer or provide access or referral to resources that enhance the career and professional development of its students. Program components must be reflective of the needs and interests of students, as well as academic and non-academic employers.

GPSPS should collaborate or consult with units within the institution and with external organizations, such as professional associations, that provide career and professional development programs, services, and resources.

GPSPS career and professional development programs should be informed by research, evidence, and information from graduate and professional students, alumni, and employers.

GPSPS must provide opportunities for students to develop the knowledge, skills, professional ethics, and values necessary to progress through the profession or career for which the graduate or professional degree program offers preparation.

GPSPS program components should include

- career counseling or coaching
- information and resources on careers, postdoctoral training and residencies, specializations within fields and professions, further education and training opportunities, and fellowships
- opportunities to explore career pathways available to those with graduate or professional degrees
- opportunities to gain experience related to the field or profession through internships, practicums, summer or part-time jobs, job shadowing, or volunteer work
- job or other postgraduate search services, which may include the use of social media and other electronic sources
- access to advice and guidance from faculty, peer mentors, alumni, and other professionals
- activities to engage graduate and professional students with alumni
- collection and dissemination of graduating student initial career outcomes information

GPSPS should support graduate and professional students' professional development by providing information about disciplinary or interdisciplinary scholarly events and travel grants to attend and/or present at professional meetings.

GPSPS should provide access to information on the job market and salary to students seeking careers in their field of study.

GPSPS must disseminate information about graduation activities and actively participate in graduation ceremonies.

## TRANSITION, PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT

GPSPS must ensure that students have access to programs and services to assist with the transition into graduate or professional education.

GPSPS must develop support systems for fostering retention, persistence, and graduation.



GPSPS must offer or provide access or referral to programs and resources that promote personal growth and development and campus engagement of its students.

GPSPS program components must reflect the needs and interests of students.

GPSPS program and resource components should include

- assistance for international students with cultural adjustment and regulatory compliance
- policies pertaining to student conduct
- assistance with on- and off-campus housing
- information about accessibility or access to disabilities services
- information about getting to and from campus, transportation options, and parking
- student organizations, governance support, and leadership development
- social and networking activities and programs
- multicultural and intercultural activities and events
- access to recreation and fitness activities
- access to health and wellness resources, services, and support, including assistance for students experiencing emergencies and crises
- resources, services, and accommodations for students who are pregnant, adopting a child, or are in parental or caretaker roles

GPSPS must disseminate relevant information about campus services, programs, and current events in a variety of media and formats.

Access to GPSPS services should be available via print, broadcast, online, social media, and other channels of communication appropriate to the institution and community.

GPSPS must facilitate opportunities for community building and intercultural interaction within and across academic units.

GPSPS should offer students opportunities for interaction with faculty, staff members, and peers within and outside their fields of study.

GPSPS should encourage and support formation of student organizations and activities, multicultural and culturally-specific communities, special-interest student organizations, honoraries, mentoring, and leadership programs.

Graduate and professional students should have adequate study, meeting, and lounge spaces that serve as gathering and community building spaces for students from different departments and academic programs. These spaces should be separate and distinct from undergraduate meeting spaces and encourage and support informal meetings, study groups, quiet study space, student organization activities, and co-curricular programs.

GPSPS should partner with graduate faculty members to offer discipline specific co-curricular programs or collaborate with other departments, faculty members, and staff from related disciplines to offer such programs to a larger population of graduate students.

## STUDENT ADVOCACY

GPSPS must work closely with student and academic affairs offices and the graduate or professional school to promote representation of graduate and professional students on all appropriate levels of campus planning, policy-making, budgeting, program delivery, and governance.

GPSPS must advocate for students and empower students to advocate for themselves.

Graduate and professional student advocacy should focus on

- access to comprehensive academic and student support services and information
- recognition of historically underrepresented graduate and professional student populations
- availability and equitable distribution of funds in support of student organizations, governance, conference travel, and research
- recognition of graduate and professional student achievement and scholarship
- institutional research and assessment that enhance understanding of the demographic characteristics and special needs of graduate and professional students
- provision of on-campus housing designed for graduate and professional students
- assistance in locating accessible, affordable, and safe off-campus housing
- provision of child care services
- expanded access to libraries, laboratories, and studios as needed on days, nights, and weekends throughout the year
- coordination of campus and community transit, parking, and security to access classes, libraries, laboratories, and studios

GPSPS must design and deliver programs and services based on the needs and interests of students, including those underrepresented based on identity and experiences, such as veterans, students with family responsibilities, and students with disabilities.

### Part 3. ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP

To achieve program and student learning and development outcomes, Graduate and Professional Student Programs and Services (GPSPS) must be purposefully structured for effectiveness. GPSPS must have clearly stated and current

- goals and outcomes
- policies and procedures
- responsibilities and performance expectations for personnel
- organizational charts demonstrating clear channels of authority

Leaders must model ethical behavior and institutional citizenship.

Leaders with organizational authority for the GPSPS must provide strategic planning, management and supervision, and program advancement.

#### Strategic Planning

- articulate a vision and mission that drive short- and long-term planning
- set goals and objectives based on the needs of the populations served, intended student learning and development outcomes, and program outcomes
- facilitate continuous development, implementation, and assessment of program effectiveness and goal attainment congruent with institutional mission and strategic plans
- promote environments that provide opportunities for student learning, development, and engagement
- develop, adapt, and improve programs and services in response to the changing needs of populations served and evolving institutional priorities
- include diverse perspectives to inform decision making

GPSPS leaders must promote career and professional development and assessment of career and post-graduation outcomes of students.

GPSPS leaders must intentionally seek perspectives of diverse faculty, administrators, and students.

#### Management and Supervision

- plan, allocate, and monitor the use of fiscal, physical, human, intellectual, and technological resources
- manage human resource processes including recruitment, selection, professional development, supervision, performance planning, succession planning, evaluation, recognition, and reward
- influence others to contribute to the effectiveness and success of the unit
- empower professional, support, and student personnel to become effective leaders
- encourage and support collaboration with colleagues and departments across the institution
- encourage and support scholarly contributions to the profession
- identify and address individual, organizational, and environmental conditions that foster or inhibit mission achievement
- use current and valid evidence to inform decisions
- incorporate sustainability practices in the management and design of programs, services, and facilities
- understand appropriate technologies and integrate them into programs and services
- be knowledgeable about codes and laws relevant to programs and services and ensure that programs and services meet those requirements
- assess and take action to mitigate potential risks

#### Program Advancement

- advocate for and actively promote the mission and goals of the programs and services
- inform stakeholders about issues affecting practice
- facilitate processes to reach consensus where wide support is needed
- advocate for representation in strategic planning initiatives at divisional and institutional levels

GPSPS leaders must advocate for the needs of graduate and professional school students with administrators in positions of authority or influence for policies, events, funding, facilities, and other areas of concern to graduate and professional students.

GPSPS leaders must advocate for identity-based communities as a key element in fostering student success.

GPSPS leaders must promote student representation in planning, policy-making, and decision-making on areas of concern to students.

GPSPS must develop collaborative mechanisms, working groups, or relationships to coordinate their work to benefit all graduate and professional students.

Staffing and reporting structures of GPSPS may vary. GPSPS may be organized as a central office within the graduate school; located within an academic department, school, or college; or offered in collaboration with other student and academic affairs offices.

If the GPSPS is housed outside of the graduate or professional school, GPSPS must reach out to the leadership of the graduate school for support and coordination of programs and services.

#### Part 4. HUMAN RESOURCES

Graduate and Professional Student Programs and Services (GPSPS) must be staffed adequately by individuals qualified to accomplish mission and goals.

GPSPS must have access to technical and support personnel adequate to accomplish their mission.

Within institutional guidelines, GPSPS must

- establish procedures for personnel recruitment and selection, training, performance planning, and evaluation
- set expectations for supervision and performance
- provide personnel access to continuing and advanced education and appropriate professional development opportunities to improve their competence, skills, and leadership capacity
- consider work/life options available to personnel (e.g., compressed work schedules, flextime, job sharing, remote work, or telework) to promote recruitment and retention of personnel

Administrators of GPSPS must

- ensure that all personnel have updated position descriptions
- implement recruitment and selection/hiring strategies that produce a workforce inclusive of underrepresented populations
- develop promotion practices that are fair, inclusive, proactive, and non-discriminatory

Personnel responsible for delivery of GPSPS must have written performance goals, objectives, and **outcomes for each year's** performance cycle to be used to plan, review, and evaluate work and performance. The performance plan must be updated regularly to reflect changes during the performance cycle.

Results of individual personnel evaluations must be used to recognize personnel performance, address performance issues, implement individual and/or collective personnel development and training programs, and inform the assessment of programs and services.

GPSPS personnel, when hired and throughout their employment, must receive appropriate and thorough training.

GPSPS personnel, including student employees and volunteers, must have access to resources or receive specific training on

- institutional policies pertaining to functions or activities they support
- privacy and confidentiality policies
- laws regarding access to student records
- policies and procedures for dealing with sensitive institutional information
- policies and procedures related to technology used to store or access student records and institutional data
- how and when to refer those in need of additional assistance to qualified personnel and have access to a supervisor for assistance in making these judgments
- systems and technologies necessary to perform their assigned responsibilities
- ethical and legal uses of technology

GPSPS personnel must engage in continuing professional development activities to keep abreast of the research, theories, legislation, policies, and developments that affect their programs and services.

Administrators of GPSPS must ensure that personnel are knowledgeable about and trained in safety, emergency procedures, and crisis prevention and response. Risk management efforts must address identification of threatening conduct or behavior and must incorporate a system for responding to and reporting such behaviors.

GPSPS personnel must be knowledgeable of and trained in safety and emergency procedures for securing and vacating facilities.

## PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL

GPSPS professional personnel either must hold an earned graduate or professional degree in a field relevant to their position or must possess an appropriate combination of educational credentials and related work experience.

GPSPS professional personnel should be educated in student and academic services in order to design and implement intentional support and services for graduate and professional students.

## INTERNS OR GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

Degree- or credential-seeking interns or graduate assistants must be qualified by enrollment in an appropriate field of study and relevant experience. These students must be trained and supervised by

professional personnel who possess applicable educational credentials and work experience and have supervisory experience. Supervisors must be cognizant of the dual roles interns and graduate assistants have as both student and employee.

Supervisors must

- adhere to parameters of students' job descriptions
- articulate intended learning outcomes in student job descriptions
- adhere to agreed-upon work hours and schedules
- offer flexible scheduling when circumstances necessitate

Supervisors should provide a thorough introduction to the increasing diversity of the population, educate interns and graduate students on the unique needs of the graduate and professional student populations, including discipline-specific issues, and identify the distinct stressors common to this population.

Supervisors should develop written performance goals, objectives, and outcomes for each year's performance cycle to be used to plan, review, and evaluate work and performance of graduate interns or assistants.

Supervisors and students must both agree to suitable compensation if circumstances necessitate additional hours.

Compensation may include hourly wage, stipends, tuition remission, or credit.

Student employees and volunteers must be carefully selected, trained, supervised, and evaluated. Students must have access to a supervisor. Student employees and volunteers must be provided clear job descriptions, pre-service training based on assessed needs, and continuing development.

## Part 5. ETHICS

Graduate and Professional Student Programs and Services (GPSPS) must

- review applicable professional ethical standards and must adopt or develop and implement appropriate statements of ethical practice
- publish and adhere to statements of ethical practice and ensure their periodic review
- orient new personnel to relevant ethical standards and statements of ethical practice and related institutional policies

GPSPS should be cognizant of ethical standards and statements of ethical practice that are discipline-specific and those established by applicable professional associations.

Statements of ethical standards must

- specify that GPSPS personnel respect privacy and maintain confidentiality in communications and records as delineated by privacy laws
- specify limits on disclosure of information contained in students' records as well as requirements to disclose to appropriate authorities
- address conflicts of interest, or appearance thereof, by personnel in the performance of their work

- reflect the responsibility of personnel to be fair, objective, and impartial in their interactions with others
- reference management of institutional funds
- reference appropriate behavior regarding research and assessment with human participants, **confidentiality of research and assessment data, and students' rights and responsibilities**
- include the expectation that personnel confront and hold accountable other personnel who exhibit unethical behavior
- address issues surrounding scholarly integrity

GPSPS personnel must

- employ ethical decision making in the performance of their duties
- inform users of programs and services of ethical obligations and limitations emanating from codes and laws or from licensure requirements
- recognize and avoid conflicts of interest that could adversely influence their judgment or objectivity and, when unavoidable, recuse themselves from the situation
- perform their duties within the scope of their position, training, expertise, and competence
- make referrals when issues presented exceed the scope of the position

#### Part 6. LAW, POLICY, AND GOVERNANCE

Graduate and Professional Student Programs and Services (GPSPS) must be in compliance with laws, regulations, and policies that relate to their respective responsibilities and that pose legal obligations, limitations, risks, and liabilities for the institution as a whole. Examples include constitutional, statutory, regulatory, and case law; relevant law and orders emanating from codes and laws; and the institution's policies.

GPSPS must have access to legal advice needed for personnel to carry out their assigned responsibilities.

GPSPS must inform personnel, appropriate officials, and users of programs and services about existing and changing legal obligations, risks and liabilities, and limitations.

GPSPS must inform personnel about professional liability insurance options and refer them to external sources if the institution does not provide coverage.

GPSPS must have written policies and procedures on operations, transactions, or tasks that have legal implications.

GPSPS must regularly review policies. The revision and creation of policies must be informed by best practices, available evidence, and policy issues in higher education.

On an annual basis, GPSPS should request up-to-date information on academic integrity, student conduct policies and procedures, and changes that may have occurred due to laws and regulations.

GPSPS must have procedures and guidelines consistent with institutional policy for responding to threats, emergencies, and crisis situations. Systems and procedures must be in place to disseminate timely and accurate information to students, other members of the institutional community, and appropriate external organizations during emergency situations.

Personnel must neither participate in nor condone any form of harassment or activity that demeans persons or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

GPSPS must purchase or obtain permission to use copyrighted materials and instruments. References to copyrighted materials and instruments must include appropriate citations.

GPSPS must inform personnel about internal and external governance organizations that affect programs and services.

GPSPS must inform personnel about relevant accrediting organizations and standards.

## Part 7. DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND ACCESS

Within the context of each institution's mission and in accordance with institutional policies and applicable codes and laws, Graduate and Professional Student Programs and Services (GPSPS) must create and maintain educational and work environments that are welcoming, accessible, inclusive, equitable, and free from harassment.

GPSPS must not discriminate on the basis of disability; age; race; cultural identity; ethnicity; nationality; family educational history (e.g., first generation to attend college); political affiliation; religious affiliation; sex; sexual orientation; gender identity and expression; marital, social, economic, or veteran status; or any other basis included in institutional policies and codes and laws.

GPSPS must

- advocate for sensitivity to multicultural and social justice concerns by the institution and its personnel
- ensure physical, program, and resource access for all constituents
- modify or remove policies, practices, systems, technologies, facilities, and structures that create barriers or produce inequities
- ensure that when facilities and structures cannot be modified, they do not impede access to programs, services, and resources
- establish goals for diversity, equity, and access
- foster communication and practices that enhance understanding of identity, culture, self-expression, and heritage
- promote respect for commonalities and differences among people within their historical and cultural contexts
- address the characteristics and needs of diverse constituents when establishing and implementing culturally relevant and inclusive programs, services, policies, procedures, and practices
- provide personnel with diversity, equity, and access training and hold personnel accountable for



applying the training to their work

- respond to the needs of all constituents served when establishing hours of operation and developing methods of delivering programs, services, and resources
- recognize the needs of distance and online learning students by directly providing or assisting them to gain access to comparable services and resources

GPSPS should publish and circulate a statement that articulates a commitment to diversity, inclusion, and cultural-responsiveness in programs, services, and staffing.

GPSPS must commit to and advocate for an inclusive and culturally-responsive environment for all graduate and professional students.

GPSPS must collaborate with colleagues and departments across the institution to promote an inclusive campus climate free of discrimination, harassment, and other barriers to success.

Demographics to consider should include a diversity of students who are seeking degrees (on campus or as distance learners), disciplines studied, and the different types of institutions they have previously attended.

#### Part 8. INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Graduate and Professional Student Programs and Services (GPSPS) must reach out to individuals, groups, communities, and organizations internal and external to the institution to

- establish, maintain, and promote understanding and effective relations with those that have a significant interest in or potential effect on the students or other constituents served by the programs and services
- garner support and resources for programs and services as defined by the mission
- collaborate in offering or improving programs and services to meet the needs of students and other constituents and to achieve program and student outcomes
- engage diverse individuals, groups, communities, and organizations to enrich the educational environment and experiences of students and other constituents
- disseminate information about the programs and services

GPSPS personnel must advocate for the needs of the graduate student population and must work in conjunction with the graduate or professional school and the graduate or professional student organizations.

GPSPS must work with the graduate college or professional school and with their student organizations to develop advisory councils or systems to facilitate communication and collaboration; to solicit feedback; and to make recommendations on student needs, programs, and services.

GPSPS should ensure that council membership is inclusive and represents diverse perspectives. GPSPS should provide clear instruction as to scope of authority of the councils and the role and purpose of GPSPS. When used, advisory councils should receive clear instructions as to their scope of authority and the role and purpose of GPSPS.

GPSPS personnel must work collaboratively with colleagues in other graduate and professional programs at their institution and with departments (including enrollment services, international student services, career services, student affairs, academic support services, research and grants offices, development, and alumni affairs) for the purpose of developing strategies for connecting students to the larger community and positively affecting graduate student learning and professional development.

Promotional and descriptive information must be accurate and free of deception and misrepresentation.

GPSPS must have procedures and guidelines consistent with institutional policy for

- communicating with the media
- distributing information through print, broadcast, and online sources
- contracting with external organizations for delivery of programs and services
- cultivating, soliciting, and managing gifts
- applying to and managing funds from grants

GPSPS should have procedures and guidelines for distributing information through social media that comply with institutional guidelines and policies.

#### Part 9. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Graduate and Professional Student Programs and Services (GPSPS) must have funding to accomplish the mission and goals.

In establishing and prioritizing funding resources, GPSPS must conduct comprehensive analyses to determine

- unmet needs of the unit
- relevant expenditures
- external and internal resources
- impact on students and the institution

GPSPS must use the budget as a planning tool to reflect commitment to the mission and goals of the programs and services and of the institution.

GPSPS must administer funds in accordance with established institutional accounting procedures.

GPSPS must demonstrate efficient and effective use and responsible stewardship of fiscal resources consistent with institutional protocols.

Financial reports must provide an accurate financial overview of the organization and provide clear, understandable, and timely data upon which personnel can plan and make informed decisions.

Procurement procedures must

- be consistent with institutional policies

- ensure that purchases comply with laws and codes for usability and access
- ensure that the institution receives value for the funds spent
- consider information available for comparing the ethical and environmental impact of products and services purchased

## Part 10. TECHNOLOGY

Graduate and Professional Student Programs and Services (GPSPS) must have technology to support the achievement of their mission and goals. The technology and its use must comply with institutional policies and procedures and with relevant codes and laws.

GPSPS must use technologies to

- provide updated information regarding mission, location, staffing, programs, services, and official contacts to students and other constituents in accessible formats
- provide an avenue for students and other constituents to communicate sensitive information in a secure format
- enhance the delivery of programs and services for all students

GPSPS must

- back up data on a regular basis
- adhere to institutional policies regarding ethical and legal use of technology
- articulate policies and procedures for protecting the confidentiality and security of information
- implement a replacement plan and cycle for all technology with attention to sustainability
- incorporate accessibility features into technology-based programs and services

When providing student access to technology, GPSPS must

- have policies on the use of technology that are clear, easy to understand, and available to all students
- provide information or referral to support services for those needing assistance in accessing or using technology
- provide instruction or training on how to use the technology
- inform students of implications of misuse of technologies

## Part 11. FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

**Graduate and Professional Student Programs and Services' (GPSPS) facilities must be intentionally designed and located in suitable, accessible, and safe spaces that demonstrate universal design and support the program's mission and goals.**

Facilities must be designed to engage various constituents and promote learning.

GPSPS should ensure that graduate and professional students have adequate spaces for study groups; socializing and networking with peers, faculty, and staff members; and co-curricular programs and events.

GPSPS should provide space for graduate student organizations and governance councils.

Personnel must have workspaces that are suitably located and accessible, well equipped, adequate in size, and designed to support their work and responsibilities.

GPSPS must advocate for adequate office space, work-space, and equipment for research, teaching, and graduate assistants.

**GPSPS must advocate that research, teaching, and graduate assistants' work space be located where** meaningful interactions with students, faculty members, and staff members may take place.

The design of the facilities must guarantee the security and privacy of records and ensure the confidentiality of sensitive information and conversations. Personnel must be able to secure their work.

GPSPS must incorporate sustainable practices in use of facilities and purchase of equipment. Facilities and equipment must be evaluated on an established cycle and be in compliance with codes, laws, and accepted practices for access, health, safety, and security.

When acquiring capital equipment, GPSPS must take into account expenses related to regular maintenance and life cycle costs.

## Part 12. ASSESSMENT

Graduate and Professional Student Programs and Services (GPSPS) must develop assessment plans and processes.

The GPSPS assessment plans and processes should be coordinated at the department, school, college, or university levels to minimize duplication or over-surveying of students and to optimize quality assessment practices.

GPSPS should identify where responsibilities for assessment lie and the offices with which to partner.

Assessment plans must articulate an ongoing cycle of assessment activities.

GPSPS must identify and assess the learning and development outcome domains and dimensions relevant to the GPSPS programs and services.

GPSPS must assess how graduate and professional students experience the campus and what institutional and societal barriers they encounter.

GPSPS must

- specify programmatic goals and intended outcomes
- identify student learning and development outcomes
- employ multiple measures and methods

- develop manageable processes for gathering, interpreting, and evaluating data
- document progress toward achievement of goals and outcomes
- interpret and use assessment results to demonstrate accountability
- report aggregated results to respondent groups and stakeholders
- use assessment results to inform planning and decision-making
- assess effectiveness of implemented changes
- provide evidence of improvement of programs and services

GPSPS must use data to guide program and services development.

GPSPS should advocate for GPSPS access to institutional data and research.

Assessment data should include

- demographics and characteristics of the students
- student needs, experiences, and learning outcomes
- overall use of and satisfaction with programs, services, and environment
- effectiveness in delivering professional development programs
- attrition and persistence rates, such as time to degree completion and reasons for leaving prior to completion
- post-graduation plans and career outcomes
- adherence to national standards, professional associations, and accrediting bodies
- certification and licensing examination passing rates
- formative and summative evaluations from stakeholders including community partners

Demographic data should include heterogeneity of students who are seeking degrees on campus or as distance learners, disciplines studied, and the different types of institutions they have previously attended.

Heterogeneity may include race, ethnicity, multiple identities, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, part- or full-time status, veteran status, marital status, family structure, first-generation, nationality, cultural identity, and intersections among these identities.

GPSPS must employ ethical practices in the assessment process.

GPSPS must have access to adequate fiscal, human, professional development, and technological resources to develop and implement assessment plans.

Results of assessment and research initiatives should be shared with constituents and stakeholders.

*General Standards revised in 2014;*

*GPSPS content developed and revised in 2008 & 2017*