We want you to succeed in your academic, professional and social life. That is why we have prepared this guide. Enclosed you will find resources and services, as well as critical advice from the graduate school staff on what serious mistakes they see most from UC graduate students. Throughout this guide, we are also highlighting “words of wisdom”, solicited from current and seasoned graduate students, to help you better navigate your graduate career.

DEAR NEW GRADUATE STUDENT,

Congratulations on being accepted to The Graduate School at the University of Cincinnati. We are very pleased you have selected UC to complete your graduate career. For those returning to graduate school, welcome back! As a graduate student, you should expect many challenges as you build upon your previous educational experiences in new and exciting ways. Graduate School is not — and should not be — an extension of your undergraduate studies. As a graduate student, you will become a member of a discipline and a professional in your chosen field. We encourage you to take full advantage of the resources of this great university to reach your full potential. Note in particular the importance of maintaining your physical and emotional health, so you are able to achieve your best. Our graduates have used the knowledge and intellectual skills acquired in Graduate School to follow a wide variety of professional paths in academia, government and industry.

This survival guide provides a general reference to some of the essentials needed for successfully navigating the many procedures and policies that are not always well communicated to every student. Yet it is the student who often suffers in the end, being unaware of requirements or rules or missing deadlines, leading to unnecessary delays or extra cost. I wish to convince you of the importance of familiarizing yourself with departmental and graduate school procedures, staying aware of and not missing important deadlines, and to seek regular guidance from your program director. Additionally, the Graduate School staff is always available to answer your questions and provide further assistance.

As you proceed through your graduate study, we hope that you will find your horizons widening and that you will leave here prepared for a rewarding professional life. I also know this will likely be a very challenging time academically and often personally for you. We will do all that is within our power to see that you succeed in your program, and have a rich and rewarding educational experience at UC.

BEST WISHES,

Margaret M. Hanson, PhD
Professor of Physics
Associate University Dean
The Graduate School

LIGHTING THE WAY

“You must develop excellent time-management skills. Make sure you train yourself in doing things quickly and effectively. When you have a deadline (say, for a research paper), set yourself an earlier deadline and stick to it. You will then have some extra time to revise your already completed paper or to focus on other projects and deadlines. I cannot emphasize this enough: the ability to manage time is the key to success in graduate school and ultimately, in your future career.”

Matteo Magarotto, PhD in Musicology
10. Check your University BOL email account often. It is the official mode of communication to students.
9. Keep the University apprised of any changes in address or personal data.
8. Know your program coordinator and program directors names and contact information, and contact or visit them often.
7. Have the Graduate School website, grad.uc.edu, listed as a “favorite” in your browsing window.
6. Register for at least one credit hour each academic year to maintain your status or there will be additional fees to be re-instated into your program.
5. Be aware of the time-to-degree restrictions: 5 years for a Master’s, and 9 years for Doctoral degrees, part-time or full-time.
4. If you have military duty or a medical reason that you will not be able to register for classes in an academic year, apply for a Leave of Absence. If approved, the year does not count toward your time to degree, and you don’t have to register.
3. "F" grades remain always figured into your GPA, there is no option for "grade replacement". If possible, ask the professor if you can redo the work for a grade change instead of retaking the class.
2. Be aware there is a strict deadline for submitting your thesis or dissertation with the chair’s approval (ETD Deadline).
1. You must apply for graduation and pay the nominal fee in the term you wish to graduate. Those deadlines, typically in the first few weeks of your graduating term are absolutely enforced. If missed you cannot graduate that term.

FURTHER NOTE
If you miss the graduation application or ETD deadline for summer term, you will have to pay one credit of tuition for the new academic year (see #6), as well as apply and pay the graduation fee again (see #1), in order to graduate fall term.
At a loss for where to find helpful information?

Fret no more! The graduate school has a website which lists loads of links for city and campus life, academics, career options, & much more: grad.uc.edu/welcome/

Workshops and seminars to help you succeed

Several times a term, the Graduate School holds strategic workshops aimed at helping students succeed. Past workshops are archived online, many with valuable downloadable resources. Topics range from communicating better with your advisor, to applying for nationally competitive awards, to maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Visit the workshops page to find out about upcoming opportunities.

Get linked in on what’s happening now

Stay in touch with opportunities and announcements via the Graduate School Facebook page, and sign up for Twitter updates.

The Graduate Handbook

This 70+ page monstrosity gives all the gory details about rules regarding, but not limited to, admission processes, financial support (scholarships, fellowships, assistantships, health insurance awards), workload expectations, annual reviews, degree policies & procedures, committee selection, and degree & graduation requirements. It is a searchable pdf with a useful index, updated every year. Jump to the handbook →

Pathways through Graduate School & into careers

The economic value of an advanced degree is undisputed: the lifetime earnings with a bachelor’s degree is $2.3 million, with a masters it is $2.7 million, and with a doctorate (excluding Law, MD, etc.) it is $3.3 million. Furthermore, the unemployment rate drops from 5% for the BS, to 3% for the MS and less than 2% for the PhD.

It is important to both clarify new and existing career opportunities associated with an advanced degree and to define skills needed to take advantage of various career options. Studies of employers clearly indicate that graduate degree holders bring value to their organizations. However, students often lack certain skills necessary for success on the job. In particular, skills related to working in a team environment, creating and delivering presentations, business acumen (delivering outcomes on schedule and on budget, good judgment and quick decisions), project management, and the ability to discuss technical issues with nontechnical individuals were identified as sometimes being absent. Finally, graduate students need to understand how knowledge in one area could be applied to solve problems in another, how to innovate, how to think like entrepreneurs and how to work in multidisciplinary teams. These skill sets are applicable to and valued by all career areas, academic and non-academic.

The graduate school is moving towards a more active role to provide professional development opportunities to help students learn these critical skills through UC’s newly created Professional Development Institute. Consider taking our new course, PD 7023 Career Professionalism, offered in both Fall & Spring terms.

Living in Cincinnati: A Guide for Graduate Students

Cincinnati is a city with a lot to offer, but it can be hard to find your way around the first few months. This guide is meant to make getting to know the city a little easier.

Writing Resources, Teaching Tools, and Professional Development

UC offers many resources that can help you improve your writing, teaching and even your marketability. Most of these resources are free, but graduate students are not always aware of them.

The Office of Nationally Competitive Awards

The Office of Nationally Competitive Awards advises students on how to build the strongest, most competitive applications they can for external fellowships and scholarships, such as the Fulbright U.S. Student Program.
We’ve all said it; those two words that sum up a bad day or an unexpected expense: I’m stressed.

A little bit of time-limited stress is all right, but research has shown that chronic stress can take a toll on your health, meaning exhaustion and a weaker immune system. Sian Cotton, PhD, research associate professor in the University of Cincinnati Department of Family and Community Medicine says that research points to evidence that complementary medicine practices can help with daily stress as well as help people cope with chronic conditions.

“It is not so much the stress in our lives that causes the problem, but our reaction to that stress,” she says, adding that stress can cause an individual to cope in unhealthy ways, like smoking, developing unhealthy eating patterns or drinking too much alcohol, and can raise blood pressure or other mechanisms in the body that send the system into “fight” mode.

“However, even a few regular moments during one’s day of meditation, deep breathing, walking or simple stretching exercises are healthy and effective ways to lower stress.”

“Those patients who are using complementary medicine techniques have shown to have improved health outcomes. Other studies have shown how these same techniques can improve stress levels and overall well-being for general populations, leading to an overall happier, healthier life.”

Cotton suggests any sort of quiet, mindful technique to reduce stress — for patients, families and health care providers.

“Quiet meditation or prayer, deep breathing, yoga or another form of mind-body or relaxation strategy that you enjoy, coupled with a healthy lifestyle are all benefits in keeping your stress levels at a lower level,” she says. “If a stressful problem becomes chronic or overwhelming, see your primary care or mental health care provider, but overall, for day-to-day life stressors, make time to relax in any form you choose — and stick to it.

“It may not seem important, but studies consistently show a link between a healthy mind, body and spirit.”

Dawna Wensel, Criminal Justice

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