

CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON TEACHING EXCELLENCE
TEACHING MATTERS WORKSHOP SERIES

COMMUNICATING YOUR PRODUCTIVITY



Michael Dawson, Assistant Professor in Biology
Jay Sharping, Assistant Professor in Physics

Workshop Outcomes

By the end of the presentation, participants will be able to...

1. Identify goals and potential obstacles on the way towards degree completion;
2. Establish important characteristics of a high-quality Ph.D.;
3. Explore some planning and communication strategies that reduce obstacles towards goals.

Writing Activity

- Consider the following question: Given the QSB degree requirement example, what will a person graduating with a Ph.D. have achieved? Take a minute to write down a list of “products” from this educational experience.
- Take another minute to list potential obstacles to this process.
- Swap responses with your neighbor. Read list and consider which obstacles can be resolved with good planning. Cross out those items.

Formal Communication Tools

- Degree requirements
- Annual Review documentation, see handout
- Course syllabi
- Timeline to degree, **see sample**

Informal Communication Tools

- Weekly status report (verbal or written), **see handout**
- Meeting agendas, with action items confirmed either by email or in person
- Collaborative research opportunities, with wikis to document contributions and progress
- Passing comment in hall that have done job X (10 seconds only!)

Key Communication Skills



Remember to be concise, precise, use illustrations (e.g. data) presented properly (axes on labels, title, labels, stats [if relevant]).

In written word, use bullet points, but don't forget context

Important Caveat!

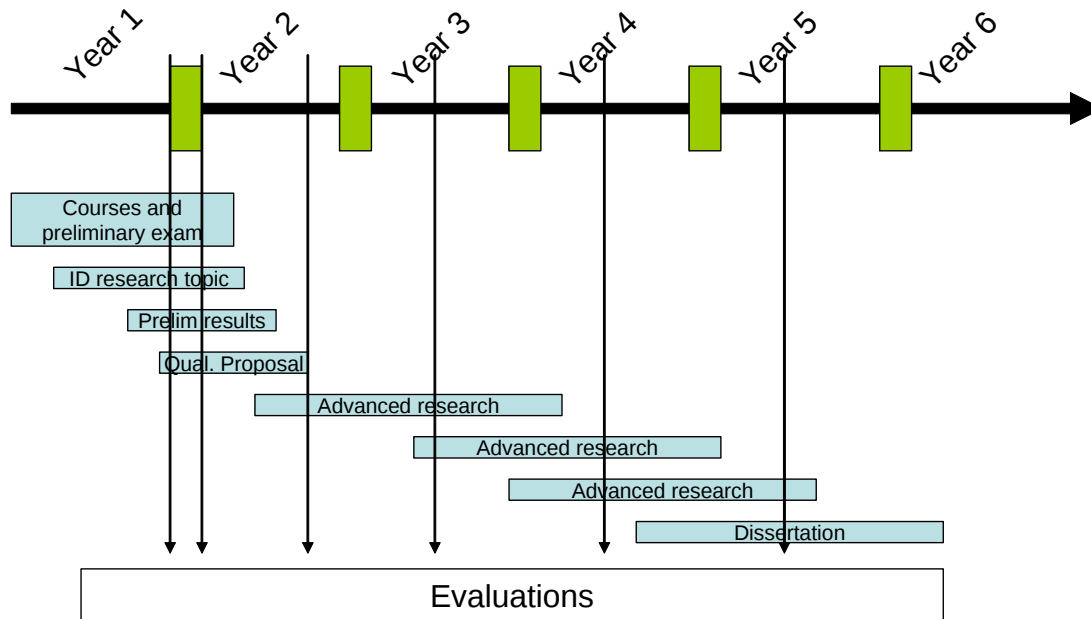


Communication strategies are highly interpersonal
and depend on what works best for both parties

Questions? Comments?



Typical timeline



SAMPLE

Graduate Student Expectations

Date: 9/2/09

I, Jay Sharping, agree to advise graduate studies of _____ on a probationary basis. Satisfying these expectations is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition to continue to pursue research within my group.

General expectations

We will agree upon common research interests, choose a program/project topic, understand the relevant background, generate preliminary results, advance to candidacy, write papers, attend conferences, prepare a dissertation, and defend. **You will work independently** with the guidance of your committee, demonstrate that you are a contributing member of the research group, and prove your "...fitness...to proceed with the doctoral dissertation...general preparedness in the discipline, and specific competence to pursue the proposed dissertation topic." Furthermore you will demonstrate your competence at the level of PhD, which means that you are able to: generate new ideas, remain aware of the state of the art, conduct research, manage research, communicate results, and teach.

Work expectations

- ☐ Participate in weekly 1-on-1 meetings except for reasonable conflicts
- ☐ Participate in group meetings except for reasonable conflicts
- ☐ Work in a safe and responsible manner
- ☐ Spend time in the lab each week even if you are not executing an experiment
- ☐ Use non-lab time constructively (review literature, perform calculations, write)
- ☐ Attempt to resolve questions independently or in collaboration with other group members
- ☐ Efficiently manage your schedule in order to satisfy all of your professional and personal obligations
- ☐ Identify goals several times per year and **make progress towards goals on a weekly basis**

Specific 2-year milestones

- ☐ agree upon a main topic and one backup topic
- ☐ present research topic idea to the group including potential experiment or simulation proposals
- ☐ agree upon initial design of one experiment and one backup or variation
- ☐ identify graduate committee and correspond with them
- ☐ provide a detailed list of equipment needs
- ☐ provide a summary of preliminary simulation or experimental results
- ☐ provide a draft of proposal
- ☐ conduct qualifying exam

STUDENT SELF-EVALUATION -- SAMPLE

Name:_____

Date:_____

Specific accomplishments to date _____

Specific positive attributes _____

Specific areas for improvement _____

Goals

Action items _____

Comments for Jay _____

