

Department of Government

Duties of Graduate Student Advisor

This document details the duties of the Graduate Student Advisor (GSA) for the Department of Government at the University of West Florida. Some students enter the M.A. program in political science with many goals in mind; still others enter this program with undefined goals. The M.A. program can serve as a springboard into a doctoral program for those who wish to pursue an academic career or as a terminal degree for those wishing to serve in the public or private sector. The GSA can help students generally think through their interests and goals and acquaint them with the many possible career paths available to them. Students would be wise, however, to cast a wide net for academic and career advising. Those interested in pursuing a specific field of study in political science would do well to work closely with the faculty member in the department specializing in that field. Normally, that faculty member would supervise the thesis, if the student takes that option, or chair the comprehensive exam committee. At the same time, the GSA can help students, particularly those who are undecided, to discover what approach would best suit them in the program and in life after UWF. The duties of the GSA generally fall under communication, professional development, and extra-curricular activities.

Communication		
<i>Students should know the performance expectations for completion of the degree and be aware of their progress in pursuit of this goal. Further students should be aware of the opportunities for career advancement available to them through the department and the university at large.</i>	Academic Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledgeable of university policies and procedures • Knowledgeable of department requirements for degree completion • Versed in department expectations for theoretical and methodological development • Equipped with documentation to communicate standards for student performance for either the comprehensive examination or thesis option
	Research Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist students in finding funding for travel to present quality research and connect with other scholars with similar research interests • Alert students to upcoming conference opportunities for presentation of research • Coordinate opportunities for students to present quality research both on campus and at surrounding campuses
Professional Development		
<i>Students should be prepared for professional employment after receipt of the Masters Degree in Political Science. They should be given the opportunity to develop the skills necessary for academic and nonacademic job opportunities.</i>	Resume/Vita	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate guidelines for constructing a competitive vita or employment resume • Work with students on developing their own curriculum vitae or employment resume
	Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide candid evaluation of job market and opportunities for employment both in the academic and nonacademic arenas • Explain and demonstrate process for securing employment after completion of the degree program
	Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage student observation of in-classroom faculty teaching • Encourage lecture opportunities for students to work on their pedagogical skills
	Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage faculty-student collaboration on research projects • Encourage student presentation of quality research in professional environments such as academic conferences

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop means to recognize our students' research accomplishments
	Extra-curricular activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage political science graduate students to found a student organization, and to serve as their advisor. • If and when such an organization is established, to encourage them to hold symposia and other activities related to academic and career interests. • Similarly, to encourage them to collaborate with the Rho Pi Chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha, the Model United Nations Debating Team, and other student organizations in carrying out activities of mutual interest.

Final, 5/10/05