
POLICY for ACADEMIC PEER ADVISING

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By the Deputy Speaker

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Under the Supervision of the Speaker

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THE SOCIETY OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

The University Western Ontario

LONDON ONTARIO CANADA

2022

0.1 Academic Peer Advising

Academic, appeal, and disciplinary support for graduate students

- 0.1.1. The Vice-President Academic shall serve as a support person (hereafter "academic peer advisor") for graduate students facing challenges in their graduate studies.
1. The President may serve as an alternate if the Vice-President Academic is unavailable, or has a conflict of interest in a given case.
 2. The student will be required to sign a waiver indicating they understand the role of the Vice-President Academic as a peer support, not an advocate or legal counsel.

Scope of academic, appeal and disciplinary support

- 0.1.2. This policy applies but is not limited to issues with the students' department/program, faculty, the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, other service units such as Equity and Human Rights, Services for Students with Disabilities etc. and applies to issues including but not limited to:
1. Academic misconduct (plagiarism, cheating etc.)
 2. Reviews of academic or performance (coursework, comps, thesis progress etc.)
 3. Requests for academic accommodation
 4. Accusations of harassment or other issues raised by a graduate student against a faculty or staff member
 5. Program related employment such as a professional placement, lab work, GTA-ship or RA-ship not governed by PSAC 610 or any other union's collective agreement
- 0.1.3. This policy does not apply to:
1. Violations of the Student Code of Conduct
 2. Duties as a Teaching Assistant governed under the PSAC 610 collective agreement or other union collective agreement.

Duties of the peer academic advisor

- 0.1.4. As a peer academic advisor, the Vice-President Academic shall assist graduate students in navigating academic and disciplinary issues faced through the course of graduate studies by:
1. Meeting with students in person or electronically to listen to the issues they are facing
 2. Recommending / referring students to potential avenues of support as appropriate to the issue
 3. Attending performance review or disciplinary meetings as a support person and witness
- 0.1.5. As a support person, the Vice-President Academic shall:

1. Understand (and be trained on per 1.7) Western / SGPS policies and procedures regarding graduate student rights, academic discipline, academic appeals, harassment and discrimination
2. Listen carefully to the issues a student is facing
3. Provide advice, based on their training and capabilities regarding the student's rights and responsibilities, who (if anyone) else they should be in contact with about this situation, and how to navigate those contacts
4. If attending a meeting with the student:
 1. Take notes and share the notes with the student after the meeting
 2. Ask clarifying questions as necessary, with the permission of the student and the chair of the meeting
 3. Debrief with the student after the meeting to:
 1. Make sure they understand what happened
 2. Make sure they understand what will happen next
 3. Advise the student regarding next steps

0.1.6. As a support person, the Vice-President Academic shall not:

1. Speak on behalf of the student, in meetings or otherwise
2. Advocate for the students interest with their academic program or any other level of the university
3. Provide on-going emotional or academic support or counselling
4. Provide legal advice

Training

0.1.7. Within one month of the election of a new SOGS VP Academic, the new VP Academic and the President must meet with relevant organizations for training and awareness of University policies. This is including, but not limited to:

1. The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
2. Equity and Human Rights Services
3. The University Ombudsperson
4. Services for Students with Disabilities