Documenting Unusual Graduate Student Situations

When out-of-the-ordinary situations arise during a graduate student’s tenure, they must be documented and brought to the attention of Graduate Affairs, especially if departmental action must be taken. Typical situations are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>Program changes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• lack of progress,</td>
<td>• non-routine changes of supervisor</td>
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<td>• excessively slow progress in research</td>
<td>• recommendations for withdrawal</td>
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<td>• excessive time in program</td>
<td>• withdrawals for any reason</td>
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<td>• language difficulties</td>
<td>• leave of absences</td>
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<tr>
<td>• performance in courses</td>
<td>(personal, internships, others…)</td>
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<td>• personality conflicts</td>
<td></td>
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<td>• misuse of department facilities</td>
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We recognize that there are a myriad of other circumstances that may be deemed ‘unusual’; use your discretion on deciding if it fits the ‘unusual’ category.

1 Progress Report Update by Supervisor

The supervisor will formally document the unusual situation by filling out a new progress report that details the problem (attachments to the report are acceptable). This report is extra to the ones normally required by the department.

- Indicate at the top of the report that this is a Special Progress Report
- The details of the situations
- The prior warnings given to the student (if it is a problem) or discussions (if it is a program change)
- The prior and/or current advice given to students about this situation
- The actions taken or not taken by the student to remedy this situation
- The likely outcome if this situation remains unresolved
- Recommendations of what should be done by the student
- Recommendations of what should be done by the department
  - For problems, this could be funding cuts, change of supervisor, formal warnings, probationary periods, etc.
  - For program changes, this could be as recommended by the Dept, or not recommended by the Dept, etc.

The student will formally respond to the report by filling out their section of the progress report (attachments to the report are acceptable):
• Signing the report to acknowledge they have received it
• Identifying the steps they have taken so far to remedy the situation (if any are needed) and/or the steps that they plan to take (include specific details, deliverables and timetable as needed)
• Refute and/or add detail to the report as stated by the supervisor if there is disagreement and/or detail is lacking

The supervisor will then send this report to the Associate Head – Graduate Affairs, identifying it as a Special Progress Report.

2 Meeting with Associate Head – Graduate Affairs

After the report is received, the students and/or the supervisor may meet with the Director Associate Head – Graduate Affairs if needed, who will recommend and / or decide on the actions to be taken.

3 Rationale

This documentation is required for several reasons.

• It formally brings the matter to the attention of the department, as these things are easily missed and/or lost in email exchanges
• It documents the matter in case there is a dispute down the road
• It allows both the supervisor and the student to indicate their points of view, agreements, and disagreements for the record
• It formally brings recommendations to the department’s attention
• It helps make sure that the department deals with unusual situation in a consistent way.