



Bill of Rights

Section 1. Preamble

This document outlines your rights as a Graduate/Professional student at Washington State University and serves as the basis of the social contract between you and the University. No section of this document shall take precedence over University policy or applicable laws. Please refer to the Graduate Student Handbook, Student Code of Conduct or applicable Academic Regulations if in doubt regarding current policy. This document will serve as a guide and is meant to be fluid in response to changes in policy and time. Any change in this document will be ratified by the Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA) Senate and presented to the University Administration. The list below is meant to serve as a quick reference outlining important rights you maintain as graduate students and references for further information.

Section 2: Rights

2.1 Professional Development

Washington State University recognizes the important role that professional development plays in the educational experience of our graduate student population and their ability to be successful in their future goals. Graduate and Professional student rights regarding professional development include, but are not limited to:

- I. Authorship and acknowledgment on scholarly publications commensurate with their contributions;
- II. Access to a variety of events that foster their professional development including, but not limited to, internships, conferences, workshops, and courses;
- III. Professional and academic guidance from their advisor(s) and department faculty;
- IV. Collaborate with students, faculty, and staff for their professional and academic
- V. development.

2.2 Information

Washington State University recognizes that in order for its student population to make careful and informed decisions. there must be a clear and accessible line of



communication and access to information. Graduate and Professional student rights regarding information include, but are not limited to:

- I. Be informed of their rights and responsibilities;
- II. Be informed in advance of any changes to the University's student health insurance policy;
- III. Be involved, engaged, or informed about decision-making and processes on issues affecting the graduate and professional student population;
- IV. Clear, written information on their degree program including university and departmental requirements;
- V. Have their plan of academic progress reviewed and approved by their advisor(s) annually;
- VI. Written communication prior to any changes made to department expectations on degree requirements, academic progress, and requirements for funding and opportunity to voice their concerns before a decision has been made.

2.3 Privacy/Data Protection

Washington State University commits to protecting your Information. At no point in a student's academic career should they be asked to provide their private information. Graduate and Professional student rights regarding confidentiality include, but are not limited to:

- I. Not be asked to provide personal information without cause;
- II. The assurance of data security and in the event of a breach, be provided with adequate identity theft protections (as covered in RCW 42.56.590);
- III. Keep any confidential accommodations from the Access Center private (as covered by FERPA);
- IV. Keep any medical or treatment records private regardless of location of care (as covered by HIPPA).

2.4 Academics

Washington State University is committed to providing a world class education and will provide an accessible and welcoming space in which Graduate and Professional students can pursue their research interests. Professors and advisors acknowledge that they hold a position of power and will not abuse that relationship. Graduate and Professional student rights regarding academics include, but are not limited to:

- I. The ability to explore, interpret, and question knowledge and opinions;



- II. Be treated with respect in discussions between faculty, administration, and other students:
- III. The freedom to select and pursue research projects in accordance with their interests and/or thesis/dissertation work in productive collaboration with their graduate committee and advisors.

2.5 Assistantships/Funding

Washington State University recognizes the vital contributions Graduate and Professional students make to the University. Graduate and Professional students serve as Research Assistants, Teaching Assistants, and members of our university staff providing critical services and ensuring WSU's ability to provide an outstanding educational experience to all of its students. In recognition of the role Graduate and Professional students hold, WSU commits to reviewing stipend levels to ensure students are being compensated on a fair and equitable basis. Graduate and Professional student rights regarding assistantships and funding include, but are not limited to:

- I. Access to a graduate student health insurance plan that provides affordable and adequate physical, dental and mental healthcare coverage;
- II. Ensure their stipend is not reduced during the length of their contract;
- III. A clear outline of time and role expectations of their assistantship through a signed contract prior to the beginning of their funding period;
- IV. Be informed in advance and in writing of any changes made to their assistantship contracts;
- V. Be provided a schedule of stipend payments prior to signing a contract, and the right to immediate recourse if that schedule is violated;
- VI. Be informed in advance and in writing regarding termination of their contract and be reasonably allowed to make other accommodations;
- VII. Have stipend and assistantship rates displayed in a transparent manner on the Graduate School and Student Financial Services' website.

2.6 Discrimination

Washington State University is dedicated to providing a safe and accessible educational experience to all of its students. In all things, student well-being takes priority. With this in mind, WSU has instituted a robust student support network that handles instances of discrimination. Graduate and Professional students' rights regarding discrimination include, but are not limited to:

- I. The ability to conduct research, learn, teach, and participate in University programs and activities, and access to healthcare free of discrimination on the



basis of race, religion, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, sex, gender identity, age, disability, veteran status and citizenship (WSU Executive Policy15):

- II. Freedom to report any discrimination and/or adverse conduct to an entity outside of the student's immediate department, including, but not limited to, the Office of Compliance and Civil Rights, a University Ombudsmen, the WSU Police Department, and the Office of the Dean of Students without retaliation as defined by University policy and/or applicable law;
- III. Access to due process regarding unfair treatment or reports and allegations of assault:
- IV. Development of a reasonable accommodation plan with the University Access Center (<https://accesscenterwsu.edu>);
- V. An accessible Student Conduct process that prioritizes student development and fundamental fairness (Center for Community Standards).

Ratified: 26 April 2021