

College of Education & Human Development Graduate Student Advising Survey
Instrument Plan

EPSY 5244 Class Project
October 2002

Purpose

Graduate education is a primary function of major research universities, like the University of Minnesota.

A major purpose of graduate education at the University of Minnesota is to instill in each student an understanding of and capacity for scholarship, independent judgment, academic rigor, and intellectual honesty. Graduate education is an opportunity for the student to develop into a professional scholar. Graduate research and teaching assistantships offer an “apprenticeship” experience in the academic profession as well as financial support. It is the joint responsibility of faculty and graduate students to work together to foster these ends through relationships that encourage freedom of inquiry, demonstrate personal and professional integrity, and foster mutual respect.¹

To facilitate these goals and realize the potential of graduate education in the college, we propose to design and implement a web-based survey to investigate the expectations and experiences of current PhD students enrolled in the college. The information will be provided to college administration, faculty and staff to further the development of advising support systems and clarify expectations, experiences, and roles for students and faculty.

To begin with, the survey will be organized around three primary areas of advising as defined by the Graduate School Executive Committee (2000). The primary research questions include how the advising process engages students with (1) information about policies and procedures, (2) communication about progress and the future, and (3) research contributions.

Survey Format

The survey will be an online, web-based survey. It will contain one welcome page to secure consent, one complete page containing the entire survey with a right vertical scroll bar, and a thank you page with a link to the University of Minnesota website containing the document on Mutual Responsibilities referred to in the purpose discussion above.

There will be four sections, addressing the questions stated above, with questions 4 and 5 in the same section on General Advising Issues. The survey will primarily contain closed questions with one open-ended question requesting additional comments at the end of each of the four sections.

¹ Graduate School Executive Committee (2000). *Mutual Responsibilities in Graduate Education at the University of Minnesota*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota. Retrieved September 19, 2002 at <http://www.grad.umn.edu/faculty/mutual.html>

Topics

As described earlier, graduate students to be surveyed include currently registered PhD students in the College of Education and Human Development.

1. Regarding information about program and policies and procedures, what are students (a) expectations in advising and what are their (b) actual experiences?
2. Regarding communication about progress in the program and future opportunities, what are students (a) expectations in advising and what are their (b) actual experiences?
3. Regarding research contributions to research activities in the college and in the field, what are students (a) expectations in advising and what are their (b) actual experiences?
4. Regarding the many roles that advisors may assume, which are important to students?
5. Are there other general concerns student may have regarding their understanding of the advising process or interactions with their advisor?

Schedule

The schedule that one follows should be tailored to the unique circumstances faced in each survey project and is likely to vary not only in the timeline, but the milestone activities which mark each point on the timeline. The timeline for our class project is unnaturally truncated to fit within the timeline of the semester.

Instrument Proposal – topic definition	September 18, 2002
Consult with Sponsor (expert)	September 25
Write items	
Form Draft	October 2
Review for content, sensitivity	
Finalize Form	October 9
Prepare and send prenotice letter	
Data Collection Begins	October 23
Reminder Notice	November 6
End Data Collection	November 13
Data Analysis Completed	November 20
Report Completed	December 11, 2002

[You all should follow the milestones I gave you in class.]