

Compact Between Advisor and Graduate Student in the Rhee Lab at MSU

Last modified: August 14, 2024

As a graduate student in the [Rhee lab](#), you are working towards becoming an independent scientist that encompasses being a scholar, communicator, mentor, and lab citizen. You are expected to develop a dissertation that advances knowledge in plant biology or a related field. These goals represent a tremendous undertaking and so you are supported in this endeavor by a rigorous academic program and research communities at various levels, including me as your main advisor, our lab, our home departments ([Biochemistry and Molecular Biology](#), [Plant Biology](#), and [Plant, Soil, and Microbial Sciences](#)), [Plant Resilience Institute](#), and numerous facilities and programs available at MSU.

The purpose of this compact is to help us consider key tenets of healthy student-advisor relationships. Thus, this compact will be used as a tool to address potential questions and issues at all stages of the student-advisor relationship. To help ensure your success and promote equitable experiences within the graduate program(s), we agree to the following compact:

Expectations for the Advisor:

1. Follow the guidelines of the University and the Graduate Program(s) the student enrolls in, even if they diverge from those of my home departments.
2. Provide timely guidance and support to the student in their research, academic, professional development, and career pursuits.
3. Meet every six months to discuss Individual Development Plan (developed by Rhee lab).
4. Meet regularly with the student to discuss their progress and provide feedback on their work, life-work balance, and other topics relevant to professional and career development.
5. Provide opportunities for the student to participate in professional development activities such as conferences, workshops, and seminars.
6. Assist the student in securing funding for their research and other academic activities.
7. Provide necessary accommodations for the student if needed due to accessibility issues or other needs as prescribed by Michigan State University in conjunction with state and federal laws and regulations.
8. Provide guidance and resources to prevent, manage, and resolve interpersonal conflicts with members of the student's research network, including peers, collaborators, mentees, and mentors.

Expectations for the Graduate Student:

1. Understand and follow our lab's [expectations](#), [training philosophy](#), and [diversity pledge](#). If you have any questions about them, reach out to me or any of our lab members.
2. Follow the guidelines and policies of the University and the Graduate Program(s) you are enrolled in.
3. Dedicate time and effort to your research and academic work and work diligently to complete your program(s) in a timely manner.
4. Lead and 'own' your projects, whether you developed it from scratch, inherited from a former member, or assigned a problem when you start.
5. Fill out our lab's Individual Development Plan and schedule a meeting with me in March and Sept.
6. Schedule and attend all meetings with me or notify me if you are unable to meet in a timely manner. The scheduled meetings will be used to discuss problems, progress, plans, opportunities, and other topics pertinent to professional and career development. You are expected to come to the meeting prepared and lead the discussion. See #3 under rotation student expectations for more details.

7. Be proactive in seeking guidance and advice from me, other faculty, or members of our lab as needed, especially when things are not working, things are going tough, or if you are feeling burnt out.
8. Participate in professional development activities such as conferences, workshops, and seminars.

Rotation Student Expectations in the Rhee lab:

Your rotation is a unique opportunity to determine if the Rhee lab is a good fit for your PhD research. The following guidelines are designed to reflect the lab's research culture and help you make an informed decision.

1. Understand and follow university guidelines to fulfill all rotation requirements. This includes determining the duration of your rotation and submitting all required documentation to the department following your rotation.
2. Engage critically with your selected rotation project. This can be achieved by reading papers, discussing with group members and me, designing/running experiments, and leveraging available datasets to advance your project. We in the Rhee lab understand that the short timeframe of your rotation (5-10 weeks) can make it challenging to run many experiments, and do not have expectations for generating data or the experiments working as expected.
3. Meet regularly and often with your rotation mentor and me to discuss your project, which can include any of the following: project plans, background literature, your hypotheses, experimental designs, analyzed and graphed results, and your interpretation. This is a good opportunity to talk about problems if anything is not working or not working as expected. The purpose of these meetings is to get feedback from your mentor and advisor, so not having results to show is totally fine and bringing problems to discuss is welcome. You should come prepared to discuss your current or planned work and lead the discussions during these meetings.
4. Present a lab meeting (30 minutes in duration + time for questions) at the end of your rotation.
5. If you are interested in joining the lab after your rotation is completed, schedule a meeting with me to discuss opportunities in the Rhee Lab.
6. If you are interested in joining our lab to do your thesis work, let me know by mid Feb. Decisions for offers will be made toward the end of Feb.

Mutual Expectations:

1. Abide by the lab guidelines, expectations and safety regulations.
2. Be aware, responsible, and accountable for meeting PhD program requirement milestones.
3. Maintain open and honest communication with each other.
4. Demonstrate professionalism and integrity in all academic and professional activities.
5. Be respectful of each other's time and commitments.
6. Set realistic and achievable goals for the student's academic and research progress.
7. Collaborate effectively to achieve those goals.
8. Address any concerns or issues that arise in a timely and respectful manner. This includes agreeing to communication avenues (i.e. through email only, slack, phone calls), communication times (i.e. no calls or emails after 6pm), meeting times and frequency (i.e. once a week at 2pm).
9. Discuss and agree on emergency protocols for physical, financial, and academic emergencies.
10. Discuss funding expectations and funding availability when the graduate student joins the lab. This discussion should occur thereafter at least once a year or more frequently as needed.
11. If the student aspires to take their PhD research project into subsequent phases of their career, such as a PostDoctoral/Group Leader position, this transition should be determined collaboratively and at least 6 months prior to graduation and through mutual agreement between the advisor and the student.

12. If a conflict arises between the advisor and the student, communicate respectfully and frankly about the nature of the conflict and resolve the conflict in a timely, professional, and friendly manner, including bringing in an objective arbitrator upon mutual agreement to help address the conflict. The major graduate program director should be the first in line to contact in these cases.

We agree to abide by this compact to ensure a successful and productive graduate education experience in the Rhee lab.

Printed Name Date

Printed Name Date

Signature

Signature

Advisor

Graduate Student

Please complete and submit this form to the Academic Program Coordinator(s) of the student's major program(s), when you select your advisor.

This compact was developed by the Rhee lab members based on a template provided by MSU's Plant Biology Department.