

Here's what you can expect from me:

- **I will work tirelessly** for the good of the lab. The success of each member of our group is my top priority.
- **I have a flawed and incomplete understanding of what it's like to work with me.** I will check in with you about this every September. In this conversation, I'd like to hear about where you think there's room for improvement in any aspect of graduate life, including our advisor-advisee relationship.

Supportive, useful meetings.

- **I will be available for weekly meetings and informal conversations.** At our scheduled one-on-one meetings, we can address your questions or concerns (and feel free to stop by my office if the door is open). It is my responsibility to help you succeed and I can do that best if I know what you're up to. Feel free to share materials or data with me ahead of time via email. Always feel free to cancel a meeting if there's not much to talk about. Email is a great way to communicate with me, but you can always call or text me on my cell phone. I don't respond very quickly to emails on weekends, because I spend this time with my family.
- **I am committed to your research projects.** I will help to plan and direct your projects, set reasonable and attainable goals, and establish a timeline for completion of projects. I will push you to solve conceptual, methodological, and data analysis problems on your own before I suggest solutions.
- **I will strive to be supportive, equitable, accessible, encouraging, and respectful.** I will try my best to understand your unique situation. I am mindful that each student comes from a different background and has a different set of circumstances, strengths, and weaknesses. It will help if you keep me informed about your experiences and remember that graduate school is a job with very high expectations. I view my role as fostering your professional confidence and encouraging your critical thinking, skepticism, and creativity. If my attempts to do this are not effective for you, I am always open to talking about other ways to achieve these goals.
- **I will listen.** At each meeting, tell me what you want to discuss, what you've been thinking about, and what's on your mind. I know how important it is for an advisor to listen. I will do my best to hear you out and have informed discussions about experiment design, data analysis, the graduate program, etc. Note that I will push back on your ideas or decisions if I feel there's validity to my perspective. I will push my ideas as if I'm right, and listen as if I'm wrong.

Help with graduate requirements and professional milestones.

- **I will help guide you through graduate program requirements, teaching experiences, human subjects guidelines, and professional milestones and responsibilities.** However, I will rely on your own monitoring of deadlines and requirements.
- **I will help you select your committees.** I will ensure that your committee evaluates your work and reviews your progress according to the department's guidelines.
- **You can count on me to do my very best to promote you as a scientist.** My primary roles are to (1) help you think clearly about theoretical issues driving your research, (2) work with you on designing, analyzing, and writing up experiments, and (3) successfully bring in grants and steward our resources so that you benefit to the maximum extent from our joint efforts. The success of these grant proposals is largely based on the work that you do, and in this way, every lab member contributes to our success.
- **I will lead by example and facilitate your training in the skills necessary to be a successful scientist,** such as oral and written communication skills, grant writing, lab management, human research policies, and scientific professionalism. I will encourage you to seek opportunities in teaching, even if not required for your funding, because I believe this is an important component of your education.
- **I will help you generate and test good ideas, and I will do all I can to kill off bad ideas.** Generally,

Graduate Study in the Princeton Baby Lab with Casey Lew-Williams

I believe that ideas should meet high standards of evidence and argumentation.

- **I will not require you to perform tasks that are unrelated to your professional development.**
- **I will encourage you to attend conferences**, and I will do all I can to provide funding.
- **I will make every attempt to help you land postdoctoral and faculty positions.** Broadly, I will help you meet people in our scientific community. Let me know if there's anybody you really want to meet.
- **I will support you in your path toward academic and "non-academic" careers!** It saddens me when students feel they can't talk with advisors about a range of career options. You can always count on me to cheer you on for positions in academia, R1 universities, liberal-arts colleges, higher ed admin, teaching, industry, data science, government, nonprofits, and more.
- **I am committed to mentoring you, even after you leave my lab.** I will provide honest letters of evaluation for you whenever you request them. I will gladly advise and guide your career development – to the degree you wish – long after you leave. In some ways we'll be linked for the rest of time (scary!).

A positive lab culture.

- **I have worked to create a lab that's full of generous people.** My hope is that you will benefit from this culture in many ways during your time at Princeton.
- **I will be a human shield** and protect you from external intrusions, distractions, and idiocy of every type. I will do all I can to make sure you are treated fairly by people in the lab, department, university, and field.
- **I will actively prevent and avoid unnecessary drama**, because it makes for a worse workplace.
- **I will try to help everyone - including myself - learn from mistakes.**
- **I will promote open science and pre-registration of your experiments.**
- **I will provide you a work environment that is intellectually stimulating, emotionally supportive, safe, and free of harassment.**
- **I will encourage incremental progress and small wins.** I will also celebrate your big accomplishments.
- **I will discuss authorship policies with you.** I will acknowledge your scientific contributions to research in the lab, and I will help you publish your work in a timely manner. Authorship is a notoriously tricky issue in science, and I am very aware that fairness needs to be prioritized. I try to set up collaborations where authorship order is clear, but this is not always possible until the home stretch.

Here's what I expect from you:

Take ownership of your educational experience.

- **Acknowledge that you have the primary responsibility for the successful completion of your degree.** This includes commitment to your work in classrooms and the laboratory. You should maintain a high level of professionalism, self-motivation, engagement, scientific curiosity, and ethical standards.
- **Ensure that you meet regularly with me and provide me with updates on the progress and results of your activities and experiments.** Make sure to also use this time to communicate new ideas about your work and challenges that you are facing. Remember: I cannot address or advise about issues that you do not bring to my attention.
- **Be knowledgeable of the policies, deadlines, and requirements of the graduate program, the graduate school, and the university.** Comply with all institutional policies, including academic program milestones, laboratory practices, and human-research policies.
- **Understand that there will be cyclical highs and lows in graduate school.** Academia can sometimes be hard on your self-esteem. You won't always be happy with me as an advisor. Both of these are inevitable. When lows hit, know that things will get better with time. Sleep on it before reacting, and take time to think things through. This will help you approach difficulties with maturity and

thoughtfulness.

Be a team player.

- **Attend and actively participate in all lab meetings, seminars, and talks.** Participation in lab meetings does not mean only presenting your own work, but providing support to others in the lab through shared insight. Asking questions is just as valuable as giving presentations!
- **Strive to be the very best lab citizen.** Take part in shared lab responsibilities and use lab resources carefully and frugally. Maintain a safe and clean lab space where data and research participant confidentiality are protected. Respect individual differences in values, personalities, work styles, and theoretical perspectives.
- **Try to spend your time in the lab.** There is no better way to contribute to the lab and to maximize learning than actually being there. Casual conversations in the hallway can be extremely helpful; helping others troubleshoot can help you build technical skills.
- **Help others learn whatever precious knowledge you possess!** I'm particularly referring to methods and statistical analysis techniques. Please help mentor and train undergraduates – it's a crucial part of your professional development.
- **Actively acknowledge the efforts of everyone in the lab.** Pass out praise when others deserve it.

Develop strong research skills.

- **Take advantage of your opportunity to work at a world-class university by developing and refining stellar research skills.** There's high-quality science happening all around you.
- **Challenge yourself by presenting your work at meetings and seminars as early as you can, and by preparing articles that effectively convey your work to others in the field.** The 'currency' in science is published papers. They drive a lot of what we do, and because our lab is partially supported by taxpayer dollars, we have an obligation to complete and disseminate our findings. I will push you to publish your research as you progress through graduate school, not only at the end. At first, I will heavily edit your manuscripts, but as you progress, I will expect you to take a lead role in authoring scientific papers. Please don't sit on interesting data, even if you have null results. Get them out the door.
- **Keep up with the literature so that you can have a hand in guiding your own research.**
- **Maintain detailed, organized, and accurate lab records.** Be aware that your notes, records and all tangible research data are my property as the lab director. When you leave the lab, the data are yours to take, but a full set of all data must stay on the lab server, with appropriate and accessible documentation.
- **Be responsive to advice and constructive criticism.** The feedback you get from me, your colleagues, your committee members, your course instructors, and peer reviewers is intended to improve your scientific work. If you sense unfair treatment from anybody, tell me.
- **Become an independent researcher.** This is the ultimate goal of graduate school, and it takes years to reach independence in some domains. Collaboration is wonderful, but you can't collaborate effectively without having strong, independent research skills. To me, independence is marked by being able to do the following things without much help: setting goals for yourself, stating objectives for the week/month, reading core literature, developing effective communication skills, seeking out resources and literature for new ideas, generating new ideas, seeing experiments to the bitter end, refining lab methods, analyzing data in contemporary and ethical ways, supervising undergraduates, thinking of follow-up experiments, predicting what peer reviewers might say about follow-up experiments, asking questions confidently, developing a compelling ability to present scientific findings at conferences, withstanding intense Q&A from colleagues, being able to spontaneously reference diverse literature, organizing ideas coherently in writing, and writing solid first drafts of manuscripts and grants. If that sounds like a lot, then you may have a sense of why PhD programs last ~5 years.

Work to meet deadlines.

Graduate Study in the Princeton Baby Lab with Casey Lew-Williams

- **Strive to meet deadlines: this is the only way to manage your progress.** Deadlines can be managed in a number of ways, but I expect you to work your best to maintain these goals. We will establish mutually agreed upon deadlines for each phase of your work. You should find a balance between time spent in class and time spent on research, and also on mentoring or teaching. As long as you are meeting expectations, you can largely set your own schedule. It is your responsibility to talk with me if you are having difficulty completing your work. I will consider your progress unsatisfactory if I need to follow up with you about completion of your lab work.
- **Be mindful of the constraints on my time.** When we set a deadline, I will block off time to read and respond to your work. If I do not receive your materials, I will move your project to the end of my queue. Allow a minimum of one week prior to submission deadlines for me to read and respond to short materials such as conference abstracts and two weeks for me to work on manuscripts or grant proposals. Please do not assume I can read materials within a day or two (although I do try to). I will always try to be as efficient as I can given other work and family constraints.

Communicate clearly.

- **Let me know the style of communication that you prefer.** If there is something about my mentoring style that is proving difficult for you, please tell me so that you give me an opportunity to find an approach that works for you. No single style works for everyone; no one style is expected to work all the time. Do not cancel meetings with me if you feel that you have not made adequate progress on your research; these might be the most critical times to meet with a mentor.
- **Learn the value of having a lively exchange of ideas with others.**
- **Be prompt.** Please respond quickly to emails from me, other professors, or anyone in our lab group, and show up prepared and on time for meetings. If you need time to gather information in response to an email, please acknowledge receipt of the message and indicate when you will be able to provide the requested information.
- **Discuss policies on work hours, sick leave, and vacation with me directly.** Consult with me and notify fellow lab members in advance of any planned absences. I expect that most lab members will not exceed 4 weeks of personal travel away from the lab in any given year. I believe that work/life balance and vacation time are essential for creative thinking and good health, and I encourage you to take regular vacations. But please plan vacations smartly and strategically. There are times when more effort is needed toward your work.
- **Discuss any projects with me before you start to ensure that we are in agreement.** This would also be a good moment to discuss authorship. Barring unusual circumstances, it is my policy that students are first author on all work for which they took the lead on experiment design, data collection, and preparation of the initial draft of the manuscript.
- **Openly talk to me about my effectiveness as an advisor.** Every September, as I mentioned above, I will ask you to give me feedback about how our advisor-advisee relationship is going for you, and we can discuss ways to improve it. I will also tell you if I am satisfied with the progress you're making. Throughout the year, if you feel uncertain, overwhelmed, or want additional support, please let me know. I welcome open communication and I view it as essential to success in graduate school.

Thanks!