



## Prescription for Persistence: Strategies for Staying the Course in Graduate School

Whether you are a newcomer to Duke's graduate community or a returning student, there are many challenges you will face at each stage of your study—course work, preliminary examinations, and dissertation. Here are a few suggestions for persisting and staying the course as you navigate graduate study at Duke.

**B**uild a support network  
**E**xplore expectations  
**A**ssess your funding  
**S**tay safe  
**U**se your resources  
**C**hallenge yourself  
**C**are for yourself  
**E**ngage socially  
**S**eek mentors  
**S**hape your career

### BUILD A SUPPORT NETWORK

Take ownership of and recognize that you are an important part of what makes Duke University a world-class institution.

Get involved with the Graduate and Professional Student Council (GPSC) and other graduate student organizations.

Interact with students inside and outside your academic and professional disciplines.

### EXPLORE EXPECTATIONS

Read Best Practices: Core Expectations for Graduate Education at Duke University, which summarizes the expectations of graduate students, faculty, departments and programs (see online student handbook).

Ask your director of graduate studies (DGS) or other departmental faculty and staff to provide written guidelines for completing each stage of your departmental degree requirements.

Take time periodically to think about your own expectations for graduate school.

### ASSESS YOUR FUNDING

Review your admissions material again to make sure you fully understand the terms of your graduate fellowship:

- What is the stipend amount?
- Are tuition and fees covered?
- Are there teaching, research, or other requirements?
- How many years of support are guaranteed?
- What are the academic requirements for keeping the award?
- Think about developing a plan for entering departmental, graduate school, and national competitions for additional funding such as travel grants, teaching and research fellowships, and dissertation support.



## STAY SAFE

Take time to learn about the variety of resources available to enhance your safety awareness.

Download the Duke LiveSafe app.

## USE YOUR RESOURCES

Take full advantage of the resources and services that the university provides to help you to accomplish your academic, personal, and professional goals.

Stay connected with the Graduate School staff.

## CHALLENGE YOURSELF

Explore your field, take challenging coursework, and engage fully in research.

Become involved in community service, take a course outside your field or do something to develop other interests outside the lab and classroom.

## CARE FOR YOURSELF

Review the guidelines for your health and insurance benefits.

Visit the Duke Wellness (DuWell) Center to learn about the variety of services available that promote healthy wellbeing—social, emotional, mental and physical.

## BE A SUCCESS ... ASK FOR HELP

Take full advantage of the resources and services provided by The Graduate School and the Duke campus community.

Challenge us to serve you better.

*Jacqueline Looney*  
*Senior Associate Dean and Associate Vice Provost*

## ENGAGE SOCIALLY

Take time to participate in social and intellectual activities across the campus community.

Review the Duke Events Calendar ([calendar.duke.edu](http://calendar.duke.edu)).

Download the Duke Mobile app.

## SEEK MENTORS

Establish mentoring relationships with faculty early in your academic career.

Mentors are essential in helping you to learn about unwritten rules and informal networks in your department.

Seek out multiple mentoring partnerships (inside and outside the department).

## SHAPE YOUR CAREER

Be your own best advocate and take ownership of your graduate career.

Establish priorities.

Stay motivated and disciplined.

## ALSO CHECK OUT ...

Our Prescription for Persistence video series at [gradschool.duke.edu/persistence](http://gradschool.duke.edu/persistence).

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