GRA Policies and Procedures

This purpose of this document is to disseminate policies of ECE regarding GRA's.

1. Management of GRA appointments

Because of the large size of the ECE GRA program, it is necessary that the procedures associated with hiring and dismissal of GRAs be systematic and structured.

> (a) The faculty advisor must use the "GRA Management Interface" to document any GRA appointment modification that results in a payroll change. Examples include status changes such as GRA hiring or termination, add a Ph.D. increment for a student who has passed the Prelim, a student leaving campus for a Coop term, or the percentage time (e.g. 33% to 50%) for a GRA. This interface should also be used to renew a GRA appointment. It is not necessary to use the GRA interface for changes in accounts charged that do not result in a pay rate change for the student. To access the GRA Management Interface go to the Faculty/Staff Internal Resources page on the ECE Web Site or use the following URL.

> http://www.ece.gatech.edu/internal/fac_staff_resources/index.html

> It is not adequate to simply instruct the ECE Accounting Office to change a student's appointment.

> (b) If there is reason to think that the source of a student's GRA support is at risk, the advisor is expected to provide GRAs with advance warning of this possibility. It is reasonable to give the students one full term of notice. Advisors should also notify the ECE Graduate Office of this possibility one term in advance.

> (c) If the project supporting a student is not one that is expected to lead to a PhD topic, the student should be informed of that at the time that the GRA offer is made.

> (d) Faculty advisors and their students are strongly encouraged to jointly complete the "GRA Performance Goals and Objectives" and the "GRA Performance Appraisal" forms at least annually, and it is recommended that they be completed every term. These forms are also available at the Faculty/Staff Internal Resources page (URL given above).

> (e) If it becomes necessary to dismiss a GRA for poor performance, that performance should be clearly documented in a sequence of "GRA Performance Appraisal" forms on file in the ECE Graduate Office. The Associate Chair for Graduate Affairs should be consulted prior to any final action being taken.

2. Reasonable progress

Advisors are expected to enable their students to make "reasonable progress" toward their degree. Please see the ***Reasonable Progress Toward the MS, MSECE, or Ph.D. Degree*** document available at the Faculty/Staff Internal Resources page (URL given above) for more details.

> (a) The ECE Graduate Committee recommends that a full-time PhD student should complete the PhD by the end of the 5th year, if they begin with a BS degree, or by the end of the 4th year if they begin with an MS degree. Faculty whose expectations differ from these should clearly communicate those to their students at the beginning of the advising relationship. Other faculty expectations, such as required publications, should also be clearly communicated to the students at that time.

> (b) It is recommended for advisors to meet with their students at least weekly. If this is not possible, they should endeavor to communicate with them weekly through some means (e-mail, etc.). It is noted that the quality of the advising is more important to ECE than the number of students advised. [The ECE strategic plan indicates that the School goal is to graduate 0.7 PhD students per faculty per year, suggesting that the typical faculty member have approximately 4 PhD students at any time.]

> (c) Students should not be asked to delay taking the Preliminary Exam, ECE 8010, ECE 8020, or ECE8022 in order to devote more time to their GRA research. It is ECE policy that these requirements take precedence over other aspects of the PhD program, and that they be completed as early as possible.

> (d) Some advisors require that their students publish several papers before being allowed to take the PhD Proposal Examination or Defense Examination. While there is certainly merit to seeking acceptance of the research through publication any publication requirement should not cause degree progress to be unreasonably impeded.

> (e) The scheduling of Proposal and Defense Examinations is the responsibility of the faculty, not the students. [It is appropriate for the student to solicit faculty to serve on the committees, but not to schedule the examinations.] Students are at a disadvantage when trying to contact professors to schedule an oral examination and this task should not be delegated to a student. Administrative assistants may be used to assist the faculty in the scheduling of exams.

3. Supporting a Professional Environment for Students and Researchers

It is critical that the environment for students and researchers be one that is without coercion or offensive behavior, and one in which every individual is given credit for that individual's accomplishments.

(a) Faculty are expected to have a professional relationship with their graduate students. Faculty are expected to be familiar with and comply with Institute sexual harassment policies.

(b) Students and researchers should be given intellectual credit in proportion to their contributions with regard to paper authorship and patent applications.

(c) Faculty should avoid employing graduate students in outside commercial ventures in which the faculty member is a principal or has a financial interest. Such employment can be implemented only under conditions of full disclosure and with School approval.

(d) GRAs, GTAs, and research staff that are on payroll are employees of Georgia Tech. As such, each faculty member should communicate specific work rules (request for time off, work hours, lab procedures, etc.) and apply them consistently. If for any reason a GRA or GTA does not report *in person* for their work assignment, the ECE Graduate Office must be notified immediately.