

10 MYTHS ABOUT BEING A GRADUATE STUDENT ADVISOR

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1 YOU CAN'T FIRE A GRAD STUDENT.

Before firing students or reducing their research funding, sit them down and explain what the issues are. If they have been given multiple opportunities, communicate why they are being fired. State the facts, and remain professional.

2 YOU CAN'T SET HIGH EXPECTATIONS.

Although students may be supported financially on one or two projects, they should be ready to jump in as needed. If you don't put students in boxes, they won't place themselves in boxes either.

3 GRADUATE SCHOOL ISN'T LIKE BUSINESS.

If a student is hired to work on a project, there is an understanding that he/she is agreeing to meet deadlines, work well with others, communicate with their advisor, and represent the group well. Professionalism is key.

4 YOU'RE MOST COMPATIBLE WITH PEOPLE LIKE YOU.

Working with students from backgrounds that differ from your own allows you to learn about other cultures. You will become a better advisor and person by working with students who push you out of your comfort zone.

5 PEOPLE WILL RESPECT YOU BECAUSE YOU HAVE A PH.D.

Having a Ph.D. doesn't prevent heartache and trouble. Having a Ph.D., however, proves that you can persist. No matter how others treat you, remember that you have the credentials to complete the job and be an effective advisor.

6 ADULTS CAN'T CHANGE.

Although many adult graduate students are set in their ways, most are teachable since they applied for graduate school in the first place. Approach an advisor-advisee relationship with an open mind.



7 COLLEAGUES WILL ALWAYS HAVE YOUR BACK.

There is no guarantee that the rules of the advising game will be played fairly. Develop your own organizational structure and rules of engagement with students and potential colleagues as you develop your research enterprise.

8 YOU HAVE TO KNOW ALL THE ANSWERS.

Admit when you don't know answers and seek resources that will help you obtain the answers that you need. As an advisor, realize there is always something new to learn, and you will never be insecure about not having all of the answers.

9 ALL STUDENTS WILL BE ETHICAL.

Communicate team norms early. Facilitate conversations with students about deeper, political aspects of higher education and collaborations to curtail bigger issues later.

10 YOU CAN ADVISE STUDENTS THE SAME WAY.

There is no one-size-fits-all model of graduate education. See each student as an individual with a unique background and with different career goals. Be flexible and see the big picture for your team.