

## Political Science Mentoring Conversation Guide (2025)

**Overview:** Faculty and students should meet at the start of their working relationship (or about each semester) to set goals, boundaries, and expectations. This is a brief guide to having that conversation.

### Conversation Topics

Contact: How (in-person/online/text) and how often/long to meet? How should students/faculty make contact and what is the expected time for a response? Do you need an emergency contact option?

Work: What work is to be done, when must it be finished, how will it be turned in, and how much time should it take? Are these expectations doable and reasonable? Any accommodations needed?

Goals: What are faculty/student goals and how can the work at hand help achieve them?

Styles: Discuss preferences for working independently versus collaboratively, topics of interest, writing & work habits. How do you engage with positive/negative feedback? What are your relevant strengths or weaknesses? How do each of you view your role as student/faculty?

### Checklists

#### Faculty

- ☐ Be responsive to student needs and questions.
- ☐ Provide availability times for meetings throughout the semester or work period.
- ☐ Discuss expectations with students and adapt if needed.
- ☐ Provide actionable feedback to student work.
- ☐ Help students navigate MSU, the unit, and profession.
- ☐ Provide resources and opportunities to advance the student's broader academic and career goals.
- ☐ Be available to speak on professionalization & socialization topics beyond just the work at hand.

#### Student

- ☐ Meet with faculty and come prepared with questions.
- ☐ Respond promptly to emails and communications.
- ☐ Discuss expectations with faculty and adapt if needed.
- ☐ Familiarize yourself with relevant university/unit rules.
- ☐ Be active in pursuit of your goals. Don't wait to be told exactly what to do or how to do it. Go find out.
- ☐ Be open to advice and criticism. Adapt accordingly.
- ☐ Get advice/help broadly from faculty & fellow students.
- ☐ Attend events and be a member of the community.

### Resources

- [Mentorship Guide for Students/Faculty](#)
- [MSU Guidelines for Graduate Student Mentoring and Advising](#)