

Advancing Inclusive Excellence in Graduate Programs

As part of the Graduate School's goal to advance excellence and inclusion, the Office of Academic Affairs offers this resource for graduate program faculty and staff. Based on the Graduate Excellence Progress tool developed by the Graduate School's Office of Graduate Student Success as well as examples from UW graduate programs, it is intended for faculty and staff to consult for ideas on developing an inclusive program culture throughout all stages of the graduate program lifecycle. However, it is not an exhaustive list and graduate programs are encouraged to develop their own additional practices as well.

ASSESSMENT (BEFORE RECRUITING)

To consider the specific needs or goals of the unit and to develop resources that can assist the unit in advancing inclusive excellence

The column to the right lists examples of promising practices in this stage

Develop external community and stakeholder groups: form partnerships and/or advisory boards that connect the unit with the community and create opportunities for feedback.

Foster a culture of inclusive excellence: evaluate systems that support communication and collaboration among individuals with different backgrounds and viewpoints; consistently seek input from internal stakeholders - not only during times of crisis.

Evaluate current climate of the unit: conduct ongoing assessment of recruitment and admissions practices, breadth of perspectives and goals of applicants and students, climate and student exit surveys.

Consider potential collaborations and resources:

- Office of Graduate Student Equity & Excellence (GSEE)
- Graduate Student Affairs
- Q Center and D Center
- International Student Services
- Office of Minority Affairs and Diversity
- UW-Tacoma's Center for Equity and Inclusion
- UW-Bothell's Office of Diversity and Equity
- [UW Diversity Blueprint](#)

There may also be organizations that are specific to the discipline/field that exist in extended communities, including Seattle, King/Pierce County, Washington State, national, and international organizations that could help identify best practices to support specific student populations and eliminate barriers.

Assess current curricular offerings: conduct assessment of current graduate programs, including program modalities and schedules, to gauge accessibility for different student populations.

RECRUITMENT (BEFORE ENROLLING)

To strategize
about the best
ways to increase
the student
pipeline

*The column to the
right lists examples
of promising practices
in this stage*

Assess recruiting pipeline: develop active, accessible, and culturally responsive strategies for increasing the student pipeline that may include listservs, conferences, and individual networks.

Implement holistic admissions: conduct a review of current practices and best practices and include a clear rubric.

Coordinate with GSEE Welcome Days: highlight that the unit's welcome days coincide with GSEE's welcome days and connect with other graduate student groups or students in other cohorts on campus.

Highlight past student funding: investigate funding patterns of students in the past one, five, ten years. Compare this to other departmental packages, other peer institutions, and whether GSEE funds were used to either "top-off" or match in previous year or years.

RETENTION (AFTER ENROLLING)

To consider
best practices
of keeping the
current
population of
the unit

*The column to the
right lists examples
of promising practices
in this stage*

Share mentorship opportunities: include research, leadership, publishing, conferences, writing groups, research groups, labs, and mechanisms to connect students with others on campus and in the field.

Evaluate curriculum: consider aspects of a curriculum that will prepare students for work that prioritizes excellence in the future, which may include concepts delivered in lectures, in-class discussions, assignments, student advising activities, and practical experiences such as practicum or internships when appropriate.

Establish mechanisms for handling complaints: foster open, respectful dialogue with students - especially when conversations involve differing perspectives or challenging topics.

Continually assess the cultural climate of the department: ask what work faculty/staff have done to prepare for changing demographics of classroom, cohort, or lab.

Consider flexibility in the scheduling of classes: offer courses during evenings and weekends and other flexible schedules to accommodate a wide range of students.

Place students in internship and practicum sites which emphasize cross-cultural engagement: engage supervisors from a variety of communities, or allocate staff to help create professional development opportunities with culturally relevant practice and mentoring models. This may also include creating partnerships with organizations and businesses in the community.

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RETENTION (AFTER ENROLLING)

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Make resource commitments: Work with faculty and staff to allocate funds for scholarships and financial aid opportunities.

Create other funding opportunities: identify and/or allocate funds to support students (e.g. conferences, travel, emergency funds). Provide resources to assist students in seeking/obtaining these funds.

Offer research opportunities for students: support opportunities with a focus on inclusive excellence.

Support students milestones: examine trends of student progress milestones, such as staying in good standing, passing exams, etc., to identify areas of improvement to support excellence.

Highlight student organizations: include particular groups on campus that address specific needs or in the larger field or specialty in the program's activities.

Develop and promote extracurricular opportunities: create professional development opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to improve awareness and cultural competency. This may include school-wide training, book clubs, etc.

Career guidance: Offer comprehensive career guidance.

POST- GRADUATION/ CAREER PREP

To assess the
student
experience and to
maintain contact
with students
after they leave
the institution

Develop exit and alumni surveys: specifically address inclusive excellence efforts during the student experience; asking where students were placed for internships and practicums and where they found jobs.

Commit to supporting students who are unable to secure employment immediately after graduation: Assist students by contributing to networks of mentorship and by offering opportunities such as inviting students back to campus for colloquium talks.