ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS: SERVICE and OUTREACH

Students are expected to participate in a minimum of 60 hours of service and/or outreach work prior to defending their dissertation. Service and outreach are a critical component of a student’s development as a scientist, and offer unique opportunities to learn by interacting with individuals outside the Department. For context, this policy was instituted after students, postdocs, and alumni advocated for it in 2020 in response to a growing realization that scientific excellence comprises both research productivity and a commitment to improving the broader community, expanding public engagement with science, and fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion in science. They sought to formalize Departmental support and guidance for these activities, which are often among the most meaningful, instructive, and fun activities during the PhD training period.

To allow students the flexibility to engage in opportunities that are meaningful to them, this service and outreach requirement broadly includes -- but is not limited to -- the following: teaching, science policy, science communication, departmental service including leading recruitment, leadership and participation in STEM professional and advocacy programs, mentoring undergraduate and high school students (including those in your lab), mentoring graduate students outside your lab (e.g. fellowship application mentor), and other community engagement and resource-sharing activities that promote others’ educational/technical/professional development or otherwise advance the public interest. The 60 hours can be completed over multiple quarters.

Students are encouraged to identify opportunities that they find meaningful (for inspiration, [see OSO](https://oso.stanford.edu/involved/)). Students are encouraged to discuss their service plan with their advisor(s), the Director of Outreach, or the Graduate Program Director in order to benefit from their guidance. For certain activities, the department may be able to financially support the service activity and/or provide space and equipment, upon request. If a student will be receiving any form of financial payment for their outreach activity, they should contact the Genetics Student Services Officer to confirm this does not violate the terms of their primary funding source.

Students track their own activities and after completing the requirement, students should submit their hours ([see Forms](https://med.stanford.edu/genetics/education/phd.html) on website) to the Graduate Program Director. Students may request an exemption waiver for this requirement from the Director of Outreach or Graduate Program Director if needed to maintain their own well-being or their other commitments. Students need not report hours in excess of the required 60 hours, but are encouraged to continue service. Students are welcome to share their experiences with the Department as part of their Retreat poster, CIG presentation, and/or thesis defense. Students are also encouraged to contribute to the list of programs and to assist other students in identifying appropriate opportunities.