

## **Guidebook for the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Course**

For Writing Center consultants, McNair or MARC program directors, Research Development Professionals, or others who are supporting students enrolled in the course.

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## Some General Advice

The course is entirely self-paced and students *can* complete it without intervention. Nonetheless, they are far more likely to succeed if they have consulting support. The online materials were designed specifically to streamline the consultation process.

(If your campus does not provide writing and consulting support, contact us at [grfp@giantangstrom.com](mailto:grfp@giantangstrom.com)).

Access the course materials with this link: <https://www.giantangstrom.com/user-courses/>. After you login, you can see and use the materials just as any student would.

We strongly suggest you watch the videos and read the tip sheets so your consultations with students are consistent with what they learn online. You may find it better to do so “just-in-time” as you prepare for each consultation rather than stepping through the course all at once and possibly forgetting something.

This guide has two sections. The first covers how to track student progress and see their work products; the second describes a suggested consultation process.

## Tracking Students Using the Learndash Reporting Functions

Your students are assigned to a group so you can track their progress. You are assigned as the “group leader.”

Learndash functions similarly to Blackboard, Moodle, or other LMS systems. It has a reporting a tracking system called **ProPanel**. We’ve created a front-end link to simplify access to your reports.

Open the page [www.giantangstrom.com/propanel](http://www.giantangstrom.com/propanel).

At the top of the page, you’ll see the following filter:

The screenshot shows the ProPanel reporting interface. At the top left is the Giant Angstrom logo. To its right is a navigation menu with links: Home, Services, GRFP, Blog, Who We Are, Courses, Logout, and a search icon. Below the navigation, there are two columns of summary statistics:




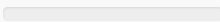

Total Students	Courses
40	5
Assignments Pending	Essays Pending
0	0

Below the statistics is a filter panel. It includes a 'Filters' button and an 'Email' dropdown. The 'Filter By:' section contains four dropdown menus: 'All Groups', 'All Courses', 'All Users', and 'All Statuses'. There are also input fields for 'Start Date' and 'End Date'. At the bottom of the filter panel, there is a 'Per Page:' dropdown set to '5', and two buttons: 'Filter' and 'Reset'. Below the filter panel, there are two identical messages: 'Please choose a filter in ProPanel Reporting.'

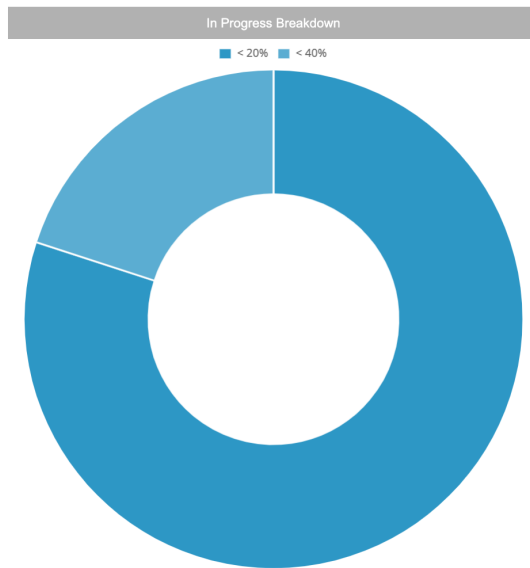
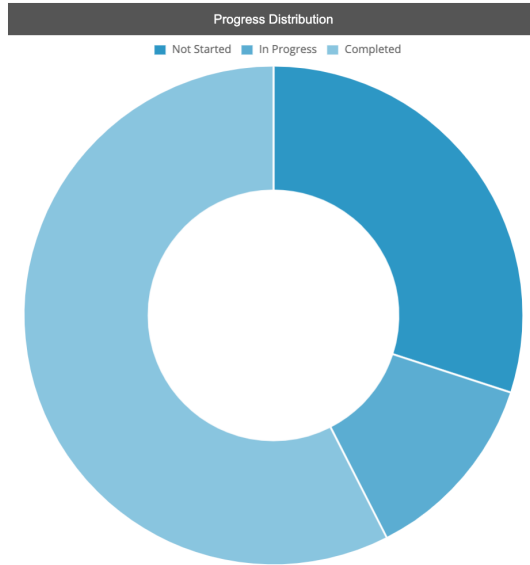
Select the filter for your group. You can run the report for one course or more, for all your students or an individual student, or for students at various stages of completion. When you’ve set the report parameters, click on the “Filter” button to run the report. (You may also want to increase the number of students displayed per page.)

Because the first course is a prerequisite to all others, I wanted to see my students progress in that course. I replaced “All Courses” with “Course 1” using the drop-down menu and clicked the “filter” button. My report looks like this:

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User	Progress
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Alan functionality test account</b> Alan functionality test account grfp@giantangstrom.com	 <b>17%</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Alan Paul</b> Alan Paul alanpaul+1@gmail.com	 <b>100%</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Alan Paul</b> Alan Paul alanpaul+2@gmail.com	 <b>17%</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Alan Paul</b> Alan Paul alanpaul+3@gmail.com	 <b>Not Started</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]	 <b>100%</b>

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The left side table shows each student’s progress in Course #1. The top chart on the right shows the distribution of students by status; the bottom chart shows the percentage of the Course 1 lessons which students “in progress” have completed.

Farther down the page is an activity list showing every lesson a student has taken and when it was attempted. It’s difficult to follow, but the buttons to the right of the list allow you to produce summary reports by lessons and quiz results. Those will download in csv format and look like this:



Notice that default sort is by student name (redacted here) and then by course number. Again, you can sort it to analyze it however you want. Sorting by Course and then Steps Completed is an efficient way to see everyone's progress.

### Quiz report:

If you click the "Quiz" button, you'll get a report of all quiz activity.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
user_id	name	email	quiz_id	quiz_title	score	total	date	points	points_total	percentage	time_spent	passed	course_id	course_title				
101			3898	Accept the Terms of Use to Continue	1	1	7/22/21	1	1	100	4s	YES	197	Course 1: Learn What it Takes to Win				
101			3898	Accept the Terms of Use to Continue	1	1	7/22/21	1	1	100	4s	YES	197	Course 1: Learn What it Takes to Win				
41			3898	Accept the Terms of Use to Continue	1	1	6/30/21	1	1	100	9s	YES	197	Course 1: Learn What it Takes to Win				
94			3898	Accept the Terms of Use to Continue	1	1	7/16/21	1	1	100	7s	YES	197	Course 1: Learn What it Takes to Win				
42			3898	Accept the Terms of Use to Continue	1	1	6/30/21	1	1	100	11s	YES	197	Course 1: Learn What it Takes to Win				
66			3898	Accept the Terms of Use to Continue	1	1	6/30/21	1	1	100	13s	YES	197	Course 1: Learn What it Takes to Win				
43			3898	Accept the Terms of Use to Continue	1	1	6/24/21	1	1	100	12s	YES	197	Course 1: Learn What it Takes to Win				
54			3898	Accept the Terms of Use to Continue	1	1	7/5/21	1	1	100	10s	YES	197	Course 1: Learn What it Takes to Win				
44			3898	Accept the Terms of Use to Continue	1	1	7/2/21	1	1	100	3m 8s	YES	197	Course 1: Learn What it Takes to Win				
95			3898	Accept the Terms of Use to Continue	1	1	7/15/21	1	1	100	6s	YES	197	Course 1: Learn What it Takes to Win				
45			3898	Accept the Terms of Use to Continue	1	1	6/29/21	1	1	100	13s	YES	197	Course 1: Learn What it Takes to Win				
46			3898	Accept the Terms of Use to Continue	1	1	6/30/21	1	1	100	9s	YES	197	Course 1: Learn What it Takes to Win				
91			3898	Accept the Terms of Use to Continue	1	1	7/21/21	1	1	100	9s	YES	197	Course 1: Learn What it Takes to Win				
58			3898	Accept the Terms of Use to Continue	1	1	6/30/21	1	1	100	7s	YES	197	Course 1: Learn What it Takes to Win				
63			3898	Accept the Terms of Use to Continue	1	1	6/22/21	1	1	100	5s	YES	197	Course 1: Learn What it Takes to Win				
47			3898	Accept the Terms of Use to Continue	1	1	6/30/21	1	1	100	5s	YES	197	Course 1: Learn What it Takes to Win				
96			3898	Accept the Terms of Use to Continue	1	1	7/15/21	1	1	100	18s	YES	197	Course 1: Learn What it Takes to Win				
48			3898	Accept the Terms of Use to Continue	1	1	6/30/21	1	1	100	4s	YES	197	Course 1: Learn What it Takes to Win				
49			3898	Accept the Terms of Use to Continue	1	1	6/30/21	1	1	100	17s	YES	197	Course 1: Learn What it Takes to Win				
50			3898	Accept the Terms of Use to Continue	1	1	6/30/21	1	1	100	24s	YES	197	Course 1: Learn What it Takes to Win				
52			3898	Accept the Terms of Use to Continue	1	1	6/25/21	1	1	100	11s	YES	197	Course 1: Learn What it Takes to Win				
52			3898	Accept the Terms of Use to Continue	1	1	6/25/21	1	1	100	19s	YES	197	Course 1: Learn What it Takes to Win				
52			3898	Accept the Terms of Use to Continue	1	1	6/25/21	1	1	100	19s	YES	197	Course 1: Learn What it Takes to Win				
65			3898	Accept the Terms of Use to Continue	1	1	6/25/21	1	1	100	4s	YES	197	Course 1: Learn What it Takes to Win				
51			3898	Accept the Terms of Use to Continue	1	1	6/30/21	1	1	100	8s	YES	197	Course 1: Learn What it Takes to Win				
92			3898	Accept the Terms of Use to Continue	1	1	7/20/21	1	1	100	7s	YES	197	Course 1: Learn What it Takes to Win				
92			3898	Accept the Terms of Use to Continue	1	1	7/20/21	1	1	100	3s	YES	197	Course 1: Learn What it Takes to Win				

Course #1 only has one quiz (Acceptance of Terms), but if you run this for other courses (or for all courses), you would get a more complete list.

Students will complete and upload three worksheets and two essays as progress through the course. These also appear in the Quiz report.

In preparation for your consultation with students, you can access their work using the "Essays Pending" link at the top of your ProPanel page. That link becomes active when students have uploaded an assignment:

Total Students	Courses
41	5
Assignments Pending	Essays Pending
0	1

When you click the link, you'll be redirected to a Submitted Essays dashboard within our Website. Each row will contain one of the student's assignments.

The screenshot shows the 'Submitted Essays' dashboard in LearnDash LMS. The dashboard includes a sidebar with navigation options: Dashboard, LearnDash LMS, Groups, Assignments, Submitted Essays, Profile, and Collapse menu. The main content area is titled 'Submitted Essays' and includes a search bar and a filter section. The filter section has dropdown menus for 'All dates', 'All Authors', 'All Groups', 'All Courses', 'All Lessons', 'All Topics', 'All Quizzes', and 'All Questions', along with 'Reset' and 'Filter' buttons. Below the filter section is a table of submitted essays. The table has the following columns: 'Essay Question Title', 'Submitted By', 'Status / Points', 'Assigned Quiz', 'Assigned Question', 'Assigned Course', 'Assigned Lesson / Topic', and 'Date'. A single row is visible, showing an essay submitted by 'Alan Paul'. The status is 'Not Graded' and the points are '1 / 1'. There are links for 'Submit a Draft', 'Submit Your Draft Here', and 'Course 5: Help the Reviewers'. The assigned lesson is 'Lesson: Polish Your Writing (Tutorial)'. The date is 'Last Modified 2021/07/22 at 9:25 pm'. There are also buttons for 'Bulk actions' and 'Apply'.

<input type="checkbox"/> Essay Question Title	Submitted By	Status / Points	Assigned Quiz	Assigned Question	Assigned Course	Assigned Lesson / Topic	Date
<input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Submit Your Draft Here</a>	Alan Paul	Status: Not Graded Points: 1 / 1 <a href="#">approve</a>	<a href="#">Submit a Draft</a>	<a href="#">Submit Your Draft Here</a>	<a href="#">Course 5: Help the Reviewers</a>	<a href="#">Lesson: Polish Your Writing (Tutorial)</a>	Last Modified 2021/07/22 at 9:25 pm

When your mouse rolls over the leftmost column (Essay Question Title), a download link will appear. Click to open that student's submission in a new browser tab.

## Managing the Consultation Process

### (1) First Consultation: Selecting their plot and deciding which events to share.

Students should be encouraged to complete the Course 2 Brainsteering lesson and upload the completed worksheet as soon as possible. In that exercise, they reflect on their motivation, preparation, and goals; they also identify specific events that illustrate their intellectual merit on these three dimensions.

Typically, students' first attempt lacks the detail and depth needed to create a personal connection with reviewers. We suggest you download and read their submission before your initial consultation. If you do not find it sufficiently engaging, you should either ask them to revise it before the meeting or spend more time in the meeting probing for those details.

Look at Patrick's worksheet as an example of what is needed (and refer them to it): <https://www.giantangstrom.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Sample-Brainsteering-Worksheet-Patrick.pdf>. They may also benefit from completing one (or more) of the Motivation, Preparation, or Goals tutorials in Course 4.

They should also complete the Course 2 Plot lesson before you meet. Although students usually gravitate toward one of the six plots, rarely do all their events align with one plot. Check whether the events in their worksheet clearly advance that plot or could suit more than one.

(For example, the Education and Revelation plots are closely related – parse their events carefully to see which is appropriate. Also, be wary of the Action plot – it should be reserved for true superstars and even then needs to have compelling *events*.)

Student can decide whether to find different event to support the *chosen plot*, or to select a plot that the *chosen events* best accommodate. If they cannot make a decision during the consultation, advise them to complete the Plot tutorial from Course 4.

Close the session by asking if they have a research project in mind and encouraging them to start on their Research Design Worksheet (Course 2) and schedule a research consultation.

Most importantly, direct them to begin their first draft of this essay. We advise them *not to limit* the first draft of the personal essay to three pages – it is better for you to see more material and cut down than to wonder what might have been included.



## (2) Second Consultation: Selecting the Research Project

Ideally, this consultation should be with the faculty advisor who will also write one of the support letters. If not, someone with a knowledge of the research questions and methods in the student's field can pinch-hit.

Course 3 has two worksheets: The *Research Design Worksheet* ensures that students address factors that are considered in the Intellectual Merit review; the *Broader Impacts Worksheet* ensures that they address factors considered in (obviously) the Broader Impacts review. Students can proceed to this consultation before either of these is fully completed.

If they *have* uploaded their worksheets and you found the research project reasonable, this consultation can be short and focused on essay structure. Help the student decide if the generic storyboard fits or they should use one of the alternatives from the Course 4 lesson, "Choose the best storyboard for you." Probe to ensure that the preparation they identified for the personal essay is sufficient for the project. (If not, they may need a plan to acquire additional skills.)

If they *have not* completed the worksheets, this consultation may be much longer. You will have to explore their interests, preparation, and direction. If necessary—and if you can—suggest research questions, methods, etc. Also discuss storyboards and preparation (as above). Direct the student to complete both worksheets and submit them for review.

If their worksheets suggest they are developing a reasonable research project, direct the student to begin writing a first draft. If there are minor flaws in the plan, suggest ways to repair them and direct students to begin writing their draft. If there are *major* flaws in the research plan, they may need to change topics or methods radically. In that case, first year graduate students should consider applying next year rather than now.

Explore which of the review panels would be the best fit. (See the lesson in Course 4.)

### **(3) Third Consultation: Review the First Drafts**

The third consultation should occur after they have uploaded both drafts. It has two goals: (1) to ensure that the student has addressed all the review criteria; and (2) to ensure the essays have a strong narrative flow and structure.

#### **Regarding the review criteria:**

Consider whether there are any omissions or weaknesses in their presentation of motivation, preparation, or goals. If so, probe to discover ways to amplify their strengths and probe for connections between these elements that would focus the reviewer's attention.

Broader Impacts are frequently presented in general, aspirational terms. Strengthen them by providing concrete plans. Also, probe for evidence of past accomplishments.

#### **Regarding the narrative:**

- Check whether events are spread throughout the documents to create continuity, tension, and resolution in the plot.
- Suggest ways to make their descriptions of events more vivid.
- Examine whether their choice of chronological *versus* thematic presentation of their preparation is effective. (Changing from one approach to the other may improve the exposition—but is major surgery that warrants an intermediate draft before final.)
- Parse the documents for storyboard structure. Identify elements germane to the review that would be more prominent if they were repositioned within the essay, moved between the essays, or mentioned in one of the letters.
- If you have sufficient subject matter expertise in the field of study, ask why the student has included or excluded something that reviewers are likely to notice.