

## Appendix VII. Advising and Mentoring

The Department's graduate program functions under a model of shared success between the student and advisor. As a result, close collaboration among faculty and students is encouraged.

The role of advisor is to:

1. Maintain regular communication with students to ensure that they are receiving input about the program, are aware of key steps and deadlines, and monitor progress in coursework, TA assignments, and research.
2. Serves as the primary but not sole intellectual mentor during the student's tenure in the Department, and helps the student identify additional mentors in the UK geoscience and allied science community.
3. Advise on matters such as course selection, proposal design, grant writing, how to conduct research, research and scientific ethics, manuscript preparation, publishing ethics, and teaching.
4. Advise students about the professional community (conferences, workshops, etc.) and mentor students on opportunities and expectations as they enter the profession.
5. Provide timely feedback on work within a mutually agreed timetable.
6. Attempt to assist the student with problems that may arise in their academic program.

Students **are expected to consult regularly** with their advisor about courses and research plans and to keep them updated on their progress, successes, and challenges. Students are also expected to work with advisors on setting timelines and due dates to meet degree deadlines and maintain timely progress.

It is important to note that graduate faculty have diverse advising styles and lab-related policies. **Graduate students are required to discuss the following issues with their advisors upon arrival at UK, so that expectations are clear:**

1. What is the best means of communication with your advisor? Telephone, email, text, Zoom, etc. What are the boundaries of communication (day of the week, times of the day, etc.). How quickly can you expect your advisor to respond to requests?
2. How regularly will you meet with your advisor? How often does your lab group meet?
3. How quickly can you expect your advisor to respond to written submissions turned in on time? What happens if you miss a deadline?

It is the department's expectation that advisors (and advisory committee members) will provide timely feedback to students on work relevant to degree progress. Students should

consult with the DGS (or chair, in the event of a DGS conflict of interest) if advisors are excessively absent or unengaged. That said, it is important to recognize the competing obligations and pressures facing advisors. For example, a student missing an agreed upon deadline can result in a slower response as a faculty member may no longer have the same availability due to other commitments. Similarly, a student who routinely misses meetings, fails in communication, or is otherwise themselves unengaged will be required to meet with the DGS and adviser to address the issues.

Initial mentoring sessions are provided to all graduate students within the first two weeks of enrollment in the program by small mentoring groups consisting of the DGS, major adviser, head TA, and a member of the UK geoscience community. These sessions are designed to provide a network of support for students as they enter their graduate studies and move to Lexington. Students are encouraged to maintain contact with this mentoring group throughout their tenure in the program. Students in the program are encouraged to attend EES alumni-provided 'lunch and learn' sessions for additional mentoring on professional opportunities.

### **Appendix VIII. Policy on Changing Major Adviser**

As part of the recruiting process, each M.S. and Ph.D. student self-selects a major adviser. That faculty member advocates for admission and the terms of support in the offer letter reflect the resources available to that individual only. As a consequence, all admitted students have an assigned major adviser upon arrival in the program. However, situations sometimes arise where changes to the adviser-advisee relationship are warranted. Examples include:

1. A poor fit. Management styles will vary from professor to professor, as do student needs. In some instances, a poor personality match may be grounds for a switch.
2. A change in student research interests. Graduate students may evolve their research interests, and in some such cases, making a switch warranted.
3. A life event places the adviser on extended leave away from campus, making a switch necessary for the student to finish in a timely manner.
4. A faculty member moves to a different institution or becomes deceased.
5. A Title IX conflict (e.g., sexual harassment)

**Switching advisors can be (and most often is) very disruptive to a student's academic progress and is generally not advised.** However, it is sometimes necessary and therefore the procedure for changing major advisers in EES is as follows.

1. The faculty adviser and advisee are to openly communicate such that the circumstances necessitating the change are understood by both parties.
  - a. In the unusual event of a dispute, the graduate student or faculty

member may consult with the DGS under confidential terms.

2. The faculty member and student are to communicate the issue to the DGS via email for written, time-stamped record keeping. This information may be shared with the chair and Associate Dean of Graduate Students.
3. The DGS will consult with both parties about the situation in detail.
4. The DGS will recommend to the student and faculty member potential options relating to a change in adviser, if necessary.

If a change is made at the behest of the student due to a poor fit or change in interests, the terms of the offer letter are subject to modification to reflect the resources of the new adviser, assuming one can be identified (N.B. this may not always be possible). It will often be the case that the new adviser will not have resources, so there can be no unrealistic expectations. For example, summer funding may not be available from the new adviser; there will be no carryover other than the 2 or 4 years total of assistantship articulated in the offer letter (assuming satisfactory progress) and the Pirtle award where appropriate. A new thesis/dissertation project may be required; carryover of research between groups will in most instances be prohibited (exceptions may include a faculty member departure or Title IX violation). When graduate students voluntarily change advisors, we expect that the student will select a new thesis or dissertation topic aligned with the ongoing research of their new lab. No extensions of the graduate timeline or milestones accompany a change of adviser. Any change in primary advisor does not change the student's responsibility for timely progress, which is held by the student and the new adviser. The advisory committee may recommend an extension with evidence of timely progress, pending the availability of funds.