

**Department of Hispanic Studies
University of Kentucky
Guidelines on Graduate Student Advising
Approved April 28, 2021**

I. GRADUATE STUDENT ADVISING

The Department's graduate program is designed to facilitate close collaboration among faculty and students with shared areas of interest. Consistent with this philosophy, each student will select a professor who will consent to act as their major advisor. The advisor's role includes:

- Maintaining regular communication with students to ensure that they are receiving necessary input about the program, to remind them to check key deadlines and monitor progress via GPA and other measures of student's performance.
- Serving as an intellectual mentor during the student's tenure in the Department.
- Advising on matters such as course selection, proposal design, grant writing, conducting research, and the student's timeline and goals trajectory in the program.
- Advising students about the larger professional community (conferences, workshops, grants, articles, etc.) and mentor students about opportunities, professional expectations, and norms as they enter the academic profession or pursue alternative professional pathways.
- Providing timely feedback on work (generally within two weeks) within a mutually agreed timetable and deadlines.
- Providing letters of recommendation for grant proposals, the job search, etc., at the discretion of the advisor.
- Assisting the graduate 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 keep them updated on their progress at least once a semester (although in practice this occurs more frequently). Students are also expected to work with advisors on setting timelines and due dates to meet degree deadlines and maintain timely progress towards their degree.

It is important to recognize that people have different relationship styles and faculty have different styles and approaches to advising. As a result, there is a diversity of models for how the student-advisory professional relation functions. In order to help ensure a successful relationship, it is useful for students to discuss the following points with their potential advisor before entering into an advising relationship. How quickly can you expect your advisor to respond to written submissions turned in on time? What happens if you miss a deadline? How quickly can you expect your advisor to respond to requests to schedule meetings or conversations? How regularly does your advisor like to meet? How often would your advisor like a written report of your progress along degree milestones? What format should this report take? It is the department's expectation that advisors (and committee members) will provide

timely feedback (generally within two weeks) to students on proposal drafts, reading lists, and related work relevant to students' degrees. It is also important to recognize the competing obligations and pressures facing advisors. For example, a student missing a convened deadline can result in a slower response as a faculty member may no longer have the same availability due to other commitments.

The DGS acts as an advisor until PhD students select a dissertation advisor. PhD students must have selected an advisor before writing the dissertation proposal as an independent study under the advisor's supervision (SPA 782), which typically takes place in the fifth semester of study, with preparatory work in the fourth semester. In all cases, advisor assignment is contingent upon agreement by both parties. As a rule, Ph.D. advising is a privilege of full graduate faculty membership (generally limited to associate and full professors; assistant professors may co-direct with a tenured faculty member with the approval of the Graduate School).

Switching advisors can be very disruptive to a student's academic progress and is generally not advised. However, changes in an advisor's ability to oversee a project as well as a student's redefinition of their area of interest and direction in the graduate program may lead to switching advisors. In such cases, the following departmental procedures apply. If an advisor is no longer able to work with a student, the DGS will act as a temporary advisor until the student is able to identify a new faculty member who consents to act as their major advisor. Likewise, students, in consultation with the DGS, may seek a new advisor during their time in the program. Students are advised that doing so can seriously disrupt/delay their progress towards their degree and may result in no degree earned before departmental funding is used up. Students without an advisor are responsible for identifying a faculty member who consents to act as their advisor. Changes in a student's research project may be advised so that it better corresponds to the new advisor's expertise in terms of theory, topic and/or method. If no faculty member is found, the permanent advising role will be determined in joint dialogue between the DGS, Chair, Graduate Studies Committee, and student. At all times, switching advisors is also subject to the rules of the Graduate School.

II. DOCTORAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES

A. Formation of the Advisory Committee

While writing the dissertation proposal, and in consultation with the advisor, the student will form an Advisory Committee typically composed of three faculty members from inside the department (including their advisor) and one faculty member outside the department. In cases where the student's project warrants the representation of a more diverse and/or interdisciplinary expertise, as many as two additional committee members may be added from inside or outside the department (the Graduate School allows a maximum of six Advisory Committee members). All Advisory Committees are constituted through consultation between the student, the advisor, and the Director of Graduate Studies, based on the student's coursework distribution, and with the student's academic interests and professional goals in mind.

B. Role of the Advisory Committee

1. Advising function of the Advisory Committee

Once a student has formed an Advisory Committee, it is expected that students will rely primarily on the advice of their dissertation director and members of their advisory committee for questions regarding additional coursework or research, scholarships and grants, conferences and publications, job information, and letters of recommendation. Students are expected to focus on their long-range plan to complete the Ph.D. degree. Students qualify automatically for M.A. candidacy after completing the M.A. Requirements or upon passing the "A Exam" portion of the Ph.D. Qualifying Exam.

2. Full meetings of the Advisory Committee

a. Dissertation proposal defense and Ph.D. Reading List

The student's Advisory Committee convenes for the first time for the dissertation proposal defense during the student's final semester of coursework (typically the student's sixth semester). After the student begins writing the dissertation proposal and prior to the dissertation proposal defense, the student will consult individually with the members of the Advisory Committee to plan his or her Ph.D. Reading List. The M.A. Reading List and coursework taken with the Advisory Committee members serves as the combined backbone for the Ph.D. Reading List, which the student and respective Advisory Committee will further refine in collaboration.

b. Qualifying Exam

The advisor serves as Chair of the student's qualifying exam committee (occasionally there will be co-advisors who serve as Co-Chairs), and is/are responsible for requesting written exam questions from the Advisory Committee and assembling the full written exam. The Advisory Committee will evaluate the student's performance on the Ph.D. Qualifying Exam.

c. Exam B

The student's Advisory Committee will convene for a third time to evaluate a full chapter from the student's dissertation during the year following the qualifying exam.

d. Dissertation Defense (Final Examination)

The Advisory Committee meets for a fourth and final time for the student's dissertation defense. At this time, the Graduate School appoints an outside examiner to the Advisory Committee. The advisor or co-advisors act/s once again as Chair or Co-Chairs guiding the defense and recording the vote of the Advisory Committee, including the outside examiner, for submission to the DGS, who verifies the vote of the Advisory Committee and submits the completed exam card to the Graduate School.