

I.c. 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, as a student progresses through the program, each student will select a professor who will serve as the advisor. In addition, the student will also select an advisory committee. These are important steps for all graduate students.

Advising Procedures and Logistics

Initial Advising Experience: Semesters 1-3 in the Program

When each student enters the program the DGS is automatically assigned as the advisor until the student formally selects his or her own advisor and files the paperwork with the Graduate School. The DGS is in a position to provide advice on a wide range of situations that are vital for new students, many of which are not field specific. Per the Graduate School, by the end of the third semester in the program, the student must formally select an advisor as well as an advisory committee. This is done by electronically filing the Formation of an Advisory Committee form, which can be found on the Graduate School website.

In addition to the DGS serving as the formal advisor, from the time the student enters the program until they declare an advisor and committee, the graduate student will also be assigned a faculty member as a substantive advisor with substantive expertise in the student's major field of interest. These "substantive" faculty advisor assignments will be rotated each semester. These assignments will be made by the DGS and will be based on input from both the student and faculty. The substantive advisor accomplishes several things. First, it facilitates students and faculty getting to know each other. Second, it compensates for any shortcoming in substantive expertise of the DGS. Third, the semester limit provides assurances that students get advice from at least three different faculty members before the student must select an advisor.¹ There is no requirement on the number of meetings that should take place, but a guideline of 2-3 meetings a semester seems sufficient to start the substantive advising process. The faculty advisor should initiate the first meeting.

Advising for first year students also has a peer component. Each Spring, the DGS will solicit interest from the current graduate students about willingness to serve on a 2-3 person peer advisor committee that will serve as advisors to incoming first year students. The Graduate Committee will select the Committee from those grad students who expressed an interest. There are no requirements for serving on this committee other than being willing to answer questions from first year students. Incoming students wishing to get a student's perspective may use the

¹ Importantly, there is a distinction between mentoring and advising. Mentoring involves the informal relationship while advising provides direction and guidance related to professional subject matter. Advising emphasizes the formal relationship between colleagues to capacity build. Specifically, advising roles are where faculty and graduate students should discuss things like each other's research interests, the state of research in the field, relevant course work in a field, and other research related topics. Thus, this is an advising relationship though a mentoring role may develop over time.

peer advisory committee for relevant questions. This committee should be formed by the end of the Spring semester.

The timeline of the advising process:

Semester	Formal Advisor	Substantive advisor	Peer Advising	To Do
Fall, semester 1	DGS	Faculty #1 from relevant field	Elected Grad Peer Advising Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet with formal advisor - Meet with substantive advisor
Spring, semester 2	DGS	Faculty #2 from relevant field	Elected Grad Peer Advising Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet with formal advisor - Meet with substantive advisor
Fall, semester 3	DGS	Faculty #3 from relevant field	~	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet with substantive advisor - File paperwork with Grad School selecting advisor and advisory committee
Spring, semester 4 and afterwards	Student selected Advisor along with the other members of the student's Advisory Committee		~	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet with advisory committee annually - See checklist and "Semester 4 and Beyond" section

Selecting an Advisory and Advisory Committee: Semesters 4 and Beyond

Selecting the Advisor and Advisory Committee, and the faculty members' willingness to serve, must be agreed upon by all parties before the paperwork is filed. With respect to formally selecting the advisor and advisory committee, there are several important considerations. The student's advisor serves as the Chair of the student's Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee includes the Chair and at least three other members.² At least one committee member must be from outside of Political Science (i.e., their primary appointment must be in another academic unit). All members of the committee must be members of the Graduate Faculty of the University of Kentucky (with rare exceptions) and three (including the advisor) must possess Full Graduate Faculty status.³ To be Chair of the committee, the advisor must have full faculty status. If the advisor does not have full faculty status, then the faculty member can be a co-chair and another member of the committee with full faculty status must be Chair. Additional

² It is possible to have more than 4 total people on the advisory committee.

³ Ascertaining whether faculty have "full" graduate school status can be found on the Graduate School's webpage. Typically, "full" status is only attained when the faculty member is tenured. While it is possible for an assistant professor to have full graduate school status, it is quite rare for that to happen.

members of the committee are permitted. In the event of a vacancy on the Committee, an appropriate replacement must be arranged prior to any committee decision.

Once the Advisory Committee is formed, the student must formally request approval of the committee through the Graduate School.⁴ All decisions of the Advisory Committee are by a majority vote of its Graduate Faculty members. Advisory Committee decisions are reported to the DGS who transmits them to the Graduate School when necessary. In addition to advising and program planning, the Advisory Committee undertakes administration of the Qualifying Examination, supervision of the Dissertation, and administration of the Final Examination (aka dissertation defense).

The Advisor-Advisee relationship

The advisor/advisee relationship is a critical component of student success. It is important to recognize that people have different relationship styles and that there is a diversity of models for what this professional relationship should look like. In order to help ensure a successful relationship, the department recommends that students and faculty members have at least one thorough conversation where they discuss a number of points related to their expectations and understandings of how the relationship will work *before* they enter into the relationship. These considerations might include:

- The student's personal timeline and the timing of committee formation and other program milestones (e.g., student goals, field exam completion, prospectus defense, dissertation).
- The advisor's preferred communication method and frequency.
- The expected supervisory model or style.
- The student's substantive area and questions they may like to study.

Students might consider asking:

- How quickly can you expect your advisor to respond to written submissions turned in on time?
- 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?
- What happens if deadlines are missed?

The advisor's role is to assist the graduate student with any problems that may arise in their program, to advise on matters such as course selection, proposal design, grant writing, teaching, conducting research, and to serve as an intellectual mentor during the student's tenure in the department. Students are expected to consult regularly with their advisor.

⁴ The form is available on the Graduate School's website.

In all cases, advisor assignment is contingent upon agreement by both parties. Ph.D. advising is a privilege of full graduate faculty membership (i.e., only faculty with full Graduate School status may serve as advisors).

Any student, with the approval of the DGS, may change advisor at any time during their tenure in the program. Likewise, any student, after due consideration and consultation with the DGS and the agreement of the faculty to serve, may change advisor or committee members at any point as long as it is consistent with the rules of the Graduate School. It is understood that changes might occur as a student defines or re-defines their area of interest or otherwise changes focus and direction in the graduate program.

Best practices for advising may include:

Advisors should:

- Maintain regular communication with advisees while in residence.
- Ensure that advisees are supported (either by themselves or another faculty member) when the advisor is on sabbatical or research leave.
- Be aware of advisees' course choices.
- Be mindful of departmental and Graduate School deadlines.
- Monitor GPAs, and other indicators of student performance.
- Review closely (for accuracy, appropriate timeline and other details) and sign-off on the annual student progress reports.
- Help advisees identify opportunities to participate in the larger professional political science community by proposing and delivering conference presentations or pursuing other appropriate activities.
- Mentor students about professional norms and provide guidance as they enter the profession.

Advisees should:

- Initiate regular communication with advisor.
- Inform advisor of the courses the student plans to enroll in and keep advisor informed of progress or problems.
- Work with advisor to create an agreed-upon timeline for reaching program milestones and maintaining timely progress toward degree.
- Learn and comply with departmental and Graduate School deadlines and regulations.
- Consult with advisor about how to best take a role in the discipline of political science by participating in professional meetings or other appropriate forums.

If students have concerns about the advising they are receiving they should arrange to speak with the Director of Graduate Studies. If discussing this with the DGS is not feasible, the student should contact the Department Chair or the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences (depending on the personnel involved). The Department wants to support graduate students to the best of our ability, and we will take these concerns seriously. Students may also seek out the guidance of the Academic Ombudsman (<http://www.uky.edu/Ombud/>).