

Advisor – Advisee Relationship, Responsibilities and Expectations

To: All Graduate Students, all Faculty

From: [Dr. Sebastian Luft](#), Director of Graduate Studies (DGS)

July 14, 2020

This document is meant to give some indications on how the relationship between advisor (full-time faculty member) and advisee (graduate student) should be construed.

The Basics: Upon entering the program, a graduate student (MA or PhD) is assigned an advisor. In the first year, your default advisor is the DGS to enable the completion of administrative tasks that arise in the first year. MA students keep their advisor for the time of their study (normally 2 years). PhD students typically switch to a different advisor after the first year, based on compatibility of interests. Both faculty and graduate students can request a specific advisee or advisor. Once a student begins the dissertation proposal process, the student selects a dissertation director, who remains the student's advisor until the completion of the student's studies. Ideally the dissertation director is the same person as the student's second advisor but may be a different faculty member.

Advisors are often tenured faculty, but untenured faculty after their first year as Assistant Professor may be considered as advisors as well. Potential advisors, especially those who are untenured faculty, are strongly encouraged to consult with the Chair and DGS before accepting a student as an advisee.

All students are advised to discuss the choice of dissertation director with the DGS and the faculty member in question to ensure both parties are aware of the obligations involved.

Responsibilities of the Advisor: Here are some of the things a professor who is asked by the DGS to be an advisor should be willing to take on:

1. Tracking progress: The advisor meets with the student at least once a semester to discuss progress in the program, things to do next (Logic, language, DQP) and to clarify that the student is on track and making progress. Any problems with the student's progress must be made clear to the student. If the student isn't in touch, the advisor should reach out to the student.
2. Support: The advisor acts as an intermediary between parties that have issues: e.g., between the student and a professor or another student; to bring things to the DGS's attention.
3. Mentorship: The advisor should mentor a student, discuss progress and interests, and point the student to opportunities (conferences, talks, publications, etc.). In very broad terms, the advisor's role is to assist the student in becoming a professional academic. A student may also seek mentorship from other faculty members.
4. Write the end-of-year-letter: This entails gathering information, in consultation with other faculty members, about the student's accomplishments, including grades, RA work, teaching, conference visits, publications, etc.; as well as addressing areas of

concern. The student may request clarification of the letter if s/he believes that the letter is unfair or false or add his/her own response, which will be appended to the end-of-year letter.

Responsibilities of the Advisee:

1. Regular contact: Students should be in touch with the advisor at least once a semester to discuss progress, classes to take next, and proactively seek out help with research ideas and problems students may encounter.
2. Seeking support: When a problem arises that might affect a student's progress in the program, the student is encouraged to consult with the advisor. Students may, in consultation with the DGS or Chair, request a change of advisor.