

# Department of Mathematics Graduate Advising Policy

*Approved by the mathematics faculty on 27 October 2020*

Graduate advising and mentoring is a collaborative process founded on clear communication and clear expectations between advisors and advisees. In this document, we outline recommended practices for both graduate advisors and graduate advisees in the UK Department of Mathematics. Further, we outline our procedure for managing and resolving issues that arise in the context of graduate advising within the department.

## **Recommendations for Graduate Advisors and Advisees**

Graduate advisors should:

- Serve as both intellectual advisors and professional mentors to their students;
- Understand the university and department policies that pertain to graduate students;
- Assist students in preparing for future employment in academia, industry, business, and/or government;
- Be aware of and, when necessary, direct students to university resources to support them through challenges; and
- Interact with students in a respectful and professional manner and maintain a high level of overall professionalism.

Graduate advisees should:

- Inform themselves about policies and requirements regarding their degree program, research activities, and financial support;
- Seek clarification from faculty or staff when needed regarding requirements and policies;
- Inform themselves about the role played by faculty advisors in graduate study, as outlined above;
- Be aware of limits to requests for time and resources made to faculty and staff; and
- Interact with faculty in a respectful and professional manner and maintain a high level of overall professionalism.

At the start of the advising relationship, advisors and advisees should:

- Discuss program and degree requirements.
- Discuss tentative advisee career goals and corresponding goals in the program.
- Discuss recommended activities for the advisee to support reaching their career goals.
- Discuss a tentative timeline for completing degree requirements and other activities.
- Discuss and agree on expectations for the advising relationship (examples of advising styles are provided at the end of this document). Note that advising styles typically develop and change throughout the advising relationship.

- Discuss and agree on acceptable/expected means of communication (email, text, phone, etc) and expected frequency of communication.

Throughout the advising relationship, advisors and advisees should:

- Hold regularly scheduled meetings.
- Discuss expectations regarding what the advisee and the advisor will each do to prepare for meetings.
- Discuss updates to advisee career goals and corresponding goals in the program.
- Review progress toward degree at least every 9-12 months and discuss an updated timeline for completion of degree requirements.
- Provide members of the doctoral committee with progress updates at least annually.

### **Procedure for Issue Management and Resolution**

Establishing clear communication and setting clear expectations can prevent many problems that arise in the advising process. In the case that an issue does arise, for either the advisor or the advisee, the following process should be used.

1. The advisor and advisee should attempt to resolve the matter together.
  - a. If one or both individuals are not comfortable raising this issue with the other, then members of the student's doctoral committee and/or the Director of Graduate Studies can be informally consulted for advice and guidance.
2. The individual requesting assistance in resolving the issue should contact the Director of Graduate Studies and request a meeting.
  - a. During this meeting, the individual should communicate the issue at hand and what attempts have been previously taken to address it.
  - b. The DGS will assist with developing strategies for the advisor and advisee to resolve the issue. If needed, the DGS will informally consult with the graduate committee and/or the department chair to develop these strategies.
3. If the issue cannot be resolved working with the DGS, then the individual should contact the Department Chair and request a meeting.
  - a. During this meeting, the individual should communicate the issue at hand and what attempts have been previously taken to address it.
  - b. The Chair will assist with developing strategies for the advisor and advisee to resolve the issue.
4. If the issue cannot be resolved working with the Department Chair, then the individual should contact the Arts & Sciences Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and request a meeting.
  - a. During this meeting, the individual should communicate the issue at hand and what attempts have been previously taken to address it.
  - b. The Associate Dean will assist with developing strategies for the department to resolve the issue.

### Examples of Advising Styles (not math-specific)

The examples below are adapted from "Advising and Supervising." Gordon B. Davis. In *Research in Information Systems: A handbook for research supervisors and their students*. Butterworth-Heinemann, 2005. Preprint at

[http://misrc.umn.edu/workingpapers/fullpapers/2004/0412\\_052404.pdf](http://misrc.umn.edu/workingpapers/fullpapers/2004/0412_052404.pdf)

<b>Style</b>	<b>Advisor Role and Behavior</b>	<b>Student Role and Behavior</b>
Strong master/apprentice style	Advisor is research director. Advisor has a well specified domain of expertise and set of problems within it.	Student is an apprentice working for the advisor. Student works on advisor's problems.
Collegial master/apprentice style	Advisor is expert who limits advising to problems that are within scope of his or her research skill set but will work on student's problem.	Student develops a problem within advisor's domain and skills and works under the advisor to develop the research plan and procedures.
Collegial development style	Advisor is senior colleague who will respond to student research problem and extend his or her advising domain to include new problems and new skills.	Student takes initiative to introduce new problem that requires new skill set and works as a junior colleague with advisor in joint development of new domain.
Guidance and suggestion style	Advisor is a senior colleague who gives good general guidance over a wide range of problems and methods but does not have personal skill in all of them.	Student is an independent, junior colleague who takes initiative for presenting problems and research plans for discussion and guidance. Student develops required skills.
Passive hands-off style	Advisor has quality control role and responds only to requests or documents and performs only general quality control review.	Student is an independent researcher who takes initiative for developing problem, developing skills, and presenting research plans for general review and approval.