

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE ADVISING PROGRAM FOR SCHOOL STUDENTS

Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology January 2014

1) What is the role of my advisor?

Your advisor plays an important role in your education and training. Every school psychology student at the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology (GSAPP) must have an advisor who is a core faculty member in the Department of Applied Psychology (i.e., the school psychology program) throughout his or her graduate student career. Your advisor can address questions related to your program proposal. Your advisor might also provide advice on courses requirements, course sequences, dissertation projects, practicum, and internship opportunities. Your advisor could provide answers to your questions about specific fellowship opportunities, research, and future career decisions, including licensure. Finally, your advisor might convey feedback from the faculty concerning your performance.

2) Is Advising the same as "Mentoring"?

Your advisor is not necessarily your only “mentor.” Whereas advising sometimes includes mentoring, the two roles are not synonymous. Your GSAPP advisor is a specific role held by one faculty member; mentor in this context is a more general, less formal term for a person who provides guidance in your career. You can and should have multiple mentors as a student at GSAPP, as well as throughout your career. Your clinical and practicum supervisors, along with faculty with whom you interact in classes and on research projects, all provide you mentorship while you develop skills for your career.

3) Does my advisor oversee my doctoral training in: (a) research, (b) dissertation and/or (c) professional clinical development?

Your advisor is not automatically your dissertation chair or your research mentor, as these latter two roles evolve over time while you advance through the program and define your research interests for your dissertation. For some students, there is a strong overlap between research interests and the work of the advisor, and she or he may become the dissertation chair. For other students, a faculty member who is not the assigned advisor will become the dissertation chair/research mentor. Please note that it is your responsibility as a student to ask a faculty member or other qualified scholar/practitioner if she or he is willing and able to serve as your dissertation chair.

4) How do I become matched to an advisor?

Before the first semester at GSAPP, each student in the school program is assigned a core faculty member as an advisor. It is expected that faculty members will have somewhat even numbers of advisees.

5) Can I change my advisor?

You can apply to change your advisor if you feel you would be a better match with another core faculty member. To make a change, simply send a request to the Department Chair briefly detailing your rationale for changing.

6) When will I first meet with my advisor?

First year students have the opportunity to meet with their advisor during orientation in June before the academic year begins. You will also be invited to meet with your advisor a second time during your first semester in the program. These initial meetings will focus on your adjustment to the program, and you will be oriented to important documents that guide your program of study, including the milestone checklist, student and dissertation handbooks, and Gazette.

7) How often should I meet with my advisor?

As per the milestone checklist, it is recommended that students maintain contact with their faculty advisors once per year at a minimum, after initial meetings take place. Students should initiate meetings with advisors based on their individual needs and professional development goals. Please note that you will need an advisor to sign your program proposal prior to the end of your 2nd year.

8) What is my role in arranging meetings with my advisor?

It is expected that as developing professionals, students will be proactive in contacting advisors as needed. If you would like to meet with your advisor, a first step is to email her or him to arrange a meeting. Make sure that both sides have confirmed the date and location of the meeting, and that you bring all necessary materials to the meeting.

9) What should I bring to an advising meeting?

Make sure to attend the meeting prepared with discussion topics, questions, or concerns. It is your responsibility as the student to bring any materials needed to meaningfully discuss the topics of the advising meeting. For example, if you seek advisement on whether to take additional training opportunities, consider bringing a resume or CV to illustrate how the extra position may complement your past experiences.

10) What occurs in advising meetings?

Potential topics for meetings with your advisor include your progress in the program, decisions regarding course of study, selecting a dissertation committee, and practicum placements (see the milestone checklist at http://gsappweb.rutgers.edu/cstudents/forms/Milestone_checklist.pdf). You might also ask your advisor to discuss the dissertation process and your initial dissertation ideas. The boundaries of topics to discuss during advisor meetings can be set by the student and the advisor, but should generally be focused on issues related to the student's career.