



The Department of Ethnic Studies' Advising Agreement Guidelines¹

In the Department of Ethnic Studies, our community thrives with open and clear communication. This document is intended to put forward the expectations between advisor and advisee in a transparent and collaborative way so that both graduate students and faculty can succeed in their overall goals—that is, to graduate in a timely manner and to support the next generation of critical ethnic studies scholars, respectively.

Organized and effective advising is beneficial to both the advisor and advisee. The Advising Agreement is a supplemental strategy created to support graduate student advisees' short- and long-term goals while also giving advisors tools to clarify expectations. This document is an agreement between the graduate student and their advisor and should be reviewed once a semester and/or once significant educational milestones have been met. This agreement should be modified and developed collaboratively throughout the advisee/advisor working relationship. Our Department recommends advisees and advisors adhere to the following guidelines:

1. **Regular one-on-one meetings:** Both advisee and advisor should agree on the frequency and length of meetings. Feedback is critical to student success and clear expectations will ensure that both parties are successful and supported during the advisee/advisor relationship. Depending on where the student is in the graduate degree process, meetings may need to be more or less frequent.

Advisors and advisees should agree on how agendas for these meetings will be formulated. One approach—especially for more advanced students—would be for the advisee to send out an agenda to their advisor prior to their meetings with a list of all items that need to be discussed and any issues the advisee would like to bring to the attention of their advisor. If the advisor wishes to add anything to the list, they should make edits to the emailed list and send it back to their advisee.

2. **Intentional Communication:** Both advisee and advisor should properly prepare for meetings and adhere to the agenda as much as possible, acknowledging that some flexibility should be expected for topics that may arise organically.
3. **Documentation and record keeping:** Both advisee and advisor should take notes during meetings. The advisee should email a description of discussion topics and any agreed upon next steps to their advisor. The advisor will let the student know if any corrections or modifications need to be made. These notes will help clarify expectations and provide records for both parties.
4. **Teaching Expectations and Requirements (GRA and TA appointments):** The Department has collaboratively developed a TA/GPTI Guidelines document that outlines core expectations for graduate TAs, GPTIs, and faculty. This can be found on the Ethnic Studies website, under

¹ Adapted from *The Graduate School's Advising Agreement Guidelines* by Dr. Leslie Ellen Blood, with contributions by Meredith Canode and Genevieve Borst McNellis.

Graduate→Resources for Current Students→Important Documents. It is also included as an appendix in the Graduate Student Handbook.

5. **Graduation and milestone completion timeline:** Advisee and advisor should discuss progression and timelines related to graduation at an early point in the student’s graduate career. Advisee and advisor should have knowledge of Graduate School and program-specific guidelines and expectations for graduation. Advisees should discuss the timeline of important milestones with their advisors and make sure they understand what is expected at each step. The timeline should be evaluated each semester and updated if necessary.

In order to have the degree awarded in any given semester, advisees and advisors should be aware of relevant deadlines set by the Graduate School for the dissertation defense and submission of approved dissertation. Completion dates for these milestones should be set with those deadlines in mind.

SAMPLE TIMELINE

Academic Milestone	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Notes
Completion of coursework*							
Formation of comprehensive exam committee							
Comprehensive exam*							
Dissertation prospectus/proposal							
Dissertation defense*							
Submission of approved dissertation*							
Other program milestones:							

* Milestones marked with * are required by the Graduate School. Other milestones can be added as necessary. Specificity can be added to the agreement by noting whether the milestone should be completed during a fall or spring semester, if necessary.

6. **Professional obligations and dates:** Any service expectations or professional opportunities should be discussed with the advisee. The advisor should discuss conference attendance recommendations. Advisors should also explain how advisees should obtain funding for travel.
7. **Publication expectations:** The advisee and advisor should discuss topics and timeline for student papers/publications. The advisee and advisor should discuss how the work will be edited and submitted. Advisees should have a clear understanding of primary authorship and co-authorship expectations on papers they publish prior to graduation.
8. **Feedback:** Scholarly and written feedback involves evaluation, critique, and making recommendations repeatedly on students' research design and written work. This kind of critical and intellectual coaching and relationship should be embraced and fostered. Prior to submitting any work to the advisor, the advisor and advisee should agree on the feedback process. Guiding questions include: What is the nature of the feedback that will be provided by the advisor? Does the advisor do line-by-line edits or should the advisee plan on using campus writing support services for documents edits? What are the expectations for turnaround time between when a draft is submitted and when the advisee can expect feedback?

Advisors will let advisees know how long it will take for them to provide feedback. Advisors will commit to providing feedback in a timely fashion based on upcoming milestone goals. Advisors will provide regular academic performance updates, including clarifying expectations surrounding level and quality of work. Advisors will let advisees know if they are making adequate progress, and what they need to do to meet graduate school level expectations to secure graduation.

9. **Boundaries:** Both advisee and advisor need to be clear on one another's personal and professional boundaries. The power differential in this dynamic can convolute the working relationship, and both advisor and advisee should discuss and agree to the work that needs to be done and how it will come to completion. The advisee and advisor should also decide when phoning or texting a personal number is appropriate. How will the advisee and advisor communicate? Email, text, phone calls? What kind of response time should both parties anticipate?
10. **Conflict Resolution:** If conflict should arise, the student advisee and faculty advisor should attempt to resolve the issue informally. The Director of Graduate Studies, program director, or Department Chair may also be contacted for context and guidance. The Ombuds office can act as a confidential resource for conflict resolution, along with assisting with mediation in some cases. If resolution cannot be reached informally, students may consider additional avenues for their complaint. The Graduate School grievance process and procedures document includes information about jurisdiction for a variety of issues, and explains the process for grievances which fall under the purview of the Graduate School. Resources related to conflict resolution and information on the grievance process can be found on the Graduate School website. Conflicts related to discrimination and harassment or sexual misconduct should be reported to the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance. If the student is employed by CU and has an employment grievance, they should consult Faculty Affairs for guidance.

In conclusion, written agreements are important in establishing productive professional relationships. This document serves both the advisee and the advisor by providing agreed-upon guidelines that will clarify expectations, lessen conflict and provide structure. By initialing below, both parties are acknowledging that they understand and have read the agreement.

Please feel free to add any other points of concern below prior to initialing.

Student Initials:

Advisor Initials:

Please contact the Director of Graduate Community and Program Development, Dr. Leslie-Ellen Blood, with any questions you have on how to use this document. Leslie.blood@colorado.edu.