

Some Considerations Regarding Advisors-Advisee Relationsⁱ

1. **Advisors vs. Mentors:** Advising is a short-term relationship that focuses on information and guidance to the learner. Mentoring is a more intricate, long-term, one-on-one relationship that goes beyond providing information.
 - Usually you only have one advisor.
 - You may have multiple mentors, including your advisor.
 - Mentors are specific to your needs, and tailor their mentoring to your needs, so don't get trapped into comparing the type of mentoring you receive to what others appear to receive
 - Mentor relations may last for a lifetime, it is worth cultivating them

2. Managing Relations with your Advisor:

- Self-assessment: Why you are in grad school? What are your goals upon graduation? How does that match up with your advisor?
- Your advisor is a busy person.
 - Communicate: Discuss how your advisor wishes to interact.
 - Preferred medium
 - Preferred frequency
 - Communicate regularly within advisor's preferences.
 - **Come prepared** to meetings. Get to the point, know what you want from the meeting.
 - Have clearly defined goals
 - Jointly draft a "right now" plan, not a master plan, that sets short terms goals and expectations—these can be modified across time.
 - What is your research project attempting to accomplish?
 - How does your research relate to your advisors?
 - Work with your advisor to prioritize so you are both on the same page.
 - Send an email afterwards summarizing your take-aways, what you understand as next steps. Your advisor will appreciate your keeping things on track.
 - Be Proactive
 - Keep advisor in the loop about developments that might impact your work/progress.
 - This may sometimes get in delicate areas, and Ombuds are there to assist you in thinking through how to communicate them.

3. Cultivate mentors:

- Make yourself known to faculty members whose interests intersect with yours. **Come prepared.** Engage them in discussion of their research. Introduce them to your interests.
- Pursue common interests with your instructional faculty. They know you from class and they will be receptive to continuing a conversation that grows from shared intellectual interests. **Come prepared.**
- Continue to cultivate mentor-mentee relationship with advisor and others on the faculty. Don't be afraid to approach faculty other than your advisor for career advice/shop talk on your research interests. **Come prepared.**

4. What to do when things go wrong:

Some advisor traits can be problematic: They may be inconsistent in their demands or advice, fail to give you credit for your participation in research or your own breakthroughs, become abusive, be unavailable, or in other ways seem to undervalue, possibly undermine your work and make you uncertain there's a path to your degree. At these times:

- It is advisable to **avoid using email to express grievances, complaints or attempt to resolve perceived differences, issues or concerns.**
- It is essential that you have mentors who can help out in these circumstances.
- Contact the Ombuds Office at 303-492-5077 for assistance in thinking through your options.

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