Advising

Your Advisor’s Job

Advising is really important, and your best help for making your way through the program is your advisor. When you are admitted to the program, you’ll be assigned an advisor. The job of the advisor is to:

- Approve your coursework each term
- Get the paperwork done (there’s a lot of it)
- Arrange for you to take HIAD and EDPR comprehensive exams
- Help you design your residency project and dissertation

Approve Coursework

*Every term*, you need to email or call your advisor and tell him/her what courses you intend to enroll in that term. You must do this BEFORE you try to register, because only the advisor can remove the advising hold. The advisor will take care of the alternate PIN, and then you can register. Don’t go directly to Paige, because your advisor must tell her if you have been advised and are cleared to register.

Paperwork

You have loads of paperwork to do to make you official and the university happy. You need to fill out:

- Thesis/Dissertation Faculty Advisory Committee form for your Program Advisory Committee (this group signs forms and is involved in your oral comprehensive exams)
- Program of Study
- Residency Form

You need to complete the forms and get them to your advisor to make sure they are correct. Then Paige can help with getting the signatures. There are more forms after these. And there are forms to fix problems in other forms. Your advisor will guide you through this paper maze.

Residency Project and Dissertation

Your advisor will have lots of ideas to help you hone your research questions, select the best research design, and prepare thorough reviews of the theoretical and research literature. Listen to his/her advice, since they are more experienced at doing research and you are still learning. And there’s no better way to learn than to dig in and begin doing research. Your advisor must also submit your IRB application and can help you fill out those forms, too.

Changing Advisors

The relationship between advisor and advisee needs to be one of mutual care and respect. Sometimes, either a student or a faculty person may decide to make a change in the advisor-advisee relationship. This is perfectly fine, and it happens regularly. You may want to look for someone else to work with, and you should consider:
- Your interests and the advisor’s expertise
- Research expertise of the faculty person (are they a qualitative or quantitative researcher or both?), and
- Complementary temperaments.

Let your current advisor know that you have sought another advisor. This is only being courteous.

**Non-Degree Students**

If you are a non-degree student, please contact an HIAD faculty person for advice. We have no way to know who you are so you need to let us know what your needs are. It often happens that a non-degree student takes the wrong courses or takes too many (you can transfer in only 12 credits) and finds themself in a pickle.

**Continuous Enrollment**

You must stay in continuous contact with your advisor and if you must take a break, let your advisor know the reason and stay in contact. If you do not enroll in a fall or spring semester, the university drops you from its computers (you’re gone!). You have to apply for readmission Paige can help you with that) and one of the things the faculty will want to know before readmitting you is whether you are ready to complete the degree. Higher education in Tennessee is funded by graduates, so we need graduates, not enrollments.

Once you are taking dissertation credits, you must stay continuously enrolled (except for summers) or you will be charged for those credits to graduate (so you can pay now, or later, but you will pay!).

In the summer, if you want to work with your advisor or another faculty person on a project, residency, or dissertation, please enroll in credit. This recognizes that you are paying for some of the facultyperson’s time and we get some credit, too. Most faculty are willing to work with students in the summer, but be sure to check on their vacation schedules (because we need them!) and how they’d like you to enroll (in a readings course or in dissertation credits).

**Co-Authorship**

Sometimes we get questions about whether an advisor expects to be a co-author on an article that you might submit. You’ll find that each faculty person may have a different view on this matter, so ask her or him about it. In fact, these are the types of questions (Who will be the authors? Who will be first author and second author? Who will do what in the preparation of the article?) that are really best handled early in a research project. Bring it up and discuss it and you’ll develop a valuable partnership that will last for years.