



ashoka
UNIVERSITY

**OFFICE OF ACADEMIC
AFFAIRS**

**GOOD ACADEMIC
MENTORING AND ADVISING**

Guideline Handbook

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RESPONSIBILITIES OF FACULTY/ACADEMIC UNITS

I.1 General

Programmes and departments must provide accurate, up-to-date information to prospective students about the academic programme, the research interests of the various faculty members, and the degree requirements. Information on the following should be made available:

- average time to degree and employment opportunities after graduation (including information regarding the placement record of the programme).

I.2 Mentoring of Incoming and Continuing Students

To ensure that incoming students are supported as they join Ashoka, they need to be provided with mentoring on courses to be taken and on general adjustment during the first year, with clear maps of the requirements each student must meet, including coursework (e.g. Foundation Courses and the Critical Thinking Seminars), examinations, internships, etc.; and a delineation of the amount of time expected to complete each step.

Mentees should also be provided with information about student services that are available to them and be referred to such services where needed. To these ends, to every incoming undergraduate student, a faculty mentor is assigned who then, in consultation with the student, plans a course of study in accord with the guidelines of the university.

Mentors will be provided with a list of available student services by OAA, which can also be found in the Information and Documents screen of my.ashoka, in the OAA section.

The assignment of faculty mentors to mentees is conducted by the Office for Academic Affairs (OAA) before the beginning of the Monsoon semester, once students have received their Ashoka email accounts. Once assignments have been finalized, faculty mentors receive system-generated emails informing them of their mentees (new and continuing). Whenever there is a change in assignment, both faculty and mentee will receive a system-generated email informing them of the change (students can request a change of mentor or advisor at any time and such requests will always be granted).

Faculty mentors need not and often will not belong to the academic programme that the student may ultimately want to pursue. That said, once the student declares their major, they will be assigned an academic advisor from their discipline (for details regarding academic advising see next section).

Every semester, the first meeting between faculty mentors and their mentees is mandatory. Ideally, it should take place before classes start and in any case before the end of the add/drop period. Depending on the needs of the students, they may wish or need to meet more frequently.

It is the responsibility of the faculty mentor to reach out to their mentees and set up the first meeting of the semester. The main rationale is that incoming students will often not know how and when to approach faculty members. This is likely to be an issue especially for those students who are most likely to be in need of mentoring,

e.g. first-generation college students and international students. Students who are most at risk may be least likely to reach out proactively. Faculty mentors may wish to hold a group meeting at the beginning of the term with all their new and continuing mentees and individual meetings according to the students' needs or start with individual meetings right away.

If a student does not respond to a faculty mentor's attempts to set up a first meeting, OAA should be informed by the faculty mentor and will then follow up with the student. Conversely, if a faculty mentor does not respond to a mentee's attempts to set up a meeting, OAA should be informed by the student and will follow up with the faculty mentor.

Once the first meeting of the semester has taken place, both sides must confirm the same via LMS. If no such confirmation has been given until three days before the end of the add/drop period, an email reminder will be sent to both the faculty mentor and the mentee. OAA will follow up as well. The rationale behind this is that faculty mentors should make sure that the student is on top of their course planning and is both aware of and meets the requirements imposed on them by the university. Not only is it in everyone's best interest that our students succeed, it is part of our responsibility as faculty members that we provide students with the guidance they need in order to do so.

Mentors should evaluate student progress and performance in a regular (i.e., no less than once per year) and informative way. In these evaluations, advisors should inform students about their performance in relation to expectations of normal progress and to norms associated with successful degree completion and placement after graduation.

1.3 Academic Advising

Once a student has declared a major, they will be assigned a faculty member of the respective programme who from then on serves as their academic advisor. With this assignment, the official mentoring relationship between the student and their previous faculty mentor ends. The academic advisor takes over all the responsibilities of the faculty mentor listed above and provides additional advising that serves to assist the student in making good academic progress in their chosen major.

Once a student has been assigned to a faculty member as their academic advisee and an appropriate email notification has been sent out to both, it is again the responsibility of the faculty member to reach out to their new advisee and set up a first meeting. Advisors should meet with their advisees at least once per semester, but may frequently meet more often, especially when the student is about to graduate and contemplates completing the fourth year. The first meeting should happen before the mid-semester break.

If a student does not respond to an academic advisor's attempts to set up a first meeting, OAA should be informed by the academic advisor and will then follow up with the student. Conversely, if an academic advisor does not respond to a mentee's attempts to set up a meeting, OAA should be informed by the student and will follow up with the faculty mentor.

Once the first meeting of the semester has taken place, both sides must confirm the same via LMS. If no such confirmation has been given until three days before the mid-semester break, an email reminder will be sent to both the academic advisor and the advisee. OAA will follow up as well.

Advisors should place students' timely completion of degree requirements among their highest priorities.

Once the first meeting of the semester has taken place, both sides must confirm the same via LMS. If no such confirmation has been given until three days before the mid-semester break, an email reminder will be sent to both the academic advisor and the advisee. OAA will follow up as well.

Advisors should place students' timely completion of degree requirements among their highest priorities

1.4 Special Responsibilities

The following additional responsibilities could be met by individual mentors or advisors, by designated faculty, or in group departmental sessions:

- Educate students about research integrity and make them aware of the University's policies on Academic Integrity.
- Help students to develop artistic, analytical, interpretive, writing, verbal, quantitative and laboratory skills, where appropriate, in accordance with the expectations of the discipline.
- Where appropriate, encourage students to participate in professional meetings or perform or display their work in public settings.
- Supply students with information about the variety of employment opportunities available to graduates of the programme and encourage them to plan toward an employment goal as early in their course of graduate study as possible.

1.5 Advising of Graduating Students

Students should be provided with assistance in finding jobs. This assistance includes preparation for making a successful job application, including CVs, teaching dossiers, and interviews; access to information about job opportunities; letters of recommendation from faculty; and encouragement of student participation in or awareness of networking possibilities.

- In part, such advising will be offered by the Career Development Office. Where possible, discipline-specific advice should be provided by the faculty advisor as well.

II.6 Advising of Capstone Thesis Students

In the fourth year, students may choose to work on a Capstone Thesis and thus select a Capstone Thesis Advisor (or two). If the student does this, the primary thesis advisor will take over from the previous academic advisor all academic advising functions and

- take reasonable measures to ensure that each student initiates thesis research in a timely fashion;
- schedule regular meetings with the advisee to discuss their project and return comments on written work in a timely fashion;
- where appropriate, clarify co-authorship publication practices, which should be in agreement with departmental policies; and
- take primary responsibility for ensuring that the student receives the advising described above.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF FACULTY/ACADEMIC UNITS

Students should

- expect to devote an appropriate amount of time and energy toward achieving academic excellence and earning their degree;
- read and become familiar with the regulations and policies concerning undergraduate study at Ashoka University;
- be aware of time constraints and other demands imposed on faculty members and programme staff;
- be prepared to take the initiative in finding answers to questions and in planning their professional careers;
- communicate regularly with faculty mentors and advisors, including the period after completion of their coursework, and
- be available for regular meetings and alert the advisor to uncertainties they may have about programme requirements, normal progress, and performance expectations.
- In part, such advising will be offered by the Career Development Office. Where possible, discipline-specific advice should be provided by the faculty advisor as well.

PROBLEM RESOLUTION

- It may happen that either the faculty advisor or the student believes that the advising process is failing. Such difficulties should be reported to the head of the department (HOD) and, if necessary, to OAA (the HOD will not be involved if the HOD is the faculty mentor/advisor in question). The HOD (if applicable) and OAA should then assist in mediating and in developing meaningful solutions to existing problems, approaching such problems in a manner as informal, constructive, and non-personalized as possible to arrive at a mutually acceptable resolution of the problem. It may happen that a change of advisor occurs as a result. Such a change should be handled so that the academic experience of the student is enhanced. If these efforts are viewed as unsuccessful, students and faculty may appeal to the Dean of Academic Affairs for more formal grievance procedures.



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