

Developing Shared Expectations: Department of Anthropology First-Year Advising

The following is a worksheet for developing shared expectations and facilitating best practices for first year mentoring triads composed of a student jointly co-mentored by two faculty members. Note that this worksheet is not meant to be used on its own, but should be used as a supplement to the 'Michigan Anthropology First Year Advising Guidelines,' which provides more detailed information about the first year advising relationship, including suggestions on goal setting in the first semester.

Students and faculty are not expected to commit to memory all details of the graduate program, so please feel free to reach out to the Graduate Program Coordinator, Graduate Program Assistant, or Director of Graduate Studies with questions about technical matters pertaining to funding, degree requirements, Rackham rules, university resources, or other related questions.

This document was created by drawing on the 'Developing Shared Expectations Worksheets' developed by the [Rackham Faculty Committee on Mentoring \(MORE\)](#) available as of November 2020. Select and adapt from these suggested topics, as relevant to your subfield and/or joint program.

Roles in the Co-Mentoring Relationship

1. Depending on student interest and faculty strengths or specialties, there may be different roles that each faculty adviser can play for students in their first year. Is there a primary mentor, or do both mentors equally share responsibility for advising? Are there specific areas of advising that each faculty member feels more practiced in or able to perform than others
2. Will advising meetings always feature both faculty advisors and the student simultaneously, or will the student meet individually with each advisor most of the time?
Note: We recommend that the (1) the first major goal setting meetings as well as (2) the final meeting of the student's first year include all three members of the triad. (For guidance on these specific meetings, see the sections on "September setting of shared expectations," "October goal setting," and "Annual review letters" in 'Michigan Anthropology First Year Advising Guidelines'.)
3. Difference in opinion when handled with respect and care does not need to be a source of problems in advising relationship--indeed, in some cases be productive. If conflicting advice is given by the two mentors, how can the triad think about reconciling the suggestions? If there is a or a difference of opinion, disagreement or conflict between the student and their advisers, what is a productive way to handle that disagreement with respect and care. Can conflict be handled in a way that is attentive to possible power differences between student and faculty, while at the same time is attentive to the needs of all parties involved?

Communication and Meetings

4. When do you plan to hold your monthly meetings, and who will attend each one? Be as specific as you can about scheduling. Will the meetings be scheduled on the same days each month? When will students send their agenda for each meeting? (For more on agendas, see the section titled "Using this Proposal" in 'Michigan Anthropology First Year Advising Guidelines'.)
5. What is the best way/technology to get a hold of each other? What is the appropriate time frame to expect a response, including when either faculty or graduate students are away from campus? Are they the same for both faculty advisors? If not, please clarify.
6. How are the next steps identified after a meeting? In cases in which students have responsibilities in relation to their adviser (for example, in a lab), or where faculty have responsibilities for students (for example, providing feedback on a grant application) how do you agree on action items so that everyone is on the same page? (For more on writing feedback, see below and the section "Appendix: writing conversations" in 'Michigan Anthropology First Year Advising Guidelines'.)
7. Discuss expectations regarding vacations and time away from campus and how best to plan for them. What is the time-frame for notification regarding anticipated absences?

Adviser-Student Collaborations

8. *For students working in faculty labs or on shared projects with advisers:* Describe student's primary area(s) of responsibility and expectations (for example, reading literature, in-lab working hours, group meetings, et cetera). If the student will participate in ongoing research group meetings, what does this participation look like? If it is suitable, we recommend putting work responsibilities in writing to make sure expectations are reasonable and meet the needs of students and advisers.
9. *For students working in faculty labs or on shared projects:* What kind of training should students expect from faculty collaborators or other sources in relation to their shared project? If presentations, papers, or other products will result from the research, what kind of credit can students expect if they meet their obligations (author order, co authorship, presentation opportunities, and so on)?

Opportunities and expectations for feedback

10. Feedback from faculty members can be one of the most useful experiences in graduate school for students, but there are a wide array of ideas about what it can look like. In what form and how often can the student expect to receive feedback regarding their work from their advisers (see below for more). What are student and faculty member's mutual expectations around the nature of that feedback? It may be useful for students to explain

what style, or even to a certain extent tone, of feedback that they find helpful or unhelpful. Similarly, it may be helpful for faculty members to explain their general orientation and approach to giving feedback. (For guidelines for writing feedback, see “Appendix: writing conversations” in Michigan Anthropology First Year Advising Guidelines.)

11. How much time is needed by the mentor to provide feedback on written work, such as grant and publication drafts? Is there an order in which the student should send work to the various faculty members? How much time is needed by each of the faculty members to provide feedback? (For guidelines for writing feedback, see “Appendix: writing conversations” in ‘Michigan Anthropology First Year Advising Guidelines.’)
12. At which stages in the drafting, editing, and revising process can the student expect to receive this feedback? Does the type of feedback differ depending on the stage of writing? Students and their advisors may wish to discuss the revision of first year grant drafts and funding applications. (For guidelines for writing feedback, see “Appendix: writing conversations” in Michigan Anthropology First Year Advising Guidelines.)
13. How should feedback from co-advisors be coordinated—especially if the readings and reactions contradict each other? (See point above on conflict, if necessary).

Funding and economic security

14. Students, advisers, and staff should share the responsibility for ensuring that students are financially secure throughout their time in the program. Discuss the department’s funding model and create a plan for the student’s future funding during both academic years and summers. (For example, discuss internal and external fellowships, including National Science Foundation, Ford Foundation, FLAS fellowships; summer research funding; RMF funding; training grants; GSI, GSRA, GSSA). Discuss any uncertainty in future sources of funding, and contingencies.