

## Advising Guidelines for the Department of Spanish and Portuguese

### A Message from the DGS

Welcome to the Ph.D. program in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Yale! Our program is based on the exploration of diverse linguistic, literary, and cultural traditions in Latin American, Luso-Brazilian, Iberian, and Latinx Studies through multiple intellectual approaches. We encourage our students to vigorously engage with a wide array of related disciplines in the humanities and the social sciences, in multidisciplinary ways.

We further seek to foster a spirit of innovation, flexibility, and creativity in line with the changing times. We do not view graduate education as mere apprenticeship or professional training. Rather, graduate education should involve intense intellectual and personal development; it is the period in which vocations are discovered, lifelong interests and friendships are established, and active participation in social, institutional, and cultural issues becomes crucial in defining your identity and goals. We invite you to view these years as an opportunity to discover and strengthen your voice and join in the pivotal intellectual and social debates of our time.

Our program aims to prepare you to be leaders in an increasingly multicultural, interconnected, and interdependent world. Whether in academia, public service, the arts, or business, our goal is to provide a solid foundation on which you can continue to develop the intellectual awareness needed to foster a more democratic, just, peaceful, and diverse society.

We hope these guidelines will help you navigate your graduate school years and make this experience at Yale an enriching and fruitful one!

In this document you will find:

- o The advising structures and resources available to you in our department.
- o The advising relationships you will form at each stage of your time at Yale.
- o The responsibilities of graduate students and their advisers.
- o The responsibilities of the DGS and the department at-large.
- o What to do when you have concerns either about academic or personal matters, or about your advising relationship.
- o Other resources available to students and advisers.

A particularly important general resource for both faculty and students in our department is the GSAS *Guide to Advising Processes for Faculty and Students* ([https://gsas.yale.edu/sites/default/files/page-files/gsas\\_advising\\_processes\\_guide\\_0.pdf](https://gsas.yale.edu/sites/default/files/page-files/gsas_advising_processes_guide_0.pdf)).

Our department is fully committed to maintaining an inclusive environment free from all forms of discrimination or harassment. Should you encounter discrimination or have Title IX concerns, need accommodations due to a disability, or otherwise wish to discuss a situation you are encountering as a student, here are the relevant links to contact Yale's general resources for these concerns:

- Resources for Students to Address Discrimination and Harassment Concerns  
<https://student-dhr.yale.edu/>
- Office for Graduate Student Development & Diversity  
1 Hillhouse Avenue; (203) 436-1301 <http://gsas.yale.edu/diversity/office-graduate-student-development-diversity>
- Office for Equal Opportunity Programs 221 Whitney Avenue; (203)432-0849  
<http://equalopportunity.yale.edu/>
- University-Wide Committee on Sexual Misconduct 55 Whitney Avenue; (203) 432-4449 <https://uwc.yale.edu/>
- Sexual Harassment and Assault Response & Education (SHARE) 55 Lock Street, Lower Level; (203) 432-2000 <http://sharecenter.yale.edu/>
- Mental Health & Counseling  
55 Lock Street, 3rd Floor; 203-432-0290 <http://yalehealth.yale.edu/mentalhealth>

If you are not certain where to begin, feel free to consult your DGS first, who can help you navigate the various offices here to support you.

The Department of Spanish and Portuguese further recognizes that both students and faculty have responsibilities within academia and in non-academic life, and that proper advising requires this holistic view.

## **Advising Structure**

### *Adviser Selection*

Our department's advising structure aims to be collegial and transparent. While the *adviser of record* for all pre-candidacy students (years 1-3) is the department's DGS, students are strongly encouraged to seek advising from other members of the faculty. Once these advisers are determined, students should let the DGS know who are the individuals sharing the advising role during pre-candidacy.

In our department students typically choose their advisers on the basis of a combination of experiences, including interactions before admissions, personal meetings established by the student, and experience during courses.

### *Changing Advisers*

A student may change advisers for a variety of reasons and circumstances, ranging from the adviser's departure and irreconcilable differences between adviser and student to changes in the student's focus or the addition of new faculty. To change

advisers, students should contact and consult with the DGS (in earlier years) and the DGS and other members of their advising committee (once students advance to candidacy).

### *Prospectus and Dissertation Committee Selection*

After passing their Qualifying Examinations, students choose, with the advice of the DGS, a Prospectus Committee that will advise, read, and approve the student's dissertation Prospectus. (The Prospectus is the proposal for the dissertation, in which the student succinctly explains the main ideas, the body of texts analyzed, the methodology, and the overall structure and organization of the dissertation.) Although this committee is distinct from the Dissertation Committee, if selected by the student, some of its members may later be asked to serve in the Dissertation Committee. It is strongly recommended that students avail themselves of the opportunity to participate in the short departmental workshops on professional topics, including prospectus writing, offered every fall term.

Upon starting the post-candidacy period (years 4-5), students should consult with the DGS and their chosen pre-candidacy faculty advisers to select their Dissertation Advising Committee, which consists of four faculty members, of which up to three may be from outside the department; the Chair of the Dissertation Advisory Committee is always a member of the departmental faculty. It is important to note that, instead of readers, as is customary in other departments, members of the Dissertation Advising Committee are involved not just in reading and offering feedback on each chapter of the dissertation, but also are involved and serve as resources in various kinds of professional decisions students make over the time they are researching and writing their dissertation, such as academic publishing questions and job searches.

Students schedule a Chapter Defense with the DGS and their Dissertation Advising Committee for each chapter of the dissertation; Chapter Defenses are held during the period in which the dissertation is being written. In these defenses, students explain and discuss a chapter of their dissertation and receive feedback from the Dissertation Advising Committee. This feedback is typically both oral and in written form.

Once the Dissertation Advising Committee judges the dissertation ready to be defended, the Dissertation Defense, the culmination of the entire process, is scheduled by the DGS in consultation with the student and the Advising Committee. The Defense consists of a succinct presentation by the student of the main points of the dissertation, followed by a discussion with the Dissertation Advising Committee, the Committee's deliberation, and the announcement of the Committee's decision. At the request of the candidate, the Defense may be open to departmental faculty, staff, and students and to the general public.

### *Other Departmental Advising Roles*

In administrative matters, or matters not directly related to course work, qualifying exams, or the Ph.D. dissertation, students can also benefit from the advice of the full

range of departmental staff: the departmental Registrar, the Administrative Associate, and the Finance and Administrative Manager.

### *Professional Development and Job Market Advising*

Our department has a designated Placement Officer who is a member of the ladder faculty and jointly advises, along with the DGS and the student's faculty advisers, on matters related to the job market and job applications.

Additionally, the department holds a year-long *Professional Development and Research Workshop Series* that provides students with guidance on research techniques and resources and professional development. (See *Graduate Handbook*.) All students are strongly encouraged to attend these workshops.

### *Funding Structure*

Funding for our students is provided by a combination of fellowships awarded by the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, student Teaching Fellowships in the Departmental Language and Culture Program (after the second year of graduate studies), and a year-long University Dissertation Fellowship (UDF), usually taken during the fifth year of graduate studies.

### *Work-Life Balance Expectations*

Our department is strongly committed to following basic guidelines for reasonable working hours and the number of hours stipulated by the university's regulations, vacation time (recesses and holidays), and other activities necessary for students' mental and physical health. Please note that students serving as Teaching Fellows are expected to fulfill their teaching obligations on all days on which classes are in session. Classes are in session on some Yale staff holidays, and students' vacation days should not interfere with any teaching obligations.

### *Communication Expectations*

Communications between students and their advisers may take place as needed in person (during the adviser's office hours), by phone, Zoom, or email. Appropriate matters for discussion with advisers include academic or scholarly consultations, course-related questions or issues, work-life balance questions, and other professional matters such as job searches. Students and faculty should discuss, at the beginning of their advising relationship, expectations on preferred modes of communication and how quickly each will hear from the other.

### *Remediation*

Students and advisers should consult with the DGS and ultimately with the Chair of the department for remediation if the responsibilities below are not met by either students and advisers; the DGS and the departmental Chair should ensure that all relevant parties have access to details about the process.

### **Timeline to Degree** (see *Graduate Handbook*)

### **Individual Responsibilities**

#### *Responsibilities of the Student*

1. Complete academic requirements by the given deadlines. (See *Graduate Handbook*).
2. Consider career goals and discuss them with the adviser and DGS no later than by the time of admission to candidacy.
3. Maintain clear communication with the adviser and help establish good practices for scheduling meetings. Be clear about limitations to your schedule, especially regarding religious observance or family obligations.
4. Discuss research expectations with the adviser no later than admission to candidacy. This discussion should include topics such as authorship order, when the adviser should/should not be included as a coauthor, time spent on outside collaboration, and time spent on professional development.
5. Submit materials with enough time for proper faculty review and response. These materials may include, but are not limited to:
  1. Dissertation chapters (at least four weeks before the end of a term).
  2. Material for discussion at regular meetings (at least two weeks prior to the meeting).
  3. Requests for letters of recommendation (at least three weeks before letter is due). Materials to be sent with the request include: a current CV, links to job announcements and descriptions.
6. Keep the adviser aware of upcoming deadlines, meetings, and other responsibilities. Be proactive in the advising relationship. For example, take the initiative to arrange meetings, keep the adviser informed of any circumstances that might affect academic progress, come prepared to advising meetings, consult with the adviser about presenting or publishing work. Pre-dissertation, students and advisers should meet at least once a term. After admission to candidacy, at least twice a term.
7. Remain open to feedback and be willing to discuss difficult academic ideas and differences of opinion.
8. Commit to regular attendance at departmental talks and events according to departmental and adviser expectations.
9. Welcome prospective students and help them understand departmental or research group practices and culture.
10. Finalize membership of the dissertation committee with the help of the primary adviser.

11. Be aware of your department's funding structure, which is explained by the DGS at the beginning of the program. Talk with your adviser and/or the DGS about possible sources of funding outside the university.
12. As you advance to candidacy, establish your expected timeline towards degree, and come to a consensus about these expectations with your adviser and dissertation committee.
13. Be aware of mental health and wellness resources offered by the university.
14. Meet with the DGS (or program-designated mediator) and/or dissertation committee members to intercede if issues arise related to the adviser's responsibilities.

### *Responsibilities of the Adviser*

1. Establish expectations with each student for communication, including the preferred means (e.g. email, text, phone, etc.), the best contact times, and shared expectations around response times.
2. Establish expectations with each student for how often you will meet to discuss the student's work. **The Department of Spanish and Portuguese expects students and advisors to meet at least twice per term after admission to candidacy.**
3. Based on pre-established departmental expectations, develop guidelines for reasonable working hours based on departmental expectations, amounts of time for vacation, and other activities necessary for students' mental and physical health.
4. Be cognizant of limitations to the student's schedule, including religious observance and family obligations, while establishing responsibilities #1-3.
5. Understand the required department and GSAS milestones for students in your program. Recognize when completion of these requirements may require an adjustment to research responsibilities.
6. Help the student develop an individualized timeline for completing academic requirements and meeting professional goals.
7. Discuss career goals and opportunities with the student early in their graduate career (by the beginning of admission to candidacy at the latest) and continue these discussions regularly. In particular, discuss opportunities to attend conferences and to submit publications to help advance students' careers.
8. Discuss research expectations with the student early in their graduate career. This should include topics such as time spent on outside collaboration, and time spent on professional development.
9. Give clear, constructive, and timely feedback (no longer than two weeks), on the student's work. In particular, give feedback and approve the prospectus and the dissertation, complete Dissertation Progress Reports, and review all related written work by the appropriate deadlines.
10. Consult the student when choosing other members of the Dissertation Committee.
11. Discuss with each student their individual funding structure, making clear when they need to teach or fulfill other responsibilities outside their research to receive their stipends.

12. Be familiar with mental health resources offered by the university so that you can suggest them if your student approaches you for help.
13. Discuss with the DGS and dissertation committee members if issues arise related to your student's responsibilities.
14. Remain open to feedback and be willing to discuss difficult academic ideas and differences of opinion in order to facilitate all students' success.

#### *Responsibilities of the Dissertation Committee*

1. Meet with the student at regular intervals, at least once every term.
2. Come to committee meetings having reviewed all relevant materials.
3. Review the prospectus and dissertation within two weeks, the amount of time established by the department as reasonable.
4. Provide support for the student if there is tension between the adviser and the student.
5. Establish a timeline to graduation with the student and work with the student and primary adviser to ensure this timeline is followed.

#### *Responsibilities of the Director of Graduate Studies*

1. Ensure that all students know how to access policies and procedures and are informed of any updates. Distribute information to individual student cohorts regarding relevant milestones and opportunities. Ensure student cohorts and their advisers understand expectations and process for completing these milestones.
2. Meet with individual students at least once per term.
3. Run a town hall for all graduate students once or twice a year.
4. Know who the student leaders of the program are and meet with them regularly. (A leader may be the student representative for the Graduate Student Assembly [GSA] or other appointed or elected student[s] in the program.)
5. Encourage the student leadership to nominate a GSA representative to represent them.
6. In collaboration with the Job Placement Officer and the adviser, advise on the job market and career paths, including participation in conferences and professional meetings.
7. Offer guidance to students about the process of identifying a new adviser if the adviser and the student have irreconcilable differences, the student's focus has changed, the adviser leaves Yale, etc.
8. Identify whom students can turn to (DGS, Chair, GSAS deans, etc.) if challenges arise in working with their adviser and be familiar with other University resources for student support (Dean's Designees, Title IX office, Office of Institutional Equity and Access, etc.).
9. In the DGS Handbook, all DGSs are asked to provide written feedback to students on their academic progress at least once per year.

#### *Pre-candidacy:*

1. The feedback takes place both in writing and in person. At the in-person meeting, the student's adviser should be present, along with the student and the DGS.

2. The faculty meet to discuss all students' academic progress each year at least two weeks before the end of the Spring term, and feedback is conveyed to the student in writing.

3. If a student is not demonstrating adequate progress toward a degree, the student will meet with the DGS, the student's adviser, the Chair of the department, and the members of the department's Graduate Studies Committee. After this meeting a decision will be made by the DGS, the student's adviser, the Chair, and the Graduate Studies Committee, based on the needs of the student, to either refer the student to counseling or to dismiss the student from the program. For students who do not pass their qualifying exams, the procedure is outlined in the department's Graduate Handbook.

*Post-advancement to candidacy:*

4. Explain the Dissertation Progress Report (DPR) and its usefulness to advisers and students. Make sure students, advisers, and the DGS complete their portions of the DPR by the required deadline.

*For students both pre- and post-advancement to candidacy:*

5. If a student is not making sufficient progress toward the degree or producing quality work, this information is communicated in writing to the student, along with necessary steps to remain or return to good academic standing, including deadlines and consequences for failure to meet these requirements.

10. Provide formal exit interviews with graduating students for feedback on department guidelines/practices, unless the Chair fulfills this responsibility. For example, were the responsibilities of student, adviser, DGS, and thesis committee met? Were timelines reasonable? How could the program improve the advising/mentoring experience?