

Guide to Graduate Mentoring and Advising in Comparative Literature

Spring 2022

Welcome to the Graduate Program in Comparative at Yale. Graduate education is at the heart of what we do—it's how our discipline sustains, enriches, and renews itself over time—and effective advising is an essential part of your transition from student to scholar. It also takes time, shared effort, and mutual respect.

The Department has created these guidelines for best practices in mentoring and advising with the goal of helping students interact positively and productively with faculty, and particularly with advisers, over the course of their career. It is not to be treated as a rulebook. For the rules governing graduate education in the Department of Comparative Literature see the latest iteration of [Yale's Policies and Procedures online](#).

A successful experience in graduate school depends upon ethical and professional conduct from all of us, and advising, in particular, is a collective enterprise. Graduate students and faculty advisers share responsibility for developing productive and rewarding advising relationships and should be in regular conversation about their goals, plans, and expectations.

I. First- and Second-Year Advising

During the student's first two years in the program, the DGS (Director of Graduate Studies) will be the advisor of record and primary resource for any questions about the program and academic life at Yale more broadly.

In addition, the DGS will assign each incoming student a faculty mentor in advance of their arrival on campus. These pairings can continue through the second year of the program or be changed, depending on preferences and faculty leave patterns. These assignments will not be based on common scholarly interests; instead, they are meant to provide each student, from the outset, with multiple points of introduction to the department and its faculty.

Upon notification of their assignments, graduate students are encouraged to reach out to their mentors with any questions about the department, plans for coursework, or life at Yale. Mentors should plan to meet with advisees as early as possible, and no later than the end of the registration period. They are expected to reach out at least once more during the term to touch base with their advisees and to make themselves available as resources. (The DGS will issue reminders to advisers to contact their advisees before and during each semester.)

If the mentoring arrangement is not satisfactory—if a student has difficulty getting in touch with an adviser, or if the advising they receive doesn't meet their needs—the student should contact the DGS for help. The content of these discussions will be kept confidential.

It is always advisable to cultivate relationships with multiple faculty members, and students are encouraged to approach other faculty for conversation about the program, future projects, and graduate student life.

II. Years 1-2: Course Work, Languages, Second-Year Paper

During the first two years of study, students focus on completing their coursework and language requirements. These vary somewhat based on the student's program of study (combined PhD students will typically complete more required courses). All students must fulfill their language requirements before the beginning of the third year of study.

A) Course Work

Every student is required to complete 14 semester courses, including at least 7 in the Department of Comparative Literature. These courses must be chosen in a manner that fulfills the following requirements:

- 1) Proseminar in Comparative Literature: this is offered in alternate years and taken for credit but is ungraded (satisfactory/unsatisfactory).
- 2) Theory: 3 courses in literary theory and methodology
- 3) Genre: 1 course each in poetry, narrative fiction and drama
- 4) Periods: 1 course each in Ancient or Medieval literature; in Renaissance or Early Modern literature; in Modern, i.e., post-1800 literature.

A single course may be used to cover multiple requirements.

The department strongly advises first and second-year students to take seminars with faculty within and outside of Comparative Literature. On both a personal and professional level, it is preferable to have mentors in several departments.

Additionally, students are advised to develop a **focus of study** over two years: they should aim to combine intellectual breadth with a focus on one or two national or language-based literatures. This is intended to qualify students to teach Comparative Literature in combination with a specific, national language department. Such a focus should include intensive language study as relevant.

During the registration period of each semester, students should consult with the DGS to plan their courses. All schedules must be approved by the DGS, yet the students are responsible for the fulfillment of all requirements outlined above. All incoming students will be given a [worksheet of requirements](#), which they must update as necessary. This will help students, their advisers, and the DGS keep track of their progress through the program.

Directed Reading. A student may also take one or two individual Directed Reading courses (900a or 900b) which consist of an independent reading project in a clearly-defined area, under the supervision of a faculty member and with the approval of the DGS. In order to register for a

directed reading course, students must fill out the Graduate School's form ([Individual Course Study Information](#)) as well as the department's internal [Directed Reading Form](#), which requires a brief rationale and preliminary bibliography.

B) Languages

The knowledge of languages is essential to the discipline of Comparative Literature. The Department therefore sets a stringent language requirement of four languages and strongly encourages advanced language study (including during the summers).

By the time of the Qualifying Examinations (see Section IV), every student must demonstrate: 1) a high level of proficiency in English and two other languages (fluent reading of primary and secondary texts without a dictionary); and 2) reading ability in a fourth language.

The department also has a **philological** requirement: this means that one of the student's four languages must normally be a classical or ancient language (such as Latin, Greek, Biblical Hebrew, Classical Arabic, Classical Chinese, Provençal). If the student has questions about whether a particular language fulfils this requirement, they should consult the DGS.

Students may prove their proficiency either by taking courses where texts are studied in the original languages, or by a written exam administered in that department. Students who plan to take language exams should contact the DGS early in the semester in which they plan to take the exams so that appropriate arrangements may be made in a timely manner.

Once students have completed either relevant coursework or language exams successfully, they must complete the [Language Requirement Form](#). Combined degree students must complete [this form](#). If students do not complete this, there will be no official record of the completion of language requirements, which may interfere with students' progress through the degree. For questions about documentation, please contact the Graduate Registrar.

Please note that **combined degree students** may have slightly different language requirements: see detailed descriptions [here](#).

C) Second-Year Paper

In consultation with the DGS, students in their fourth term will submit a second-year paper to the DGS by March 15. This paper will typically be a revised version (based on the instructor's feedback) of a paper written during the student's first three semesters. It should represent, in the student's view, their best work to-date, and it is an opportunity for them to receive focused feedback from faculty beyond the parameters of coursework.

Upon the submission, the DGS will appoint a faculty member to read the paper and prepare a written evaluation, focusing on the question of how well the paper displays the student's ability to write clearly, develop coherent scholarly arguments, read and interpret texts in a foreign language, and contribute to relevant debates in the field.

The evaluations will be shared among faculty by April 15 and discussed during the following departmental meeting. After that meeting, the DGS will share the evaluations and any

additional faculty comments with the student. Students are strongly encouraged to reach out to their readers to discuss their papers in person.

III. Teaching

Teaching experience is a crucial part of each graduate student's training at Yale. Students normally teach as Teaching Fellows (TFs) after four semesters of residence and course work have been completed. For a full description of the Teaching Fellow Program as administered by the Graduate School, please [click here](#).

As part of a student's financial aid package, students must teach four semesters and are granted two additional semesters of guaranteed teaching if they wish. Candidates will typically teach in their third, fourth and sixth years. Sixth-year teaching is meant for students in good standing who, on the estimation of the DGS, are normally on track to complete their degree by the end of the sixth year. Seventh year students are also eligible to teach, but they will only be assigned teaching if there are still available positions after all interested teaching-priority students (those who have not yet taught six semesters in their first six years) have been placed.

The Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS), in consultation with the DGS, appoints graduate students as teaching fellows. In addition, students may teach in various language-based departments as well as in other disciplines of the humanities. There are also various pedagogically-oriented positions available in Yale's museums, libraries and Center for Teaching and Learning that are open to Teaching Fellows. These term-length professional development opportunities may help students acquire different skills, and can be especially helpful to students considering career paths within the academy and beyond.

Students should contact the DUS of all departments in which they feel competent to teach. This should be done early in the spring semester, preceding the year of their desired employment. The departments normally send out information concerning available positions in the spring, yet the students should take initiative in signing up for these positions. There is no guarantee that a desired position may be secured for a particular student.

After the approval of a student's Prospectus (see Section V), they may be eligible to teach in certain language courses, college seminars, or courses such as English 115, 118, and 129 at the rank of Part-Time Acting Instructor.

Resources for Teaching. Yale offers extensive support for teaching with many programs aimed towards graduate students beginning to teach for the first time. The department strongly encourages students to take advantage of the seminars, workshops and individual consultations offered by the [Center for Teaching and Learning](#).

Students may also choose to acquire various teaching certifications while at Yale: these include the [Certificate of College Teaching Preparation](#) and the [Certificate in Second Language Acquisition](#).

IV. Fifth Semester: Qualifying Examination for the Doctoral Degree (“Orals”)

Candidates for the Ph.D. must take a qualifying oral examination, which includes a written component, in **the fifth term of study**. Orals assess students’ knowledge and understanding of their disciplines, the scholarly fields and debates to which they hope to make a contribution. The exam includes topics from areas in which the student has gained some expertise through course work, as well as areas in which they want to acquire expertise—especially for possible dissertation topics.

The oral portion of the exam consists of four fields, examined for half an hour each for a total length of two hours. In aggregate, the fields must cover three national literatures, several historical periods (including the modern **and** ancient/medieval), and include works from three literary genres (poetry, narrative fiction, drama).

Field Essay The written component of the exam is a field essay, which should be between 5-8,000 words in length, inclusive of the bibliography. This is a chance for the student to investigate a scholarly field they expect will be important to their dissertation (and is separate from the four fields of their oral exam).

The essay is primarily a review of the literature of the field, identifying and assessing the major contributions. It is not merely a summary of books and ideas: rather, it should aim to present the significant trends in the field and show how they have developed over time, resulting in the current state of scholarly opinions and approaches. Critique of the field is also possible, as are analyses of the deep structures and assumptions, some of which may need reframing. The essay will be completed **two weeks before the oral exam** (see below for scheduling) and circulated to all the examiners.

These fields and accompanying reading lists will be selected in consultation with the examiners and the DGS to allow the student to demonstrate command of a range of topics. At least two of the examiners must be Comparative Literature faculty.

Preparation of Topics/Lists. Students preparing to take their Orals in December are expected to identify examiners, who will work with them to shape the lists, or discuss the essay, in the spring of the previous academic year. Students should feel free to approach faculty members with whom they have not previously had an opportunity to cultivate a relationship; oral examinations provide a good opportunity to widen your support and mentoring network within the department. The examiner/reader of the field essay **will not** normally be one of the oral examiners.

Scheduling of the Exam. Qualifying exams will typically take place in the first two weeks of December of each academic year. They are scheduled by the Graduate Registrar, in consultation with the student and examiners, in the late spring or early summer to ensure sufficient time for preparation. Once the date of the oral exam is agreed on, the deadline for the field essay will be set two weeks earlier. Students who are on a different calendar due to personal or medical leave should approach the DGS to ascertain the dates by which examiners and lists must be finalized.

Faculty are encouraged to use pre-examination conversations to help prepare the student for a meaningful experience in the exam; the graduate student should schedule at least one meeting with

each examiner in the interval between the submission of the exam list and the exam to discuss their progress through the reading.

List Parameters. Students should complete the preparation of the four initial lists of proposed topics, along with a preliminary description of the field essay (250 words), by **April 15**. Each list should consist of a mix of primary and secondary works. After obtaining the signature of approval of the individual examining faculty member on each of these lists, copies should be submitted to the department office. They will also be signed by the DGS and kept in the student's file.

Conception and preparation of these lists, as well as the questions about them that will be asked at the exam, should focus on a specific problem or problems for literary study, but should also demonstrate chronological, theoretical and geographical range. One useful measure might be to think of each reading list as the equivalent of a seminar course of assigned readings in terms of depth, range, and volume.

Submission and Distribution of Final Lists Prior to Exam. When each examining faculty member has approved and signed the final list of readings—usually two weeks before the exam date—the student will submit that final list to the department office, as above. These lists, along with the field essay, will be distributed to all examiners and the DGS, with copies on file for other faculty members who may wish to inspect them.

The Exam. The examination will last for two hours, with 30 minutes for each of the prepared topics. Students should come prepared with a brief statement about the proposed area of dissertation research or the questions that might lead to a dissertation: the exam will open with the candidate being asked about the proposed direction for future research. Often, this initial description can help shape the exam itself. Candidates should not only be prepared to demonstrate specialized knowledge of their examination subjects, but also a capacity for conveying this knowledge in accessible terms.

Examiners are available to meet with students after the exam to debrief and to discuss their plans for the dissertation prospectus. Students should be sure to schedule such meetings with examiners who might go on to serve on their dissertation committees.

“Distinction.” The Graduate School provides departments with the opportunity to indicate that a student has passed the qualifying exam “with distinction” when it deems this to be the case. This commendation is only very rarely extended. The faculty must recommend “distinction” unanimously, and will consider this designation at its own discretion.

Sample Orals Topics and Lists: [PDF](#)

V. Sixth Semester: Selection of Advisors and Dissertation Prospectus

Candidates for the degree must submit a dissertation prospectus for approval to the department no later than the **sixth semester of study**. Usually, after passing their qualifying examinations in December, students begin work on the prospectus in January. Preliminary prospectuses should be ready for submission to advisers by the end of Spring Break (mid-March), with the goal of submitting the prospectus to the department's prospectus committee by 1 April. Prospectus conferences will typically be scheduled for late April/early May.

A) Selecting Dissertation Advisors

In the spring of their third year, shortly after Orals, students should select a dissertation committee of three Yale faculty members to direct the dissertation. The DGS can assist students in this choice, and open communication with other faculty mentors may also be helpful.

At least one of the advisors must be a member of the Comparative Literature faculty, and the student should designate one of the advisors (normally Comparative Literature faculty) as chair; the chair has special administrative responsibilities, including writing annual Dissertation Progress Reports, but may or may not serve a leadership role on the committee beyond that. The student may consult with the chair regarding the constitution of the committee, if this seems appropriate and useful, but such consultation is not required. Another member of the committee—not the chair—will be slated to serve as an official reader when the graduate student submits their dissertation. On occasion, with permission of the DGS, one member of the dissertation committee may be a faculty member at another institution.

In selecting an advisor or advisors, the student should reflect on their experience with faculty members in coursework, colloquia, and other formal and informal mentoring opportunities. Some sense of expertise and compatibility should guide the student's selection process, but advisors may well have different degrees of proximity to the topic of the dissertation, and different areas of specialized knowledge to contribute.

Changing Advisors. Graduate students are permitted to change advisors at any point up to the submission of the dissertation. Reasons for switching advisors may include a faculty departure, irreconcilable differences between adviser and student, change of intellectual focus, or addition of new faculty to the department, among others.

In the case of irreconcilable differences, the graduate student should feel empowered to call on the DGS for assistance in mediating a change in committee constitution. The DGS is also available to discuss confidentially any challenges or concerns that arise between a student and their adviser or advisers. In the case that the DGS is the advisor in question, the student should contact the Department Chair.

B) Prospectus

Format. The Prospectus should normally run between 10 and 12 double-spaced pages and should not exceed 15. It should open with a brief description and abstract of the project, describing the expected scholarly contribution and the corpus of texts to be included in the research (the field essay portion of the Qualifying Exam should be used as a model here). The body of the prospectus should include an account of anticipated chapters and their relationship to the argument as a whole. A selected bibliography of primary and secondary sources should be appended. Past prospectuses are available in the department office as examples.

The department understands that the dissertation may shift focus once dissertation research and writing begin; nonetheless it is helpful to summarize the probable or possible shape of the project and to get faculty feedback.

Procedure. The student should submit a draft of the prospectus to their prospective advisors by March 15, revise as necessary, and then submit it to the Graduate Registrar and DGS by April 1. At that point, the Registrar will schedule the date of the Prospectus conference. The student does not need to make any special preparations for the conference, beyond submitting their prospectus by the established date.

This is not an examination, something to be dreaded or approached as an adversarial occasion. Instead, this informal, hour-long discussion between the student and the department's standing committee (usually three faculty) plus prospective advisors (if available, and there strictly as observers) is intended to be a constructive brainstorming session about the project. Faculty may point out further primary or theoretical texts that might be relevant, suggest the scope of the project be narrowed or expanded, and discuss methodology and organization; students should feel free to ask questions, share doubts, and seek clarification about any aspect of their developing project.

At the end of the hour, faculty will decide either to pass the prospectus as is, or—a more common outcome—ask the student to submit a further draft (generally without necessitating a further live meeting). On the final approval of the prospectus, the student will be advanced to candidacy for the degree. Successful completion of orals and the prospectus triggers the awarding of the MPhil degree.

VI. The Dissertation: Advising, Funding, Writing

The student's fourth, fifth, and sixth years of study are typically devoted to dissertation research and writing, teaching, and activities such as publication, conference/colloquium or workshop attendance.

Students presenting papers at conferences may apply to the Graduate School Assembly for support [conference travel funds](#); the department does not have designated funds for this purpose.

We encourage students working on international topics to apply to the Macmillan Center for research, language study, travel, and conferences: <https://ovef.macmillan.yale.edu/fellowships-0>.

Students in these years may apply and receive—on a non-competitive basis—a University Dissertation Fellowship (UDF), guaranteeing a year's stipend with no teaching duties. It is advisable to take this Fellowship only when the student is well advanced in his/her research and ready to devote all of their time to writing the dissertation.

First Chapter Conference. The department requires that students have a first chapter finished by March 15 of their fourth year; this need not be Chapter One of the dissertation. Students will need to email the DGR a copy of the chapter in the form of a single pdf document, along with a one-page abstract of the dissertation as a whole. Dissertation committees will meet with students upon completion of their first chapter, normally before the end of the spring term of their fourth year.

Though the department does not impose individual chapter deadlines, students are strongly encouraged to aim to complete two chapters a year, following the first chapter conference of year one.

Advisers will work closely with the student and be available to discuss the project as it develops. This availability includes substantive written and/or verbal feedback on drafts, and correspondence by email or phone at a frequency agreeable to both the student and the adviser. Face-to-face meetings should occur at least once a semester. Graduate students should feel entitled to solicit advice during all stages of the writing process and to determine a schedule for draft submission and turnaround that suits their circumstances.

Individual advisers may offer different kinds and quantities of feedback at different stages of the writing process: some advisers welcome the chance to read early or partial drafts, while others prefer to weigh in with written feedback when a chapter is more fully conceived. So long as the student is happy with the quantity, quality, and consistency of guidance they receive, such variations should be seen as normal and appropriate. If a student isn't receiving adequate guidance from a particular adviser, they can and should seek the advice of their chair or the DGS.

In order for a dissertation to proceed to completion on time, advisers must be able to count on receiving drafts in a timely fashion, and students must be able to count on getting timely responses to the work they submit. In general, advisers should read and respond to drafts within a month of receiving them, whether the form of that response is delivered in person or in writing. For their part, students should alert advisers to any necessary changes in the agreed-upon schedule for submitting their work, and should recognize that those changes may make it harder for their advisers to read and respond to their work promptly.

The Dissertation Progress Report. During their work on the dissertation, students are advised to keep an informal record of their research, books read, and writing activities. Students are required to report annually to the Graduate School on the progress of the dissertation; May 1 is the deadline. Students describe briefly what they've done in the past year, what they anticipate doing in the next year, and when they expect to finish. The process is now entirely online and can be initiated at: <http://www.yale.edu/sis/dpr/>. The form will be automatically sent to the dissertation supervisor and the DGS, who can each make recommendations or suggest changes, if necessary.

VII. Dissertation Workshop

Students in years four through seven will take a Dissertation Writing Workshop in alternate years (i.e., years four and six, or five and seven), taught by departmental faculty. The workshop will take place on Zoom—to accommodate students who are not in residence—and will meet on a weekly basis throughout the fall semester. The workshop is required of all students, but ungraded (satisfactory/unsatisfactory).

The Workshop will be a forum for showing work-in-progress to one's peers as well as to faculty, often in the form of a dissertation chapter or journal article-in-the-making. Each week will be devoted to one student's work, which they will pre-circulate among members of the workshop. Authors will solicit feedback on particular issues, and readers—including faculty teachers—will give detailed comments, orally and in writing, on the submitted work.

The aim of the workshop is to provide graduate students with a writing community and sense of shared scholarly endeavor—often difficult to come by in one's dissertation writing phase—as well as helpful deadlines. For those beginning the dissertation writing process, reading the work of

peers will provide helpful models and lessons; for more advanced students, it will provide intensive and engaged feedback.

The Workshop instructors will discuss with each student individually what a realistic final goal will be for the term, whether that be a new dissertation chapter, an article ready for submission, or a conference paper.

VIII. Dissertation Format, Submission, and Reader Reports

Format. The Dissertation should not exceed a readable size. An optimal size would be between 200-300 double-spaced pages. If the work has produced much more, the student should consult with the advisor and either write a more concise version or curtail the scope of the study. The [Graduate Writing Center](#) offers a variety of programs to help with the process of researching and writing the dissertation.

All dissertations in Comparative Literature should be submitted with full translations of all texts (secondary and primary) quoted in languages other than English. This is to assure that the dissertation is understandable, in all its parts, to any Yale outside readers, prospective employers, readers of the dissertation on micro-film (possibly a larger and more heterogeneous audience, as information technologies change) and also any dissertation prize committees. Each of these audiences may well contain readers who command the relevant languages, but also some who do not.

Submission. Yale dissertations are submitted at two deadlines a year, one in the middle of each semester (March 15 and October 15). For detailed information on submitting dissertations, please see the Graduate School's Checklist for the [Submissions Process](#).

Reader Reports. In the Comparative Literature department there is no "dissertation defense." Instead, dissertations receive three written reports from Yale faculty members, two of whom will **not** be dissertation advisors, but who have some expertise in the field or discipline (in rare cases, a professor outside of Yale may serve as a reader). One of the readers will be a member of the dissertation committee (normally, this reader will not be the committee chair).

The DGS selects the three readers, with input from the dissertation adviser; dissertation authors are welcome to make suggestions as well, although the availability of particular readers cannot be guaranteed. If there are serious reasons why a faculty member should not be asked to serve as the reader for a given dissertation—for instance, a personal or professional conflict of interest—either the student or the adviser should communicate that to the DGS in advance, who will make every effort to find a suitable alternative.

Readers produce detailed and substantive reports on dissertations, on the model of a reader's report for a scholarly book manuscript. These reports serve both as a statement of evaluation as well as a constructive response, an account of what has been achieved and what might be developed further. The content of a report may be critical, but the tone should be respectful and encouraging throughout. In many cases, readers' reports on dissertations are of use as graduates revise their projects for publication.

IX. Applying for Jobs

The department appoints a Job Placement Officer each year, who works closely with the DGS and advisers to help students prepare for the job market. Students who plan to apply for academic jobs in the fall should contact the JPO in late spring prior to the semester in which they expect to begin their search.

Students should also alert their advisers well in advance of their decision to embark on an academic job search—no later than August of the year in which they plan to submit applications—so that advisers have time to discuss the available options, assist with the preparation of job materials, and prepare their own letters of recommendation.

Traditionally, the application season lasts from September through March or April of the academic year, but it is increasingly common for job postings to appear at any time. The JPOs and faculty advisers are aware that students may need additional help at intervals throughout the year; students should still strive, as much as possible, to give ample advance notice of application deadlines.

Placement Workshops. The Job Placement Officer typically organizes a series of workshops and meetings to prepare students for the job market. The first of these is usually held in late April/early May: all interested students should attend this meeting, including those who are not sure if they should go on the job market the following year. Students are urged to begin preparing their materials over the summer; a series of meetings/ workshops in the fall help students through the various stages of the process.

Other Resources. Students are also urged to attend the [Academic Job Search Series](#) offered by the Center for Teaching and Learning and the Office of Career Strategy (OCS). The OCS also maintains an online archive of useful [video tutorials](#).

The [OCS](#) is also the best resource on campus for alternative-academic and non-academic job searches. The department has a strong record in placing students in such jobs (as translators, museum curators, administrators, public education directors, arts educators etc): the Job Placement Officer can provide support and resources as appropriate.

N.B. At present, only one third of graduate students who matriculate in Humanities programs end up in tenure-track positions within five years of their degree. Given that fact, and the likely ongoing contraction of the academic job market in years to come, successful graduate advising requires diverse and expansive notions of success. In practical terms, this means that students committed to seeking academic jobs should be prepared by their advisers for the rigors and uncertainties of that process, encouraged to be honest and compassionate with themselves about the toll it can take, and offered ample support in navigating it.

The department is working on developing and strengthening its resources for students seeking jobs in areas such as journalism, translation, and publishing; secondary school teaching; libraries, museums, and archives; and university administration. A significant number of program alumni are employed in such fields, and the DGS, JPOs, and faculty advisers can all help to connect current students with alumni contacts.

As faculty assist in connecting students with employment and professional networks, they should keep in mind that students from different backgrounds will have different levels of familiarity with profession-specific “networking” practices. Faculty members who can provide support in this regard may wish to begin conversations with advisees about some of the norms and expectations for navigating these networks.

X. Guidelines for Effective Graduate Advising

The following catalogue of principles, rules, and expectations for graduate students, graduate advisers, and graduate program directors is adapted from the official GSAS “Guide to Advising.” Healthy and effective advising relationships entail regular, honest, and respectful communication among the parties involved. At their best, can foster richly collaborative approaches to research, writing and teaching, but they also depend on a clear division of roles and responsibilities.

1. General Expectations for Dissertation Committee Advisors

Once a faculty member has agreed to serve as a graduate student adviser, they are expected to assist in the intellectual and professional development of their graduate students in the following ways:

- helping students develop academic and professional skills, ranging from identifying research topics to appropriate venues for publication and possible sites of employment;
- providing timely written feedback (at a minimum, on at least one draft of every thesis section or dissertation chapter and on the completed thesis or dissertation);
- helping students to set a reasonable and realistic schedule of deadlines for written work, and ensuring that the delivery of their own feedback does not impede that schedule;
- establishing a shared expectation about the frequency of meetings and communications, whether virtual or in-person;
- meeting with students at least once a term to provide constructive feedback on their progress;
- facilitating students’ research by guiding them to relevant academic opportunities or research experiences, such as fellowships or extracurricular programs;
- encouraging students to be open about any problems in their work relationships, including with an adviser, and actively helping to resolve those problems, seeking guidance from the DGS or other university offices as necessary, while maintaining confidentiality as much as is possible and desired by the student;
- being aware of and directing students to University resources to support students through challenges, some of which can be found in the Appendix, and reporting any acts of discrimination or Title IX violations that come to their notice as advisers;
- recognizing that success in academic work is contingent upon students’ mental and physical health and supporting them in preserving reasonable leisure and vacation time.
- not asking students for inappropriate personal favors (e.g. walking dogs, child-minding, picking up dry cleaning, and unpaid secretarial or editorial work);

- remaining aware that academic hierarchies may make it difficult or uncomfortable for a student to set boundaries related to the above expectations, and remaining critically attentive of their own requests and behaviors toward advisees.

Note: The above expectations apply to all graduate advisers, but individual advisers are likely to excel at some roles more than others, and to have different approaches to meeting the needs of particular students. For instance, on a given dissertation committee, one adviser may be especially helpful in responding to drafts and providing structure and encouragement for writing, while another is a particularly expert guide to the job market, the publication process, or other modes of professional development.

So long as both advisers provide the essential minimum of feedback and guidance, such differences are not necessarily indicative of a problem. By the same token, some advisers develop close informal bonds with their advisees while others maintain more distance; the same, of course, is true of students. It isn't required for every advising relationship to look exactly the same, so long as the intellectual and professional needs of the student are being met and the preferences and comfort levels of all individuals are respected.

2. General Expectations for Graduate Students

In order to develop satisfying relationships with their faculty mentors and advisers, it's helpful for students to understand faculty advisers' central role in graduate education, while also taking increasing ownership for the content, direction, and progress of their own research. Students can expect advisers to be responsive to their requests for feedback, guidance, and advice, but should be mindful of constraints on their time and willing to provide reminders of impending deadlines. Students can help foster healthy advising relationships by:

- recognizing that faculty advisers will seek to provide guidance and direction for their research on the basis of their own scholarly experiences and expertise; such guidance should be taken seriously, although students should always feel free to ask questions, seek clarification, voice reservations, or suggest alternate approaches;
- recognizing that faculty advisers are responsible for monitoring the accuracy, validity, and integrity of the students' academic work, and, in the case of published research, ensuring that the contributions of all participants are properly acknowledged;
- being aware of time constraints and other demands imposed on faculty members and staff by honoring agreed-upon deadlines for submitting work and—whenever possible—avoiding last-minute requests for meetings, letters of recommendation, or other time-intensive forms of support;
- arriving at shared expectations about the frequency of meetings and other forms of communication;
- taking the initiative to arrange meetings or communicate via other mechanisms with faculty advisers as often as necessary to keep the advisers informed of any factors that might affect their academic progress, including research or time to degree;
- recognizing that a single adviser will not be able to serve in every role or meet every need, and seeking to diversify, de-centralize and expand their advising and mentoring network where possible.

3. *General Expectations for the Director of Graduate Studies*

The particular responsibilities of the DGS in Comparative Literature include:

- creating an intellectual community where students, faculty, and staff can thrive in pursuit of academic excellence
- introducing new graduate students to the policies, practices, and resources of the department and the University through an orientation or advising session and follow up as needed to ensure students' understanding, assuming no prior knowledge on the part of any student;
- providing students with documentation of departmental policies, degree requirements, and timelines
- providing support to the department's colloquia and lecture series;
- being present, when possible, at oral examinations as an impartial observer, and at prospectus conferences to offer general feedback and guidance to the student and their committee;
- providing guidance to students about altering their advising relationships (for instance, if a student's faculty adviser leaves Yale, a faculty adviser and student have irreconcilable conflicts, or a student wishes to change faculty advisers);
- resolving problems locally and quickly if possible, and consulting (and/or directing students and faculty to consult) as appropriate with the offices and organizations listed in the "Resources" section of this guide, below;
- recognizing that in some cases, due to their personal relationships or commitments, they may not be the best source of support for a student facing a particular challenge, and ensuring that such students are aware of non-departmental resources including Dean's Designees and the GSAS Administrative Dean, as well as peer support available through the Graduate Student Advisory Committee in English or the Graduate Student Assembly.

Graduate Student Resources Beyond the Department

Faculty members and graduate students are encouraged to seek assistance in improving advising relationships and/or resolving issues through a number of offices. If the student encounters a problem within their committee, the student should meet with the primary adviser to discuss the matter. If things cannot be addressed from within the committee, the DGS is available for confidential discussion on any matter.

If students prefer for any reason not to approach members of the department with a particular advising-related concern—or if their efforts to do so don't yield a satisfying resolution—Yale has a variety of resources designed to ensure a healthy workplace for graduate students. These include:

Graduate School of Arts & Sciences Dean's Office
1 Hillhouse Avenue; (203) 432-2733
<http://gsas.yale.edu/office-directory>

- The GSAS Dean's Office provides centralized support for students and faculty in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Pamela Schirmeister (pamela.schirmeister@yale.edu) is in charge of graduate student teaching and professional development. Allegra di Bonaventura (allegra.dibonaventura@yale.edu) is responsible for academic advising and student progress, disciplinary and grievance cases, and outside fellowships. Jennifer Mendelsohn (Jennifer.mendelsohn@yale.edu) is the Director of the McDougal Graduate Student Center and is responsible for fostering a greater sense of social and cultural community for graduate students.

Office for Graduate Student Development & Diversity

1 Hillhouse Avenue; (203) 436-1301

<http://gsas.yale.edu/diversity/office-graduate-student-development-diversity>

- Dean Michelle Nearon (michelle.nearon@yale.edu) is head of the Office for Graduate Student Development and Diversity, as well as serving as one of three Discrimination and Harassment Resource Coordinators (DHRCs) and Title IX coordinators for the Graduate School. Title IX prohibits sex or gender discrimination in all education programs and activities, including but not limited to admissions, recruitment, instruction, advising, and employment. DHRCs are administrators with the responsibility to receive student concerns and offer advice and guidance related to diversity and inclusion, discrimination and harassment, and equal opportunity. DHRCs may also help facilitate informal resolution of complaints. Students and faculty should note that DHRCs are mandatory reporters under Title IX.

University-Wide Committee on Sexual Misconduct

55 Whitney Avenue; (203) 432-4449

<https://uwc.yale.edu/>

- The UWC is the disciplinary board that addresses claims of sexual misconduct and assists with the process of filing a formal complaint.

Office of Institutional Equity and Access

<https://oiea.yale.edu/>

- Any student, employee, or applicant for programs or employment at Yale who is concerned about affirmative action, equal opportunity, sexual harassment, racial harassment, or fairness in admissions or employment at Yale, either in a general sense or with respect to their own situation, is encouraged to contact the OIEA. Talking about a problem with a member of the Office is not a part of any formal grievance procedure. However, the Senior Director, Valarie Stanley (valarie.stanley@yale.edu), can investigate a situation and help to resolve it informally. The Office also informs individuals about the availability of the University's grievance procedures for students and employees. In cases where the individual is not within a group of persons to which a formal grievance procedure applies, the Office will review a complaint. All inquiries are treated in a confidential manner.

Student Accessibility Services
35 Broadway (rear), Room 222; (203)432-2324
<https://sas.yale.edu/>

- The Student Accessibility Services (SAS) office facilitates individual accommodations for all students with disabilities throughout the University. SAS works to remove physical and attitudinal barriers, which may prevent students' full participation in the University community. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act guide the work.

Sexual Harassment and Assault Response & Education (SHARE)
55 Lock Street, Lower Level; (203) 432-2000
<http://sharecenter.yale.edu/>

- SHARE offers a range of confidential and/or anonymous support services to any member of the Yale community dealing with sexual misconduct of any kind. SHARE has a new support group specifically for graduate and professional students.

Mental Health & Counseling
55 Lock Street, 3rd Floor; 203-432-0290
<http://yalehealth.yale.edu/mentalhealth>

- You can call 203-432-0123 to reach an on-call therapist 24/7, or call 203-432-0290 to make an appointment, or you can come to YMH&C in person at 55 Lock Street (3rd floor). If you are having trouble securing an appointment in a timely fashion and are comfortable seeking confidential help from the DGS, they can contact YMH&C on your behalf.

Resources for Students to Address Discrimination and Harassment Concerns
<https://student-dhr.yale.edu/>

- This website offers a comprehensive accounting of the array of institutional offices, programs, resources, and people available to students to address discrimination and harassment concerns. It also includes a catalogue of policies and definitions and a list of steps to take toward resolving complaints of various kinds.

Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning
301 York Street; (203) 432-4765
<https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/GraduateStudents>

- The Poorvu Center provides an array of support for graduate student teaching and writing. The Teaching Development Team can assist with course design and offers confidential individual consultations and classroom observations, as well as offering dozens of teaching workshops led by experienced graduate student teachers. The Graduate Writing Lab offers individual consultations with writing tutors, programs and

workshops on academic writing and communication, writing retreats, and facilitated peer writing groups.

Office of Career Strategy

55 Whitney Ave., 3rd Floor; (203) 432

<https://ocs.yale.edu/>

- The Office of Career Strategy offers individual Career Advising Appointments and runs a Professionalization Workshop Series for graduate students in the Humanities, as well as sponsoring discipline- and field-specific Peer Professionalization Groups. Their website provides links to on- and off-campus professionalization resources, including lists of current employment opportunities and internships in the public and digital humanities. The Director of Graduate and Postdoctoral Career Services is Hyun Ja Shin (hyunja.shin@yale.edu).