

## **Advising:**

1. We recommend that the group of faculty members who eventually end up present at and participating in any given graduate student's Defense of Method be constituted already at the prospectus stage. This group, comprising faculty from both partner units (and from other units as well, at the student's discretion), will make up the student's advisory body for the duration of the dissertation-writing and submission process. As is generally the case now, one faculty member on that advisory body will function as the main advisor. Depending on the practice of the partner department and on the student's wishes, members of that larger advisory committee should expect to be asked to be present at the prospectus defense, at chapter conferences, and to read drafts as the dissertation takes shape.
2. We recommend that a mechanism be set up – perhaps a questionnaire, suitably crafted to maintain confidentiality – to solicit regular feedback from graduate students on the quality of the advising they are receiving. This feedback would be received and (as necessary) acted upon by the DGS, unless the DGS is one of the advisors under evaluation: in that case, the feedback would go to another suitable faculty member. We hope that such a mechanism might serve a useful and regular conduit of information from the student's perspective on how advising is succeeding and how it might be improved.

3. We recommend that information about faculty office hours be aggregated, so that graduate students might know when they might sign up to speak with a given faculty member (not necessarily the DGS or members of their committee). These could be indicated in a newsletter sent out by the DGS at the beginning of each semester. We also suggest that faculty hold "open" office hours at least once a semester, to which graduate students might drop in at their convenience. We see this practice as a way of creating community and giving students the chance to converse with as many FMS faculty members as possible over the course of their graduate careers.
4. We recommend that FMS hire, on a yearly rotating basis, two graduate student liaisons who would assist the program with such things as graduate student social and academic events, recruitment, and finding graduate student mentors for incoming PhD candidates. Such liaisons – who would be paid for their work – already exist in units such as American Studies, and will provide crucial help to our senior administrator and DGS, and aid with establishing closer and more dynamic links across cohorts.
5. We recommend (in accord with the report's suggestion on page 23) the creation of "a crowdsourced graduate handbook offering advice and guidance that is authored and updated frequently by a program's doctoral students." The students who craft the initial version of the handbook should be remunerated for their work, and could be the graduate liaisons mentioned in the point above.

6. In accord with the report's suggestion on page 24, we recommend that FMS establish "a graduate student advisory committee that can serve as a consultative body for the DGS and chair." Membership in this committee would rotate, and committee members should be present at non-executive FMS faculty meetings when possible.

7. Film and Media Studies is a community in which members of the faculty mentor students to help them achieve their full academic and professional potential. Graduate students approach the relationship with their advisors in a spirit of trust. For these reasons, we strongly recommend that members of the Film and Media Studies faculty not have amorous or sexual relations with any Film and Media Studies graduate student, even when the relationships are ostensibly consensual. This principle should be observed regardless of whether the faculty member in question has or might reasonably expect to have pedagogical or direct supervisory responsibilities over the student in question.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> We refer here to the University's Policy on Teacher-Student Consensual Relations, and specifically the following paragraphs:

"The integrity of the teacher-student relationship is the foundation of the University's educational mission. This relationship vests considerable trust in the teacher, who, in turn, bears authority and accountability as a mentor, educator, and evaluator. The unequal institutional power inherent in this relationship heightens the vulnerability of the student and the potential for coercion. The pedagogical relationship between teacher and student must be protected from influences or activities that can interfere with learning and personal development.

"Whenever a teacher is or in the future might reasonably become responsible for teaching, advising, or directly supervising a student, a sexual or romantic relationship between them is inappropriate and must be avoided. In addition to creating the potential for coercion, any such relationship jeopardizes the integrity of the educational process by creating a conflict of interest and may impair the learning environment for other students. Finally, such situations may expose

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the University and the teacher to liability for violation of laws against sexual harassment and sex discrimination.

"Therefore, teachers must avoid sexual or romantic relationships with students over whom they have or might reasonably expect to have direct pedagogical or supervisory responsibilities, regardless of whether the relationship is consensual. Conversely, teachers must not directly supervise any student with whom they have a sexual or romantic relationship"  
(<https://smr.yale.edu/find-policies-information/yale-sexual-misconduct-policies-and-related-definitions#:~:text=Sexual%20misconduct%20is%20antithetical%20to,serious%20consequences%20for%20policy%20violations>).