

Information for GTPCI Advisors and Advisees

1. All GTPCI degree students (PhD, ScM, and MHS) are assigned an academic advisor from among the Program's faculty. Assignments are generally made by the Program Director or Associate Director during the second term of the didactic year as past of the Professional Goals and Objectives course. Pairings are made on the basis of perceived mutual interests, availability, and sometimes professional background. Advisors are not chosen because of presumed expertise in the student's intended research interests. Students and their assigned advisors work together with mutual consent, and either may request reassignment if the relationship is not satisfactory.
2. Each student and his/her assigned advisor are expected to have a face-to-face introductory meeting no later than mid-November of the didactic year. The required course Professional Goals and Objectives will provide each student with an opportunity for at least one detailed discussion with his/her advisor regarding career objectives, mentoring arrangements, and thesis development.
3. For PhD and ScM candidates, the academic advisor's responsibility is to: (a) advise the student on coursework selection and monitor academic performance during the didactic year; (b) provide general mentoring and support for academic issues and the selection of a thesis research topic; (c) to review and approve the preliminary thesis proposal at the end of the didactic year; and (d) to serve on the student's thesis committee(s). In this latter role the advisor represents the Program's faculty, and as such has the responsibility to strive for application of uniform academic standards across the program. The academic advisor therefore usually does not function as the candidate's advocate which is the role of the research mentor. (*Note: BSPH graduate degree documents frequently use the term "advisor" by which is meant the student's GTPCI academic advisor. BSPH requires that the advisor be present during the preliminary oral exam and participate on the thesis committee/final oral examination. GTPCI requires that the research mentor be present at these exams as well.*) For MHS candidates the advisor's role is complete once the student has passed the comprehensive examination at the end of the didactic year, and hence satisfied the degree requirements.
4. For Ph.D. and ScM tracks, students are required to contact their academic advisor by phone or in person by June 1 and again by December 1 each succeeding research year until a degree is awarded. For the MHS track, students are to contact their academic advisor by June 1 to review their didactic year. Each academic advisor will provide a brief, written documentation of these contacts to the Program office for monitoring by the Research Review Committee. After the didactic year, content of these semi-annual exchanges will focus on the candidate's research progress, relationship with mentor(s), and general academic and professional well being. If problems are identified, the advisor should help structure a list of viable alternative solutions for the student to consider. Rarely communication with research preceptors and mentors may be advisable and helpful. The Program's Research Review Committee or the Program Director or Associate Director should be informed when situations that could prevent successful completion of the program arise.
5. When the PhD candidate's academic advisor and the GTPCI Research Review Committee agree that a written draft of the dissertation work is acceptable, the student may proceed to schedule the "oral defense" of his/her thesis. A similar committee of Thesis Readers is appointed to review and approve the thesis of ScM candidates. Ordinarily the academic advisor will serve on the thesis committees of his/her advisees, again representing the GTPCI Program.

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