

Advising Matters

Harvard College
Advising Programs Office

Advising Programs Office
Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Harvard University



HARVARD
COLLEGE

Harvard College Advising

As students progress through Harvard College, advising relationships offer them opportunities to further their understanding of who they are and the pathways they will take. Providing a space within which students can imagine themselves experimenting and exploring, they are also relationships to which students can return for fine-tuning and deep reflection throughout their time here.

Many Harvard students arrive with concrete ideas about what they should be doing and preconceived expectations of the goals of a Harvard education. Good advising programs challenge these ideas, dare students to imagine themselves as something different than they are or plan to be, and encourage them to explore and expand their horizons at every stage of their undergraduate education.

Productive advising does not encourage students to know all the answers immediately, but instead encourages them to revel for a time in not knowing. It should not strive to answer all questions, but instead encourage students, when appropriate, to question further. Advising is valuable not only for figuring out the best way to arrive at a destination, but also for discovering the world and oneself along the way.

Fruitful advising conversations help students focus on achieving balance in their lives, both among their academic, extracurricular, and social endeavors as well as between their narrower academic interests and the broader learning opportunities a liberal arts education affords them.

Harvard College's Advising Programs Office (APO) was created in the spring term of 2006 to help coordinate and support academic advising programs for all undergraduates. The APO sees itself as a bridge designed to connect students with faculty, administrators, and peers



Concentration advising during Advising Fortnight, April 2008

throughout the Harvard community to facilitate the pre-concentration and concentration advising experiences of undergraduates.

With the understanding that advising relationships are productive when they are built on mutual respect, receptivity, and initiative, the APO conceives of advising as a partnership in which a student and an adviser each play an active role. Over their four years here, students are encouraged to assume increasing responsibility for cultivating advising relationships. This includes expanding their network of advisers, proactively seeking out desired resources, considering their own needs and goals, and balancing multiple sources of advice.

Believing that good advising programs provide many opportunities for personal transformation through productive conversation, the APO has built redundancy into each of its advising programs so that all students have multiple sources of advice and counsel at every turn. When students invest time and energy in developing meaningful advising relationships with faculty, administrators, and peers, they position themselves not only to make highly informed choices while here, but also to develop valuable relationships with advisers that may enrich their lives for years to come.

Advising Relationship Expectations

During their time at Harvard, students enjoy advising relationships with their formal advisers as well as other members of the Harvard community they include in their ever-growing network of support. Each of these advising relationships should be formed on a basis of mutual understanding, receptivity, and initiative on the part of the adviser and advisee. Both parties should take a role in establishing and fostering the relationship.

Advisers are expected to:

1 Provide Informed Support

Advisers should get to know students' individual needs and act as a sounding board for their ideas. Advisers should also support students by suggesting pathways that fit with the particular goals of the advisee.

2 Be Knowledgeable about the Curriculum and Resources

Advisers should have a basic knowledge of the College curriculum and the resources available to students on campus.

3 Make Connections

Though advisers are not expected to know the answer to every question, they should be a source of referrals and link students to appropriate resources.

4 Be Accessible, Responsive, and Proactive

Advisers should let their advisees know how to reach them easily, should be responsive to communications from advisees, and should be proactive in keeping up with their advisees throughout the term.

Advisees are expected to:

1 Be Responsive

Advisees should respond to advisers' communications in a timely manner and be willing to meet in person.

2 Take Initiative

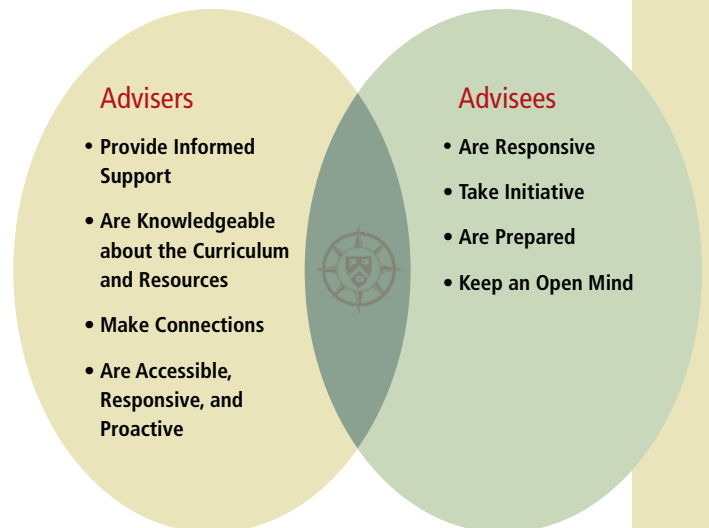
Advisees should be proactive in seeking out the advising resources they need. This may include requesting additional advising meetings, seeking out multiple sources of advice, and continuing to expand both their formal and informal network of advisers.

3 Be Prepared

Advisees should come to advising meetings prepared, considering in advance the choices, questions, and issues they hope to discuss with their adviser. Additionally, students should prepare by considering their own academic goals.

4 Keep an Open Mind

While many students may have concrete ideas about potential paths, advisees should be open to new possibilities they may not have considered.



Building A Board of Advisers at Harvard College

One of the APO’s goals is to help students build a “board of advisers” that they can draw on during their time at Harvard and beyond. Once the first connections are made with the freshman advising network, students are encouraged to continue, formally and informally, to augment their personal advising board so that they have a wealth of advising resources at their disposal at every turn. With the goal of advising being personal transformation through meaningful conversation, expanding such a network increases opportunities for productive moments in advising experiences.



A proctor and peer advising fellows on Freshman Move-in Day

Good advising provides “increasing opportunities for individual decisive moments....”

– Derek Bok

Proctor
Freshman Adviser
Peer Advising Fellow
Resident Dean of Freshmen

First-Year ADVISING

(Terms 1–2)

Sophomore Adviser
Sophomore Advising Coordinator
Resident Dean
House Masters
Concentration Advisers
DUS/ADUS

Proctor
 Freshman Adviser
 Peer Advising Fellow
 Resident Dean of Freshmen

Sophomore ADVISING

(Terms 3–4)

DUS/ADUS
Concentration Advisers
Thesis Adviser
Residential Tutors
Fellowships Advisers
Resident Dean
House Masters

Sophomore Adviser
 Sophomore Advising Coordinator

Proctor
 Freshman Adviser
 Peer Advising Fellow
 Resident Dean of Freshmen

Concentration ADVISING

(Terms 4–8)

First-Year Advising

The goals of first-year advising are to help students make the transition from high school to college, to help them navigate and shape their educational experience, and to encourage students to explore the opportunities and resources available at Harvard.

All incoming first-year students start out with a network of advisers: a proctor, a freshman academic adviser, a peer advising fellow, and a resident dean of freshmen who serve as the student's chief initial resources for academic and non-academic advice.

As helpful as these advisers are, we emphasize to all first-year students that no adviser has all of the answers, and that they should be proactive in making use of other resources as well.

Please contact advising@fas.harvard.edu with any questions. We are always open to conversation and inquiries!

Board of Freshman Advisers

Freshman advisers are faculty members, administrators and/or proctors at the University who together form the Board of Freshman Advisers. Freshman advisers help first-year students select courses and explore a wide range of questions on the curriculum, academic requirements, educational goals, summer opportunities, career aspirations, and extra-curricular interests. Our freshman advisers work with an average of three to six first-year students and can act as both a sounding board for students' ideas and a link between students and further resources.

Proctor

The proctor is an administrator or graduate student who lives in the dorm and advises on personal, residential, social, and academic matters. In some cases, the proctor is also the academic adviser. Proctors oversee an entryway of approximately 25 to 30 students, and along with the peer advising fellows, they are also responsible for fostering entryway community.



First-Year Student

Peer Advising Fellow

The Peer Advising Fellow is a sophomore, junior, or senior at the College who has been appointed by the Advising Programs Office to offer advice and assistance to first-year students. Fellows are assigned by entryway and, together with the entryway proctors, are responsible for entryway and dorm-wide programming. Fellows are matched with approximately ten freshmen in the entryway and bring a student's perspective to the first-year advising network.

Resident Dean of Freshmen

The Freshman Dean's Office (FDO) is responsible for the overall well-being of first-year students at Harvard. There are three resident deans of freshmen; one for each of the clusters of dorms that comprise Ivy Yard, Crimson Yard, and Elm Yard. Resident deans also work closely with the proctors in their respective Yards.

Sophomore Advising

The goals of sophomore advising at Harvard College are to support sophomores as they engage in focused academic exploration and to empower them to make informed and personally meaningful decisions on academic and other matters. Sophomores, like freshmen, begin the year with a network of advisers: a sophomore adviser, a sophomore advising coordinator, and a resident dean. Once they choose a concentration, they also have a concentration adviser or advising team.

While concentration advisers serve as the primary academic advisers for sophomores in the fourth term, sophomore advisers continue to work with their advisees throughout the year, supporting students in their transition into concentrations, addressing academic issues such as study abroad, secondary fields, and research opportunities, and providing individualized, holistic attention.

Please write to advising@fas.harvard.edu with any questions about the sophomore advising experience.

Sophomore Advising Coordinator

The SAC works with the House Masters and resident dean to guide the House sophomore advisers and coordinate House advising events. Students are free to go to the SAC with questions about how the advising system works.

House Masters

House masters set the tone for the House in its activities and in its function as a close-knit community within the context of a larger college and university. They are wonderful sources of knowledge about Harvard and the world beyond.

Concentration Advisers

Once students declare a concentration near the end of the third term, they are assigned a concentration adviser or advising team who help them create an academic path within the concentration.

Freshman Advising Network

Students are encouraged to maintain the advising relationships they built in the first year. Freshman advisers can continue to serve as productive resources and sounding boards.

Advising Programs Office

Check out the APO web site for links to the advising resources on campus: www.fas.harvard.edu/advising. On this web site, there is a list developed by each concentration of courses that are particularly appropriate for students interested in exploring the concentration. These lists are great resources for sophomores.

Sophomore Adviser

Matched with students based on shared interests, the sophomore adviser helps students choose classes, select a concentration, think about study abroad and fellowships, and make summer plans.

House Tutors

House tutors are available to help on a range of subjects, from physics problem sets to fulfilling premed requirements to writing fellowship applications. They are also great people to talk to about personal matters and broad life questions.

Resident Dean

Each House is served by an Allston Burr Resident Dean who is responsible for the well-being of the students in that House. The resident dean serves as a key resource for all students on academic and personal matters.



Concentration Advising

By the middle of the sophomore year, Harvard students make the transition from exploring all of the concentrations that might interest them to selecting one concentration for focused study. We encourage students to consider many factors in making this decision. These include the student's intellectual interests, the concentration community, the required coursework, availability of research opportunities and faculty contact, advising structures, class size, thesis policies, and ways in which concentration choice may play a role in post-graduation paths.

Concentrations are very involved in helping students find the right program for their individual needs and interests and collaborate on pre-concentration advising efforts with the Advising Programs Office, the Freshman Dean's Office, and the Houses. In September, there are college-wide Divisional Fairs for first-years and sophomores designed to help students select courses that will facilitate concentration exploration.

One of the resources that helps students learn more about the over 40 concentrations at Harvard is the Advising Fortnight, to which students are invited in the spring of their first year. This two-week advising event begins with an academic fair attended by representatives from all concentrations. That is followed by at least one event by each concentration that will introduce students to the department's field of study, its faculty, students, and requirements.

During the Advising Fortnight, first-year students are required to engage in at least one "Advising Conversation" with a prospective concentration. This requirement can be fulfilled by attending one of the departmental events or by attending advising hours. While only one conversation must be reported by each student, the hope is that students will have many advising conversations during the Fortnight, as well as throughout the year.



A concentration advising event with the Department of African and African American Studies, during Advising Fortnight

In the third term, academic advisers encourage students to seek out information from the concentration advising teams before concentration choice in December.

Once a student declares a concentration, the concentration assumes primary academic advising responsibility for the student. The student works with a concentration adviser or with an advising team, depending on the concentration advising structure. The APO supports concentrations as they guide students in three phases: into an appropriate set of introductory courses in the field of study, to advanced work in the field of study and, when applicable, through a final project or thesis in the senior year.

Since each concentration has a somewhat unique advising structure and process, we encourage all advisers to help pre-concentrators reach out to concentrations. Updated contact information for concentration advisers is located under "List of Programs" on the Advising Programs Office web site at: www.fas.harvard.edu/advising.

The APO works closely with advisers in all of the concentrations and is always happy to help students and concentration advisers make connections. Please write to advising@fas.harvard.edu with any questions or suggestions.

Advising Web Site: Accessing Information



Through the Advising Programs Office web site, www.fas.harvard.edu/advising, students access a multitude of advising resources, including their network of advisers and online advising resources available throughout the Harvard community.

Course Selection:

Access course information through a variety of sources, including the Office of the Registrar, the *Harvard College Handbook for Students*, and the Q Guide.

Concentrations:

Find out more about each of the concentrations, including contact information for advisers, requirements, resources, links and more.

All About the APO:

We are always eager to link students and advisers with available resources and to receive feedback on our advising programs.



Requirements:

Read about the Core, General Education, Expos, and Foreign Language requirements here.

Academic Information and Resources:

Information and resources are available for both academic and non-academic questions on requirements, advanced placement, the freshman seminar program, study abroad, achieving balance, life after Harvard, and more.

Advising Network Portal:

Students use the Portal to gain access to their full network of advisers as well as to view their course enrollment, placement scores, grades, and other information. Advisers use the Portal to access advisee photos, contact information, and relevant advising information.

Advising Network Portal: Making Connections

Since students find some connections more fruitful and productive than others, an important element of our advising philosophy is the concept of *redundancy*. All of our advising programs are structured to offer multiple advisers at each step along the way. We also encourage students to expand their network of advisers continually during their time here.

The Advising Network Portal is an online tool which displays a student's formal network of advisers in one place, providing students easy access to their advisers and allowing advisers to make connections and better support students as a team. In the Portal, students and advisers can also access important advising data, including student records, placement scores, present course enrollment, and more.

Student information facilitates adviser-advisee interaction.

Here students find contact information for people in their House community.

Concentration advising personnel are also displayed. Program Administrators are often the best first stop in a concentration office.

The screenshot shows the Harvard College Advising Network Portal for a student named Jesse Harvard. The page is titled "Advising Network for Jesse Harvard" and includes a welcome message from the Advising Program Office. It lists various advisers and their contact information, including:

- Mather House: Suite 99, 617-555-1234, jharvard@fas.harvard.edu
- Year in School: Primary Concentration: Math
- Sophomore Linguistics: Active, Registered
- House Masters: Will Wisener, Sara Suckler
- Allston Barr Resident Dean: Emma Emerson, Contact Information, 617-495-0000, emerson@fas.harvard.edu
- Sophomore Academic Adviser: Owen Gutman, Contact Information, 617-495-5555, gutman@fas.harvard.edu
- Sophomore Advising Coordinator: Rebecca Radcliffe, Contact Information, 617-495-1111, radcliffe@fas.harvard.edu
- Concentration Advisers for Linguistics: Head Tutor: Aimee Areeda, Contact Information, 617-495-2222, areeda@fas.harvard.edu; Assistant Head Tutor: Larry Loeb, Contact Information, loeb@fas.harvard.edu
- Department Administrator: Steve Sewer, Contact Information, 617-495-3333, sewer@fas.harvard.edu

At the bottom, a note states: "If the advising data are not accurate, please contact the Advising Program Office via email at advising@fas.harvard.edu."

Additional Advising Resources

Accessible Education Office

AEO supports the needs of individuals with disabilities in the Harvard community and serves as a valuable source of information.

See www.aeo.fas.harvard.edu.

Bureau of Study Counsel

The Bureau provides peer tutoring, group and individual counseling, reading courses, and a wide range of other assistance. See bsc.harvard.edu.

Core Program Office

The Core Curriculum, required for students who entered Harvard prior to Fall 2009, introduces students to various “ways of knowing.” See my.harvard.edu/core for more information.

See www.courses.fas.harvard.edu.

Expository Writing Program

“Expos,” taken by every first-year students, is an intensive writing class in which students receive a great deal of individual attention.

See www.fas.harvard.edu/expos.

Freshman Seminar Program

The Freshman Seminar program offers opportunities for incoming students to work closely with members of the faculty on a wide range of selected topics in various ways. The program attempts to free both the seminar leader and the students from the usual constraints associated with a regular course offering: the seminars are not letter-graded and they do not have formal examinations.

See www.fas.harvard.edu/seminars.

General Education

The Class of 2013 is the first to enter the College under the requirements of the new Program in General Education. Students who entered Harvard prior to Fall 2009 are eligible to switch to the new

requirements if it makes sense in the context of their overall program of study. The Program in General Education seeks explicitly to “connect a student’s liberal education – that is, an education conducted in a spirit of free inquiry, rewarding in its own right – to life beyond college.” See www.generaleducation.fas.harvard.edu.

Harvard Chaplains

This is the umbrella organization of chaplains representing over 25 of the world’s religious traditions, united in their commitment to serving Harvard’s diverse student communities.

See chaplains.harvard.edu.

Harvard College Women’s Center

This center facilitates student-run programs, centralizes resources, builds relationships across campus and develops and enhances women’s leadership on campus.

See www.fas.harvard.edu/hcwc.

Harvard University Health Services

HUHS provides a comprehensive health care facility in Harvard Square, and at the Business, Law, and Medical school areas.

See huhs.harvard.edu.

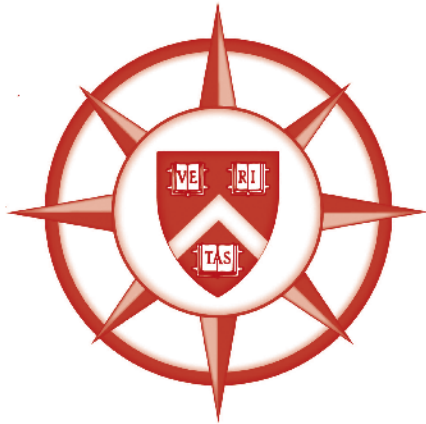
Office of Career Services

OCS offers information and assistance on everything from jobs and internships to career preparation and graduate school. Sign up for their listservs to receive information about upcoming events! See www.ocs.fas.harvard.edu.

Office of International Programs

OIP offers information on term and summer study abroad opportunities.

See www.fas.harvard.edu/oip.



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