

Graduate Program Policy Guidelines for Change of Graduate Faculty Advisor

Applicability

This policy applies to all graduate students pursuing a MS or PhD degree in the College of Engineering.

Background

It is recognized that graduate faculty advisors spend considerable amount of time, energy as well as intellectual capital to direct and mentor their graduate student advisees. It is also recognized that students often contribute significantly to the faculty scholarly work. Furthermore, students' research interest or faculty's interest and focus may change during the course of students' studies. This, as well as other circumstances may warrant a change of graduate faculty advisor.

Principles

Every graduate student has the right to change their graduate faculty advisor during the course of their graduate studies. However, change of advisor should not be taken lightly as it can have significant impact on the student's progress towards graduation, faculty research output and the well-being of the graduate program as a whole. Such a change must be done in a professional, collegial and contemplative way. It is recommended that each department provide a mechanism for confidential consultation to graduate students who wish to consider a change of advisor. In general, change of advisor during the first semester of MS program and first 3 semesters of the PhD program is less disruptive. Students should be mentored to be cognizant of this fact. All faculty members should approach change of advisor consideration with collegiality and act with the best interest of the students in mind.

Process

In the event that a graduate student feels they can no longer work with a graduate faculty advisor, the graduate student needs to undertake the following steps in the order listed below:

1. Graduate student should seek consultation and advice from the designated department faculty (if established), or Department Chair as deemed appropriate.
2. Student should identify a prospective graduate faculty advisor and discuss their request to change faculty advisor with him/her.
3. Proposed graduate faculty advisor should discuss the change in advisor with the Department Chair and the current advisor with the consent of the student.
4. A change of Faculty Advisor Form with signatures of current advisor, new faculty advisor and the Department Chair must be submitted to the Graduate School via Office of Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.
5. If there are objections by the existing faculty advisor, the matter should be addressed by the Department Chair in consultation with the Departmental Graduate Committee. Further resolution of the matter may be referred to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.
6. Any departmental or university funding granted to the student will be reviewed by the Department Chair upon request for a change of advisor.