

Undergraduate Advising Guidelines

*University of Maryland
Geography Department
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We provide our undergraduates with a two-tiered advising system, (i) curriculum advising in the Undergraduate Advising Office and (ii) faculty mentoring with an assigned faculty member. Curriculum advising is mandatory each semester, and students have a registration block that will be lifted only after curriculum advising has been completed. Faculty mentoring is also mandatory, but the lifting of the students' registration block is not necessarily contingent on faculty mentoring. This will allow students and faculty mentors more flexibility in the scheduling of mentoring sessions throughout the semester. However, students who have not met with a faculty mentor at least once during an academic year will be required to meet with a faculty mentor before the advising block is lifted. The Undergraduate Advising Office will monitor the frequency of faculty mentoring for each student by keeping a copy of the most recent Faculty Advisor Form in the student's record.

Below are descriptions of:

- I. The curriculum advising system, and
- II. The faculty mentoring system.

I. Curriculum Advising in the Undergraduate Advising Office

a.) Student/Advisor Interactions

- Advisors conduct preliminary interviews with new majors to determine students' general interests. Based on this preliminary interview and the current advising loads of faculty members, advisors assign each new student a faculty mentor.
- Advisors discuss course scheduling and curriculum requirements for Geography majors following the GIS and/or Geography areas of specialization to assure that students will fulfill graduation requirements. Informal evaluations of University CORE requirements are also preformed.
- Formal graduation clearances are processed and approved through the Geography Advising Office and the Director of Undergraduate Studies.
- Advisors administer the GIS Citation Program for majors and non-majors.
- Advisors administer the departmental certification programs in Geography and GIS.

b.) Frequency of Advising

- All Geography majors are required to have curriculum advising at least once per semester. Students' advising blocks will be lifted after curriculum advising has been completed.

c.) Faculty/Advisor Interactions

- Advisors are available to aid in the interpretation of policies related to the undergraduate major in Geography, the GIS Certification program and the departmental certification programs in Geography and GIS.
- Advisors can help resolve conflicts.
- Advisors will provide contact information for students to their faculty mentors, but may not release transcripts or other confidential information.

II. Faculty Mentoring

a.) Student/Faculty Mentor Interactions

- Faculty mentors are assigned students whose interests match their own. Faculty mentors can help students focus these interests, suggest courses, sponsor internships or independent studies, and provide general guidance and encouragement to their students.
- Faculty can meet with their students one-on-one, as a group, or communicate with their students via phone or e-mail.
- Faculty should sign the “Faculty Advisor Form” that the student will turn into the Advising Office as a record of the meeting or interaction.

b.) Frequency of Advising

- Students are required to meet with their faculty mentor at least once during an academic year, but are strongly encouraged to interact with their mentor each semester. Juniors and seniors are especially encouraged to cultivate a good relationship with their faculty mentor, as this person is a source of recommendations for graduate school or job applications after the student graduates.