

Interview Guidelines & Advisor Signature

As part of the application to the Ph.D. program in Curriculum & Instruction, you will initiate a two-way interview with faculty who may be appropriate doctoral advisors. This interview process is different from the typical interview process in many of our bachelor's and master's programs in that the Ph.D. applicant must initiate the process.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the two-way interview is to mutually identify a faculty member who agrees to serve as your doctoral program advisor (the coursework phase of the Ph.D.) The same faculty member may or may not serve as your dissertation advisor; there are many good reasons why it might be desirable to switch advisors prior to or at the dissertation phase:

- student's research interests develop in a different direction from the faculty member;
- student gets to know additional faculty over time and identifies a better match for the dissertation direction;
- a new faculty member whose research is well-aligned with the student is hired after the student has begun the program.

An applicant must have secured the agreement of a faculty member to serve as the doctoral program advisor in order to be admitted to the program. The rationale for this is to avoid a situation whereby a doctoral student who is admitted later discovers that the particular expertise needed in an advisor is not present among the faculty (as, of course, not all particular areas of interest are available in any given group of faculty).

Please see the FAQ which has several entries related to identifying a potential advisor.

A secondary purpose of the two-way interview is to provide additional information to the admissions committee. Faculty with whom the applicant interviews are requested to submit in writing (to the Ph.D. program assistant, who will put the document in the applicant's admission file) a confidential summary evaluation for the admission file. This summary evaluation will be one piece of evidence that will be considered by the committee in making a final admission decision. In that evaluation, the faculty member is requested to make an admission recommendation ("highly", or "with reservations" or "not recommended.") For all recommendations, the faculty member is requested to provide an evidence-based rationale for his or her recommendation. The evidence he or she cites should come from the interview, and may additionally come from any other documents the applicant shares such as resume/CV or *Statement of Purpose*.

PROCESS

1. The applicant writes the *Statement of Purpose* to clarify thinking prior to contacting faculty.
2. The applicant contacts faculty who might be a fit in terms of research expertise (see the *Faculty Research Interests* document in the right-hand menu bar for a summary listing of faculty and their expertise).
3. The applicant makes an appointment to interview with chosen faculty member(s) (in person if possible, but phone interviews are acceptable if necessary due to distance or time constraints). Please be clear in your communication that the purpose of your requested appointment is to explore the possibility of serving as doctoral advisor. We recommend that you share both your resume/CV and your *Statement of Purpose* in advance of the interview so that the faculty member has some prior information about you.
4. In many cases, applicants will want to interview with more than one faculty member in order to determine the best potential fit (but more than one isn't required if the first meeting identifies a mutually agreeable fit). Each faculty member with whom you interview is requested to submit a written summary evaluation of your interview.
5. Once a mutual decision has been made agreeing to serve as faculty advisor, the faculty member must submit this decision in writing to the program assistant for the applicant file (and should let the applicant know that this has been done so that the applicant can monitor the completion of all application requirements). That can take the form of:

- Putting the applicant name and the faculty signature/date at the bottom of this document and submitting the completed form to the Ph.D. program assistant
- Sending an email to the program assistant
- Any other mechanism that verifies in writing that the faculty member agrees to serve as doctoral program advisor

INTERVIEW TOPICS

To facilitate this interview process and to assist the applicant in preparing for the interview, below is a suggested list of topics that might be helpful to address during the interview.

Remember: this is a two-way interview, and it is expected that the applicant will be asking many questions as well as responding to them. A useful way to think about this process is a conversation – both parties are engaging in a conversation to determine if the doctoral advisor-doctoral student relationship would be a good fit for both.

Please see the FAQ related to the nature of the advisor-doctoral student relationship.

Possible (non-comprehensive) interview topics (not necessarily distinct from one another):

- Career goals (what do you intend to do post Ph.D. and how will this program help?)
- Rationale for pursuing a Ph.D. (why is this right for you at this time?)
- Relevant experiences to date that would positively situate you for a Ph.D. in Curriculum & Instruction
- Research interests and why
- Why UofL and/or this particular faculty member would be a good fit for you

It may be helpful to bring a paper copy of these guidelines for use by the faculty member, as it is likely that they won't have a copy lying within easy reach. Providing this as a guide to the interview may facilitate the process for both parties. Plus it is one small demonstration of being prepared!

TO THE FACULTY MEMBER

After the applicant-initiated interview, the Ph.D. Curriculum & Instruction admissions committee requests two things from the faculty member:

1. If both parties mutually agree to have you serve as doctoral advisor, please sign/date here and submit to the Ph.D. program assistant for inclusion in the application file (please let the applicant know this was done).

I AGREE TO SERVE AS DOCTORAL ADVISOR FOR _____
(applicant name)

(faculty signature)
(date)

2. Please submit a confidential summary evaluation to the Ph.D. program assistant for the applicant file (whether you will be serving as the faculty advisor or not). As part of that evaluation, please clearly choose one of the following recommendations:
 - **Highly recommend admitting**
 - **Recommend admitting with reservations**
 - **Do not recommend admitting**

For any recommendation, please provide an evidence-based rationale for your recommendation.