

Doctoral Mentoring Policies  
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Dear students

Many of you have asked me to clarify my mentoring and advising policies over the last few months. So, I have compiled my broad take on student mentoring as well as my specific rules here, so you can refer to it. If this doesn't answer your questions, please email me.

First, I really enjoy working with PhD students and it is one of the most rewarding experiences of my career. It is fun to interact with students and I find that it helps me grow as a researcher. That said I only have a finite amount of time, resources, and abilities. Moreover, spreading myself thin over multiple students and projects will lead to poor training for all the students. I would rather work with a few and ensure that they get all the attention and help.

Therefore, I have come up with a set of rules to decide which students to work with/mentor. The premise of these rules is this: I want to work with students who are smart, willing to invest the effort to prove their abilities and work hard, and whose interests match mine.

#### Rules

1. For MIB students for whom I am already the “advisor/mentor”, I will resign from the advisory position (i.e., you have to find a new advisor within the program):
  - a. If your performance in my Phd class is below the median *or*,
  - b. If you do not answer my PhD quals questions *or*,
  - c. If you take my PhD quals question, but get a Low Pass or Fail. You are expected to get a High Pass. Under some special circumstances, a Pass will suffice.
2. For MIB students for whom I am not the advisor, if you want me to:
  - a. Serve on your dissertation committee *or*,
  - b. Work on a paper with you *or*,
  - c. Write you a recommendation letter,you need to satisfy the following requirements:
  - a. Have above-median performance in my PhD class *and*
  - b. Answer my PhD quals questions *and*
  - c. Receive at least a Pass (preferably a High Pass) in my PhD quals question

#### Notes:

- There will be absolutely no exceptions to these rules (unless you had a serious personal/health emergency)
- You have to take my quals question at the end of your second year as is usual. You cannot take the quals question in your 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> years
- Please do not approach me with any of the three requests – committee, paper, or letter – before you have satisfied these requirements, which should be at the end of your second year in the program.

- These are necessary but not sufficient requirements. Passing these requirements does not guarantee anything. You still need to convince me that there is a research area fit and explain exactly why you would like me to be involved.
  - If you have passed these requirements and you want me to work with you on a paper, please send me a short, written proposal with the idea and a brief explanation of what I would add as a co-author. My answer will depend on my time constraints, my expertise, and your proposal. Please approach me directly, i.e., you should email me and come meet me. I expect you to be able to explain why your ideas are good and what excites you about them, and how we can work together. Do not send your advisor, friends, or some other faculty member to make the case for you (even if they are involved in the project).
3. For non-MIB students looking for committee membership, letter of recommendation, or joint work possibilities, the same rules as point 2 apply.
    - a. To schedule yourself to take my quals question, please coordinate with me at least a few weeks in advance.
  4. For students for whom I am not currently an advisor/mentor, if you want me to mentor/advise you, please come talk to me directly. Unless I was directly involved in recruiting you into the program, this is an extremely low probability event – but I am willing to listen and if I really convinced that there is a research fit and you are capable, I will consider the possibility.
  5. Irrespective of whether I am directly working with you or not, I would like all our students to succeed. If you have completed papers you want feedback on, or ideas you want to run by me, or want feedback on practice talks for the job market, I am more than happy to help.  
Good luck!