

# Academic Mentor Duties

**Academic Mentors provide academic guidance throughout the mentored student's enrolment at OIST. Academic Mentors should be a consistent presence in the student's academic life, offering support and assistance as required to help ensure academic success.**

## Key Responsibilities and Duties

### 1. Develop the individual course program proposal

Work carefully with the student to select courses that reinforce the foundations of the field of study and also provide the breadth of study necessary to develop the ability to collaborate effectively across traditional boundaries. The Graduate School (GS) will assign lab rotations with due consideration to suggestions from Mentors and Students, as appropriate, with at least one rotation being sufficiently far away from the student main research field.

- Develop program proposal with student (remotely/by video conference or email) prior to the student arriving at OIST
- Submit program proposal to the GS, two weeks prior to September 1, Year 1
- Meet with the student as needed to discuss and sign-off on course changes.

### 2. Ongoing guidance

Continue to play a general mentoring role for the duration of the student's studies at OIST. In cases of academic or personal difficulty, liaise with the Graduate School to organize help and support for the individual student as needed.

- Meet with the student formally at least once a term to review course grades and evaluations and discuss progress in courses and rotations
- Work with the student to develop strategies for improvement as needed, particular where grades or evaluations suggest difficulty or academic weakness.
- Ad hoc meetings as required if the student encounters difficulty.
- In cases of academic probation, work with the Dean and Graduate School to develop appropriate strategies to address the issue and improve performance within an agreed timeframe.
- Provide advice on appropriate travel for educational enhancement (conferences, workshops, educational visits)

NOTE: Student grades and evaluations are available from the student record system, to which all faculty have access.

### 3. Serve on Thesis Committee

Work with the student and thesis committee members to ensure the thesis proposal and final thesis are at an examinable standard in advance of submission and examination. Act in a moderating role, advocating for the best interests of the student in case of conflict within the committee.

- Check the thesis proposal draft provided by the student in advance of submission is complete and if so endorse it. Signed endorsement of the proposal by all thesis committee members is required prior to submission for examination.
- Chair annual research progress review meetings following the thesis proposal exam, with the first meeting to take place within the six months and annually thereafter. A short report with a recommendation on research progress should be forwarded to the Graduate School and the Dean immediately following each meeting.

The Academic Mentor should continue to advise the student throughout their enrolment in the degree. In exceptional cases, such as when the student is being accepted into the Mentor's lab for thesis research, or where the relationship between the student and Mentor has become unworkable, the faculty member or student may apply to the Graduate School to have a new mentor assigned.

## Program Advising

### Basic Guidelines

Students are admitted with varying degrees of preparation and the guidance of mentors in course selection is essential for students to meet our educational objectives. The emphasis should be on educational objectives rather than point collection. Nevertheless, there are some legislative requirements to fulfill.

### Students entering with BSc

Altogether, students will be required to accrue at least 30 points. In effect this sets a minimum requirement of 18 points from course work.

Course	Credit value
Professional development 1 (required)	1
Professional development 2 (required)	1
Rotations (as an indivisible block of 9 credits on successful completion of at least 3 rotations)	9
Thesis proposal (required)	1
Elective courses	18
Total points required	30

### Students entering with MSc

Students can be given considerable credit for past course work, up to a maximum of 10 points. In effect this sets a minimum requirement of 8 points from course work. Students still need sufficient background knowledge for their intended research, so may need to do more than the minimum. Credit waivers are not done on the basis of matching prior courses against OIST courses, but by consideration of the overall level of preparation a student has and needs.

Course	Credit value
Professional development 1 (required)	1
Professional development 2 (required)	1
Rotations (as an indivisible block of 9 credits on successful completion of at least 3 rotations)	9
Thesis proposal (required)	1
Elective courses	18 (up to 10 may be given for prior work)
Total points required	30

### Workload and Timetabling

Students should not take more than two elective courses per term, in order to leave time for independent studies, reading, and laboratory work during rotations. Students may take Advanced Courses in Year 1 if they are sufficiently well prepared.

### Course Changes

Course changes in the first calendar month of term can be made with no penalty. Courses may not be started after the first calendar month. Courses dropped after the first calendar month are given a W = Withdrawn grade on the transcript, which may be overwritten by subsequent retaking of the course.

## **Overview of order of study**

### **Year 1**

- Appointment of Academic mentor
- Mentor and Student prepare course program plan for Year 1 and Year 2
- Professional Development I
- Complete approved courses
- Three Rotations (as assigned by the Graduate School)

### **Year 2**

- Prepare PhD Thesis Proposal
- Complete required number of credits courses
- Professional Development II commences
- Student nominates PhD Thesis Committee members
- Supervisor nominates external and internal examiners
- Submit nominating forms and thesis proposal
- Oral qualifying examination for progression to PhD thesis research conducted

### **Years 3-5**

- Thesis research
- Professional Development II continues
- Workshops
- Students may enroll in additional courses for credit if they wish

### **Examination of thesis**

- Notification of intention to submit Thesis (6 months prior)
- Thesis Examiners nominated
- Thesis Examination Panel appointed
- Thesis submitted
- Examiners provide reports on written thesis, then
- Oral examination of thesis conducted at OIST