

Clarifying mutual expectations between newly admitted doctoral student and supervisor

The purpose of the questions below is to facilitate a discussion between student and supervisor about supervision.

Goals, ambitions and quality of work

1. What are your goals and ambitions with your PhD? Why are you doing a PhD?
2. How will you know if the quality of your work is good enough? How will you learn to judge the quality of your own work?
3. Do you and your supervisor expect that you will overtake him/her as a specialist in this particular task within the research field?

Roles, relations and process feedback

4. What different roles will you and your supervisor assume during the doctoral work? How will you communicate about it?
5. Will your supervisor take initiative to contact you if he/she feels something is wrong?
6. What personal issues should you share with your supervisor? What would you not share? What is relevant to bring up?
7. Will your supervisor intervene if he/she suspects scientific misconduct?
8. In which instances would you revisit your individual study plan and assess if changes are needed?

Project management

9. Will your supervisor help you manage time, or is that purely your responsibility?
10. How will you and your supervisor monitor progress?

Confidentiality in research

11. Can you share confidential things, and trust that they remain confidential?
12. How will you handle issues of confidentiality in relation to the project?

Modes of interaction

13. What is your preferred mode of interaction? What kind of issues can be dealt with via emails or telephone, and what should be put off for a regular meeting?
14. Are you allowed to call your supervisor outside normal work hours? And do you allow off-work calls from your supervisor?

Meetings

15. How frequent will you have supervision meetings?
16. Will you schedule meetings ahead or make spontaneous appointments upon need?
17. Should you submit something in writing before a supervision meeting?
18. Should you suggest an agenda for supervision meetings?
19. Should you take minutes of supervision meetings?
20. Will your supervisor contribute with relevant literature for your review of the research domain?

Manuscripts and writing

21. How long time does your supervisor need to give feedback on manuscripts?
22. How many times can you expect your supervisor to give feedback on the same manuscript?
23. Will your supervisor correct your writing (English language, grammar and spelling)?
24. Will your supervisor contribute to the actual writing, as a co-author?
25. How will you decide on co-authorships?