

Establishing a good relationship from the beginning: Shared responsibilities and expectations

Name PhD candidate	
Name Supervisor	
Date	
<p>Read each pair of statements below and estimate your position on each. For example with statement 1, indicate '1' if you very strongly believe that it is the supervisor's responsibility to select a research topic. If you think that supervisor and PhD candidate should be equally involved, you put a ring around '3' and if you think it is definitely the PhD candidate's responsibility to select a topic, indicate '5'.</p>	

Supervisor's responsibilities	RATING	PhD candidate's responsibilities
DESIGN		
1. It is the supervisor's responsibility to select a research topic	1 2 3 4 5	It is the PhD candidate's responsibility to choose the research topic
2. The supervisor decides on the appropriate theoretical framework and methodology	1 2 3 4 5	The PhD candidate decides which theoretical framework or methodology he/she wants to use
OWNERSHIP OF KNOWLEDGE & EXPERTISE		
3. The supervisor needs to have detailed knowledge of the research topic	1 2 3 4 5	The supervisor needs a general knowledge of the research topic
4. The supervisor is the specialist and expert in the research field of the PhD project	1 2 3 4 5	The PhD candidate is or will become the specialist and expert in the research field of the PhD project
6. The supervisor should go to academic conferences with the PhD candidate	1 2 3 4 5	The PhD candidate should attend academic conferences independently
7. The supervisor is responsible for research ethics (scientific integrity, research data management)	1 2 3 4 5	The PhD candidate is responsible for research ethics (scientific integrity, research data management)
REGULATIONS & TIMING		
8. The supervisor is responsible for informing the PhD candidate on the administrative and regulatory framework with regard to the doctoral project	1 2 3 4 5	The PhD candidate looks for administrative information and regulatory framework of the PhD project and asks the supervisor for information only if necessary
9. The supervisor is responsible for practical arrangements regarding Doctoral Schools (e.g., doctoral training programme, submitting the annual progress report, re-enrolment, and scheduling doctoral advisory committee meetings)	1 2 3 4 5	The PhD candidate is responsible for practical arrangements regarding Doctoral Schools (e.g., doctoral training programme, submitting annual progress report, re-enrolment, and scheduling doctoral advisory committee meetings)
10. The supervisor should have a timetable in mind and ensure the PhD candidate keeps to it	1 2 3 4 5	The PhD candidate creates his/her own timetable for the research and monitors his/her own progress
11. The supervisor should initiate a discussion about the timing for	1 2 3 4 5	The PhD candidate should initiate a discussion about the timing for submitting first

	submitting first publications, conference papers, and final thesis						publications, conference papers, and final thesis
12.	The supervisor sets deadlines for the PhD candidate	1	2	3	4	5	The PhD candidate works autonomously and sets his/her own deadlines
13.	The supervisor checks regularly that the PhD candidate is working consistently and on the right task	1	2	3	4	5	The PhD candidate works independently and does not have to account for how and where time is spent
14.	The PhD candidate should always adhere to agreed deadlines	1	2	3	4	5	Agreed deadlines are guidelines rather than absolute targets
GUIDANCE, FEEDBACK, AND AUTONOMY							
15.	The supervisor insists on regular meetings with the PhD candidate	1	2	3	4	5	The PhD candidate decides when she/he wants to meet with the supervisor
16.	The supervisor makes explicit how often he/she is willing to give written and/or oral feedback (e.g., x meetings per month)	1	2	3	4	5	The supervisor gives as much feedback as the PhD candidate needs (e.g., open door policy)
17.	The supervisor corrects style, grammar and spelling as well as content and structure	1	2	3	4	5	The supervisor only corrects content and structure, not grammar and spelling
18.	The supervisor assists in the writing of the thesis if the PhD candidate has difficulties	1	2	3	4	5	The supervisor advises only, and leaves all decisions concerning content, format and style to the PhD candidate
19.	The supervisor insists on reviewing drafts of every section of the thesis (e.g., to ensure that the PhD candidate is on the right track)	1	2	3	4	5	It is up to the PhD candidate to ask the supervisor to review drafts of the thesis (e.g., if he/she wants constructive criticism)
20.	The supervisor is responsible for decisions regarding the standard and quality of the PhD thesis	1	2	3	4	5	The PhD candidate is responsible for decisions concerning the standard and quality of the thesis, it is his/her own work
21.	PhD candidate needs fully honest feedback, even when it is critical	1	2	3	4	5	The supervisor needs to judge how much feedback to give
22.	The supervisor takes the initiative to talk about personal wellbeing, professional development and career aspirations of the PhD candidate	1	2	3	4	5	The PhD candidate takes initiative to talk about personal wellbeing, professional development and career aspirations
WORKING RELATIONSHIP							
23.	A warm, supportive relationship between supervisor and PhD candidate is important for a successful PhD project	1	2	3	4	5	A personal, supportive relationship is inadvisable because it may obstruct objectivity for both PhD candidate and supervisor
24.	The supervisor is responsible for providing emotional support and encouragement to the PhD candidate	1	2	3	4	5	Talking about personal issues and providing support are not the responsibility of the supervisor. The PhD candidate has to look elsewhere
25.	The supervisor is proactive in looking for future career opportunities within or outside academia for the PhD candidate	1	2	3	4	5	The PhD candidate is responsible for his/her own future career, and asks the supervisor's agreement to invest in this (taking courses, workshop, career coaching,...)
26.	The supervisor is an authority figure and evaluates the PhD candidate	1	2	3	4	5	The supervisor is a colleague/friend, acting as a sounding board

How to use this questionnaire?

This questionnaire can be completed by the PhD candidate and the supervisor separately and compared afterwards. It is mainly a tool that can stimulate the **communication** and facilitate discussion between supervisor and PhD candidate on the expectations and responsibilities related to the doctoral project. We strongly recommend to use this tool at the very **beginning** of the doctoral project. The main aim is not to persuade each other on specific standpoints, but rather to make expectations **explicit** and to articulate differences in expectations, and – where needed – provide a basis for calibration.

It can be helpful to **repeat** the exercise every six months (or at key stages of the PhD process) so to see how expectations of both have changed over time and ensure that they remain in alignment.

The supervisor and doctoral candidate may not only discuss their expectations, but also **write** them **down** in (formal) agreements and **modify** this during the PhD project.

Adapted from work by:

Kiley, M. & Cadman, K. (1997) Supervision Expectations adapted from work by Brown, G. & Atkins, M. (1988). *Effective teaching in higher education*. Methuen, London. 146-147.

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