FAILING TO PREPARE IS PREPARING TO FAIL:

What to expect from your supervisor?

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PLANNING OF THE SESSION

✓ Why is the supervisory relationship important?

✓ How to get started?
  ✓ Discussing expectations & tool to take action

✓ The PhD trajectory:
  ✓ Ups & downs (what if…?)

✓ Contact
THE SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP
WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT?

- Successful collaboration is key to successful PhD (*)
  - Timing and quality PhD
  - Turnover intentions / early drop-out
  - Satisfaction & mental wellbeing

* Martinuso & Turkulainen, 2011; Paglis et al., 2006; Zhoa, Golde, & McCormick, 2007; Levecque et al., 2016, 2017
SO IF IT IS THAT IMPORTANT…?

– Not 1 formula for success (*)

– Differences
  – Supervisor
  – PhD candidate

* VIGOR unit, 2019
SO IF IT IS THAT IMPORTANT…?

“The relationship between student and supervisor is about as close as many marriages, and lasts as long as many marriages. It’s a fairly good analogue in several ways. One important issue is compatibility.”

Shared responsibility

HOW TO GET STARTED?
1. FIRST MEETING WITH YOUR SUPERVISOR

- How was your ‘first’ meeting with your supervisor?
- Did you discuss shared expectations?
- Did your supervisor inform you on specific aspects (e.g., supervisory style, your needs, PhD process…)?
2. WHAT DO YOU EXPECT?

- What would you like/have liked to discuss with your supervisor at the start of your PhD project?

  - Technical support
  - Emotional support
  - Guidance and structure
  - Research topic
  - Practicalities
  - Feedback, Regular meetings
  - Ability to deliver in time
  - Standards of work
  - Co-supervisor
  - Publications
  - Career aspirations
  - Co-supervisor
2. WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM YOUR SUPERVISOR?
2. WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM YOUR SUPERVISOR?

- Expertise in your subject area
- Regular supervisory meetings
- Feedback on work in progress
- Advice and support
- Mediation and representation
- Clarity on authorship, publication and conference presentations

➤ See Charter for doctoral students and supervisors
2. WHAT CAN YOU NOT EXPECT FROM YOUR SUPERVISOR?

– Being taught
– Will inspire you on your research topic
– Taking responsibility for your thesis
– Special treatment
– Being your editor
2. WHAT YOUR SUPERVISOR WILL EXPECT FROM YOU
2. WHAT YOUR SUPERVISOR WILL EXPECT FROM YOU

– You manage the project
– Being proactive & autonomous
– Staying in touch
– Appropriate communication
– Sticking to deadlines
– Follow up their feedback (or tell him/her why not)
– If nothing else, be professional
TAKE ACTION

• Charter: “A good start of the doctoral project involves clear (written) agreements concluded between the doctoral student and the supervisor(s)”

• Communication/discussion

• Preparation is everything: tool to help you make expectations explicit and start a conversation
KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE

1. The **supervisor** is the specialist and expert in the research field of the PhD project

2. ...

3. … equally

4. …

5. The **PhD researcher** is or will become the specialist and expert in the research field of the PhD project
REGULATIONS AND TIMING

1. The **supervisor** sets deadlines for the PhD researcher
2. …
3. … equally
4. …
5. The **PhD researcher** works autonomously and sets his/her own deadlines
GUIDANCE, FEEDBACK AND AUTONOMY

1. The **supervisor** insists on regular meetings with the researcher

2. ...

3. ... equally

4. ...

5. The **PhD researcher** decides when she/he wants to meet with the supervisor
1. **Supervisor** takes initiative to talk about personal wellbeing, professional development and career aspirations of PhD researcher

2. ...

3. ... equally

4. ...

5. **PhD researcher** takes initiative to talk about personal wellbeing, professional development and career aspirations
WORKING RELATIONSHIP

1. The **supervisor** is an authority figure and evaluates the PhD researcher

2. …

3. … equally

4. …

5. The **supervisor** is a colleague/friend, acting as a sounding board
CHECKLIST: TOOL TO USE

– Fill in the document

– Ask your supervisor to fill it in

– Discuss with your supervisor (and repeat)
THE PHD TRAJECTORY
I know research can seem Sisyphean, Tajel, but it's not.

At some point, you will reach a peak.

Wow, that's great, Prof. Galvez! What happens after that?

Uh...
PHD TRAJECTORY

0y: Learning how to swim
1y: Second year dip
2y: Will I succeed?
3y: Writer’s stress
4y: What’s next?

Source: van haas naar schildpad, Promood
UP: WHAT GIVES YOU ENERGY?

- Why did you choose to do a PhD?
- What is most appealing to you in the PhD trajectory?
- What are you looking forward to?
- What gives you the most energy?
- What do you enjoy doing the most?
DOWN: WHAT DRAINS YOUR ENERGY?

- Which kind of tasks don’t you like? Are you less good at?
- Which things ask a lot of energy from you?
- What are you more dreading than looking forward to?

- How did/will you deal with this?
- Which sources of support can help you out at that time?
WHAT IF…?

HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR SUPERVISOR?
WHAT IF THE RELATIONSHIP IS PROBLEMATIC?

- Try to talk with your supervisor, co-supervisor, colleagues
- Go to the confidential contact at your faculty (psychosocial support);
- Go to the ombudsperson of your faculty (conflict, difficulties with SV):
- In case of serious conflicts (harassment, bullying, psychosocial issues): contact trustpunt: trustpunt@ugent.be
- If you have HR-related questions regarding your contract or your career, contact DPO: loopbaanbegeleiding@ugent.be
CONCLUSION

– Supervisor-PhD-student relationship is key & shared responsibility
– Think about what is crucial to you, what do you need?
– Talk about this with your supervisor & keep on talking
– Keep monitoring and discussing the (changing) relationship throughout your PhD-process

Enjoy your PhD period!!!
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HR Coach

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