

Expectations of Research Supervision

Supervisors and research students often have differing expectations of supervision. The supervisor and student should complete this scale independently and then compare their responses. Circle a number depending on whether you think the responsibility lies more with the supervisor or the student.

| | Supervisor | Rating | Student |
|-----|---|-----------|--|
| I. | It is the supervisor's responsibility to select the research topic. | 1 2 3 4 5 | The student is responsible for selecting her/his own topic. |
| 2. | The supervisor should decide which theoretical framework and/or methodology is most appropriate. | 1 2 3 4 5 | The students should decide which theoretical framework and/or methodology they wish to use. |
| 3. | The supervisor should develop an appropriate program and timetable of research and study for the student. | 1 2 3 4 5 | The student should develop their own program and timetable of research. |
| 4. | The supervisor should ensure that the student has access to the resources and facilities that they need. | 1 2 3 4 5 | It is the student's responsibility to locate and access all necessary resources and facilities. |
| 5. | It is the supervisors' responsibility to advise the student of all relevant policies, procedures and requirements. | 1 2 3 4 5 | The student is responsible for being familiar with the relevant policies, procedures and requirements. |
| 6. | It's up to the supervisor to build an appropriate professional relationship with the student. | 1 2 3 4 5 | It is the student's responsibility to manage the relationship with their supervisor. |
| 7. | The supervisor should insist on regular meetings with the student. | 1 2 3 4 5 | The student should decide when she/he wants to meet. |
| 8. | The supervisor should check regularly that the student is working consistently and on track. | 1 2 3 4 5 | The student should work independently and not have to account for how and where time is spent. |
| 9. | It is the supervisor's responsibility to should ensure that the thesis is finished by the required submission date. | 1 2 3 4 5 | It is up to the student to finish within the allocated timeframe. |
| 10. | The supervisor should insist on seeing all drafts of work to ensure that the student is on the right track. | 1 2 3 4 5 | It's up to the student to decide when to show drafts of their work. |
| 11. | The supervisor should assist in the writing, editing and presentation of the thesis. | 1 2 3 4 5 | The writing of the thesis should only be the student's own work and they must take full responsibility for presentation of the thesis. |
| 12. | The supervisor is responsible for deciding when the thesis can be submitted for examination. | 1 2 3 4 5 | The student should decide when they are ready to submit the thesis for examination. |

Adapted from: Moses, I. (1985). Supervising postgraduates. HERDSA Green Guide No 3, Kensington: Higher Education Research & Development Society of Australasia.

ALTERNATE VERSION

Supervisor and student complete separately and then discuss

| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|-------------------------------|--|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| Design | | | | | | | |
| 1 | It is the supervisors' responsibility to select the research topic | | | | | | It is the student's responsibility to select the research topic |
| 2 | The supervisors decide the appropriate theoretical framework | | | | | | The student decides the appropriate theoretical framework |
| Ownership of knowledge | | | | | | | |
| 3 | Supervisors need to have detailed knowledge of the research topic | | | | | | Supervisors need to have a general knowledge of the research topic |
| 4 | The supervisor is the specialist | | | | | | The student is the specialist |
| 5 | The supervisor is an authority figure | | | | | | The supervisor is a colleague, acting as a sounding board |
| 6 | Supervisors should go with students to academic conferences | | | | | | Students should attend academic conferences independently |
| 7 | The supervisor is responsible for ethics and the standard of the final thesis | | | | | | The student is responsible for ethics and the standard of the final thesis |
| Timing | | | | | | | |
| 8 | The supervisor should have a timetable in mind and ensure the student keeps it | | | | | | The student should create their own timetable for their research and monitor their own progress |
| 9 | Supervisors should arrange the appropriate number of meetings | | | | | | Students should ask for meetings when they need them |
| 10 | The supervisor should initiate a discussion about the timing for submitting the final thesis | | | | | | The student should initiate a discussion about the timing for submitting the final thesis |
| 11 | Students should always adhere to agreed deadlines | | | | | | Agreed deadlines are guidelines rather than absolute targets |
| Writing and feedback | | | | | | | |
| 12 | Supervisors should correct style, grammar, and spelling as well as content | | | | | | Supervisors should only correct content, not grammar and spelling |
| 13 | Supervisors should encourage students to publish in academic journals before their thesis is submitted | | | | | | Writing academic articles before submission takes too much time |
| 14 | Supervisors should make explicit how often they are willing to give written/oral feedback | | | | | | Supervisors should give as much feedback as the student needs |
| 15 | The supervisor should assist in the writing of the thesis if the student has difficulties | | | | | | The supervisor advises only, and leaves all decisions concerning content, format, and style to the student |
| 16 | The supervisor should insist on reviewing drafts of every section of the thesis | | | | | | It is up to the student to ask the supervisor to review drafts of the thesis |
| 17 | Students need fully honest feedback, even when it's very critical | | | | | | Supervisors need to judge how much feedback to give |