



## ***Supervision as Negotiated Practice***

### **Recommendations for Supervisors of Honours and Coursework Dissertation Students**

#### ***1. Prepare for supervision***

Before commencing supervision, ensure that you are familiar with the formal requirements for supervision within your program and discipline, including your role and responsibilities and the boundaries of supervision.

#### ***2. Clarify expectations with co-supervisors***

Before meeting with students that will be co-supervised, meet with the co-supervisor to reach agreement on responsibilities, style of co-supervision and ways of dealing with differing opinions and feedback.

#### ***3. Clarify expectations with students***

In the first meeting with the student spend some time clarifying expectations and boundaries of the supervisory relationship. Establish *how* supervision will operate for the duration of the dissertation project. Consider formalising these arrangements through a supervision agreement.

#### ***4. Meet regularly to monitor progress***

Regular meetings provide the opportunity to review current progress, discuss issues and determine future directions of the research project. Helping students to evaluate their ideas and providing guidance, rather than explicit instructions, contributes to the development of research skills and ownership of the project.

#### ***5. Ask students to send a meeting summary with actions required after each meeting***

Meeting summaries provide a useful reminder of actions that need to be completed before the next meeting. They can also be used as a starting agenda for the next meeting.



6. *Provide timely, constructive feedback*

Provide both informal (e.g., discussion in meetings) and formal (e.g., comments on drafts) feedback on progress. Feedback on drafts should be clear, specific and detailed, including praise for what has been done well, identifications of areas requiring improvement and suggested strategies for addressing areas requiring improvement. Do not edit student's work.

7. *Involve the student in working through the process of developing a research question*

Regardless of whether a research topic is assigned to, or chosen by, a student, it is important that the student works through the process of developing a research question as part of their research training. Your role as supervisor is to guide this process in order to ensure that the final version of the research question provides the basis for a research project that is achievable within the constraints of the program.

8. *Teach students the skills required to write a literature review*

Focus on teaching students the skills required to conduct literature searches, evaluate literature and write a literature review, but do not do it for them.

9. *Guide students towards appropriate literature on methodologies, methods and analysis, helping them shape their ideas into a feasible research project*

As a supervisor your responsibility is to ensure that the proposed research is feasible. It must be achievable within the time frame, required resources must be available, and the student must have (or be able to develop) the skill set required.

10. *When project issues arise, work with students to identify the sources of the issue, and identify and evaluate possible solutions*

Monitor the effectiveness of strategies implemented to deal with the project issue.

11. *Guide students in data collection, analysis and interpretation, but not to do it for them*

Ensure students are trained in data collection techniques, do not begin data collection until ethics approval has been obtained, and complete data collection in accordance with ethical requirements. Provide guidance and training in analytical techniques, but do not conduct the actual analysis. Use questioning to encourage students to think about both theoretical and practical implications, the limitations and strengths of the research, and directions for future research.



12. *Encourage students to write frequently and provide feedback on technical components of writing as well as content*

Refer students experiencing difficulties in writing academically to university writing support services where available.

13. *When progress stalls for personal reasons, help the student determine the nature of the problem, decide on a course of action and monitor progress*

Students may experience cognitive, affective or social domain blockages, and the type of blockage will influence the course of action recommended.

14. *Supervisory expectations set at the beginning of the research project may need to be renegotiated over time to maintain effective supervisor-student relationships*

15. *Keep the time spent on supervision as close to workload allocation as possible*

Be upfront with your students about the time you will have available for supervision and what will be achievable. Working within the time allocation will also assist in reducing supervision inequities across students and supervisors.