



CONFLICTING ADVICE

Relevant Literature

The increasing move to team supervision for doctoral students has resulted in students reporting the need to manage conflicting advice from supervisors (Guerin & Green, 2013; Guerin, Green & Bastalich, 2011). Using case studies, Guerin et al (2011) described the different ways doctoral students tried to manage conflicting advice from supervisors: working through differences at meetings, relying on the primary supervisor to set the direction or making own decisions on which advice to follow.

To manage conflicting advice on drafts of written work, three strategies were recommended:

- *simultaneous multiple feedback* provided verbally at a joint meeting
- *serial feedback* where the draft with tracked changes is sent to each supervisor in turn
- *selective feedback* where feedback is sought only from the supervisor with the most relevant experience (Guerin, 2011)

References:

- Guerin, C. & Green, I. (2013, online first). 'They're the bosses': Feedback in team supervision. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 1-16. doi:10.1080/0309877X.2013.831039
- Guerin, C., Green, I., & Bastalich, W. (2011). Big love: Managing a team of research supervisors. In V. Kumar and A. Lee (Eds.), *Connecting the local, regional and international in doctoral education* (pp.138-153). Serdang: Universiti Putra Malaysia Press.





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Best Practice Suggestions for Supervisors

Guerin, Green & Bastalich (2013) recommend the following practice:

1. As part of the process of setting expectations for supervision, agree on procedures for handling conflicting advice
2. Invite the student's views and include them in discussion surrounding conflicting advice
3. Recognise that conflicting advice can be threatening to students

References:

Guerin, C., Green, I., & Bastalich, W. (2011). Big love: Managing a team of research supervisors. In V. Kumar and A. Lee (Eds.), *Connecting the local, regional and international in doctoral education* (pp.138-153). Serdang: Universiti Putra Malaysia Press.

