



## EXPECTATIONS

Most research on the expectations of supervisors and students relates to doctoral programs (e.g., Bui, 2014; Friedrich-Nel & MacKinnon, 2013; Pole, Sprokkereef, Burgess, & Lakin, 1997; Spear, 2000). However, research that has examined expectations in coursework dissertations indicates that there are some common student expectations of supervisors across all levels of dissertations (see Table 1). There are also some commonalities in supervisor expectations of student behaviour across levels of dissertations (see Table 2), but with a stronger emphasis on the personal qualities of students in HDR than coursework dissertations.

At all levels of dissertation, the key recommendation is for the student and supervisor to discuss expectations early in the supervisory relationship and to continue discussing expectations throughout the duration of the dissertation (Bui, 2014; Friedrich-Nel & MacKinnon, 2013; Spear, 2000; Wisker, 2009).

### References

- Anderson, C., Day, K. & McLaughlin, P. (2006). Mastering the dissertation: Lecturers' representations of the purposes and processes of Master's level dissertation supervision. *Studies in Higher Education, 31*, 149-168. doi:10.1080/03075070600572017
- Bui, H. T. M. (2014). Student-supervisor expectations in the doctoral supervision process for business and management students. *Business and Management Education in HE, 1*, 12-27. doi:10.11120/bmhe.2014.00006
- Friedrich-Nel & Mackinnon (2013). Expectations in postgraduate supervision: Perspectives from supervisors and doctoral students. *Interim: Interdisciplinary Journal, 12*, 1-14.
- McMichael, P. (1992). Tales of the unexpected: Supervisors' and students' perspectives on short-term projects and dissertations. *Educational Studies, 18*, 299-310.
- Pole, C. J., Sprokkereef, A., Burgess, R. G., & Lakin, E. (1997). Supervision of doctoral students in the natural sciences: Expectations and experiences. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 22*, 49-63. doi:10.1080/0260293970220104
- Spear, R. H. (2000). Supervision of research students: responding to student expectations. Working/technical paper. Retrieved 30 March 2014 from <http://hdl.handle.net/1885/41534>
- Todd, M., Bannister, P., & Clegg, S. (2004). Independent inquiry and the undergraduate dissertation: perceptions and experiences of final-year social science students. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 29*, 335-355.





Todd, M. J., Smith, K., & Bannister, P. (2006). Supervising a social science undergraduate dissertation: staff experiences and perceptions. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 11(2), 161-173.

Wisker, G. (2009). *The undergraduate research handbook*. New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan.

Wisker, G. (2012). *The good supervisor* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan





Table 2. Supervisor Expectations of Students

Expectation	Source (Dissertation Level)
<i>Personal qualities:</i>	
Problem solver	Friedrich-Nel & MacKinnon, 2013 (HDR)
Academic potential	Bui, 2014 (HDR)
Disciplined	Friedrich-Nel & MacKinnon, 2013 (HDR)
Innovative	Anderson et al, 2006 (M) Friedrich-Nel & MacKinnon, 2013 (HDR)
Engaged	Anderson et al, 2006 (M) Friedrich-Nel & MacKinnon, 2013 (HDR)
Reflective	Friedrich-Nel & MacKinnon, 2013 (HDR)
Motivated	Friedrich-Nel & MacKinnon, 2013 (HDR)
Social skills	McMicheal, 1992 (U, PG & M) Bui, 2014 (HDR)
Emotional intelligence	Bui, 2014 (HDR)
<i>Behaviour:</i>	
Prepared to discuss issues	Friedrich-Nel & MacKinnon, 2013 (HDR)
Student agency: Movement from dependence to independence	McMicheal, 1992 (U, PG & M) Anderson et al, 2006 (M) Friedrich-Nel & MacKinnon, 2013 (HDR) Pole et al, 1997 (HDR)
Committed to research	McMicheal, 1992 (U, PG & M) Anderson et al, 2006 (M) Friedrich-Nel & MacKinnon, 2013 (HDR)
Work hard	Bui, 2014 (HDR) Friedrich-Nel & MacKinnon, 2013 (HDR)
Keep supervisor informed	McMicheal, 1992 (U, PG & M) Friedrich-Nel & MacKinnon, 2013 (HDR)
Publish and present work and build research network	Bui, 2014 (HDR) Friedrich-Nel & MacKinnon, 2013 (HDR)
Accept criticism and feedback	Friedrich-Nel & MacKinnon, 2013 (HDR)
Bring ideas/material to meetings	Todd et al, 2006 (UG)
Take responsibility for dissertation	Todd et al, 2006 (UG) Anderson et al, 2006 (M)
Punctuality	Todd et al, 2006 (UG) McMicheal, 1992 (U, PG & M)
Interest in topic	Todd et al, 2006 (UG)
Respectful	McMicheal, 1992 (U, PG & M)

Note: U = Undergraduate, PG = Postgraduate Diploma, M = Masters, HDR = Higher Degrees by Research (Masters and PhD)