



I rushed to get my draft of my dissertation in to the supervisor who had agreed to review it, so that I could get the feedback cause I'm really wanting to get that feedback. I didn't get it back. I didn't get it back. I didn't get it back. I'm still waiting several weeks later! Maybe this person is so laid back she doesn't realise the effects that it might be having but I just find it unacceptable that as students we have to toe the line and there are consequences if you don't give it on time, we get penalised. So why aren't the staff doing the same? I try to meet my deadlines. So if I can work to a schedule, why can't the supervisors? As it stands I'm probably gonna have a week to pump out my dissertation after she's looked at it and I find that so difficult 'cause of my other work and family commitments. I've got so much on and the pressure is so intense at the moment. I mean, I'm sure I'm not gonna fail, but I just have that horrible anxiety that if I don't get it back in time I'm not gonna have enough time to do it and that's just not gonna work out.





FEEDBACK

New Supervisor Perspective

As a new supervisor, I'm struggling with how much guidance and feedback it is appropriate to provide to undergraduate dissertation students. My co-supervisor just like, lets the students figure it out for themselves. I like to be relaxed and let them read around the topic and those kind of things, but guide them towards the best solution at the end of the day. This makes supervision challenging, because my co-supervisor's style is not the way I would normally do it. But I think it's probably a good experience as well, you know. I don't know with experience if I will get more like that, we'll see.

I've actually been really lucky in that the dissertation coordinator's been giving me a bit more feedback in terms of how much feedback to give students. I'm now aware they need a lot more hand holding. Whereas I came from the place where this is their fourth year: I didn't get hand holding and I did fine. I don't think students need their hands held throughout the process. I think after I spoke with the dissertation coordinator, there were things that clicked or I knew more of what groups needed. Their credit average students, not honours students, and they may or may not know how to do stuff. I would have benefited from knowing before I started what kind of guidance we need to provide because I was expecting that they would know their stuff and I forget that maybe they don't because they're not distinction students, or students that want to do research.

I'm struggling to find time to provide feedback on dissertation drafts with all my other teaching and marking responsibilities. I've tried to make it clear to students that if you want more feedback you have to get it to me by this date kind of thing. So the last student, they were in really late with the final document, I couldn't give much feedback.





FEEDBACK

Coordinator Perspective

Generally, the main problems I see are related to students not getting feedback, timely feedback. Some students have particularly busy supervisors and are not getting the support that they require from supervisors. Students feel that they're not getting sufficient comments or, you know, returns to them quickly enough. It seems to be a process issue in that either feedback hasn't been given within the specified time or feedback hasn't been given at all rather than that feedback being misinterpreted.

In addition, some students have highlighted the fact that there may be discrepancy in how much feedback they're getting compared to other students. In our program it's now specified that supervisors are to give feedback on one only draft of a particular piece of work. I have had a couple of students complain that some other students in the same program are getting more than that or getting more support. So I guess managing that amongst the group of supervisors is an issue that needs some attention because there may be inclinations for some supervisors to actually give more than what the recommended amount is.

When students approached me about lack of feedback, I had a number of ways of dealing with it. Firstly, by giving them some strategies to contact the supervisor and ways to get more timely feedback. If that didn't work, I contacted the supervisor by email and said, tactfully, "I'm getting this feedback from your student. Is there a problem? Can we help?". If email didn't work, then I'd phone them. If they were in the school, I would have a sit down meeting and see what's happening. Do you need somebody else to be taking over? That sort of thing. Generally that worked.

One student wasn't receiving any feedback from her supervisor in developing her literature review. I spoke to her about it and asked, did she feel comfortable going to her supervisor and actually tackling her about it and she didn't. So, I said I would have a word to her supervisor and just find out, just let her know that that's sort of not the way we'd prefer things to happen. And I also





offered to look at it myself. So, basically, the last two, three people in this role have tended to be a little bit “mother hennish” and make sure the students get the feedback they need.

