



NEW SUPERVISOR STRUGGLING

New Supervisor Perspective

I'm new to supervising student dissertations. This year I'm supervising both groups of dissertation students and honours students. I've been paired with another supervisor for one of the projects. The other supervisor is quite experienced, has done it a lot of times before, so that's really me learning from him: how to manage the students, and the deadlines and how much work you put into each student, those kind of things. Whatever I take from supervision with my cosupervisor I bring on to the meetings with my own students. That's been the way I've been learning. But I realise if I wasn't co-supervising, I'd have no idea in terms of what I'm actually meant to be doing in terms of timing and stuff like that. It would be up to the students to figure out what the timeline would be. And so that's a bit concerning, I guess, if you're a new supervisor.

I floundered a bit at first with supervising my own students. I would have liked further information about what the expectations or what the students should be bringing to the project and what you need to essentially provide as a supervisor.. So I don't know what to expect in terms of what to mark for the proposal, what I have to look at, what I can't forget, how much information to give. Things just pop up and I'm like, "Oh, okay. I have to do this", or, "I should be doing this." So I don't know whether that's because there isn't training or because I'm not reading e-mails right or just 'cause it's not explicit enough or - ?

Maybe have some little guidelines in terms of, "Okay, if your student is struggling and it's roughly this period, perhaps it time to intervene and be like, 'Do this,' and that kind of stuff there." So perhaps – I don't know, a broad timeline or something like this which will be kind of useful it's like, "Probably by this point, you should have done this."

I find it particularly difficult when I'm working with older students. Two of my students, male ones, are older than me and they find it very hard to listen to me. You know, "Oh, he's too young. He doesn't know what's going on. He's trying very hard." They don't realise that the experience in education is worth more than their age in this case.





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Coordinator Perspective

New supervisors in our program have the choice of whether they want to supervise in collaboration with someone else or on their own-it would be up to that person's judgement. Almost everyone thinks that "It's just supervision. I don't need somebody to tell me what to do." Sometimes, too, we have staff offering to supervise who really don't understand supervision. They were used to lecturing at undergraduate level, but when it came to supervision, they really didn't have much understanding of what supervision meant. For example, I had this one supervisor wrapping the student up in cotton wool and holding their hand every step of the way and doing all of the thinking for them, building a relationship that was very dependent. And then I'd be trying to unravel some of that, and say, "Well – actually at Honours level one of the main skills we're trying to teach students is how to work independently".

