Supervisory Relationships

Graduate Research School Workshop
Research Supervision Professional Development Program

FEB 2019
12pm
Supervisor Relationships
GRS Policies, Guidelines & Tools
Principles for Respectful Supervisory Relationships (Respect. Now. Always.)

12.20pm
Case Studies 1-4
12.40pm Group discussion

1pm
Case Studies 5-8
1.20pm Case study group discussion

1.40pm
Wrap up
Resources

- Graduate Research Training Policy
- Course Rules
- GRS Resources – past professional development & resources list

- Counselling & Psychological Services (CAPS)
- UWA Medical Centre

- Kearns & Gardiner. 2013. Planning your PhD. ThinkWell, SA.
- Kearns & Finn. 2017. Supervising PhD Students. ThinkWell, SA.
- Thinkwell Tools for Supervisors
- Thinkwell PhD Toolkit
Information for schools, GRCs, supervisors, examiners and GRS board members

Policies & Rules
Postgraduate Forms
Scholarships
GRC Contact List

Supervisor Information
Supervisor Responsibilities
Supervisor Register
Supervisor Professional Development

GRC and School Information
Creating Student Lists
Joint PhD Programs
Researcher Training

Nominating Examiners
Viva Voce Roles & Responsibilities
Supervision & Thesis Writing
Independence of Examiners

Resources
- BEST (for Improving Research Supervision and Training) - activities, bibliographies, case studies, tools, workshops, guides and links.
- Joint PhD program for UWA schools to strengthen links with partner institutions.
- OICRS (Online Information and Case Study Repository) - focus on feedback about students' postgraduate research experience at UWA.
- Thrinkwell's Tools for PhD Supervisors
- EChTIPS (Enhancing Communication and Transfer of Information for PhD Students) - support for PhD students transitioning to a new country.
- Principles for Reflective Supervisory Relationships - jointly developed by Universities Australia, the National Tertiary Education Union, the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations, and the Australian Council of Graduate Research, this set of principles underpins the relationship between postgraduate research students and their academic supervisors.
- SPQR (Student Perceptions of Research Supervision) - tool to facilitate discussion of expectations of candidature between students and supervisors.
Case Studies

Difficult behaviours & difficult situations
• Drawing on GRS experience
• gender neutral pronouns (& images)
• draw on your experience
• discuss positive experiences
• discuss your disciplinary perspective
• address your current concerns

Explore beyond case
• add detail to the case
• add additional players to the case
•

Resources for transforming/improving supervisory relationships
1. Complaining about supervision

Your student has recently commenced their studies and would like to meet with you multiple times a week to discuss their research proposal. You indicate you are not available to meet this frequently.

In the following week, you hear your student has complained to other students, the GRS and the PSA.

Your student seems to be making accusations that you are “not available for supervisory meetings”.

What do you do in this situation?
1. Resources

UWA Student Complaints
http://www.student.uwa.edu.au/experience/complaints

A number of processes for reporting and resolving student concerns and complaints exist at the University. Students are strongly encouraged to familiarise themselves with these processes from the outset of their engagement with the University. The Complaint Resolution Unit is available to provide advice to students and will refer matters it receives to the relevant process for resolution.

UWA Graduate Research Training Policy

Excerpt from Section 7.4 Managing candidature and monitoring progress - Supervisors
7.4.4 All supervisors must make every effort to build and maintain an effective and professional supervisory relationship in accordance with this policy.
7.4.6 A supervisor must maintain contact with the student at least monthly, if possible on a face-to-face basis.
7.4.7 Supervisors must discuss with each student the level and extent of support the student can expect of them as supervisors and also refer students to other areas of the University as appropriate.

Excerpt from Section 10 Grievances and appeals
10.4 Supervisors
10.4.1 All supervisors must be aware of the Student Complaints Resolution Policy and must, at an early stage in the candidature, discuss with students the importance of informally addressing any issues as they arise.
10.4.2 All supervisors must make every effort to follow School procedures to deal with unresolved conflicts or issues with their students, in line with the Student Complaints Resolution Policy if issues arise which cannot be resolved by informal discussion.

10.5 Students
10.5.1 A student must be aware of the Student Complaints Resolution Policy and is encouraged to informally discuss any issues as they arise with their supervisors, Graduate Research Coordinator or Head of School as appropriate.
10.5.2 A student must make every effort to follow School procedures to deal with unresolved conflicts or issues with their supervisors, in line with the Student Complaints Resolution Policy if issues arise which cannot be resolved by informal discussion.

Student Supervisor Alignment Tools
2. Hostile in response to requests for participation

Your student has recently had their research proposal approved. Now their research is underway, you have asked them to attend the school’s research seminar program.

Your student missed the first of these seminars. You confront them about their absence, insisting they attend the next month.

Your student storms from your office, shouting, "The seminar isn’t compulsory. I don’t have time to attend!"

*What do you do in this situation?*
2. Resources

UWA Human Resources Conduct in the workplace
http://www.hr.uwa.edu.au/policies/policies/conduct

Excerpt for Supportive work environment
People work best in a setting marked by mutual respect, personal dignity and support which utilises one’s skills and abilities, and encourages further learning. Students and all members of staff, therefore, may reasonably expect to pursue their work and studies in a safe and civil environment, free from threatening or violent conduct or offences against property.

UWA Code of Conduct
http://www.hr.uwa.edu.au/policies/policies/conduct/code/conduct

Excerpt from Obligation of Individuals Section
Individuals employed or enrolled at The University of Western Australia are responsible for their own behaviour and obliged to conduct themselves in the following manner with regard to each and every undertaking associated with University business:
• Behave honestly and with integrity;
• Act with care and diligence;
• Treat everyone with respect and courtesy and without harassment;
• Comply with any lawful or reasonable direction given by a person with the authority to give the direction;
• Behave in a way that upholds the values, integrity and reputation of the University of Western Australia.

UWA Graduate Research Training Policy

Excerpt from Section 8 Graduate Research Community
8.4 Advisory panels and supervisors
8.4.1 Advisory panels and supervisors must work with the student to clarify expectations at the commencement of candidature, including the extent to which the student must contribute to group research.
8.4.4 Supervisors must make every effort to attend seminars at which their students are presenting work, and to provide feedback, advice, encouragement and assistance with regard to these presentations.
8.4.6 Advisory panels and supervisors must encourage students to participate in the intellectual activity of the School or area through activities such as attendance and presentations at School seminars and conferences.

8.5 Students
8.5.1 A student must participate in the intellectual life of the School/area through activities such as attendance and presentations at School seminars and conferences.

Professional Development
3. Refusing to take advice with regard to candidacy commitments

You are supervising a high achieving student, who is entering their second year of candidature.

Your student has recently enrolled in a training course, become student rep for the faculty, volunteered to help coordinate a local student conference, and accepted a 5h/week paid tutoring position. You warn them about the time commitment required for research.

Your student is annoyed and says, “Don’t worry. I know what I am doing. I can manage everything.”

*What do you do in this situation?*
3. Resources

UWA Graduate Research Training Policy

Excerpt from Section 7.4 Managing candidature and monitoring progress - Supervisors
7.4.2 Supervisors must discuss with students any significant change in the student’s commitments likely to affect the progress of the candidature, and if required ensure that this is communicated to the Graduate Research Coordinator and the Graduate Research School or faculty as appropriate.
7.4.5 All supervisors must provide academic guidance to students and foster an environment in which research is seen as a creative and exciting activity.
7.4.8 The supervisors must continue to monitor the student’s progress in order to resolve any on-going difficulties.
7.4.12 General supervisory responsibilities include (b) suggesting ways in which the student can make the most effective use of time;
7.4.12.2 Specific supervisory responsibilities throughout candidature include: (a) monitoring, evaluating and reporting on progress; and (h) submitting to the Graduate Research Coordinator and Graduate Research School, or faculty as appropriate, an annual report on the progress of the student, noting any significant achievements, difficulties and problems discussed with the student, including inadequate progress if applicable, and the action taken or advice given

Excerpt from Section 6 Provision of resources - Students
6.5.1 A student will devote at least 30 hours per week (full time, or equivalent if the candidature is part-time) to their higher degree by research candidature.

GRS Research Productivity Workshop
http://www.postgraduate.uwa.edu.au/students/resources/events

Academics, overcommitment and patterns established during the PhD

4. Disorganised when project planning required

Your student is now in their second year of candidature, and you have asked them to take responsibility for organising supervisory meetings.

Three months have passed and there has been no meeting scheduled.

When you ask when this meeting will go ahead, your student says, “I just need to decide what data to present and then I’ll arrange a meeting”.

What do you do in this situation?
4. Disorganised when project planning required

GRS Research Productivity Workshop
http://www.postgraduate.uwa.edu.au/students/resources/events

Supervising PhD Students
Kearns & Finn. 2017. Supervising PhD Students. ThinkWell, SA. Chapter 5. Meetings

Thinkwell PhD Planner
https://www.ithinkwell.com.au/resources/PhDToolkit

Meeting Agenda
Meeting Notes
5. Disconsolate in response to research setbacks

Your student has recently received peer review feedback of a paper you co-authored with them. The journal has rejected the paper and the reports recommend a large number of changes before the paper could be reconsidered for resubmission.

Since receiving the journal’s rejection letter, your student has not responded to your emails.

In response to your latest email, your student requests to “be left alone.”

What do you do in this situation?
5. Resources

UWA Graduate Research Training Policy

Excerpt from Section 7.4 Managing candidature and monitoring progress - Supervisors
7.4.12 General supervisory responsibilities include (e) encouraging students to give seminars and to submit articles for publication

GRS Write a Journal Article Workshop
http://www.postgraduate.uwa.edu.au/students/resources/events

UWA Safety, Health and Wellbeing Workshops
Stress management and resilience

UWA Counselling Service

UWA Counselling Service/ GRS Supervisor Development Workshop
Research Students and Mental Health - Information, advice and strategies on how to best deal with mental health issues that may arise in students and overview of supervisor self care.
http://www.postgraduate.uwa.edu.au/staff/supervisors/workshops

GRS Supervisor Development Workshop JUN 2018
Building Resilience in Research Students - Strategies to develop resilience in students.

Prose, Persistence and Psychopaths: Personal Perspectives on Publishing
6. Romantic interest during candidature

You are the coordinating supervisor of a student. You, the student, and her primary supervisor meet once a month to discuss progress.

At the end of the latest meeting, as the student leaves the room, they briefly touch their primary supervisor’s arm, saying, “See you tonight after work.”

*What do you do in this situation?*
6. Resources

Principles for Respectful Supervisory Relationships
https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/Media-and-Events/media-releases/Relationships-between-academic-supervisors-and-their-students-are-never-okay@XG8bn6zaU
Jointly developed by Universities Australia, the National Tertiary Education Union, the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations and the Australian Council of Graduate Research, this set of principles underpins the relationship between postgraduate research students and their academic supervisors.

*Principle 1: A Sexual or Romantic Relationship Between a Supervisor and Their Student is Never Appropriate.*
Staff who engage in a sexual relationship with their student harm the learning and research environment of that student and other students. Such a relationship also compromises the academic integrity of all parties, including the university. Universities’ relevant policies, for example a conflict of interest policy, should clearly state that sexual/romantic relationships between supervisors and their students are never appropriate. These policies should specify the actions to be taken if such a relationship occurs, including the removal of the staff member from supervisory, teaching or assessment roles involving that student, and how alternative supervision arrangements will be made.

UWA Policy: Professional and Personal Relationships in the Workplace

*Excerpt from Section 5 Staff - Student relationships*

5.1 When staff members interact with students, staff members are frequently in a position of trust and influence. The staff student relationship must not jeopardise the academic integrity or effective functioning of the University by the appearance of either favouritism or unfairness in the exercise of professional judgment. In relationships with students, the staff member is expected to be aware of their professional responsibilities and to avoid apparent or actual conflict of interest, favouritism or bias.

5.2 Where a staff member has a student relative, or is currently or has been in a close personal relationship with a student, that staff member must not take any part in any academic or administrative decision-making processes in respect of that student, including (but not limited to)...postgraduate supervision.

5.3 Where a close personal relationship between a staff member and a student has created, or has the potential to create a conflict in the supervision and/or assessment of the student, the staff member must formally terminate any supervisory and/or evaluative role and make alternative arrangements for the supervision and/or evaluation of the student’s work.

5.4 It is the duty of the staff member to disclose to their Head or Committee Chair or, where there is a conflict with that person, the Head’s next-in-line manager or committee, any close personal relationship involving a student or student relative, as soon as the staff member becomes aware of the possibility that they might, if not for this policy, be involved in one of the processes listed at above, or a similar decision making process.

5.9 Failure by a staff member to disclose a close personal relationship, coupled with participation in the processes listed in 2.1 above, or any impropriety found with regard to a staff member will be reviewed by the Head or Supervisor and may lead to disciplinary action on the grounds of misconduct, or serious misconduct under the and can lead to disciplinary action on the grounds of misconduct or serious misconduct.
7. Superficially agreeable with research direction

Your student is working on an industry funded project and is in their final year of candidature. You need to tightly manage the project as your industry partner asks for regular reports on progress.

Despite agreeing to follow the research required by the industry partner, your student pursues a different research path.

You student says, “I’m doing the research that will get me the experience I need for a post-doc.”

What do you do in this situation?
7. Resources

UWA Graduate Research Training Policy

Excerpt from Section 3 Research Integrity, Safety and Intellectual Property
3.3.2 If the research is funded by a contractual arrangement, any particular contract terms or conditions which could either restrict disclosure or affect the extent to which communication with colleagues is possible during the research and on its completion must be discussed with the student and the Legal Services Office at this University prior to the commencement of the project.
3.3.2.1 The student’s formal agreement to undertake the project under these conditions must be sought and a copy of that agreement lodged with the Graduate Research School.
3.3.4 Advisory panels and supervisors must advise students on the ethical practices appropriate to the discipline and requirements regarding the retention and management of primary data.
3.3.8 Advisory panels and supervisors must discuss with students issues of ownership of data and the consequences for early, unexpected or acrimonious end to any supervisory relationship with regard to the use of data.

GRS Supervisor Development Workshop NOV 11 2019
Commercialisation and Intellectual Property - Understanding funding agreements that place obligations on students and supervisors in relation to intellectual property, publishing, confidentiality, indemnities and other matters
http://www.postgraduate.uwa.edu.au/staff/supervisors/workshops
8. Inappropriate in response to candidature pressure

Your student is approaching thesis submission. Each day they send multiple emails and texts with questions about their thesis.

In the past few days, the student has also started to wait for you outside your office, asking your colleagues when you are expected back.

When you get there they say “I have a quick question. It will only take 2 minutes.”

*What do you do in this situation?*
8. Resources

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