

GOLDEN RULES FOR SUPERVISION

BE PROFESSIONAL

SUPERVISOR

GRADUATE STUDENT

Graduate students bring their own stories, cultures, strengths, and needs, so honour these differences with dignity, mutuality and respect as you build your relationship together.

Be aware that supervisors are unique human beings with their strengths and weaknesses. Act with dignity, mutuality and respect.



BE COMMITTED

SUPERVISOR

GRADUATE STUDENT

Be aware that pursuing a graduate degree is a lengthy process that requires a long-term supervisory commitment.

Be aware that the grad studies journey is lengthy and not always easy. Initial motivation can be hard to maintain, so planning and time management skills are key.



BE AVAILABLE

SUPERVISOR

GRADUATE STUDENT

Be aware that your availability along with meeting and communicating regularly contributes to graduate student success.

Be aware that the success of your project is a joint responsibility. Set mutually agreed upon meetings to help with communication.



BE CONSISTENT & CLEAR

SUPERVISOR

GRADUATE STUDENT

Be aware that the (perception of) research progress should be addressed. It is crucial to be open about your expectations of each other.

Be aware that being honest about your progress and your expectations is key to the success of your research. Use wisdom and tact to address issues as early as possible.



BE TIME SAVVY

SUPERVISOR

GRADUATE STUDENT

Be aware that your guidance and help in realistic planning is essential for graduate students, for milestones and for completion.

Planning can be a tricky part of research. Set small achievable goals along the way.



BE WILLING TO RECEIVE FEEDBACK

SUPERVISOR

GRADUATE STUDENT

Be aware that for any professional relationship to work, feedback must be a two-way exchange.

Be aware that receiving feedback is vital for your progress. Adopt a growth mindset.



BE WILLING TO GIVE FEEDBACK

SUPERVISOR

GRADUATE STUDENT

Be aware that graduate students need regular feedback that must be specific, detailed, constructive, balanced and timely.

Be aware that feedback on supervision can be helpful when given in the spirit of collegiality.



BE AWARE OF STRESSORS

SUPERVISOR

GRADUATE STUDENT

Be aware that as a supervisor you are a role model for the graduate students and need to set a good example of stress management.

Be aware that your life must involve more than your graduate work. Adopt strategies around a healthy work-life balance.



BE FUTURE-ORIENTED

SUPERVISOR

GRADUATE STUDENT

Be aware that graduate students might need encouragement and support to think about a career after graduation.

Be aware that before you graduate, you need to think about your career after graduation.



GOLDEN RULES FOR SUPERVISION

BE PROFESSIONAL

SUPERVISOR

Being a supervisor is a demanding role, and there is no single template for how to do it well. Supervisors are expected to fully enact their supervisory responsibilities while keeping an open mind and adapting their approach to meet the unique needs of each graduate student.

GRADUATE STUDENT

Approach supervisors, supervisory committee members and peers with dignity, mutuality and respect.

BE COMMITTED

SUPERVISOR

Grad students need to feel that you care about the progress and outcome. Even if the project is meant to develop students' competences, you are involved in the journey, and your input on the project, topic or execution is essential. Be current and collect material with which you can give your students valuable input.

GRADUATE STUDENT

If things are tough, don't despair. Carry on and talk to your colleagues or supervisors. It is a stage most graduate students go through. Have grit:

G: give it your all
R: redo if necessary
I: ignore giving up
T: take the time and do it right

BE AVAILABLE

SUPERVISOR

As a supervisor you need to initiate planning regular supervision meetings. You are expected to be sufficiently available to the students in a way that is mutually beneficial, and professional. Consider that, due to personal circumstances, individual students may have different needs or constraints.

GRADUATE STUDENT

Be aware that it is your graduate project and also your responsibility to arrange meetings with your supervisor. Be prepared when meeting and ensure that your supervisor can be prepared too. Make sure to get the time you need while being aware of constraints.

BE CONSISTENT AND CLEAR

SUPERVISOR

Doing research is, by definition, charting unknown territory. Thus, it is unavoidable that the research evolves, including your view of what the next step(s) should be. Be honest about this and show ownership of your changing views. Remember what you say and advise.

GRADUATE STUDENT

Be clear and honest about your progress and struggles. For instance, prepare for meetings with your supervisor by sending a list of discussion points beforehand. Use the meeting with your supervisor to clarify expectations and problem solve together. Make notes of the discussion and what next steps to take.

BE TIME SAVVY

SUPERVISOR

The plan as initially foreseen will change during the course of the research. Be prepared for a change by thinking about a plan B. Set short term goals and celebrate successes with graduate students. Make certain that students know what, in terms of thesis content, is sufficient to graduate.

GRADUATE STUDENT

Keep track of the time you spend on a particular issue. On a regular basis, discuss this with your supervisor and what next steps to take. Discuss short term goals with your supervisor and celebrate your success together.

BE WILLING TO RECEIVE FEEDBACK

SUPERVISOR

Expect feedback from your students just as they expect it from you. Be open to feedback you receive and take it seriously. If no feedback is given, ask for it. You are encouraged to do so during the annual progress review. Remember that your reaction to feedback will have an impact on the openness of your discussions with your graduate students.

GRADUATE STUDENT

Feedback is meant to help you and is needed to advance your project. Don't be afraid to ask for feedback at any time as this prevents you and your supervisor from going in separate directions. If you experience the feedback as unhelpful, reflect on it for a while and discuss with your supervisor in a professional way. When your supervisor has helped you, show appreciation.

BE WILLING TO GIVE FEEDBACK

SUPERVISOR

Feedback may have an emotional impact on the students, so be cautious in choosing where and when to give feedback, especially when the feedback is person-oriented. Positive feedback is as important as critical comments.

GRADUATE STUDENT

Supervising a graduate student is a hard job. You can help your supervisor by giving constructive feedback about their supervision, always starting from a place of kindness, respect and consideration.

BE AWARE OF STRESSORS

SUPERVISOR

Be aware that your work attitudes are seen as a professional standard. Encourage graduate students to take breaks. Be aware that students' personal life stories can affect their work. Be aware not only of your students' wellbeing but take care for your mental health and wellbeing.

GRADUATE STUDENT

Manage your stress level and respect boundaries. Talk to peers about their struggles with doing research, sharing the same experience helps to manage the difficulties of life as a grad student. Maintain communication with your supervisor and know that your supervisor has followed a similar path and can offer perspective.

BE FUTURE-ORIENTED

SUPERVISOR

Many students don't think much about next career steps before their last year, nor do they know much about what comes after grad studies, especially outside academia. Having no prospects for future career development triggers stress, so it's important to discuss this with students. Share your professional network with your students.

GRADUATE STUDENT

Most students start thinking about next career steps during 3rd or 4th year, which is too late. Spend time on this issue in your 2nd year and your supervisor can advise you. Work on your network to let the outside world know who you are. Don't underestimate the time this takes.