Student-Supervisor Relations

Graduate Training Seminar
10th November 2016
Supervisor
=
Academic Advisor + Manager
How many supervisors do you have?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4+
How often are your meetings?

Meetings with Supervisor(s)

- Weekly: 18
- Monthly: 10
- Less than monthly: 8
- Every 2 weeks: 6
- Daily: 4

Meetings with Lab/Group

- Weekly: 20
- Rarely: 15
- Never: 10
- Every 2 weeks: 5

Who do you go to for help...

...with your research?

- Supervisor: 31%
- Someone in Group: 14%
- Someone from outside the group: 13%
- Friends/Family: 12%
- Internet: 30%

...with your DPhil in general?

- Supervisor: 44%
- Someone in the Group: 36%
- Someone from outside the Group: 10%
- Friends/Family: 5%
- Internet: 5%
Conferences

How many conferences have you attended in the past year?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- None

If you have been to any conferences, were any international?

- N/A
- No
- Yes
Do you socialise with your group outside of work?
Have you discussed expectations with your supervisor?

- No, and I'm happy
- No, and it's a problem
- Yes, and I'm happy
- Yes, and it's a problem
Do you have goals and deadlines set by your supervisor?

- Never: 21%
- Rarely: 28%
- Regularly: 35%
- Sometimes: 16%
How many hours does your supervisor expect you to work?

**Expected**
- No set hours, as long as the work is done: 30
- I don't know: 5
- All the time: 10
- 9am-5pm weekdays and weekends: 0
- 9am-5pm weekdays: 0

**Actual**
- No set hours, as long as the work is done: 20
- I don't know: 0
- All the time: 5
- 9am-5pm weekdays and weekends: 10
- 9am-5pm weekdays: 0
If you had an issue with your research, you would you go to?

- Supervisor: 30
- Someone in the group: 10
- Friend/family: 0
- Collaborator: 0
If you had an issue with your supervisor, who would you go to?

- Supervisor
- Someone in the group
- Second supervisor
- Other member of department
- Nobody
- It depends how serious it is, friends/family first.
- Graduate Adviser in college
- Friend/family
- Director of graduate studies
- College advisor
- College
I cannot stress enough how important it is to TELL your supervisor when you want to finish. Not ASK, because it seems they will keep you for as long as the research is done. Do not let them keep you for longer than you really have the funding to do so (or at least, get them to help you with extra funding options). Do this ASAP, particularly at the start of 3rd year so you can look for scholarships etc.

Having 3 or more supervisors, who won't move forward unless all can meet together makes work nearly impossible. It is difficult to get them together or to make decisions.

I don't think it's overly clear where to go if you are stuck. The GSS forms seems like a way to bring up problems, but that seems too formal and taking things straight to the top. I had issues with never seeing my supervisor and struggled with the technical side of my work, so after some nagging was given a postdoc as my co-supervisor - this has been so much more useful.
Hints and Tips

• Discuss expectations, and try to reach an agreement
• Meet regularly
• Prepare before your meetings
• Be open and honest
• Don’t give them a reason to be annoyed with you...
  • agree on deadlines you know you can make
  • give them enough warning if something
  • needs to be read/signed/etc
  • Mutual respect
9 types of difficult PhD supervisor (and how to domesticate them)
http://www.nextscientist.com/domesticate-difficult-phd-supervisor/

20 tips for surviving your PhD
http://phdtalk.blogspot.co.uk/2013/09/20-tips-for-surviving-your-phd.html

What to do if you don’t work well with your supervisor
http://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2014/dec/29/phd-supervisoruniversity-research-tips-relationship-work

The PhD: troubles talk
https://techknowtools.wordpress.com/2013/12/08/the-phd-troubles-talk/

Clarifying expectations
http://www.learning.ox.ac.uk/supervision/stages/expectations/
• Supervisor
• Graduate office (Heather Green, graduate.office@zoo.ox.ac.uk)
• Director of Graduate Studies (Adrian Thomas, Stu West)
• Head of Department (Ben Sheldon)
• College: Senior Tutor, College Advisor, Tutor for Graduate Studies, College Doctor, Chaplain, Dean
• Zoology mentor http://www.zoo.ox.ac.uk/graduates/mentoring
• MPLS Division Graduate Studies Office http://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/graduate-school-office
• University Counselling Service http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/counselling
• University Harassment Advisor network https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/harassment
• Equality and Diversity Office http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop
• Nightline http://users.ox.ac.uk/~nightln/
• Special Needs: Department/MPLS Division disability contacts
• Oxford University Student Union Student Advice Service http://ousu.org/advice/student-advice-service/