

# Supervision Skills on Postgraduate Students

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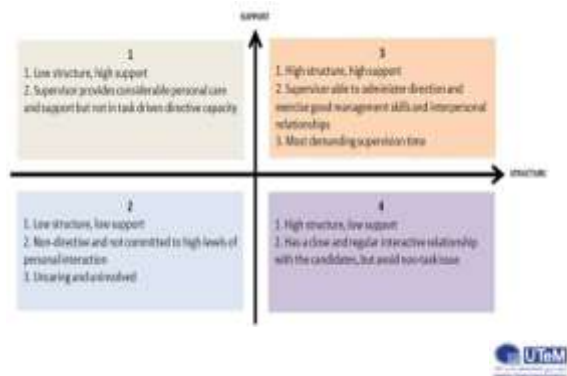


## Question 1:

- Please introduce yourself  
(name, expertise, where did you obtain your PhD)
- How many PhD/MSc students that you have  
currently? International? Malaysia?
- How many PhD/MSc students that you have  
graduated? International? Malaysia?
- What is “postgraduate supervision” means to you.



Question 2:  
Which one is the type of your supervision?



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Factors Influencing on Supervision

- Supervisor**

  - Disciplinary pedagogy
  - Departmental resources
  - Methodology approach
  - Codes of practice
  - Funders' requirements
  - Own research interest
  - Time
- Students**

  - Gender
  - Full or part time students?
  - Experienced or inexperienced students?
  - International or home students? (culture)
  - Single or married (with kids) students?
  - PhD or Master students?

Source: Lee, A. 2008.

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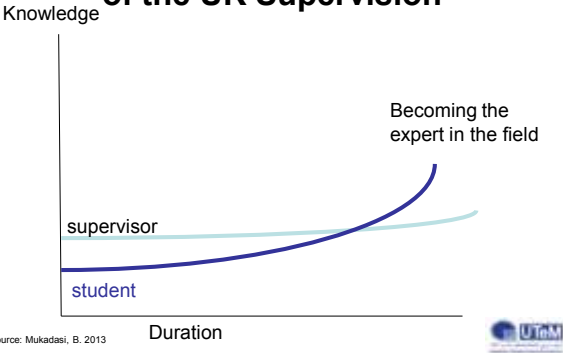
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Understand the Dynamic Nature  
of the UK Supervision



Source: Mukadasi, B. 2013

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Question 3:

What are the challenges you have with supervising your postgraduate students?

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Meeting the Expectations

Table 6.2 Supervisor and student expectations

| Supervisors expect their research students to  | Students expect their supervisors to   |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• be independent, even though some aspects of the research process may require conformity</li><li>• follow their advice, especially when requested by the student</li><li>• produce written work that is fairly polished</li><li>• have regular meetings</li><li>• be honest when reporting progress</li><li>• be excited about their research</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• supervise them</li><li>• read their work well in advance</li><li>• be available when needed</li><li>• be friendly, open and supportive</li><li>• structure sessions to support easy exchange of ideas</li><li>• have good knowledge of research area</li><li>• have sufficient interest in their research to put more information in the students' path</li><li>• be sufficiently involved in their success to help them get a good job at the end of it all</li></ul> |

Sources: Adapted from Woolhouse, 2002; Phillips and Pugh, 2005



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Eight Convention Roles & Relationships Between Supervisor and Student

| Supervisor                    | Student          |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Master                        | Servant          |
| Expert                        | Novice           |
| Guide                         | Explorer         |
| Project manager               | Team worker      |
| Editor                        | Author           |
| Professional senior colleague | Junior Colleague |
| Friend                        | Friend           |
| Counselor                     | Customer         |

Source: Light and Drane, 2014



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**Question 4:**

How can we help students prepare their research better?

At 230pm

If you have any questions, please let me know so that I can share with you.



### Students' perspectives on postgraduate supervisory practices By Sidhu et al. (2017)

The main aim of this study was to investigate postgraduate students' perspectives of their supervisors' supervisory practices in terms of and ethics, personal commitments and positive climate. The study employed a descriptive research design and involved a total of 209 postgraduate students from two local public universities in Malaysia. Data were collected through the use of a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews with eight students.



### ...Students' perspectives on postgraduate supervisory practices By Sidhu et al. (2017)

The findings revealed that on the whole, postgraduate students perceived their supervisors as displaying **moderate supervisory practices in terms of ethics, personal commitments and positive climate during the supervision process**. The findings also revealed that there were **no significant differences in the students' perceptions with regards to gender and discipline but a significant difference was recorded with regards to locality**.



### ...Students' perspectives on postgraduate supervisory practices By Sidhu et al. (2017)

Interview sessions, however, revealed that some students felt uneasy with regards to [confidentiality of information kept by their supervisors](#) whilst others highlighted that [they would appreciate more prompt and constructive feedback from their supervisors](#). Students also pointed out that they looked for a [nurturing and positive climate during supervision](#) as some [supervisors often made the supervision session rather intimidating](#).



### ...Students' perspectives on postgraduate supervisory practices By Sidhu et al. (2017)

The findings imply that [supervisors need to work together with their students](#) and facilitate the supervision process in a [positive and nurturing climate](#) so that students can [complete their thesis on time](#) and [develop as confident members](#) of their learning communities.



### Understand the Postgraduate Students Life Cycle

The postgraduate supervision for each student is following sequence of steps that constitute the postgraduate student life cycle [is broadly similar](#) for all postgraduate research programmes.

Each step requires that processes are in place, and that there is responsibility for the provision of support, service and an enabling environment by supervisor to become a successful student.



**...Understand the Postgraduate Students Life Cycle**

The following three phases are embedded into the life cycle of postgraduate journey

1. Foundation stage

- Ensuring the relationship is right
- Getting to know students and carefully assessing their needs, strengths and weaknesses
- Establishing reasonable and agreed upon expectations (academic and administration)
- Working with students to establish a strong conceptual structure of a research proposal/early part of the thesis.
- [Key: Mental checklist, planning, consolidate research proposal.](#)




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**...Understand the Postgraduate Students Life Cycle**

2. Momentous stage

- Encouraging students to write early
- Initiating regular contact and providing high quality feedback on written work
- Getting students involved in the life of the department, training courses, talks.
- Monitor the research methods used
- Data collection
- Data analysis

[Key: Executing, controlling, provide feedback and helping students on data collections, data analysis and written work.](#)




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**...Understand the Postgraduate Students Life Cycle**

3. Final stage

- Carefully monitoring the final written production
- Make sure thesis has a well presentation of the academic research criteria
- Preparing for viva
- Motivating in students' future careers

[Key: Evaluation, quality controlling and motivation](#)




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### 3 Major Components of Supervision

To be an effective supervisor, you need to be skilled at each of the three areas.

1. Management (institutional policy, personal objectives, resources, facilities, time, quality/academic expectation, risk management, documentation)



### ...3 Major Components of Supervision

2. Educational (knowledge transfer during the research process, evaluation, feedback, alignment, intellectual support, writing support)



### ...3 Major Components of Supervision

3. Supportive (emotional, availability, sensitivity role model, direction, commitment, relationship, communication)



The outcomes of the supervision

Produce a Thesis which is Finished On Time and of Sufficient Quality for the award of a higher degree

and Publish your findings in an internationally renowned journal

and/or Present Your Research to world experts at a conference



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The problem..



- “the problem is that skills acquired by PhD graduates do not serve their long term needs. Currently **PhDs do not prepare people adequately for careers in business or academia**”

“Sir Gareth Roberts Review (2001) ‘SET for success’. (Chapter 4 Section 4.2)”

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The solution..



- “...we should make all PhD students conditional upon students’ training meeting stringent minimum standards. These minimum standards should include **...two weeks of dedicated training per year, principally in transferable skills...**”

“Sir Gareth Roberts Review (2001) ‘SET for success’. (Chapter 4 Section 4.2)”

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## Outcomes of Transferable Skills through Supervision

- Excellent Research skills
- Ethics and social understanding
- Professionalism
- Communication skills
- Writing skills
- Problem solving
- Intellectual development
- Team working and leadership
- Entrepreneurship & innovation

Source: Marnane, L. 2013



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## Graduate on Time: How well we plan

URL:

[https://www.academia.edu/36486568/Gantt\\_Chart\\_of\\_Supervision](https://www.academia.edu/36486568/Gantt_Chart_of_Supervision)



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## Suggested Reading Materials

URL:

[https://melbourne-cshe.unimelb.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/1761502/11practices.pdf](https://melbourne-cshe.unimelb.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1761502/11practices.pdf)

[http://www.sgs.upm.edu.my/dokumen/92225\\_supervision.pdf](http://www.sgs.upm.edu.my/dokumen/92225_supervision.pdf)



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Reflections

- If we fail to plan, we are planning to fail.
- Supervisors' postgraduate learning experience has a profound influence on how they will supervise. (field, methodology, graduated universities)
- Shared experience, there are often no right or wrong answers, but there are a range of approaches of supervision from which we can choose.
- Approach to supervision can be linked to core beliefs about what supervision on postgraduate is.
- Always praise your students on his/her good quality work.



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References

1. Lee, A. 2008. New Approaches to Postgraduate Supervision and Supervisor Development. University of Surrey

2. Light, G and Drane, D. 2014. Research and Project Supervision. Palestinian Polytechnic University.

3. Marnane, L. 2013. Postgraduate Research Skills Training. University College Cork, Ireland.

4. Mukadasi, B. 2013. Critical Concerns for Supervision and Elements of Interest. Makerere University.

5. Sidhu, G. K., Kaur, S., Choo, L. P., Fook, C. Y., Fong, L. L., & Jeffry, N. A. (2017). Students' perspectives on postgraduate supervisory practices. *Advanced Science Letters*, 23(4), 3229-3232. DOI: [10.1166/asl.2017.7725](https://doi.org/10.1166/asl.2017.7725)



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