Department of Biosciences
University of Oslo

 **Managing expectations between
PhD candidates and their supervisor(s)[[1]](#footnote-1)**

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This document is a helpful tool to address the **different expectations** that the PhD candidates and supervisors bring to supervision meetings, in order to have a more collaborative and supportive supervision process based on mutual understanding. More specifically, this document can:

1. Help prepare the PhD candidate and supervisor for their first meetings;
2. Form the basis for the discussion in which the PhD candidate and supervisor agree on their roles and responsibilities and how to implement the supervision process

Both the PhD candidate and the supervisor can formulate their opinions and expectations on the different issues addressed below, and the documents will form the basis for the discussion on expectations in the introductory conversation. We do advise the candidate and supervisor to write down their mutual understanding of these and other potential issues after their discussion and agreement. It is also recommended that the PhD candidate and supervisor revisit this document at a later stage, because expectations and needs may change over the course of the PhD.

There are several websites where the supervisor and candidate can get more information:

* **PhD on Track**: <http://www.phdontrack.net>
* **PhD Supervision**: <http://www.mn.uio.no/english/research/phd/>
* **Ethical Guidelines for Supervisors at UiO:** <http://www.uio.no/english/about/regulations/ethical-guidelines/ethical-guidelines-supervisors/index.html>
* **Formal regulations at UiO**: <http://www.uio.no/english/about/regulations/research/doctoral-degree/>
	+ **Supplementary regulations at the MN Faculty:** <https://www.mn.uio.no/english/research/phd/regulations/regulations.html>

**General**

*The PhD is mainly seen as an:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] Employment[ ] Education[ ] Both[ ] Other | Comments:  |

*The aim of a PhD is:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] To write a thesis[ ] To become a competent researcher[ ] Both | Discussion: Other important goals of PhD education |

**Supervision**

*What should be the main form of supervision?*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] Spontaneous talks[ ] Booked appointments[ ] Both | Comments:  |

*How often should the supervision take place?*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] Daily[ ] Weekly [ ] Two-weekly[ ] Monthly [ ] When necessary | Discussion: e.g. more frequent in the beginning/at challenging points of the PhD project?  |

*Who should take the initiative for planning and setting up the supervision meetings?*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] Supervisor[ ] PhD candidate[ ] Both | Comments: |

*What is the role of the co-supervisor(s)?*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] Have regular supervision meetings[ ] PhD candidate/main supervisor will contact co-supervisor when needed[ ] Other | Discussion: Should each supervisor have a specific role (experiments, writing, etc.). Should they be part of the decision-makings of the PhD project? |

 *How quickly is the supervisor expected to read the manuscript and respond?*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] Same day[ ] 1 week[ ] 2 weeks[ ] 1 month[ ] Other | Discussion: What is the desired form of feedback? |

 *Who is responsible for the PhD candidate’s project timeline?*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] Supervisor[ ] PhD candidate[ ] Both | Discussion: Making and following the timeline, and taking the responsibility to revise it when needed? |

*Research should be done:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] According to the project timeline with deadlines[ ] Freely[ ] Other | Comments: |

*Who defines any possible deadlines?*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] Supervisor[ ] PhD candidate[ ] Both | Comments: |

**Research**

*Who defines the original research?*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] Supervisor[ ] PhD candidate[ ] Both | Discussion: Start talking about the formulation of research questions, what is expected of the candidate to do on their own, what should they get help with?  |

*How will the research work be done?*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] Alone[ ] Together with others[ ] Other | Comments: |

*Who is the driving force in the research project (attending meetings, making contacts, etc.)?*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] Supervisor[ ] PhD candidate[ ] Both | Comments: |

*Who solves practical problems (equipment, analysis, logistics etc.)?*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] Supervisor[ ] PhD candidate[ ] Both | Comments: |

**Thesis**

*Who decides the contents of the thesis?*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] Supervisor[ ] PhD candidate[ ] Other | Comments: |

*Who decides the type of thesis (monograph or compilation of articles with the “kappe”)?*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] PhD candidate[ ] Supervisor[ ] In collaboration  | Discussion: Discuss the differences, and the expectations and traditions within the field |

*The PhD student can decide the length of the thesis (number of papers and chapters)?*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] Yes[ ] No[ ] In collaboration with the supervisor | Comments: |

**Publication/property rights/research ethics**

*Who has the right to the research results of the PhD candidate?*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] The department /University of Oslo[ ] Supervisor[ ] PhD candidate | Discussion: [Work results](https://www.uio.no/english/for-employees/employment/work-results/rights-to-work-results.html) |

*Who decides on the publication channels for the research results?*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] Supervisor[ ] PhD candidate[ ] Both | Comments: |

*Who is responsible for identifying and addressing ethical issues related to the research? This must also be addressed in the project description.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] Supervisor[ ] PhD candidate[ ] Both | Discussion: who should develop the [data management plan](https://www.uio.no/english/for-employees/support/research/research-data-management/index.html), apply for relevant permits/approvals, rights to publication of research results, FAIR principles, etc.  |

**Financing**

*Who takes care of the project’s running costs (driftsmidler) (materials, etc.)?*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] Supervisor[ ] PhD candidate | Comments: What amount do they have at their disposal, how should they be used |

*Who applies for means to travel to conferences, workshops, etc.?*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] Project leader (if external project)[ ] Supervisor[ ] PhD candidate | Comments: |

**Workplace**

*Computer, phone, specialised software, tools, etc.:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] PhD candidate needs to organise this[ ] Supervisor will organise this | Comments: |

**Working hours and vacation**

*Work hours*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] Free working hours[ ] PhD candidate should be at work during core hours[ ] Other | Discussion: what does it mean to have a “[particularly independent post](https://www.uio.no/english/about/regulations/personnel/academic/regulations-working-hours.html#toc2)”, not governed by normal working hours regulations |

*PhD candidate should work more than the usual working time:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] Agree[ ] Disagree | Comments: |

*Vacation:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] Strict vacation period (July)[ ] Free vacation period[ ]  Other (please specify) | Discussion: Should the vacation period be in agreement between PhD candidate and supervisor  |

**Courses**

*Who decides which courses the PhD candidate should take?*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] Supervisor[ ] PhD candidate[ ] Both | Comments: |

*Courses should be chosen:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] From a specific research field[ ] From a broad research field | Comments: |

**Duty work (for those who have)**

*The duty work is a part of the training and relevant for the student’s further career:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] To a large degree[ ] To some degree[ ] To a limited degree | Comments: |

**Extras**

*Discuss if the following is important and why:*

*Taking part in the group/department/institution’s common scientific work (seminars/meetings etc.) is:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] Important[ ] Not important[ ] Other | Comments: |

*Mingling with other PhD candidates and researchers at the department/my research group is:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] Important[ ] Not important[ ] Other | Comments: |

*Participating in academic activities with other PhD candidates in my research group/at the department is:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] Important[ ] Not important[ ] Other | Comments: |

 *Taking part in the common social activities in the department/institution (coffee breaks, discussions, parties, etc.) is:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ] Important[ ] Not important | Comments: |

**Additional notes:**

1. This document is based on a document prepared by Department of Informatics, which again is based on the NTNU document ”Discussion Material for Newly Accepted PhD Candidates and their Supervisors, which is based, with only minor modifications, on the work of Johan Bijnens at Lund University, Sweden. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)