Natural History Museum  
University of Oslo

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

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The purpose of this document is 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 in 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; and
3. Help evaluate the supervision process during the 3rd semester upgrade and at other points in the process, in which an evaluation of the supervision process is warranted.

Both the PhD candidate and the supervisor can formulate their opinions and expectations on the different issues addressed below. The candidate and supervisor don’t need to share their documents with each other. The documents will be used as the basis for the discussion on expectations in the first supervisory meetings. We do advise the candidate and supervisor to write down their mutual understanding of these issues after their discussion and agreement.

There are several sites 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>

*Regulations*: <http://www.uio.no/english/about/regulations/research/doctoral-degree/>

**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 | Other important goals of PhD education:  Comments: |

**The supervisor**

*What is the main form of supervision?*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Spontaneous Talks * Booked appointments * Both | Comments: |

*How often will this /these forms supervision take place?*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Daily * Weekly * Two-weekly * Monthly | Comments: |

*Who should take the initiative for planning the supervision meetings?*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Supervisor * PhD candidate | Comments: |

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Have regular supervision meetings * PhD candidate will contact co-supervisor when needed * Other | Comments: |

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Same day * 1 week * 2 weeks * 1 month * Other | Comments: |

*Who is responsible for the PhD candidate’s Individual Study Plan (part of project proposal)?*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Supervisor * PhD candidate * Both | Comments: |

*Research is to be done:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * According to the study plan schedule with strict deadlines * Freely * Other | Comments: |

*Who defines any possible deadlines?*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Supervisor * PhD candidate * Both | Comments: |

**Research**

*Who defines the original research?*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Supervisor * PhD candidate * Both | 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: |

*The PhD student can decide the type of thesis (monograph or compilation)?*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Yes * No * In collaboration with supervisor | Comments: |

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Yes * No * In collaboration with supervisor | Comments: |

*How is the research work supposed to be done?*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Alone * Together with others * Other | Comments: |

**Publicising/property rights/research ethics**

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Supervisor * PhD candidate * Both | Comments: |

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Institute * Supervisor * PhD candidate | Comments: |

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Supervisor * PhD candidate * Both | Comments: |

*Who is responsible for identifying and addressing ethical issues related to the research?*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Supervisor * PhD candidate * Both | Comments: |

**Financing**

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Project leader * Supervisor * PhD candidate | Comments: |

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Project leader * 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 | Comments: |

*Vacation:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Strict vacation period (July) * Free vacation period | Comments: |

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Agree * Disagree | Comments: |

**Courses**

*Who decides what courses the PhD candidate will take?*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Supervisor * PhD candidate * Both | Comments: |

*Courses are to 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 a very limited degree * Other | Comments: |

*The content of the duty work should be:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Teaching * Work in the collections * Outreach * Other | Comments: |

**Extras**

*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: |

**Notes:**

1. This document is based on a document prepared by Department of Informatics, University of Oslo, 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)