

# Doctoral supervision training – some reflections

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# PhD supervision

- Supervision – formal and informal – widespread from MSc students to senior professors
- PhD supervision is a specific topic within university pedagogics
- Supervision training can be separated from general pedagogics
- Managing mutual expectations is key – and culturally dependent

## Postdocs

- Supervision – formal and informal – widespread for postdocs
- Key competence for career development
- More direct benefit than general pedagogics
- Hard to combine long term intensive courses with research demands
- Creating opportunities for postdocs – often transient employees
- Transferable skills training important for recruitment of talent but also to visualize career development focus in proposals, ref. Charter & Code (HRS4R)

# Lifelong learning

- No supervisor is perfect
- No supervisor has dealt with every imaginable scenario
- Lifelong learning and academic 'påfyll' an important opportunity
- Strengthen career development of employees, ref. Charter & Code (HRS4R)

# Supervising Doctoral Students

- <https://mp.uu.se/en/web/info/undervisa/kurser-och-seminarier/kurser/handledning-av-doktorander>
- Target group: Postdocs with no or less experience of supervising doctoral students; new or senior lecturers holding a doctoral degree, as well as readers/docents with some or lots of doctoral supervising experience.
- Extent: A total of three weeks on a full-time basis, comprising 7 days in-campus divided into four blocks (3 + 2 + 1 + 1) and 8 days for homework assignments off-campus.
- Course credits: 5 ECTS

## Course - content

- The interaction between supervisor and doctoral student: `drawing up a contract´ (rights and obligations), the research tutorial, conflict management, different issues in supervising, to give feedback.
- What does the regulatory framework stating the conditions for current research education in Sweden look like? What changes of the supervisory context for supervisors and doctoral students may be identified? What criteria for assessment should be met in a senior lecturer/reader appointment; and how do you make preparations for such an appointment?

## Course - content

- How can gender- and diversity-related opinions and attitudes influence the supervisor and student in the supervising process? What is stated about equal opportunities in the regulatory framework for higher education? How do problems pertaining to these issues arise in practice?
- What ethical statements should the supervisor and the student depart from? How are both parties expected to act and relate themselves to each other in a professional way?
- The communicative perspectives of the student and the supervisor: the long journey from being admitted as doctoral student to the final defence of the dissertation (the stages of doctoral career building and the roles of the supervisor).

## Course - goals

- Identify, critically reflect on and independently assess the aims and the design of current research education in the light of historic, national and international perspectives, as well as legal matters.
- Analyse and display in theory and practice your understanding for the supervisor-PhD student relationship and the dynamic character of supervising meetings, with considerations taken to ethnic, ethical and gender-related aspects.
- Benefit, in terms of growth and support, from the communicative and situated training offered for approaching different supervising situations.



## Course - goals

- Make a written statement on your own philosophy of supervision, e.g., discussing and sharing what, in your opinion, makes for good doctoral supervision.
- Reflect on the ideas of research education at your own department/division and, if possible, to identify a supervision policy formally/informally agreed upon.
- Design an individual action plan using the statement made on your philosophy of supervision and the ideas of your department/division on research education and doctoral supervision.

## Take home message

- Supervision is Faculty-specific with MatNat and NHM sharing similar supervision styles
- Supervision training requires time for development and scope of coverage
- Strengthen career development of temporary and permanent employees, ref. Charter & Code (HRS4R)
- Specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound training is an important transferable skill to offer our postdocs

Can we initiate a 5 ECTS course in PhD Supervision?