



Master's and PhD Supervision

Best Practice Guide

Student supervision is a crucial element in the research process in Master's and PhD programmes. The present document offers practical advice, with the aim of making the supervision process more transparent and efficient, with clear indications regarding the rights and responsibilities of lecturers and candidates.

What is expected of a Master's and PhD candidate?

That they produce knowledge in a specific area or sub-area, through original research work, demonstrating theoretical and methodological skills, as well as the ability for critical thought. The defined goals and candidate's conduct must be guided by ethical principles. The work carried out should contribute to the advancement of knowledge and, whenever possible, should actively engage with or intervene in the examined sectors and/or communities and society.

What is expected of a Master's and PhD supervisor?

That they encourage, challenge and support the candidate in his or her research journey. Supervisors must not impose their vision, nor replace the candidate in decision-making nor in writing the manuscript. Additionally, a serious and ethically responsible conduct is expected.

The Supervisor – Candidate Relationship

This must be guided by an ethos of transparency and accountability. A positive collaboration and mutual respect between the two parties will contribute to a fruitful work experience. It is therefore advisable that the following aspects be carefully considered: i) definition of working methods and ii) definition of times and modes of communication.

Should any unforeseen situation arise that renders working together unfeasible, the Candidate or the Supervisor should contact the degree coordinator of the degree in which the Candidate is enrolled.

The Supervisor's Responsibilities

During the first meeting, the working method and preferred mode of communication must be defined. From thereon, the supervisor must: i) promote the compliance with the established plan; ii) be available to clarify queries through the previously agreed communication methods; iii) acknowledge receipt of the candidate's emails, and respond to queries or indicate an expected date of reply.



The Supervisor's Rights

The Supervisor's rights are as follows: i) to ask the candidate for pieces of work that reveal a degree of prior research and reflection, written clearly and in accordance with good academic writing practices; ii) to query the candidate's methods and work time; iii) to offer constructive feedback to the candidate whenever he or she deems it necessary; iv) to advise the candidate to define new goals and/or to choose different methodological options whenever this becomes crucial for the success of the work; v) to recommend rewritings; vi) not to issue a favourable opinion for admission to public examination, if the work does not meet the necessary requirements, or if the student intends to submit work that has not been examined by the supervisor.

The Candidate's Responsibilities

A Master's or PhD candidate is expected to: i) be proactive in the collection of bibliography and theoretical-methodological composition of the study; ii) think over the observations made by the supervisor and critically decide on whether or how to accommodate them in the manuscript; iii) respond to the supervisor's emails and prepare for meetings (by making notes on possible queries and clarifications); iv) comply with the plan agreed upon during the first meeting and with the terms of the relationship established; v) inform the advisor of the progress of the work and of any unexpected events; vi) not to resort to illicit acts in drafting the work, namely plagiarism and the use of artificial intelligence tools.

The Candidate's Rights

Candidates are entitled to: i) ask questions and request clarification; ii) obtain substantive feedback throughout the drafting of their work; iii) respect for their intellectual freedom.