



Agreements between supervisors of PhD student

More than one person is usually involved in the supervision of a PhD student; one or two promotors, one or two daily supervisors, and sometimes also an external supervisor. Irrespective of the commonly held interest in the student's PhD work, the supervisors have possibly diverging interests and may have different responsibilities as supervisor. Problems are apt to arise when it is unclear who is doing what and, therefore, who is responsible for what, or worse, when these interests are argued over at the cost of the PhD student.

It is vital to answer the questions below together and at the outset of the PhD project, and to make clear agreements about each person's responsibilities and tasks, and about the way in which decisions will be made during the program.

Interests

What interest(s) does each person have in the course of the PhD work?

For example: contributions to one's own research, co-publishing, solving a practical problem.

Input

Who is responsible for which parts of the PhD research? (the PhD student, daily supervisor(s) or promotor(s)?)

Who will make what contribution regarding content? (direction of the research)

Who will make what contribution regarding methodology?

Tasks

Who will carry out which tasks?

How much time will the various supervisors spend on this research on a weekly basis?

How frequently will the supervisors meet with the PhD student?

Are time investment and frequency of input dependent on the various stages of the PhD research?

Will everyone be giving the same type of feedback at the same times? (for example commentary on a written paper)

Who is the first point of contact for the PhD student?

Who will show the PhD student the way in the department and faculty?

Decision process

How is the decision process structured? Does anyone's opinion have priority over the opinion of others? Does anyone have veto rights – overall, or in specific areas, and if so in which areas?

How often will meetings be held with all parties present?

How will the decision making process be recorded? How do we guarantee that everyone is cognizant of all crucial decisions, agrees with said decisions, and adheres to them?