

TOPICS TO DISCUSS WITH CO-SUPERVISORS (AND PHD RESEARCHERS) (from Kiley, Margaret; Australian National University (2016))

This discussion framework may be particularly useful in an inter-disciplinary team supervision context.

Roles and contribution of each supervisor in the team

- Who takes final responsibility?
- Can different members of the team be responsible for different aspects of supervision, if so, how does that get recognized?
- Are you OK with the PhD researcher speaking with one supervisor without letting the others know?
- What happens if one supervisor is unavailable (sick leave/sabbatical) for more than a few weeks?

Supervisor style

- How do you like to supervise: hands-on, hands-off, by-the-book, flexible approach?

Reading of drafts of written work

- Who will read, and in what order, e.g. who is good at 'big picture', structure, detail?
- What is reasonable turn-around time on drafts?
- How many drafts is it reasonable for a member of a supervisory team to read and should all supervisors comment in parallel, or in series, on a particular document?
- Should supervisory teams provide a collaborative overall summary of feedback, along with individual supervisory feedback?

University requirements and policies

- Who will undertake to prepare the candidate for fieldwork and support them when in the field?
- Who is responsible for ensuring the PhD researcher achieves milestones?
- Whose role is it to ensure that the PhD researcher knows, and follows, policies related to research ethics, plagiarism etc?
- Whose role is it to take the PhD researcher through the ethics application process and sign off?

Meetings

- How often, where, who will organize meetings and will they include all team members or only some?
- Will meetings be noted, if so, by whom and to what level of detail and will the notes be cc'ed to all panel members or only those who were at the meeting?
- What will be the best way to access one another, especially off-campus?

Who provides the funds for the PhD researcher's project?

Publishing

- What are your expectations regarding the PhD researcher publishing?
- How much do you think it is reasonable to help without being a co-author and, on the other hand, how much should be contributed to be a co-author?
- How will you determine the order of the authors?
- What about the corresponding author?

What is the process for discussing concerns?

- About the candidate?
- About one another?
- What if the PhD researcher goes to one of the supervisors with a problem regarding the other supervisor?

What research strengths do you consider you bring to the supervisory team?

- Knowledge of process, topic, methodology etc.

What personal skills do you bring to the team?

- Is there a role for one of the supervisors in mentoring the less experienced supervisors?
- Are there specific aspects of supervision that you think are critical and need to be understood by other members of the team?