



Good Practices in Doctoral Supervision

OBJECTIVES

- Become aware of the new roles of supervisors in the context of the new doctorate.
- Give tools for the early identification of potential conflicts and resolution of the existent ones in the relation between the supervisor and the PhD researcher.
- Develop a culture of the supervision that albeit being productive supports the PhD candidate.
- Help to achieve satisfactory doctoral experiences, for both supervisors and PhD candidates.
- Advocate on the quality, efficiency and excellence of the doctoral education.
- Create a common and generalised research culture.

CONTENTS

- **Introduction to the good practices in the supervision.** This part offers a general insight to the current international context of the professionalization of the doctoral supervision, going through its historical evolution, the concept of supervision, the need to produce doctoral theses of high quality and the implications of the professionalization of the doctoral supervision.
- **Supervision, a multidimensional task.** The main functions of the supervisors are analysed: guidance and academic and professional support, and follow-up of these tasks.
- **From the "ideal" to the "real" candidate.** The aim is to identify the main preferable characteristic in the profile of the ideal doctoral candidates, and to assist the supervisors with the design of tools to remediate the competency mismatches of their PhD candidates, thus helping them in the development of their future professional career.
- **Supervision, a question of style.** The characteristics and roles of an effective supervisor are described, as well as the importance of good relation between supervisors and PhD candidates. Special attention is given to the expectations of both supervisors and supervisees and to the diversity of styles that can facilitate an effective supervision.
- **Problems in the supervision: symptoms, diagnosis and treatment.** The focus is on the anticipation of the identification of potential sources of problems and conflicts that can emerge all along the living cycle of the doctoral thesis. Tools to help solving these issues are presented and discussed.

METHODOLOGY

This initial course contains four modules on the basic topics of good practices in doctoral supervision. Each module starts with a short presentation of the main concepts that will be treated, followed by interactive exercises performed by the supervisors in groups, working in round tables.

The objective is that there is a “before and after” in one’s own conception and awareness of the supervisory role. To achieve this, emphasis is given not to the conceptual contents, but above all to the process based on the experience.

Supervisors of different disciplines and with different degrees of experience can work together in a collaborative way. This methodology allows supervisors to create their own tools that facilitate and systematise the process of supervision. Attendance is therefore indispensable in the development of this training programme, with the added value of making possible the interaction between peers and creating a forum of dialogue on the doctoral supervision as a professional practice, forum which up to now did not exist in our university. This diversity between participants can be beneficial because it reveals that, despite the very different ways of working in the different areas of knowledge during the doctorate, the main challenges and problems are common to all. Therefore, although the task of the supervisor is often very individual and solitary, the training activities provide room for meetings and support that many times continues and goes beyond the duration of the workshop.

These training activities are not aimed at giving global and magic recipes to become a good supervisor. All the opposite, what is looked for is that the participants are able to create their own tools to perform a systematised follow-up of the process of supervision when needed, and always adapted to their specific needs in a continuum evolutionary process.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

The classroom for the course must allow to accommodate the assistants in an initial distribution of the seats in U shape to follow the presentations. Additionally, it would be advisable to have four tables or group of tables to work in groups of 5-6 people. Alternatively, the classroom could be equipped with tables and chairs that could be arranged according to the needs of the different activities developed.

The classroom should have a computer (with internet connection preferably) and projector. We would also need 4 black/whiteboards or flipcharts. If this is not possible, let us know to arrange an alternative solution.