

# Good practices in the relationship between supervisor and doctoral student

Starting and implementing doctoral studies is a complicated and demanding process, both for doctoral students and their supervisors. The attitude of the supervisor and the doctoral student, as well as the cooperation between these two parties, are crucial for achieving scientific success and personal development. This guide was created to support both parties on this path, offering tips and principles that help build effective and harmonious relationships.

The guide addresses aspects of cooperation such as:

1. professionalism
2. availability
3. time management,
4. communication
5. coping with stress, and
6. career planning.

Each of these sections provides practical advice and recommendations that are designed to facilitate collaboration and maximise scientific outcomes. Both supervisors and doctoral students will find here tips that will help them understand each other's needs and expectations, which is essential for creating a fruitful academic relationship.

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## 1. Professionalism

The supervisor and the doctoral student should form a professional relationship, the main goal of which is to obtain a doctoral degree by the doctoral student and prepare him or her for further steps in his or her scientific career. Establishing appropriate guidelines and maintaining full professionalism support the establishment of an effective relationship between the Supervisor and the PhD student.

Promoter	PhD student
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain professionalism in all interactions with the PhD student. Respect his time, effort, and ideas, and be ready for constructive criticism and feedback.</li><li>• Take care of professional ethics, reliability and honesty in conducting research and in relations with the PhD student. Avoid favoritism and treat everyone equally.</li><li>• Adhere to high ethical standards in conducting research and collaborating with the PhD student. Respect copyrights, ensure fair attribution, and ensure the integrity of research data.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be responsible for your actions and decisions. Demonstrate diligence and responsibility in the implementation of the research tasks entrusted to you.</li><li>• Ensure the quality of your work, regardless of its stage. Work accurately, diligently and with full commitment. Maintain professional ethics, integrity and integrity in conducting research and in relations with the Supervisor.</li><li>• Build positive professional relationships with the Supervisor, colleagues and other students. Demonstrate empathy and understanding, which will contribute to a supportive work environment.</li></ul>
<b>Professionalism means respect, reliability and responsibility in the relationship between the Supervisor and the PhD student</b>	

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## 2. Availability

Accessibility plays a key role in the success of a PhD project, for both the Supervisor and the PhD student. Regular meetings, time flexibility, adapting to the individual needs of both parties are an extremely important aspect of cooperation.

Promoter	PhD student
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Schedule regular oversight meetings to discuss progress and determine next steps.</li><li>• Be careful not to overload the PhD student and encourage them to maintain a work-life balance.</li><li>• Check in with the PhD student regularly to ensure they receive support and answers to their questions.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Don't be afraid to show initiative in arranging regular meetings with the Promoter and keep them informed about your needs.</li><li>• Be aware of the Promoter's time constraints and adjust to their availability.</li><li>• Prepare carefully for meetings by making a list of topics to be discussed and progress in your work.</li></ul>

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## 3. Time management

Effective time management and punctuality are essential for the success of a PhD project. Without proper time management, it is difficult to implement an Individual Research Plan, which can lead to delays and unnecessary stress.

Promoter	PhD student
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Help the PhD student develop a realistic research plan with clearly defined stages and deadlines.</li><li>• Set realistic expectations for progress and deadlines to avoid pressure and stress.</li><li>• Advise the PhD student on how to effectively manage time and priorities to achieve research goals.</li><li>• Set an example of punctuality and good time management so that the PhD student has a role model.</li><li>• Quickly identify and respond to potential delays or issues in your project to minimize their impact.</li><li>• Encourage the Graduate student to regularly document progress and plans for the future, which facilitates monitoring and reporting</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create a detailed timeline for your Ph.D., including deadlines and milestones.</li><li>• Learn to prioritize tasks to focus on the most important aspects of your research.</li><li>• Review your progress regularly and adjust your schedule to ensure that your research goals are met.</li><li>• Keep the Promoter informed of any delays or problems so that solutions can be found together.</li><li>• Do not hesitate to share your doubts, difficulties and questions with the Promoter. Regular communication will allow you to solve problems faster and avoid delays.</li></ul>
<b>Be punctual, meet the set deadlines, tasks, and answers to questions.</b>	

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## 4. Communication

In the scientific community, proper communication between the Supervisor and the PhD student is the foundation of success in the implementation of the doctoral project. Communication not only enables the transmission of information, but also the building of trust, clear understanding, and collaboration.

Promoter	PhD student
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide clear and constructive guidance for research work, assisting the PhD student in developing effective strategies for action.</li><li>• Provide regular and constructive feedback on the progress of the PhD student to enable them to develop and improve their research skills.</li><li>• Be available to the PhD student as needed, trying to answer questions and provide support in the shortest possible time, while respecting your own responsibilities and time limits.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be open to the Supervisor's tips and suggestions, treating them as valuable support in scientific development. Do not treat them as criticism, but as support in the research process.</li><li>• Actively participate in consultations with the Supervisor, using them to discuss key issues and develop effective research strategies</li><li>• Maintain a professional and polite tone of communication, even in difficult situations. Respect differences in opinions.</li></ul>
<b>Don't limit yourself to electronic communication only.</b>	

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## 5. Coping with stress

The process of obtaining a doctoral degree is full of challenges and may involve many stressors for both doctoral students and supervisors. Stress can stem from a variety of sources, such as deadline pressures, academic expectations, research difficulties, as well as work-life balance.

Promoter	PhD student
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Help the PhD student understand the reviewers' comments and develop a plan to improve the article together</li><li>• Encourage the PhD student not to give up after the rejection of the publication. Remind him that rejections are part of the scientific process and can lead to improvements.</li><li>• In difficult situations, consider using mediation or other external support to help resolve the conflict.</li><li>• Keep in touch with other promoters. Discussing challenges together can bring new perspectives and support.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learn to set boundaries between work and personal life to avoid burnout.</li><li>• If you feel excessive stress, do not hesitate to seek the help of specialists such as counselors or therapists.</li><li>• Remember to celebrate your achievements, even small ones, to stay motivated and positive.</li><li>• Be aware of your own signs of stress and don't ignore them. Identify what stresses you out the most.</li></ul>
<b>Understand that the success of a doctoral student is a shared responsibility.</b>	

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## 6. Career Planning

Career planning requires motivation and orientation towards the future – without this, it is difficult to imagine success in pursuing a doctorate. A long-term research process requires constant commitment as well as a clear vision for the future of one's professional career.

Promoter	PhD student
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gather information about the Doctoral student's motivations and career goals. An individual approach will allow you to adjust your support strategy.</li><li>• Help PhD students identify and achieve short-term goals to keep them motivated through visible progress.</li><li>• Highlight the achievements and progress of PhD students to maintain their motivation and confidence in their own abilities.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Spend time defining your long-term career goals. Defining a clear vision of the future can be motivating.</li><li>• Look for sources of intrinsic motivation, such as curiosity and a passion for research. Try to maintain a positive attitude, even in the face of difficulties.</li><li>• Consider participating in scientific trips, conferences and internships as sources of external inspiration. A new research environment can provide new perspectives and ideas.</li></ul>