

## **Guidelines to PhD supervision**

### **Organization of the supervision:**

- When a new PhD student starts, expectations and organization of supervision should be discussed.
  - Discuss the project, publication strategy, conferences, potential visits abroad, etc. This is the responsibility of the supervisor.
- Most PhD students prefer regular weekly meetings. The length can vary from week to week, but it is important for the PhD student to know when the next meeting will be held.
  - Weekly meetings are expected until the supervisory relationship has fully developed.
- “Open door” should also be available.
  - One should be available for short ad-hoc discussions.
  - When a meeting is requested, one should suggest a specific meeting time promptly.
- The role of the co-supervisors should be clarified.
- Students must be informed when supervisors are on leave. Extended leave requires a replacement.
  - Informing PhD students on travel plans and securing proper solutions for longer absence is the responsibility of the supervisor.

### **Developing into an independent researcher:**

- The supervisor should help the student to understand the context of their work.
  - The supervisor should prepare information and tasks for the start-up period that introduces the PhD student to the project. One such task is helping in writing the project description.
  - When the student starts, both the project on a larger scale and the planned division into smaller tasks need to be discussed.
  - The supervisor should ask the student questions about what they are doing and why, to open a discussion about the student’s role in the research.
  - The student should develop the habit of having a hypothesis for the outcome of an experiment or calculation and then compare the results with that the hypothesis.
- The PhD student should present their work at seminars and conferences.
  - The student should participate actively at seminars in their section and department.
  - The supervisor should encourage PhD students to go to minimum one international conference and to have a research visit abroad.
- The supervisor should give constructive support and critical assessment on draft of papers and abstracts that the PhD student writes.
  - The PhD student needs to write regularly to get feedback and show progression.
  - When receiving a draft from the PhD student, the supervisor should indicate when the PhD student can expect feedback.
- The student should develop a critical way of reading the literature.
  - This could be trained in a journal club.
  - When the student has had some experience reading and writing papers, the supervisor might also recommend the student as a referee to a journal.
- If there is no progress for a substantial time due to high-risk projects, instrumentation breakdown, etc., then the project should change direction/find alternatives.
  - It can be useful to discuss alternatives/new directions when writing the project description.
- Social events where supervisor and PhD students participate are important.
  - Examples: lunches, celebrations when papers are accepted or applications approved, trips, dinners during guest visits, salary beer.

### **When the relationship between the PhD student and the supervisor is not working**

- The PhD student should discuss the problems with the co-supervisor and other PhD students and members in the research group.
- The PhD student can contact the section leader.
- The PhD student can contact the head of department.