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Supervision in Focus

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Supervision: Definition and Scope

Process in which researchers are guided in the development and implementation of their research project by more experienced researchers and professionals with clear responsibilities. (MSCA Guidelines on Supervision)

- Provide scientific expertise
- Help to develop methodological skills
- Introduction to good scientific practice
- Provide guidance concerning career opportunities
- Introduce to scientific community

Why should we talk about supervision?



Supervision makes a difference

About one third of university research publications originate from doctoral researchers ^[1]

Supervision is one of the strongest determinants of PhD completion and experience ^[2]

Influences research engagement, productivity and well-being ^[3]

[1] Munkácsy G, Herman P, Györffy B (2022) PLoS ONE 17(7)

[2] Kirsi Pyhältö, Lotta Tikkanen & Henrika Anttila (2024) Innovations in Education and Teaching International, 61:3, 555-569.

[3] Lotta Tikkanen, Elina Ketonen et al. (2025) Higher Education 90:1451–1469. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-024-01385-w>



Supervision can be challenging

Balancing between

Structure vs. Flexibility

Independence vs. Guidance (under limited time)

Project progress vs. Learning process

...

Different roles as a supervisor – researcher, representing your organisation or a project, coach, person



Supervision is becoming a professional competence

More and more studies about supervision

Universities increasingly offer templates for written agreements, supervisor trainings, support in case of conflict etc. ^[4]

Most organisations have developed guidelines, e.g.

[Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions - Supervision guidelines \(EC 2025\)](#)

[Recommendations from UniWiND \(Germany\)](#)



Helpful factors for good supervision:

Good & clear comm, asking ^{good} questions
active listening, follow-up meta-comm
giving feedback

regular meetings
written minutes,...

tailored, acknowledge the person; encouragement
acknowledging success
+ ability

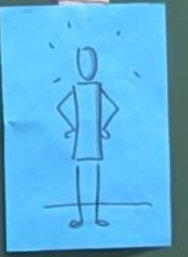
To-do + To do
motivate

inspire a vision, big picture
discuss the future + career opp.

make sure they read
relevant literature
check if the level of difficulty
is ok

but take the
issues seriously

learning from colleagues
Resources: networking intervision /
workshops peer groups
co- or double supervision



Group discussion: collecting helpful factors for good supervision

