SUPERVISION CONVERSATION

DISCUSSION GUIDE

About the conversation

Candidates and supervisors should have an initial conversation about their expectations of supervision, and other related aspects of the project, early on - ideally within the first few months of candidature.

This document helps to guide that conversation by providing suggested topics and example questions. Supervisors and candidates may touch upon some only briefly in the initial conversation. Others may be more relevant later in candidature. During the conversation, record outcomes and comments in the **Supervision Conversations: Discussion Record** document, which can be uploaded to the candidate's record in Wahapū.

We recommend supervisors and candidates revisit these topics together regularly. When you do, be sure to update the Discussion Record to reflect any changes that emerge in subsequent conversations.

Please ensure both candidate and supervisor are familiar with the Doctoral Supervision Policy and Procedures.

Supervision

Topic	*What to discuss*
1 - Research guidance and direction	a. How much does the supervisor expect the candidate to determine the direction or the research, and how much is expected to be joint problem solving? Where are the boundaries of the candidate's research autonomy? b. How are ways of working (for example, innovation, theoretical frameworks or new experimental methods) to be approached? Who makes the decision on the direction of the research? c. Review the role of the supervisory team members attached to the project.
2 - Meetings Wahapū is used to schedule meetings and record notes	a. How often will the candidate and main supervisor meet? How often will the full supervisory team meet? b. Who will set the agenda and how far ahead of meetings? c. Who will keep records of the meetings and how will they be documented and circulated?
3 - Contact between meetings	a. What type of communication is expected between meetings? b. Does the supervisor have an open door policy, or do they prefer appointments? c. Email/phone contact: when is off-limits (e.g. weekends)? How quickly will candidates/supervisors respond to emails? d. How will candidates and supervisors discuss availability over the course of the project?
4 - Candidate work life	a. What are the candidate's working hours and the expected levels of regular attendance at the University? b. Is a lab induction required? What are the candidate's expected responsibilities in the lab? c. What contact is expected around annual leave, sickness, working off site etc? d. Is employment within and outside the University anticipated? Be aware of any scholarship restrictions. e. Is access to specialised facilities or instruments required and how does the candidate organise access and training?
5 - Feedback	a. How much notice do supervisors expect before receiving work to review? b. What is the expected or usual turnaround time? c. How should written work be submitted for review: Small chunks or larger sections? Rough drafts or polished copy? d. Feedback types: Detailed corrections or more general comments on direction and content? How will candidates and supervisors check writing and feedback is understood on both sides? e. What is the expected level of support with literacy, writing skills and academic integrity? f. What are expectations around feedback on creative/lab work, presentations, professional practice, or other project areas?
6 - Monitoring supervision	a. Where does the candidate go for help – research , personal, support? b. How will candidates and supervisors approach difficult conversations if things aren't going well? c. What happens if things goes wrong?
7 - Other areas for discussion Doctoral support	a. Cultural acknowledgement, including differences in academic cultural background. b. Equity awareness discussion, if both parties are comfortable to discuss this. c. What are the expected level of pastoral care from the supervision team? Where can the candidate find further support? d. What are the candidate's family and community commitments? e. Does the supervisor have upcoming Research and Study Leave or other planned supervision absences?

Project

Topic	What to discuss
8 - Health, safety and ethics Health, safety and wellbeing Ethics	a. Is there Health and Safety training? If there is no formal training, how will the candidate keep safe during the project? b. Will the candidate need to apply for Ethics approval for the project? Who has responsibility for this application? What is each person's role?
9 - PReSS Account expendidature PReSS Account Policy	a. What is the plan for PReSS account expenditure? b. How will PReSS account costs be discussed before approval?
10 - Career expectations	a. What are the candidate's future plans (acknowledging these may change over time)? b. Discuss introductions to related professional bodies or societies. c. Discuss impact on publications plan, training and development, other in-candidature opportunities.
11 - Publications and authorship Thesis with publications Authorship	a. What is the publication plan for research undertaken during this thesis? b. What are the expectations around writing workload and credited authorship – group publications, single author, joint with supervisor? c. Is the candidate considering submitting a "Thesis with Publications"? If so, they must be aware of the co-authorship rules for any publications included.
12 - Conferences, research networks and other presentations Three Minute Thesis	a. What are the expectations around presenting research at conferences? b. What about any conference proceedings? c. What are the expectations around University presentations, including confirmation? d. Are there other University opportunities to present research, e.g. 3MT? e. Discuss relevant networks e.g. New Zealand or International Societies.
13 - Data access, storage and sharing Data Governance Policy Research Code of Conduct Policy	a. How will the candidate manage the data generated by the project? b. How will this data be stored and handed over on project completion? c. If a notebook/lab book is required, how often will this be maintained and checked? d. Will the project involve specialised data/statistical analysis and how does the candidate access support and training?
14 - Intellectual property Intellectual property: A guide	a.Discuss any IP-related issues within the project including appropriate record keeping and ownership.

Record responses to these discussion questions in the **Supervision Conversations: Discussion Record**.

Useful links

Information for new doctoral candidates
Doctoral support services