

# Supervisor models, roles and styles of supervision; Responsibilities of a PhD/M candidate

---

Professor HB Klopper: The Da Vinci Institute

---

# Some context

- **Different approaches to supervision**
- **Challenges faced by supervisors and students**
- **Conflicting expectations and blurred boundaries**
- **Changing roles and responsibilities of supervisors and students**
- **Things to lookout for**



# Questions

---

## Question 1:

What are the qualities of a good supervisor / student?

## Questions 2:

What are expected from supervisors / students?

## Question 3:

What are the biggest headaches for supervisors / students?



# Feedback



QUANT → qual? or QUAL  
↓  
quant?



# The challenges that students face

*(the supervisor's view)*

- Dependency on supervisor
- Not admitting to problems
- Not seeking advise and comments on their work from others
- Not understanding the required standard of work and showing insufficient initiative
- Poor progress / not meeting regularly
- Supervisor not interested in topic
- Conceptual difficulties
- Differences between supervisors



"I'm coordinating five different R&D projects,  
but SURE, I can spare a minute."

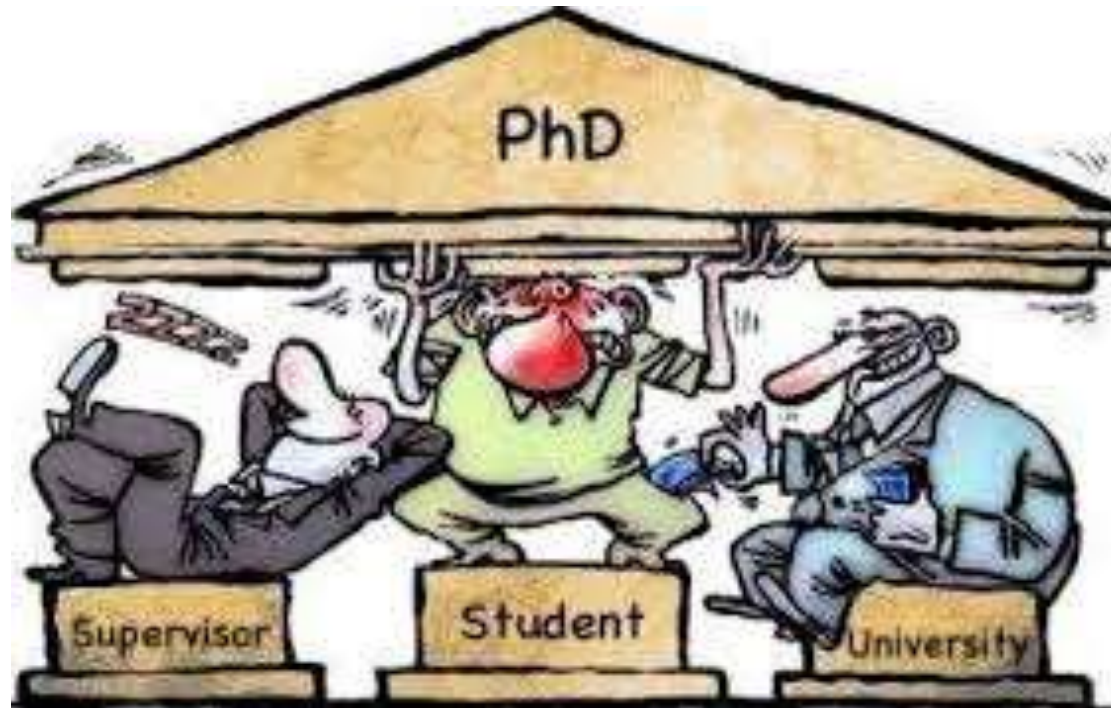
# The challenges that students face

## *(the student's view)*

- Self-doubts regarding capacity/competencies. Is my work good enough?
- The enormity of the task
- Emotional dimensions of the process: isolation, motivation and perfectionism
- Not enjoying the topic; Not knowing what is expected
- Lack of skills & stress
- Working arrangement with supervisor (the supervisor's personal qualities)
- Supervisor being too prescriptive 'my way is the only way'
- Practical issues: money, lifestyle, getting hold of the supervisor
- Supervisor with in-sufficient knowledge
- Supervisor's poor time management skills
- Ethical issues: are we being used?
- Lack of support and writer's block.



# What is expected?



- We need to understand the relationship between the supervisor and the student – many elements to a successful relationship
- The relationship may impact on what you do and on your research and writing
- The roles vary over time – need to understand how they change

# Managing the different expectations

## What students expect of the University:

- High quality, trained supervisors
- Reasonable access to resources
- Guidance on submission and completion
- Career development advice

## What supervisors expect of the student:

- Enthusiasm, commitment, professionalism, good work ethic, curiosity, honesty & integrity, knowledge of subject, organised
- Foster creativity, independence and reflection
- Ownership of research degree

## What students expect of the supervisor:

- PhD, qualified – professional, academic, ethical standard of work
- Can assess the research topic (does it have merit?)
- Know the regulations, documents and procedures....training
- Aware of available support services
- Can identify the students' training needs
- Is accessible and gives adequate time for uninterrupted supervision
- Competence in mentoring ... adaptable ... watchful and resourceful ... helps with career planning





# Responsibilities of the student

- Research must be undertaken independently with the support of the supervisor(s)
- Research must be of the highest standard and conducted in an ethical manner
- Be responsible for their own personal career development
- Be aware of academic rules, regulations, ethical guidelines & grievance procedures
- Maintain a good working relationship with supervisor: regular contact with supervisor, agree & keep deadlines, report on progress (end of semester report) & keep a written record of meetings; manage your supervisor
- Seek and participate in training courses, but do so in an ordered way – not course junkies?
- Be prepared to attend conferences / deliver papers / publish research
- Seek to publish the work, acknowledging the role of the supervisor, co-publishing with the supervisor when appropriate
- Submit final study within the agreed time frame
- Be aware of IP issues and commercial possibilities



# Responsibilities of the supervisor

At the outset a supervisor should:

- Explain what is involved in doing a masters or PhD
- Agree on the ground rules – identify the expectations
- Agree a programme of work and time frame
- Agree on a schedule of meetings / deadlines
- Respond promptly to emails and student submissions
- Be alert to how much influence you may have e.g. methodologically



# Roles of the supervisor



<b>DIRECTOR</b>	determines topic, method, provides ideas
<b>ADVISER</b>	helps to resolve technical problems, suggest alternatives
<b>TEACHER</b>	of research concepts, skills, techniques
<b>FACILITATOR</b>	provides access to resources, expertise other sources of support
<b>GUIDE</b>	suggests writing timetable, gives feedback on progress, path options
<b>CRITIC</b>	of design interpretations of data, drafts
<b>FREEDOM - GIVER</b>	authorises and encourages student to make decisions
<b>SUPPORTER</b>	gives encouragement, shows interest, discusses ideas
<b>FRIEND</b>	extends interest and concern to non-academic aspects of student's life
<b>MANAGER</b>	checks progress regularly, monitors, gives feedback, plans
<b>EXAMINER</b>	informal



# Common challenges / problems

- Poor planning & management of project
- Unrealistic expectations for the research
- Poor formulation of research question / hypotheses / propositions
- Research design & methodological difficulties
- Writing up
- Isolation
- Personal problems outside the research



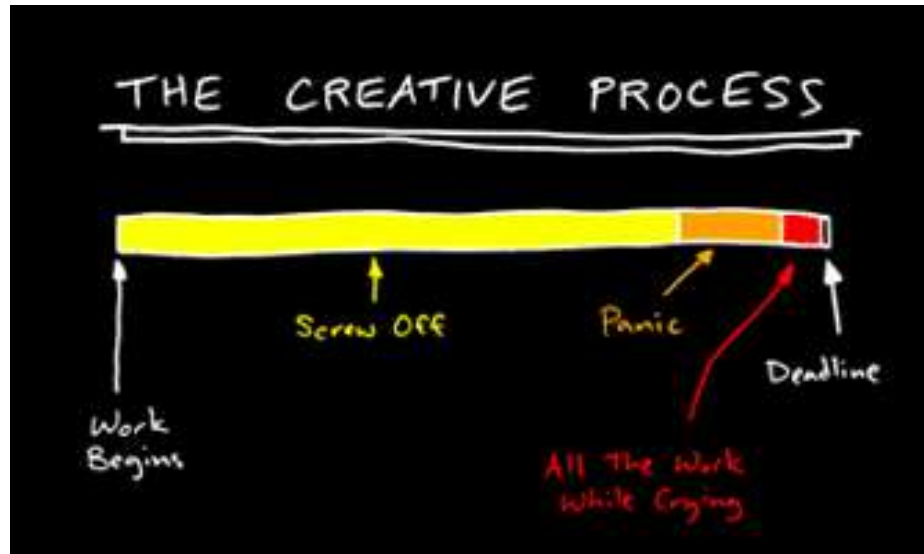
# Important qualities of an ideal research candidate

- Intelligence
- Independence / confidence
- Commitment
- Literacy / numeracy
- Time management / organisational skills
- Curiosity / ability to learn
- Enthusiasm and passion
- Ability to think
- Hardworking / diligence
- Motivation
- Sound research design and methodology



# The most substantial shortcomings affecting satisfactory progress

- Lack of commitment and focus
- Doesn't take advice / communicate with supervisor
- Poor writing and language skills / inadequate numeracy skills
- Lack of independence
- Poor time management and organisational skills
- Laziness and procrastination
- Lack of or wrong motivation
- Lack of intelligence / academic ability
- Lack of curiosity / ability to learn
- Lack of enthusiasm / passion to learn



*Thank  
you*



**Any Questions?**

---