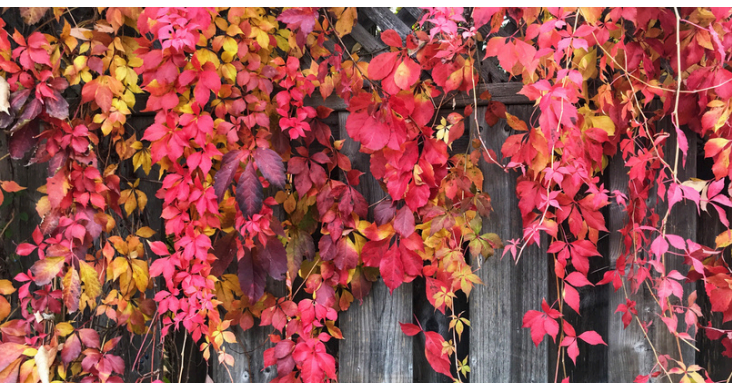


THE SUPERVISION SCOOP

The YorkU Graduate Supervision Support Hub Newsletter



WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- **FGS Supervision Guidelines**
- **IDP: Individualized Development Plan and Best Practices Guest Writer: Jennifer Hodder on the Supervisory Relationship**
- **Strong Start to Supervision Checklist**
- **GSSHUB Events & Conflict Course with Discount Code**

FGS SUPERVISION GUIDELINES

The following chart highlights select guidelines from FGS' Supervision Policy outlining the responsibilities of supervisors and students to help promote effective graduate supervision practices.

Example Guidelines	Student Role	Supervisor Role
Meetings	Meet regularly with the supervisor to review progress. The frequency for such meetings may vary, but should normally occur once a month and not less than once each term. Interact with other members of the supervisory committee as appropriate.	Be reasonably accessible to the student for consultation and discussion of the student's academic progress and research problems. The frequency of such meetings will vary according to the discipline involved and the stage and nature of the student's work, but should normally occur once a month, and not less than once a term.
Feedback	Give serious consideration to and respond to the advice and feedback received from the supervisor and the supervisory committee.	Give timely response to submitted written work, with constructive and concrete suggestions for improvements. This normally means within 3 weeks or as agreed upon between supervisor and student.
Annual Progress Report	Prepare a Report on Progress for an annual meeting with the full supervisory committee.	Convene an annual meeting of the supervisory committee, normally in the spring, to evaluate the student's Report on Progress and submit a completed copy to the GPD. Apart from highlighting the student's academic progress thus far, the report should also clearly identify the challenges, if any, facing the students including considerations for students with disability.

THE INDIVIDUALIZED DEVELOPMENT PLAN

What is the IDP?

It is a tool to assist graduate students to identify and develop their goals during their studies. It is designed to provide a framework for encouraging active participation in professional skills training and career management. It consists of a document that is meant to evolve during their studies to better reflect their changing goals and to highlight their progress and accomplishments.

What is a supervisor's responsibility with the IDP?

The supervisor's principal task consists of helping students realize their scholarly potential. The IDP can be relied upon as a helpful guide when supporting students in exploring various skills development opportunities. Having conversations with your students to review their overall goals while in graduate school can help them to formulate their research path and give you a better idea of their interests and aspirations throughout their studies.

The IDP enhance students' professional growth & skills by:

- Setting and communicating goals related to teaching, research, and/or professional development with a supervisor, faculty colleagues, or other mentors.
- Identifying ways to learn or improve your students' competencies to be used during their graduate work and within professional spaces.
- Identifying your students' strengths, talents and passions, as well as opportunities to use them during their studies and in their future professional lives while building an effective support network.

Why is the IDP a good tool to support graduate students?



BEST PRACTICES

These best practices can assist supervisors in helping their students achieve their academic potential and lay a supportive foundation for ongoing dialogue.

How Graduate Programs can Include the IDP in Class

- One-on-one sessions with incoming and outgoing graduate students in which the IDP is discussed along with career development and academic advice generally.
- Support professional skills development through doctoral seminars. A series of three-hour workshops related to the goals of the IDP was hosted in which the IDP was introduced with follow-up workshops to discuss strategies on how students can achieve their goals and to go over any challenges they've faced in achieving them.
- Introducing the IDP to mentorship circles outside York University, helping to create consistency for students engaging with a variety of mentors.
- Student-led workshops and conferences to promote student wellness and professional development were hosted, with the IDP being highlighted as a useful tool to complement the subject matter.

Resources for Graduate Faculty

- Guide for Supervisors/Faculty Mentors
- IDP Lesson Plan
- Timeline Example
- Guiding Questions for Meeting with Students

Student Reflections on the Supervisory Relationship

By Jennifer M. Hodder

Ahead of the Fall term, FGS hosted a webinar, “Discover Graduate Supervision at York”, for newly-admitted graduate students. It highlighted the Principles for Graduate Supervision at Ontario’s Universities now endorsed by FGS in October.

The webinar included the reflections of graduate student Jennifer Hodder on her supervisory relationship. Jennifer just completed her Masters of Science in Nursing and will attend convocation in October.

In this guest article, Jennifer shares her enactment of the student-specific responsibilities within graduate supervision and provides tips for incoming students based on her experiences and reflections.

I selected four responsibilities to share lived experiences around, beginning with “Selecting a topic of research, in collaboration with their supervisor, for which adequate resources (including financial and material resources) are available” (p.4). I shared that when selecting a topic for my thesis, my original idea was to talk to patients and families after admission to an ICU due to violence. My supervisor asked me to consider a different approach as talking to patients and families could present some challenges ethically that would be prohibitive at a Master’s level. During our conversation, my supervisor suggested that I consider talking with critical care trauma nurses to obtain their perspectives and understand their lived experiences. My supervisor introduced me to Canada’s nursing expert in the field as I began my thesis. However, discussions around the topic with my supervisor did not end there.

I had a desire to make this a strictly nursing study and my supervisor listened and suggested that I also speak to community professionals, to provide insight into the experiences of living with gun violence. I admit I was initially resistant to the idea, and the resistance continued through several conversations about the topic. However, my supervisor remained patient as my knowledge of the topic grew. I began to recognise the importance of speaking to people in the community, to consult them about causes of violence and what they would like nurses to know.

Next, I spoke to “Acting in the spirit of collegiality with the supervisor, supervisory committee, professors, departmental administrators, and fellow graduate students” (p.4). This began early in the supervisory relationship and my supervisor and I were able to recognise the professional in each other, being nurses, and use that as one of the building blocks for the foundation of our relationship. We acknowledged the power dynamics of the student and teacher relationship, and the boundaries that come with it. As a result, I feel that my supervisor has become a mentor, and I hope to continue the relationship into the future. Ultimately this is about respect for each other, not just as student and teacher, but as individuals with independent lives.

I followed this with my reflections on “Considering and responding to the constructive feedback of the supervisor and supervisory committee” (p.4). This was a piece of advice I received from my first professor in my first graduate course, before I had even met my supervisor or had even decided to do a thesis.

Receiving constructive feedback can be ego bruising, especially when you open the document and see a sea of red. If possible, after reading the edits and comments, step away. Be upset. Get your comfy pants on and eat your pint of ice cream. But in 24 hours you have to put on your “big girl pants and get’er done.” The key points of this advice are: it’s ok to have a bruised ego; wait before responding and/or asking for clarification; treat this as a learning opportunity for one-on-one learning from someone that has more education and experience than you; and lastly, we can do hard things, some of the best learning comes from when we stumble and fall, your supervisor is there to help you get back up.

Lastly, I spoke about “Meeting and communicating regularly with the supervisor” (p.4). I found this to be a challenge in the early days of my supervisory relationship, especially not having a clear understanding of what was expected of me. I also realized that I didn’t have a clear understanding for myself. How often we were meeting was not clearly defined in the beginning and it was a challenge for both of us as my job is not 9-5 Monday to Friday. I also shared that I had struggled with my mental health, being a critical care nurse during COVID. For me, this meant I struggled with communication. Not just replying to emails, but it influenced how I would interpret tone in the emails received. I sought insight from friends, family and other students, especially in the early days of the supervisory relationship when I was still getting to know my supervisor.

Interested in being a guest writer for the Supervision Scoop?
Contact Tracy Bhoola tbhoola@yorku.ca

I also shared a few tips for new students considering or entering a supervisory relationship.

- Build a community: find at least one person who is doing this journey; no matter how much family and friends love and support you, they probably won’t understand what you’re going through; take the time to look at what FGS is offering to graduate students, this builds community and this is highly informative as well.
- You don’t know what you don’t know, and that’s ok: have a beginner's mindset which means checking your ego and approaching this process with an open mind and heart; give yourself permission to explore new ideas and perspectives.
- Ask for what you need: be clear within yourself about what you want; ask for help, guidance or ask for a break; it’s ok if the answer is no, it’s the beginning of a discussion.
- Find Joy: enjoy the process; don’t take yourself too seriously; laugh as much as possible. And if possible, find something to laugh with your supervisor about.



Reference

Ontario Council on Graduate Studies, (2023, June 26). Principles for Graduate Supervision at Ontario’s Universities. <https://cou.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Principles-for-Graduate-Supervision-at-Ontario-s-Universities-FN-June-2023.pdf>

Strong Start to Supervision Checklist

Following a national sector scan, FGS is pleased to release a new tool for supervisors with the aim of the Strong Start to Supervision Checklist to facilitate a strong start to the supervisory relationship through clarification and discussion.

The checklist serves to complement the FGS Discussion Topics to Inform Productive Supervisory Relationships. As a shared responsibility between students and their supervisors, effective graduate supervision fosters positive, respectful, and productive relationships that enhance student success.

Graduate students are responsible for their degree completion, requiring independent learning and collaboration with their supervisor. They must engage fully with their studies, meet deadlines, and maintain open communication.

Supervisors are expected to provide mentorship, guidance, and timely feedback on the student's work, including thesis and publication materials.

This checklist helps facilitate open dialogue to clarify roles, preferred styles and programmatic milestones. As a communication tool, the checklist can proactively address potential mismatches in expectations and responsibilities, ensuring both parties understand their roles from the beginning. Regular communication is encouraged, with the checklist serving as a guide for discussing program expectations, working styles, wellness and communication.

While it is essential to commence this checklist at the beginning of the student-supervisor relationship, it should also be revisited periodically to discuss additional items that become relevant, especially during significant changes in circumstances or committee membership.

While organized into four sections, supervisory dyads are invited to discuss items in an order that makes sense at the time.

To ensure a smooth relationship, it is recommended that both parties review the Strong Start to Supervision Checklist annually, ideally alongside the annual progress report, to keep expectations aligned.



The Supervisory Relationship Roles and Responsibilities

We have discussed:

- the purpose of graduate supervision in general and of the supervisor, student and supervisory committee (if applicable).
- the purpose of the supervisory committee including their responsibilities to provide feedback through scheduled supervisory meetings, and expectations regarding contact with individual committee members.
- the FGS Graduate Supervision regulations for supervisors and students as well as those listed in the Ontario Principles for Graduate Supervision.
- the shared responsibility of fostering a positive, respectful and appropriate working relationship between student and supervisor.
- the supervisory committee roles and responsibilities as well as the process to secure additional members to the supervisory committee.

Objectives And Preferred Styles

We have discussed:

- our respective objectives and how we are planning to achieve them, noting how student objectives in particular, may shift over time.
- the student's preferred learning style(s) (e.g. mostly independent, does well with structure, needs feedback/encouragement) and agree to revisit this discussion periodically during check-ins.
- the supervisor's preferred supervisory approaches (e.g. hands-on/hands-off, mentor, manager, organizer) and agree to revisit this discussion topic periodically during check-ins.

Communication

We have discussed:

- the responsibilities of supervisors and students to maintain timely communication.
- the preferred means of communication (e.g., email, phone, in-person, online) as well as expectations for 'check-ins' by the student regarding progress or requests for scholarly guidance.
- the length of time to expect a response for emailed questions, chapter draft feedback, queries regarding field work and other specifics associated with the student's given program.

Conflict Resolution

We have discussed:

- how conflicts can sometimes arise in the student-supervisor relationship, the FGS approach to conflict and related supports and the benefits of open, proactive and transparent dialogue with one another aimed at conflict prevention.
- the mechanisms for raising any concerns over supervision or other conflicts that may arise and of the availability of assistance from the Graduate Program Director, and other offices at the university including the Faculty of Graduate Studies Dean's office.

Feedback

We have discussed:

- the teaching and communicative role of feedback on written and creative work (such as thesis or dissertation proposals, scholarship applications, proposals, ethics applications, thesis/ dissertation chapters, creative works and potential publications) that is expected from the supervisor and supervisory committee where appropriate.
- the reasonable expectation to receive feedback from a supervisor or committee member is normally up to 15 business days depending on the size of the document and timing of submission.
- a plan to give, receive and respond to feedback on student work that works for us given our preferred supervisory approach and learning style(s).
- the importance of student responses to feedback including the arrangement of a meeting to discuss any areas requiring further clarity.

Frequency And Format of Meetings

We have discussed:

- the importance of scheduling and attending regular student-supervisor meetings and supervisory committee meetings in order to support the timely completion of the degree.
- and agreed upon a meeting schedule in terms of frequency and format(s); agenda co-creation and the shared responsibility of creating summary notes.
- when and for what purposes the supervisory committee will be met with, including the necessity of individual meetings with committee members and students.

Academic, Progression and Program Requirements

Program Requirements & Progression

We have discussed:

- program-specific requirements, components, timelines and time limits.
- reasonable expectations for student workload and milestone completion, including a discussion of hours devoted to study and other professional development activities.
- agreed upon a meeting schedule and format that will support the timely completion of the degree.
- the importance of the FGS annual progress report including its components, goals, timeline and related supervisory committee meeting requirement.

Academic Conduct, Academic Integrity

We have discussed:

- Academic Integrity issues such as plagiarism, and the misrepresentation of data in presentations, proposals, theses, dissertations, creative works and the consequences of these acts.
- the York University Academic Conduct Policy and Procedures.

Research Expectations, Research Ethics & Research Integrity

We have discussed:

- the necessity of ethics approval before data collection involving humans or animals can begin.
- the role of the supervisor in supporting students to draft and complete research ethics forms prior to submission to the Office of Research Ethics.
- the principles of approaches to Safeguarding Research, Research Integrity in general and specific aspects salient to the given program and intended area of scholarly inquiry.
- expectations regarding research including lab and/or field research.

Funding & Scholarships

We have discussed:

- the student's funding sources, as outlined in the offer letter at the time of admission, including any associated expectations for the student or supervisor.
- the availability of scholarships and awards and of the student and supervisor's roles attached to these opportunities.

Intellectual Property

We have discussed:

- Intellectual Property issues that may arise during the course of graduate studies in general and those related to the particular program and those related to the student/supervisor collaboration where applicable.
- the necessity to review the FGS regulations on Intellectual Property and the related student-supervisor Intellectual Property Awareness Checklist.

Well-being and Professional Development

Academic & Professional Development

We have discussed:

- the necessity to build academic skills related to graduate studies and of the student's responsibility to seek out and avail themselves of opportunities for growth associated with scholarly skills and future career readiness.
- the importance of accessing and acquiring professional development skills and that experiences of this nature add value to the student's future career goals.
- the role of the Individualized Development Plan (IDP) and the importance to revisit aspects of it annually, ideally in conjunction with the Annual Progress Report.
- that the identification of opportunities for the student to attend suitable conferences and present scholarly/creative work is a shared responsibility.
- that while publications and research outputs are of benefit to the student's professional and academic development, we understand that they should not displace or be prioritized ahead of meeting academic milestones.

Well-Being

We have discussed:

- the importance of work-life balance for the graduate student and supervisor and of the availability of graduate student wellness services from FGS.
- the rights of students and supervisors to take time off, the importance of informing one another of absences and the requirement of the supervisor to arrange coverage of supervisory duties should an absence be extended.
- the shared expectation to co-create safe teaching and learning environments within the academic space and supervisory relationship.

Accommodations

In situations where the student identifies as having a disability, we have discussed:

- the need to register with Student Accessibility Services. We further discussed that once an accommodation plan is provided to the supervisor, a follow up discussion will be arranged to discuss any academic accommodations and to revisit expectations and deadlines.
- the necessity of ongoing communication regarding accommodations during check-ins and supervisory/committee meetings.

GSSHub Events



Graduate Supervision 101 for New Faculty

November 12, 2024, in person



Wellbeing and Supervision: Strategies for Graduate Faculty Workshop with Gina Wisker

November 29, 2024, via Zoom Register



Supervision Sparkshop: Introducing the IDP

November 21, 2024

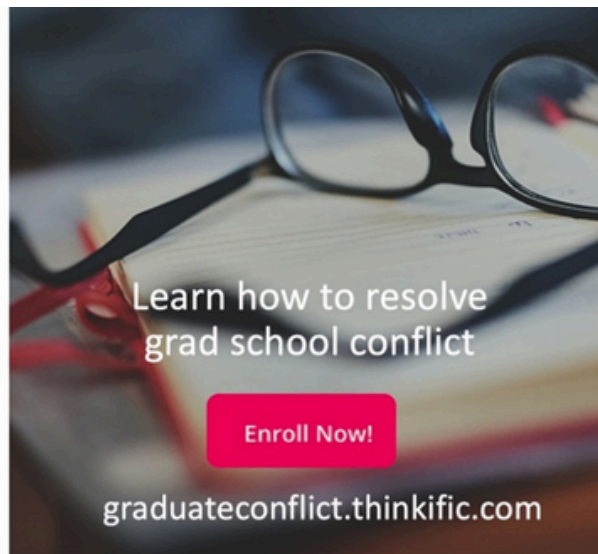
11:30am-12:00pm via Zoom Register



Graduate Student Think Tank Meeting

December 3, 2024, in person

Based on input from the graduate community of GPDs as well as our survey of graduate supervisors, conflict mediation in graduate supervision emerges as important. As we consider inside-York supports surrounding conflict to complement the recently augmented supervision policy's section on conflict, FGS is pleased to advise graduate supervisors and GPDs of an online conflict management course specifically focused on graduate supervision and designed for graduate faculty.



~~\$475~~
now only **\$199***

*Special price for YorkU faculty with code:

fgsyorkresolves



*When grad things happen...
you'll be ready.*

Perfect for supervisors and GPDs interested in learning dispute resolution skills you need to identify emerging issues and effectively resolve everyday grad school concerns.

The course instructor is Heather McGhee Peggs, lawyer, ombuds and author of *Supervising Conflict: A Guide for Faculty*. She led these efforts at the University of Toronto for several years and her book and course are the outcomes of lessons learned.

FGS has negotiated a special reduced price of \$199 (regular registration price is \$475) for members of the YorkU graduate community. **Register with code fgsyorkresolves**

For more information about what is in the self-directed modules and to register, please visit graduateconflict.thinkific.com

Reach out to the GSSHub Team

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