



KRAKOW SCHOOL  
OF INTERDISCIPLINARY  
PHD STUDIES

# **The role of the supervisor, principles of cooperation between supervisor and doctoral student, good practices**





**The primary task of the supervisor is to introduce the doctoral student to the scientific community and ensure that he/she prepares his doctoral dissertation.** The period of preparation of the dissertation is also the beginning of the formation of a "new researcher".

The principles of scientific work and norms of conduct acquired during this period will bear fruit in the future. It is worth remembering that **the supervisor plays a key role in shaping both the skills and attitudes of a doctoral student; should become a mentor for the young researcher.**

*The following basic principles of cooperation between the supervisor and the doctoral student can constitute a set of guidelines and limit the number of inappropriate practices.*



## Role of the supervisor:

### I. Supervision of the preparation of the doctoral dissertation

#### 1) Individual Research Proposal

- The doctoral student prepares an individual research proposal (IRP) **in consultation with the supervisor.**
- The IRP must take into account in particular the schedule of research and preparation of the doctoral dissertation, the methods of achieving the effects of the [8PRK](#) and **the deadline for submitting the doctoral dissertation.**
- The preparation of the IPB must be **carefully considered** because its implementation is assessed during the mid-term evaluation, in the middle of the doctoral student's education.
- Establishing and following the schedule specified in the IRP has a **motivating** effect on both the doctoral student and the supervisor.
- IRP can be updated.



## 2) Deadline for submitting a doctoral dissertation

It should take into account, on the one hand, the need to perform research and prepare a dissertation, and, on the other hand, the need to protect the doctoral student against a period in which he will not receive funding from the doctoral school.

- **The doctoral scholarship** at the doctoral school is paid **only for a period of 48 months**.
- Submitting the doctoral dissertation exactly at the end of the 4th year of education at the doctoral school (after 48 months) means that **the doctoral student is left without specific financial resources while waiting for the defense**.



### 3) Monitoring doctoral student's progress

- The supervisor should constantly monitor the progress of the doctoral student's work, while providing the doctoral student with the necessary **substantive and methodological assistance** in scientific work.
- The supervisor's approval of **annual reports for each year of education** makes it possible to systematically assess the doctoral student's scientific development and the progress of the doctoral thesis.
- The supervisor may request a **committee assessment of the doctoral student's work progress** once during his or her education at the Doctoral School, but not earlier than after the end of the first year of the doctoral student's education.



#### 4) Mid-term evaluation

- Halfway through the period of training, a doctoral student undergoes a mid-term evaluation carried out by a Committee, which also includes research workers employed in other scientific entities.
- **The implementation of the Individual Research Proposal (IRP) is assessed.**
- Any delays in the implementation of IRP require detailed explanation.
- The effects of a negative evaluation affect both the doctoral student and the supervisor.



## 5) Submitting a doctoral dissertation

Submitting a doctoral dissertation at the end of training at the doctoral school requires attaching a positive opinion of the appointed supervisor or supervisors.

### **ATTENTION! A doctoral student submits a doctoral dissertation 2 times:**

- first time: **at the end of education at a doctoral school** on the terms specified by the school, thus obtaining confirmation of obtaining learning outcomes for qualifications at PQF level 8. This dissertation remains in the doctoral student's personal file.
- second time: **when initiating the procedure for awarding a doctoral degree** on the terms specified by the relevant Scientific Council of the institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences or the University Disciplinary Council.



## Role of the supervisor:

### II. Help in shaping specific scientific attitudes and skills

- A doctoral student must not only prepare a dissertation, but also learn **the specifics of scientific work**, so that in the future he/she will be able to **independently conduct research** at the highest possible level, also in cooperation with other scientists.
- **The supervisor plays the role of a mentor** who, through his own actions, teaches the doctoral student **certain patterns of behavior and principles of cooperation**.





## Role of the supervisor:

### III. Introducing a doctoral student into the scientific environment

- Supporting active participation in **seminars, scientific conferences and research internships**.
- Assistance in obtaining external **sources of financing** for scientific research.
- Help in establishing contacts in the scientific community.
- Familiarizing the doctoral student with the obligations arising from **affiliation**.
- Conducting **on-the-job occupational health and safety training** for a doctoral student at the place where he/she conducts research.



## Role of the supervisor:

### IV. Assistance in preparing an individual doctoral student education program

Unlike first- and second-cycle studies, the main emphasis in the doctoral school is on scientific and research issues.

The individual education of a doctoral student includes:

- classes selected from the doctoral school's offer,
- doctoral student's participation in conferences,
- participation of a doctoral student in research internships,
- vocational training of a doctoral student, teaching,
- preparation of scientific articles by a doctoral student.



## Rules of cooperation between supervisor and doctoral student

1. The basis of cooperation is **constant communication between the supervisor and the doctoral student**. This communication takes place on many levels, not only scientific ones. The supervisor indicates the principles of scientific work, good practices, with particular emphasis on the specificity of scientific work in a given discipline.

2. Currently, **the expectations of doctoral candidates are often very different from the expectations of their supervisors**, therefore it is necessary to establish contact/cooperation between the future supervisor and the doctoral candidate as early as possible.

The supervisor-doctoral student relationship **should begin before recruitment to the doctoral school**. Both the future supervisor and the doctoral candidate should be aware that recruitment to the doctoral school tests the candidates' scientific competences and knowledge and at the same time gives an idea of the quality of contact between the future supervisor and the doctoral candidate.



3. Doctoral students who are completely independent are rare, so **time must be reserved for supervision**. A researcher, especially one with numerous obligations, must assess his or her ability to supervise subsequent doctoral students. An increase in the number of doctoral students per supervisor is often associated with a decrease in the quality of care and failure to meet the deadlines specified in the individual research proposal.

4. Cooperation between the supervisor and the doctoral student includes advising, assessing work, praising and criticizing. **Assessing a doctoral student's work is necessary to indicate appropriate directions for research and development**. Only constructive criticism motivates a doctoral student's further work and scientific development.

5. **The problem of meeting deadlines and obligations** concerns both the supervisor and the doctoral student. **Each party has different time possibilities and different life situations**, so issues of time and availability should be discussed as early as possible.



6. The doctoral student must know the definition of a doctoral dissertation, and the supervisor should explain to him what an "original solution to a scientific problem" or "an original solution in the application of the results of one's own scientific research in the economic or social sphere" is. A doctoral dissertation should meet **the requirement of novelty**.

7. It is worth determining **the form of the doctoral dissertation** as early as possible. Will the doctoral thesis be a monograph or a collection of scientific articles? Will it be prepared in Polish or English? Is it worth determining the possibility of exposure to the world of a given work and establishing cooperation with domestic and foreign scientists?

8. The education of a doctoral student at a doctoral school and the awarding of a doctoral degree **are currently subject to the provisions of the Code of Administrative Procedure**. Administrative decisions are issued both in the process of removing a doctoral student from the list, admitting a foreigner to study at a doctoral school, and awarding a doctoral degree. Administrative proceedings involve numerous formal requirements. In case of irregularities, the proceedings may be transferred to court.



## Good practices:

**1. Getting to know the candidate early.** A candidate for a supervisor should establish contact with a candidate for a doctoral student as early as possible, even before recruitment to the doctoral school, to get to know the candidate, his or her motivation, capabilities, experience, etc.

It is unacceptable to unreflectively agree to take on the role of supervisor for unknown candidates for doctoral students. Such situations are quickly noted during the entrance exam and prove, above all, the approach of the candidate for supervisor.

**2. Defining the principles of cooperation.** The principles of cooperation and expectations of both parties should be clearly defined as early as possible, in particular in terms of scientific, financial, time availability, method and frequency of contact, etc. The principles of cooperation should also take into account the family and care obligations of the doctoral student and the supervisor. The share of each party in the common scientific achievements should also be clearly specified.



**4. Learning by doing.** During the completion of the doctoral thesis, a doctoral student should actively cooperate with the supervisor, including agreeing on the possibility of using new solutions, correcting the initial theses of the dissertation or, for example, its scope.

**5. Exposure to discussion.** Various platforms for discussion should be created: meetings, gatherings, seminars, discussion forums. It is worth confronting both the topic of the doctoral thesis and the way of working with the external environment.

**6. Discussion of "risk factors".** The tasks necessary to be performed should be discussed with the doctoral student, the doctoral student should also be familiarized with the weak points and the so-called "risk factors". If possible, it is worth considering alternative options or options that minimize risk factors as early as possible.



**7. The nature of cooperation.** Depending on the capabilities and expectations of both parties, it should be considered whether: 1) recruit a doctoral student to the doctoral school and pay him a doctoral stipend, or 2) employ him as an assistant and allow him to complete his doctoral degree externally. Each solution has both advantages and disadvantages and depends on individual circumstances.

**8. Foreign candidates.** In the case of foreign doctoral candidates, the rules of education and obtaining a doctoral degree in Poland should be clearly explained.

**9. Further education.** Beginning supervisors should benefit from the skills of more experienced supervisors and improve their competences using available materials\* and training.

**10. Conflict resolution.** In case of difficulties and conflicts, it is worth using the possibility of internal mediation, e.g. by people representing the doctoral school.





## Success/risk factors:

- 1. A PhD is a project that needs to be planned well.** The quality of the prepared plan affects the possibility of its implementation, and thus the final effect of joint work.
- 2. Topic.** The choice of the topic of the dissertation should be carefully considered. Is it better to choose a known issue or maybe a topic completely new to science? Is a new topic better because it is not known, or worse because it may turn out to be so difficult that no one has been able to and will not be able to develop it?
- 3. Systematicity.** It is necessary not only in scientific work, but also in contacts between the supervisor and the doctoral student. Preparation of an Individual Research Proposal, annual reports and mid-term evaluation promote systematicity in scientific work.



**4. Empiricality.** It is necessary to carefully plan how the data will be obtained. Is there enough time to obtain data for a PhD? How long will I receive data? How long and where will the data be stored? Who will have access to them? Where to get the data? Do I have access to equipment and research tools? Do I have money for research? Will it be necessary to travel abroad to obtain data?

**5. Mutual communication.** Without communication, a PhD will not be possible. Communication teaches both the doctoral student and the supervisor. Having different social competences should not be a problem if both parties treat each other with respect.



**\* materials regarding the role of a supervisor:**

1. <https://instytucja.pan.pl/kodeks-etyki-pracownika-naukowego>
2. <https://issuu.com/eui-publications/docs/codeofpracticesupervisionnov031.pdf>
3. <https://allea.org/code-of-conduct/>
4. <http://www.uni-frankfurt.de/52338471/Promotionshandbuch2012-Supervisors.pdf>
5. [http://www.uniwind.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Publikationen/UniWiND\\_Bd4\\_Englisch\\_web.pdf](http://www.uniwind.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publikationen/UniWiND_Bd4_Englisch_web.pdf)