

## Student and Supervisor team workshop

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### Intent:

- To stimulate and support dialogue on aspects related to wellbeing and work.
- Enable supervisory team dialogue in a safe space to stimulate expectation management, relatability and lower supervisor dependency.

### Audience:

- Groups of 4 peer; OR
- Two students and two supervisors per group

### Workshop Plan:

<b>Intro and lunch: 35 min</b>		
Plenary	(35 min)	Walk-in and lunch
		Introduce the intent of the workshop and create a safe sharing space and make groups of 4 as specified above.
<b>Workshop Part 1- Discuss a topic in groups without supervisors: 35 min</b>		
Instructions		4 topics* available to choose from, discuss one or two. 7 minutes each. You can choose who goes first, student or supervisor. Just listen first and ask open questions. Dive into the situation and discuss the why.
Group discussion	(15 min)	Respond to the questions on the card. Dive into the why. <i>(Refer to the yellow topic and question cards in the attached sample below)</i>
Plenary discussion	(20 min)	Each group shares. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the expectations in the group align?</li> <li>• Were there unexpected perspectives/ responses you were surprised by?</li> <li>• Why/ How did you pick a topic at your table?</li> <li>• Have you explicitly discussed these topics within your supervisory teams?</li> <li>• How did you or would you bring it up with supervisors?</li> </ul>
<b>Workshop Part 2- Address Problem Scenario without supervisors: 40 min</b>		
Instructions		Within groups choose one topic that you would like to address the scenario* around. Take a minute to read the two perspectives at the table out loud. Then first address the supervisors' perspective within then group, and then discuss your own reaction to the situation. <i>*Sample scenarios attached below.</i>
Group discussion	(10 min)	Considering the supervision perspective with the group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you expect your supervisor to take any steps to change the situation?</li> <li>• What steps must your supervisor take to change/ improve the situation?</li> </ul>
	(10 min)	Discuss your reactions to the situation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What did you do/ would you do in a situation like this yourself?</li> <li>• What do you expect from your supervisor?</li> <li>• How could you communicate the situation to your supervisor?</li> </ul> <i>Note: Be specific. Not just 'communicate' with your supervisor but 'how'? i.e. verbal and non-verbal, language, tone etc. Take this as an opportunity to practice what you could say.</i>
Plenary	(20 min)	Share the most useful insights from your groups' discussion. Per group
<b>Round-Up and feedback: 15 min. Make plans to continue dialogue with your groups!</b>		

<b>Workshop Part 1- Discuss a topic in groups with supervisors: 35 min</b>		
Instructions		4 topics* available to choose from, discuss one or two. 7 minutes each. You can choose who goes first, student or supervisor. Just listen first and ask open questions. Dive into the situation and discuss the why.
Group discussion	(15 min)	Respond to the questions on the card. Dive into the why. <i>(Refer to the yellow topic and question cards in the attached sample below)</i>
Plenary discussion	(20 min)	Each group shares. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the expectations in the group align?</li> <li>• Were there any misalignments?</li> <li>• Were there unexpected perspectives/ responses you were surprised by?</li> <li>• How aware/ unaware were you of each other's perspectives?</li> <li>• Have you explicitly discussed these topics within your supervisory teams?</li> <li>• How did you or would you bring it up with supervisors?</li> </ul>
<b>Workshop Part 2- Address Problem Scenario with supervisors: 40 min</b>		
Instructions		Within groups choose one topic that you would like to address the scenario* around. Take a minute to read the two perspectives at the table out loud. One by one respond to the situation from the others' perspective first. Don't jump to yours yet, you will switch back to your own perspective in a bit.
Group discussion	(10 min)	Discuss your reaction in the other's shoe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would you take any steps to change the situation?</li> <li>• What steps would you take to change/ improve the situation?</li> </ul> <i>Note: Be specific. Not just 'communicate' with each other. But 'how' (i.e. verbal and non-verbal language, tone etc.)</i>
		<b>Switch roles to yourselves now.</b>
	(10 min)	Discuss your own reactions to the situation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What would you do in a situation like this yourself?</li> <li>• Have you experienced a similar situation before? What happened then?</li> <li>• How would you improve the situation as a team?</li> </ul> <i>Note: Be specific.</i>
Plenary	(20 min)	Share the most useful insights from your groups' discussion. Per group

Sample topics with questions (Cards from workshop with MSc. graduation students and supervisors at ME)

**Guidance and Support**

*Questions for supervisors*

What can/ should I guide and support students with during graduation?

What can students approach me for in terms of guidance and support?

*Tip:* Link back to past experience – what did students need from you, where were your boundaries in terms of what, when and how you supported them.

**Guidance and Support**

*Questions for students*

What do I need guidance and support with?

What can I approach my supervisor for (e.g. mental well-being, planning, etc.)?

*Tip:* Think about previous supervision you might have had, the good and not so good.

**Motivation**

*Questions for supervisors*

What motivates and demotivates me most about graduation supervision?

How does your student contribute to your motivation/ demotivation when supervising?

*Tip:* Think of a time where you felt both motivated/demotivated when supervising a student and why that was. Explain the situation to your group – what happened, how did it make you feel, what was the outcome?

**Motivation**

*Questions for students*

What was my main motivation for selecting this project/ topic for graduation?

How has your supervisor contributed to your motivation/ demotivation towards the project?

*Tip:* Think about a time where you felt motivated/ demotivated during your graduation project and why. Explain the situation to your group – what happened, how did it make you feel, what was the outcome?

**Criticality and Feedback**

*Questions for supervisors*

How critical/ detailed am I in my supervision feedback style? Too polite, too harsh?

What kind of feedback should I provide to my graduation student?

*Tip:* Think about the feedback you have given to students in the past and their response to feedback. How does student response factor in to your feedback?

**Criticality and Feedback**

*Questions for students*

How do I respond to criticism or lack thereof? Do I often receive it as a personal attack, constructive feedback or with indifference?

What kind of feedback do I need from my supervisor?

*Tip:* Think about experiences when you dealt with negative feedback. Explain the situation to your group – what happened and how did it make you feel? Think about what kind of feedback will help you during graduation?

**Team Dialogue**

*Questions for supervisors*

What kind of supervisor do I feel comfortable being (e.g. the friend/teammate, the monitor, the expert, the manager)?

What kind of supervision do I tend to avoid any why?

*Tip:* Think about how most of your conversations go with students - which ones bring you energy, and which ones drain you.

**Team Dialogue**

*Questions for students*

What kind of dialogue do I predominantly have with my supervisor (e.g. too polite, debate/discussion, inquiry, generative – thinking together)?

What kind of dialogue do I prefer to have with my supervisor?

*Tip:* Think about how your conversations go with supervisors - which ones bring you energy, and which ones drain you.

## Sample scenarios (Cards from workshop with MSc. graduation students and supervisors at ME)

### Study delay and expectations

#### Student Perspective

Alongside your graduation project, you also have a course you have to redo, a part-time job and house chores that take up your time. The graduation project to-dos are already a never-ending list, and your supervisor has asked you to add more activities to the already intense research plan. It's all together overwhelming, and you're afraid the project might be delayed, if you want to end up with a great project. You are also struggling to keep up with the tasks for the project, but you don't want to let your supervisor down either - you feel a bit guilty about not keeping up. Your supervisor's additional activities come with enthusiasm in that they love your project and want the best for you. Perhaps the problem is that you are not explicitly admitting that you are overloaded. But you are hoping to do a PhD here and want to impress – your supervisor is aware of your intentions.

#### Supervisor Perspective

You are supervising a very enthusiastic student, who is very invested in the project and topic. In every meeting the student is well prepared with slides to discuss, and questions for feedback. You do feel they might even be interested in taking the topic further as a PhD or researcher. So, you're not afraid to explore a few additional research routes with the student, as they seem equally interested and invested in the topic. However, lately, the interactions with the students haven't been as fantastic as they were in the beginning. You've asked a couple of times, but you don't want to pry. It might just be a tough few days the student is going through.

### Difference of opinion between company and TUD supervisors

#### Student Perspective

You are playing 'piggy in the middle', being stuck between differences of opinions between your two supervisors - one academic, one in-company. They have different needs. The lack of dialogue and cooperation between them both is affecting you and your progress. You feel like you need to take the lead when you could be working on your research. But you don't want to ruffle any feathers – TUD supervisors are assessing you after all, and the company might offer you a job. And perhaps this is just part of the whole process. Your peers don't know how to advise you on how to tackle the matter and you are lost. You have also approached your supervisor about this but felt that there was a lack of support. Perhaps this is understandable, they are not there to hold your hand but rather be a guide. Then again perhaps you did not explicitly address your concerns for fear they might judge your incompetencies.

#### Supervisor Perspective

You are one of two supervisors to your student, the other supervisor working in a local company. Throughout the process, you are realizing that the company has exceedingly high expectations of the student in terms of research outcomes. But you need to remind the student that this is still a learning environment, where they should be able to make mistakes and have space to learn and carry out a research project. The student is unable to take lead, and you need to get more involved in managing the collaboration and expectations between the student and the company. This adds on to your already packed schedule of supervising 7 Msc. thesis projects, running a course and applying for a grant.

### Feedback & inter-cultural differences

#### Student Perspective

The way within which feedback is given to you is not, in your eyes, respectful. You feel attacked and nothing is good enough for your supervisor. You are used to feedback given in a way that is positive, even though it is constructive. It could be a cultural thing. But you are also someone who is sensitive and can take things to heart, perhaps too much?

#### Supervisor Perspective

You are quite direct in your approach – that is how students learn. Yes, you understand that it might come across as 'too much' at times. But at the end of the day, you are doing what is best for them. 'You need to be cruel to be kind' and all that! And research does show that the sandwich effect does not work. It is best be honest. But perhaps your student, given their cultural upbringing, might not be used to your style of feedback? How do you find a balance here?

### Communication

#### Student Perspective

Your supervisor is so slow in replying. You sometimes need to wait days for a question that is so minimal in nature, but it is imperative that you get a reply in order to move forward with the project. It is making you really nervous, and you are not sure how to approach it with them.

#### Supervisor Perspective

You have a lot on your plate at the moment. 7 Msc. thesis projects, running a course and applying for a grant – such is the life of an academic. Sometimes your student contacts you for such small queries and during out of office hours. You also have a family at home who needs your attention. You want to help as much as you can but you are finding it difficult to find a balance in your life. Then again, you realise that this is not your student's fault and they should not be affected by your overburdened schedule.