

# Faculty Graduate School 3mE – Role of the PhD mentor

TU Delft Graduate School recognises an important role to the PhD mentor in advising and supporting the PhD candidate during his or her PhD track. To identify this role TU Delft Graduate school formulated a basic document with the general roles and duties of the PhD mentor. Based on this document the 3mE Faculty Graduate school has specified the description of the PhD mentor and formulated the following instruction.

## PhD mentor appointment to PhD candidate

- During the Welcome Meeting at the Faculty Graduate Office the PhD candidate is informed about his or her PhD mentor.
- To create a confidential objective environment the PhD mentor is to be chosen from a different department as the PhD candidate.
- After the PhD mentor is appointed to the mentorship of a PhD candidate, the 3mE Graduate school informs the PhD mentor via e-mail with copy to the PhD candidate.

## What is to be expected from a PhD mentor

- Within two weeks after the PhD Mentor has received this e-mail the PhD mentor **will invite the PhD candidate in for** an introductory meeting.
- The PhD mentor should meet the PhD candidate at least **twice a year**.
- The promoter and supervisor are both responsible for supervision of the candidate. The PhD mentor primarily is an **advisor to the PhD candidate**, addressing the process of the PhD track, focusing on the supervision and the role of the PhD candidate in the PhD track (and not on the content!), monitoring the **wellbeing and progress** of the PhD candidate.
- The PhD mentor needs to be **independent and objective**, and therefore will both not be present at the Go/No go meeting nor at the yearly review meetings.
- The PhD mentor **motivates and supports** the PhD candidate, to complete his PhD track in close collaboration with his supervisory team, facing challenges and solving problems within the team itself.
- When the PhD candidate is facing problems the PhD mentor should **refer** the PhD candidate to counselling or confidential, medical or human resource advisors. The Faculty Graduate School Office can be of help in these matters as well.
- Matters will be dealt with in a **confidential manner**.  
Signals of possible concern are: structural absence, chaos, isolation, illness etc.
- The mentor is advised to **not try and solve any problem himself**, but to support the PhD candidate in solving his problems and find his way himself.
- **Confidentiality** between mentor and candidate can only be broken with the approval of the candidate.
- The mentor should **alert** the Graduate School Officer or Director in case of problems, of course with approval of the candidate.

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### Focus points of conversation can be:

- Planning, starting to write in time
- Ambition level vs. time constraints
- Contact with the supervising team
- Language, personalities, intercultural aspects in communication
- Coping with setbacks
- Initiative, leadership of your own PhD track/research/career
- Making contact with others, expanding your network, countering isolation.

### Topics for a first meeting can be:

- How are you?
- Why did you start a PhD?
- Are you already settled well?
- Did you already start with your research?
- How is the contact with your supervisory team?
- New appointment dates