



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH
informatics

The PhD journey a (biased) supervisor's view

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Role of supervisor

- An advisor not a boss
- Mainly a guide
 - Help you get the best out of your time
- For me
 - Help get over fear of unknown
 - Understand research landscape rapidly
 - Get you connected
 - Sounding board for ideas
 - Challenge you to be innovative
 - Support you when the rejections arrive!
 - The best part of my job

Managing your supervisor

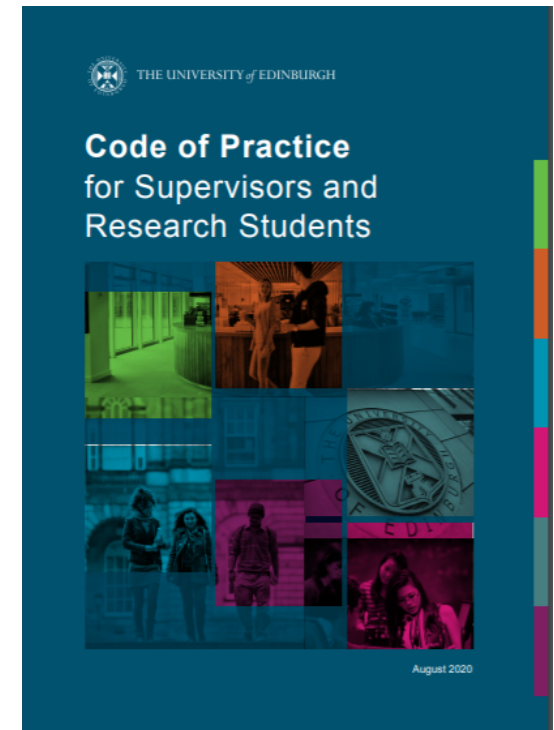
- They are well-meaning but easily distracted!
- Make sure you see them regularly
 - Especially when things are going badly
 - 1st year - at least once a week
- Don't wait till meeting if an issue
 - Don't let things fester
- Expectation discussion
 - Early on - what are your goals after PhD?
 - What does your supervisor hope to achieve?
- Occasionally things don't work out
 - Change supervisor

Be an effective PhD student ...

- PhD time is precious – manage it carefully
 - Schedule holidays and time to refresh
- Plan your research around paper submissions
 - In my area aim for one a year growing in ambition
 - e.g. 2-3 papers plus intro/related work = PhD
- Avoid rabbit holes - evidence based PhD
 - Does your problem exist?
 - Can you estimate value of your solution before you develop it?
 - Is there a market for your solution?
 - Probability of solution vs impact

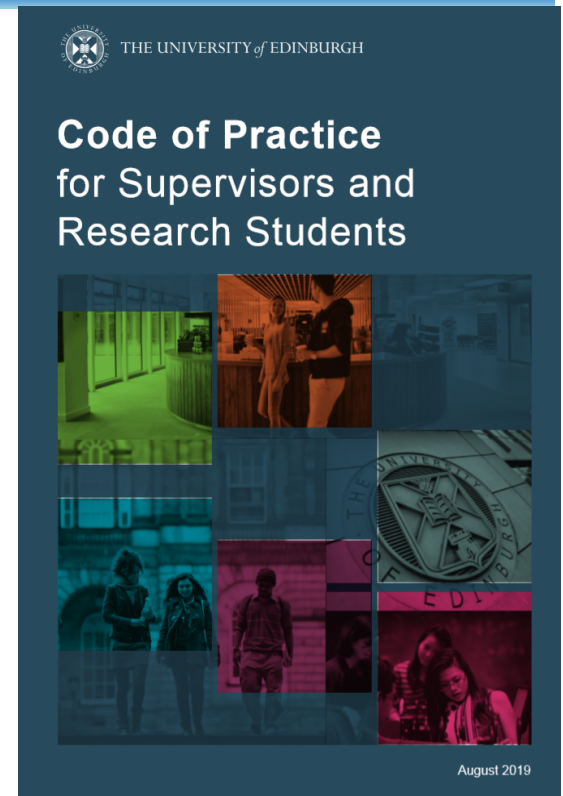
Be an effective PhD student ...

- Read extensively, widely and continuously
 - Get a wide network to test ideas
 - Get feedback from supervisors and colleagues about your plans
 - Learn from the best role models
 - Seek out mentors
 - Joint work/papers
 - Take control of your own destiny
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- Read the *Researchers' Handbook* (Bundy et al.)
<http://web.inf.ed.ac.uk/infweb/student-services/igs/phd/training-development/researchers-handbook>



Useful Programme Information - Rules and Regulations

- **Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students**
 - Roles and responsibilities of students and supervisors
 - Managing the student-supervisor relationship
 - Organising supervisory meetings
 - Annual progression and review
 - Thesis preparation and assessment
 - Managing programme concessions (e.g. LoA, interruptions)
 - Other support – e.g. resolving problems
- **Postgraduate Research Degree Regulations (2020/21)**
 - PGR programme regulations <http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/20-21/regulations/PGDRPS2020-21.pdf>
 - Assessment regulations https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/pgr_assessmentregulations.pdf



<https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/copsupervisorsresearchstudents.pdf>

Staying on track = PhD Milestones

PhD Timeline (for standard 3 year PhD programmes)

Year	When	What	Sept Start
Year 1	Month 1	First Supervisor Meeting: identify career aspirations and training needs	September
	Month 4	Submit Outline Proposal and Literature Review	December
	Month 9	Submit the First Year Review Document	May
	Month 10	Formal First Year Review	June
	Month 12	Supervisor completes the formal first year review report	August

<http://web.inf.ed.ac.uk/infweb/student-services/igs/phd/year-timelines>

- **Recommended year 1 IAD training sessions**
 - “*How to do an Informatics PhD*”, Oct 12th, 2021, Spring
 - “*Preparing for 1st year review*” March.

<http://web.inf.ed.ac.uk/infweb/studentservices/igs/phd/training-development/recommended-training>

- **PhD Annual reviews in years 1, 2 and 3**
 - important progression points, valuable feedback and support,
 - an opportunity to practice for the real viva.

Your PhD

- Can be the best of times
 - and the worst of times
- Tend to look back as a key stage in our lives
 - But no-one finds it plain sailing
 - So ask for help
- However,
 - the vast majority make it and are successful
- It's the start of a research career not the end
 - avoid Magnus opus
- Fortunate to have supervised many students
 - Happy to give informal advice

Good luck and enjoy the journey!!!