Open communication and clear expectations between senior supervisor and graduate student is a critical element that determines the success of the student in their degree progression, their research productivity, and their training. Conflict and tension can arise in situations where expectations, roles, and responsibilities are unclear or mismatched. As such, open discussion at an early stage in the student’s degree program can be very beneficial.

This document is for senior supervisors and graduate students and is intended to be used to foster discussion and facilitate ongoing dialogue during the student’s graduate degree. Part 1 is intended to assess initial perceptions and perspectives and to provide opportunity for discussion as to how to address any areas of disparate expectations. Part 2 provides a list of discussion points collected into a variety of categories associated with graduate training. It is expected that these points will generate dialogue, engender continued communication, and outline clear expectations. If desired, action plans/items may be drawn up for relevant items that can then be used and reflected upon at a future defined time. Any agreements made must not breach SFU or TSSU policies and principles.

Discussion of these expectations is a requirement for all students entering into a BPK graduate program, and completed copies will be kept by the Graduate Program Assistant, the student and the senior supervisor. The discussion shall be completed within the first month of a student’s degree. Students with co-supervisors (i.e. joint senior supervisor) should complete Parts 1 and 2 with both supervisors to ensure clear expectations and open communication.

This document is adapted from documents created by the Canadian Association of Graduate Studies, the Oxford Learning Institute, the University of Saskatchewan College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, and the University of British Columbia Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.
PART 1

Supervisory Expectations Questionnaire:

The student and senior supervisor should complete this questionnaire independently and then discuss each item taking particular care to address any disparities in expectations. Read each of the statements below and then estimate your position in each. For example with statement 1, if you believe very strongly that it is the supervisor’s responsibility to select a good topic you should put a ring round ‘1’. If you think that both the supervisor and researcher should be equally involved you put a ring round ‘3’ and if you think it is definitely the researcher’s responsibility to select a topic, put a ring round ‘5’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.  It is the supervisor’s responsibility to select a research topic.</td>
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<td>The student is responsible for selecting their own topic.</td>
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<td>2.  It is the supervisor who decides which theoretical framework or</td>
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<td>Students should decide which theoretical framework or methodology they wish to use.</td>
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<td>methodology is most appropriate.</td>
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<td>3.  The supervisor should develop an appropriate programme and timetable</td>
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<td>The supervisor should leave the development of the programme of study to the student.</td>
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<td>of research and study for the student.</td>
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<td>4.  The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the student is</td>
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<td>It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that they have located and accessed all the relevant services and facilities for research.</td>
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<td>introduced to the appropriate services and facilities of the</td>
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<td>department and university.</td>
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<td>5.  The supervisor should promote a collegial, friendly and supportive</td>
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<td>The student should promote a collegial, friendly and supportive relationship with the supervisor that does not obstruct objectivity.</td>
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<td>relationship with the student that does not obstruct objectivity.</td>
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<td>6.  The supervisor should insist on regular meetings with the student.</td>
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<td>The student should decide when they want to meet with the supervisor.</td>
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<td>7.  The supervisor should check regularly that the student is</td>
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<td>The student should work independently and not have to account for how and where time is spent.</td>
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<td>working consistently and on task.</td>
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<td>8.  The supervisor is responsible for providing emotional support and</td>
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<td>Personal counselling and support are not the responsibility of the supervisor – students should look elsewhere.</td>
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<td>encouragement to the student.</td>
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<td>9.  The supervisor should insist on seeing all drafts of work to ensure</td>
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<td>Students should submit drafts of work only when they want constructive criticism from the supervisor.</td>
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<td>that the student is on the right track.</td>
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<td>10. The supervisor should assist in the writing of the thesis if necessary.</td>
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<td>The writing of the thesis should only ever be the student’s own work.</td>
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<td>11. The supervisor is responsible for decisions regarding the standard of</td>
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<td>The student is responsible for decisions regarding the standard of the thesis.</td>
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<td>the thesis.</td>
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PART 2

Academic Development

It is the supervisor’s responsibility to:

☐ Provide mentorship, guidance, support, encouragement, commitment to your research, and constructive feedback;

☐ Guide you in identification of a research topic and ensure that your project has an appropriate hypothesis/question and achievable goals;

☐ Ensure that your thesis research is suitably aligned with the number of credits awarded and that the project is manageable with respect to the time allocated for the completion of the program;

☐ Provide you with suitable resources and work space;

☐ Assist you in developing your research interests and help you modify your research when unforeseeable problems arise;

☐ Guide you in the formation of your supervisory committee and when it should be formed;

☐ Provide supervision in a way which leaves you with room for autonomy (especially if you are a doctoral student);

☐ Provide timely feedback with constructive suggestions/revisions to thesis drafts and other written work (e.g. proposals, manuscripts, literature reviews, analyses, chapters) submitted by you in accordance with an agreed upon schedule – typically up to 2 weeks is reasonable;

☐ Be open, honest and fair with you when academic performance is not meeting expectations;

☐ Establish with you a yearly renewed or revised study plan, i.e. via the graduate progress report (or more frequently if the need arises).

It is the student’s responsibility to:

☐ Be familiar with relevant policies, procedures, regulations and deadlines within BPK, the Office of the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, and SFU;

☐ Develop the necessary skills and learning approaches suitable for an advanced degree;

☐ Exhibit independent judgment, academic rigour, and intellectual honesty;

☐ Complete research, required course work and a thesis within the period that is typical for the degree program in which they are enrolled;

☐ Seek advice from their senior supervisor and supervisory committee regarding course work, research direction, completion of program milestones, ethics and safety, presentations, thesis writing, resources available, and professional development.

☐ Give due consideration to workload and exercise care in the performance of the work assigned;

☐ Submit material in a timely manner so as to receive an adequate assessment;

☐ Make timely progress towards completion of degree and dedicate effective time to carrying out research activities;
Determine with the assistance of the senior supervisor, a yearly renewed or revised study plan, i.e. via the graduate progress report (or more frequently if the need arises);

Complete and maintain a BPK CV.

**It is the responsibility of both the student and the supervisor to:**

- Hold regular meetings and to hold a supervisory committee meeting at least once per year.

**Communication**

**It is the supervisor’s responsibility to:**

- Meet regularly with you to provide guidance, assess progress and assist you in the goal of completing the program milestones on time;
- Monitor the accuracy, validity, and integrity of your progress and respond in a timely manner with comments/revisions to drafts of applications, manuscripts, reports, or research presentations;
- Meet with you to discuss specific provisions related to your course of study, especially regarding intellectual property and financial support;
- Ensure that you are aware of relevant policies and procedures for the conduct of research and model research integrity;
- Assist you in the presentation of your work at meetings/conferences and required seminars;
- Be available to meet with you and at your request to provide support to you towards the progress and completion of the program;
- Provide information about their availability for meetings and expectations about preparation for meetings.
- Make arrangements to ensure the continuity of supervision during leaves or extended periods of absence.

**It is the student’s responsibility to:**

- Meet regularly with their senior supervisor to report on research progress and to meet deadlines;
- Hold a supervisory committee meeting at least once per year and provide a progress report and future plans to the committee;
- Participate in departmental seminars and events;
- Hold a supervisory committee meeting to discuss the preparation and submission of the master’s or doctoral thesis, and thesis defence timeline.

**Interpersonal and Professional Conduct**

**It is the supervisor’s responsibility to:**

- Work to establish a professional working relationship to guide you in your approach to research;
- Guide you in learning to work independently and as a member of a team;
Implement a plan of action to help overcome any unforeseen difficulties;

Advise you concerning the preparation and submission of your master’s or doctoral thesis or drafting of scientific papers or poster/oral presentations;

Treat all members of the laboratory (and their work) with verbal and intellectual respect and to strive to maintain good professional and personal relationships with you and other trainees in the research group;

Avoid personal or business relationships that may constitute a conflict of interest;

Give credit in an appropriate manner to trainee contributions to scholarly activity, whether presented at professional meetings, in publications, or in applications for grants.

It is the student’s responsibility to:

- Be receptive to any advice or suggestions given by their senior supervisor or other faculty member involved in their education;

- Interact with fellow students, both graduate and undergraduate, staff and faculty in a professional and mature manner;

- Seek assistance from their senior supervisor, especially when making important decisions about the course of study or while looking to define or redirect the master’s or doctoral thesis project;

- Advise their senior supervisor, in a timely manner, of any issues arising throughout the course of their program, e.g. difficulties of integration, learning or financial issues, selection of courses, availability of their senior supervisor, absence or delay in feedback of their work, or any other difficulty related to his/her supervision framework);

- Advise their senior supervisor, in a timely manner, of any foreseen prolonged absence and to negotiate amount of time and timing of holidays;

**Funding Considerations**

It is the supervisor’s responsibility to:

- Openly discuss with you the level of financial support, stipend schedule, and the period during which financial support is provided.

- Provide consultation about scholarship and bursary applications in advance in order to look at ways of optimizing your chances of success.

It is the student’s responsibility to:

- Seek TA/TM opportunities to gain teaching experience in consultation with their senior supervisor;

- Apply for scholarships appropriate to his/her program of study.

**Ethics and Safety**

It is the supervisor’s responsibility to:

- Assist you in determining the level of safety training and which safety training course(s) are required for your study;
Assist you in obtaining or amending ethics protocols required for your research projects;

Make every reasonable effort to ensure that your learning and research environment is safe and adequately supported.

It is the student’s responsibility to:

- Complete the required SFU Laboratory Safety Training and any project-specific additional safety training, e.g. Laser Safety Training, X-ray Safety Training, phlebotomy;
- Pass the appropriate courses on the use of animals in research (if applicable) and have their name added to relevant animal care protocols;
- Obtain or be named in relevant human research ethics protocols (if applicable).

Laboratory Etiquette and Data Recording

It is the supervisor’s responsibility to:

- Provide or facilitate appropriate training on equipment used by you in your research;
- Outline expectations for data management and record keeping.

It is the student’s responsibility to:

- Keep space tidy, respect the space of others, keep laboratory equipment and supplies clean and orderly, and participate in periodic laboratory cleanup;
- Understand that space and equipment is shared and that care must be exercised with problems reported as they arise;
- Refrain from borrowing the supplies of others or removing items from the laboratory without permission;
- Strive to maintain good professional and personal relationships within the research group and will treat all members of the laboratory (and their work) with verbal and intellectual respect;
- Maintain detailed records of laboratory notes, including records of primary data, and ensure these are backed up and accessible to my senior supervisor;
- Leave laboratory books and primary data within the department (or if signing out use a pre-determined process);
- Use laboratory computers for research purposes only (e.g., email, data analysis, literature searches and other forms of scientific communication).

Publications and Intellectual Property

It is the supervisor’s responsibility to:

- Reach an agreement with you on the ownership of any intellectual property that may result from research, including patents, licenses and the authorship of publications which may arise from the research.

It is the responsibility of both the student and the supervisor to:
☐ Present research results that are publishable in reputable, externally refereed journals, thereby achieving the goals of creating new knowledge and reporting it to the appropriate community;

☐ Determine an authorship process for shared and non-shared authorship and identify the importance of first authorship for the student;

☐ Strive for timely completion and publication of manuscripts before completion of the program to facilitate preparation of thesis;

☐ Maintain appropriate confidentiality concerning research activities.

Professional Development

It is the responsibility of both the student and the supervisor to:

☐ Work together to find opportunities for students to attend suitable conferences and present research findings and seek funding sources for associated travel costs.

It is the supervisor’s responsibility to:

☐ Encourage participation in non-academic programs for professional development, such as teaching workshops (e.g. Teaching and Learning Centre), TA/TM day, research and library skills seminars (SFU library), effective writing courses, project management workshops, networking workshops, and workshops on research grants;

☐ Provide mentoring in academic writing, research presentations and career progression.

Any additional specific expectations

☐

I acknowledge that these items have been discussed between student and supervisor:

__________________________________   ___________________________
Supervisor        Date

__________________________________   ___________________________
Graduate student       Date