

What makes a good graduate mentor?

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Following Material Developed by Naomi Krogman, Past Associate Dean, FGSR
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The Supervisor's responsibility

Provides an environment for the student that is conducive to research and in which the student can grow intellectually

Provides appropriate guidance to the student on the nature of research and the boundaries around the research so the student can finish in a reasonable time frame

Establishes a realistic set of expectations for accomplishments at each phase of the program

Accessible to give advice and constructive feedback (in a timely way)

(Section 1.2 of the GPM)

The Supervisor's responsibility

Sets up committee meetings and examinations in consultation with the student

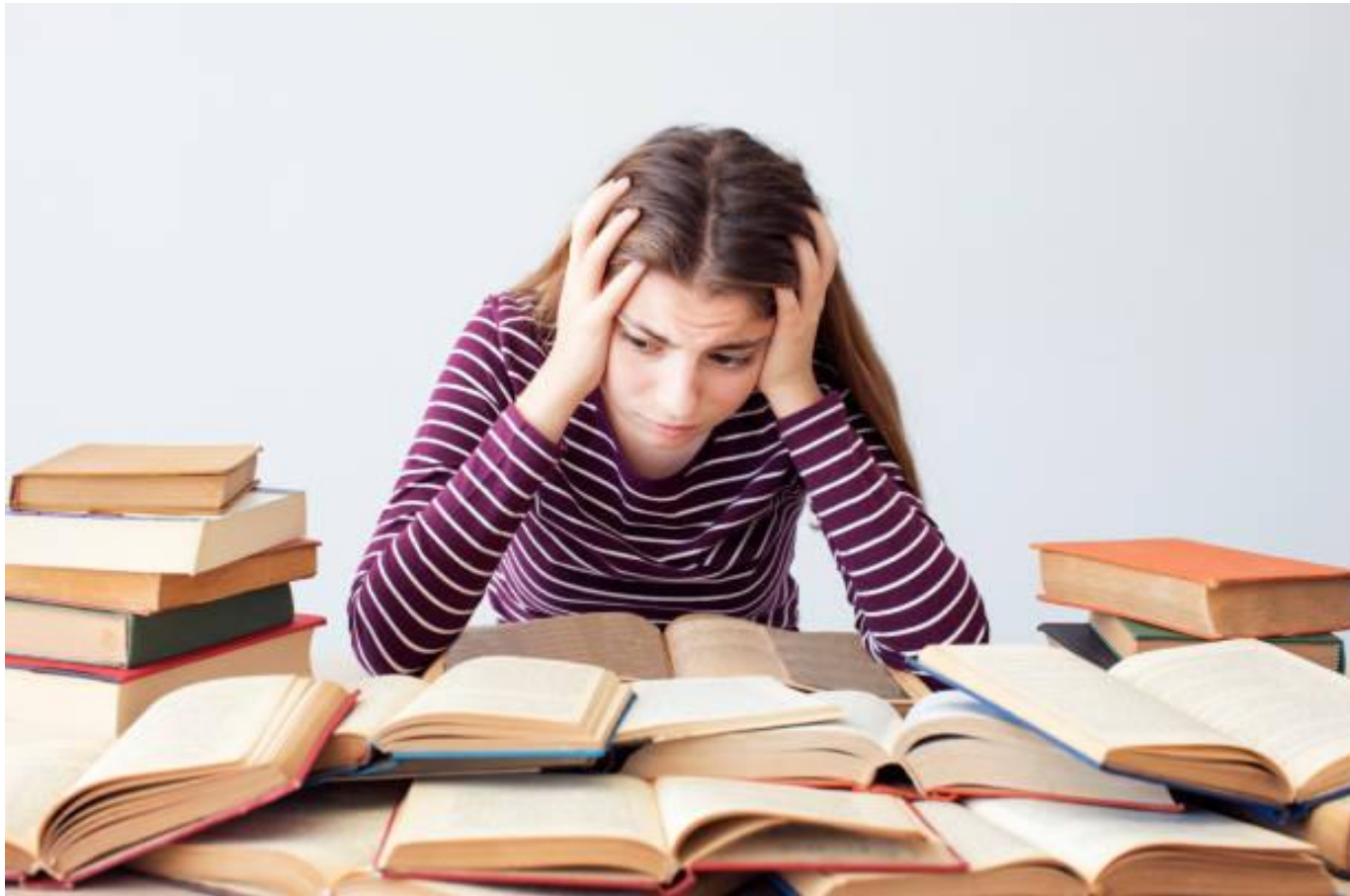
Maintains open communication with the student concerning any problem

Works with the student to establish the supervisory committee as soon as possible after the start of the program and ensures that it maintains contact and formally meets at least once a year with the student

Ensures that the student is adequately supervised when the supervisor is away or unavailable

(Section 1.2 of GPM)

By reflecting on your own graduate student supervision and that of your peers in graduate school, where does supervision and mentorship often fall short?



Key Problems we see in FGSR

- Neglect
- Lack of direction given for student's research and/or writing
- Micromanaging
- Intimidating or disrespectful behavior
- Issues over assigning credit/authorship
- Inappropriate Expectations

Graduate students are more than six times as likely to experience depression and anxiety compared to the general population (Flaherty 2018)

Supervisory relationships are highlighted as being critical to all aspects of the graduate student experience... (Everall 2018)



Poor advisor relationships are one of the top predictors (alongside social isolation and precarious finances) of graduate students' levels of both life satisfaction and depression (Patel, 2015)



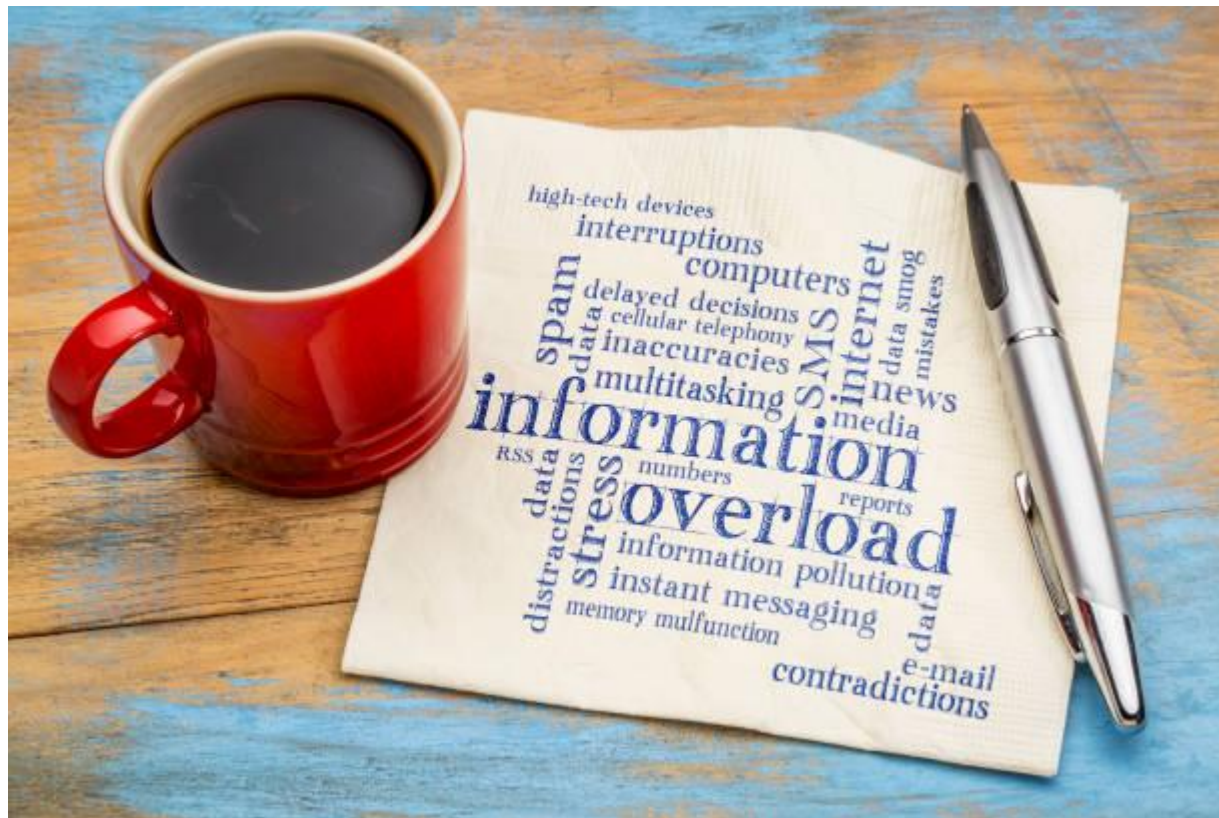
Recent survey data from National College Assessment (2016) found:

82% have felt overwhelmed by all they had to do

82% have felt exhausted (not by physical activity)

Other surveys suggest these stressors for graduate students:

Social isolation, apprehension about career opportunities, depression, anxiety



Personal characteristics of a good mentor

Enthusiasm

Sensitivity

Appreciating individual differences

Respect

Unselfishness

Support for other than one's own



Tips for Mentors

Be available – the gift of attention

Inspiration, optimism

Balancing direction and self-direction

The art of questioning and listening



Tips for Mentors

Being widely read and widely receptive
Ensure there is some work that will ensure results
Life after research
Celebration



Obmuds office argues managing expectations most important...

Things you should discuss with your student!

- What are your timeline expectations for completion of the various stages of the program?
- How available will you be to meet, discuss, answer emails?
- What is your preferred mode of communication? (i.e. in person or via e-mail, etc...)

Managing expectations (continued)...

Things you should discuss with your student!

- How frequently do you expect to meet with your graduate students?
- How many hours of work per week do you expect from a graduate student?
- What are your expectations in terms of publications and conference presentations?



Fill out Oxford Expectations Survey

Which of these positions have you held that are not always held by the graduate students you take on?

Which of these expectations do you most need to discuss early on in the student's program?

How to create a supportive mentorship environment

Build Community
Demystify Criticism
Share Writing
Oral Presentation practice
Foster Networking
Advice on Career Decisions



Dealing with Conflict ...

- Deal with problems early—don't let them drag or get worse.
- Deal with problems appropriately – start at lowest possible level - don't start by calling your Dean.
- Talk to your student openly and directly.
- Don't assume he or she knows that you feel there is a problem.
- Be kind and professional, even when the other person is not.
- Preserve the relationship whenever possible. Do not make assumptions. Start with what you're observing and curiosity about how to make the working relationship better.



Mistakes to avoid ...

- Look for a friend/buddy in your student
- Conflicts of interest
- Abuse power differential
- Ignore collective agreement



Seek assistance from a third party if you can't resolve the conflict

- Colleague you trust/mentor (beware of confidentiality issues)
- Graduate Coordinator (or Associate Chair Graduate)
- Department Chair (when the Graduate Coordinator is unavailable)
- FGSR Associate Deans; call, or email to ascdean@ualberta.ca
- Office of the Student Ombuds

Seek assistance from a third party if you can't resolve the conflict (continued):

- The Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights (discrimination and human rights violations)
- International Student Services (visa and study permit issues)
- The Student Success Centre and the Centre for Writers (writing and other academic guidance)
- Counselling and Clinical Services (mental health assistance)
- Student Legal Services of Edmonton (legal advice and advocacy)

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

Your Decanal Team:

Dean and Vice Provost

Dr. Brooke Milne

Vice Dean

Dr. Bryan Hogeveen

Associate Deans

Dr. Janice Causgrove Dunn, (Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation)

Dr. Tracy Raivio (Science)

Dr. Victoria Ruetalo (Arts)

Resources

FGSR Graduate Program Manual

<https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/about/graduate-program-manual>

FGSR's Supervisory Guide

<https://cloudfront.ualberta.ca/-/media/gradstudies/about/faculty-and-staff/resources-for-supervisors-and-graduate-coordinators/20181018-guidelines-for-supervision-and-mentorship-for-faculty-and-administrators.pdf>

Mentorship Academy Workshops

<https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/about/resources-for-faculty-and-staff/resources-for-supervisors/mentorship-academy-workshops>

Nature's Guide for Mentors <https://www.nature.com/articles/447791a>

Resources for Supervisors

<https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/about/resources-for-faculty-and-staff/resources-for-supervisors>