

Internal guidelines for master's supervision at the Department for Foreign Languages

What should a supervisor do?

- Have a conversation early in the supervision period in which mutual expectations are agreed upon
- Sign the supervision contract, ensuring that the student is familiar with the content and get him/her started with the master's thesis
- Make a timeline with the student, ideally with dates and short-term goals
- Show up on time and prepared to supervision sessions
- Ensure that clear agreements are reached, follow them up and remind the student that they are to be followed
- Assist the student with their choice of topic, formulating a research question and a sketching an outline of the project
- Give advice about possible sources, methods and theoretical background early in the process
- Introduce processes to get writing started, such as informing the student about writing seminars and similar events
- Allow the student's writing to be the starting point for guidance relating to content, structure, style and language, especially at the beginning of the process
- Ensure that feedback is prompt and clear, primarily in writing, in the form of comments on the text, but also in the form of regular conversations throughout the agreed upon period. The student should usually receive their feedback within a week
- Think *along with* the student throughout the process, but do not take over
- Be more available during the run-up to the deadline

What should a supervisor not do?

- Write for the student – the student should be in the driver's seat when writing the thesis
- Provide the student with a complete literature list
- Make final corrections to the thesis

What characterises good supervision?

- Dialogue, listening and open engagement
- Built on mutual trust
- Academic, clear, and structured
- Solution-oriented
- Suited to providing the student with an overview of the thesis' topic

- A space where all aspects of the master's thesis can be discussed, where the writing process can be reflected upon, and where the student can get help to resolve problematic aspects of their work

Which issues can a supervisor meet? How can the issues be resolved?

- The studies coordinator at the department is the contact person for students who experience problems with the relationship with the supervisor
- If the student and supervisor are unable to cooperate, the student will be assigned a new supervisor
- If agreements are not met, or are changed at the last minute, the student and supervisor can be encouraged to change practices or, if necessary, the contract can be revoked
- If the supervisor's advice on the thesis is not followed, the student will be made aware of the fact that the standard of the thesis may suffer as a result
- If the student feels that supervision is unnecessary and expresses desire to complete the thesis unsupervised, they will be reminded that supervision is compulsory
- If the student experiences non-academic problems that the supervisor is not qualified to solve, the student will be referred to the student advisor who can refer the student further (e.g. to the student priest, psychologist)

Other tips

- Have a conversation in which the student-supervisor relationship is defined *before* the work begins. This can include agreeing on distribution of responsibility, deadlines, what the student feels will be most beneficial, and agree on the extent to which the supervisor will be involved in the writing process
- Both the student and supervisor should make notes about what has been discussed in supervision sessions. The student can also keep a 'log', which can be referred to when choosing next steps
- Encourage the student to join study groups where students can read one another's work and provide one another with feedback (whether student-driven or with a teaching assistant)
- Encourage the student to organise meetings where they can speak to individuals who are/have been in similar situations (fellow students, a previous master's student, a PhD candidate, a teaching assistant)
- The supervisor can obtain advice from experienced supervisors of students who write comparable literary, linguistic, historic, or didactic theses
- Encourage consultation with subject specialists at UiB
- Provide the student with the experience of being a researcher, and share some of your own experiences

- Be willing to supervise theses on topics that you are not an expert on. In such instances, the student takes on more responsibility, and the introduction of a co-supervisor may be appropriate

What are the department's responsibilities?

- Follow up the signing of the supervision contract early in the process
- Ensure that all parties are made aware quickly of any changes in the supervision situation, such as those caused by sickness
- Provide good information about the contract and seek to resolve any deviations from it from either the student's or the supervisor's side
- Ensure that a new supervisor is found if necessary

Approved by the Department Council 11th November 2020