Clarifying co-supervision expectations: Issues to discuss

Using this set of questions will enable you and a co-supervisor to discuss and clarify how you will work with the student. The intent behind the questions is to make explicit assumptions that may otherwise be taken for granted.

What each team member contributes

1. What research strengths do you each bring to the supervisory team, e.g., knowledge of the process, the topic, the methodology?
2. What personal skills do you each bring to the team?
3. Are there specific aspects of supervision that you each think are critical and need to be understood by the other members of the team?
4. How do you each like to supervise: hands-on, hands-off, by the book, as it comes?
5. Who in the group might be in the best position to provide particular forms of feedback?

Responsibilities and decision-making

6. Who takes final responsibility?
   - Can different members of the team be responsible for different aspects of supervision, if so how does that get agreed and recognised?
   - Are you OK with the student speaking with one supervisor without letting the others know?
   - What happens if one supervisor goes on Study Leave or is away for more than a few weeks?
   - Who is responsible for ensuring the candidate achieves milestones?
   - Whose role is it to ensure that the student knows, and follows policies related to research ethics, plagiarism etc?
   - Whose role is it to take the student through the ethics application process and sign off?

7. What is the process for discussing concerns:
   - About the candidate?
   - About one another?
   - What if the student goes to one of you with a problem regarding the other?

8. Who provides the funds for the student's project?

Working jointly

9. Meetings
   - How often, where, who will organise meetings and will they include all team members or only some?
   - Will meetings be noted, if so by whom and to what level of detail and will the notes be cc'ed to all panel members or only those who were at the meeting?
   - What will be the best way to access one another, especially if off-campus?

10. Reading of drafts of written work
    - Who will read, and in what order e.g. who is good at 'big picture', structure, detail?
    - What is a reasonable turnaround time on drafts?
    - How many drafts is it reasonable for a member of a supervisory team to read?

11. Publishing
    - What are your expectations re the student publishing?
    - How much do you think is reasonable to help without being a co-author/alternatively how much should be contributed to be a co-author?
    - How will you determine the order of authors?

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