

## Mentoring, or co-supervising with, a new DPhil supervisor

As an experienced supervisor working with an inexperienced colleague, mentoring and co-supervision represent two different approaches which have different desired outcomes. Mentoring gives the novice someone to whom they can go for advice or guidance, whilst co-supervision provides additional support in the form of modelling.

### *The roles of mentors and (experienced) co-supervisors*

Mentor	Co-supervisor
Engage in objective discussion with the new supervisor about his/her problems, concerns. Offer advice based on own experience. Effect introductions to useful contacts	Work alongside the novice, demonstrate in 'live interaction' with the student the approaches taken, engage from time-to-time (or post-tutorial debrief) about what was done and why. Even using the cc on email can demonstrate tactics to your junior colleague

Whether acting as a mentor or experienced co-supervisor, the issues below are likely ones of concern to most new supervisors.

### *Passing on institutional knowledge*

New supervisors are often not knowledgeable about institutional policies or practices or the resources that are available. You may find yourself asked the following questions:

- Who can supervise?
- How many supervisors (minimum) must one student have?
- Is supervisor training required before supervising?
- How many students can one supervise?
- How does co-supervision 'count' in supervision?
- How much am I responsible for student progress?
- What do I do if I think there is a problem?
- A useful resource is the FAQ section of the New Supervisor webpage (<http://www.learning.ox.ac.uk/supervision/supervisor/new/>).

### *Helping to understand their new role and deal with any problems or concerns*

The following concerns (reported by new supervisors at Oxford) may be among the issues you wish to discuss. De-briefing after meetings with students can be a good time to discuss these.

- Being responsible for someone else's future (career);
- Progressing their own careers while carrying out this responsibility;
- The extent to which they need to be knowledgeable in the subject area to take on a student;
- Being the day-to-day supervisor but not the formally recognized one;
- How to discover information about supervision when they do not hear others talking about it and they get different answers when they do ask questions;
- Finding the right balance of providing structure whilst allowing the student to develop her or his own ideas.

### *Workshops for new supervisors*

Encourage your colleague to take part in the workshops for new supervisors offered by the Learning Institute. For information go to: <http://www.learning.ox.ac.uk/support/teaching/> and click on **Course List: by topic**. After taking part, your colleague may wish to discuss with you issues that arose during the session.

The Learning Institute welcomes requests to run discipline-specific supervision workshops with groups of 6 or more participants in departments/ faculties. For more details see:

<http://www.learning.ox.ac.uk/support/teaching/bespoke/>.