

Imperial College London

(Postgraduate) Supervision Observation Guide (SOG)

The purpose of this (Postgraduate) Supervision Observation Guide is to stimulate good practice in (research) supervision and to facilitate discussion between the supervisor and an observer.

The SOG may be used for an individual supervision or supervision of a small group. (It is primarily designed for postgraduate research supervision but may also be used for BSc or MSc project supervision.) The questions are intended as prompts for reflection and discussion, not as a prescriptive checklist, and they will not all be equally applicable to all disciplines/situations. An observer will need to be alert to the impact their presence may have on a supervision and the observee will need to have cleared with their student(s) that they have no problems with an observer being present.

A fresh copy of the SOG should be used for each session studied. It may be printed and photocopied for use in Imperial College London.

Supervisor		CID		Observer	
Department			BSc/MSc/PhD/Project topic or title		
No. & level of students:	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3		
Date		Duration	Venue		

1. Background and setting

1.1 What information / instructions had been given to the student(s) about the general purpose and frequency of these sessions?

1.2 What sort of room was the session held in? Did it have any particular associations, advantages or disadvantages?

2. Purposes of the session

2.1 What seemed in theory & in practice to be the specific purposes of this session? How were these purposes evident and how were they supported?:	In Theory	In Practice	What happened?
To set & agree research priorities/plans			
To review recent progress made			
To present & interpret new data			
To discuss technical issues & problems			
To focus work towards publications/conference presentation			
To encourage the development of transferable skills base – which skills?			

	In Theory	In Practice	What happened?
To encourage interdisciplinary interactions			
To discuss transfer / thesis write-up / viva			
Pastoral			
To discuss discipline specific & generic training needs			
Other			
2.2 How were the supervisor's purposes made clear to the student(s)?			
2.3 What opportunities were there for the student(s) to direct discussion into channels they perceived as necessary?			

3. Functions						
Use the table below to indicate who undertook any of the functions listed						
	Tutor	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Student 4	No-one
Agenda Setting						
Gate-keeping (letting everyone who wants to speak do so)						
Time-keeping						
Watching relevance						
Initiating						
Terminating						
Co-ordinating						
Facilitating						
Evaluating						
Being the expert						
Being critic						
Being "devil's advocate"						
Building morale						
Praising						
Instructing						
Chairing						
Other						

4. Dynamics	
4.1 For what proportion of the time did the supervisor talk?	
4.2 For what proportion this time did the student(s) talk?	
4.3 Supervisor's questions were mainly:	
<i>Open-ended</i>	
<i>Factual</i>	
<i>Inviting personal reactions</i>	
<i>Critical</i>	
<i>Loaded</i>	
<i>Leading to a specific answer</i>	
<i>Other</i>	
4.4 Were student questions mainly:	
<i>To the tutor?</i>	
<i>To other students?</i>	
4.5 If a group, did one or two students dominate the session?	
4.6 Did students who had already mastered the material helped to teach other students?	
4.7 Were some issues shelved?	
4.8 Was the session likely to help a student to be more independent in action & thought? How?	

5. Conclusions	
5.1 Was/were the student(s) given every opportunity to be clear about their next steps?	
5.2 When will the next meeting be?	
5.3 Has any record of discussion / decisions / actions been made or planned?	

6. Enhancing Practice	
6.1 What aspects of good practice might be noted from this supervision?	
6.2 What aspects of practice might be enhanced? Why? How?	

7. Other Comment