



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

The UBC Guide to the principles of excellent graduate supervision

Supervising graduate students is a complex form of pedagogy, one made even more complicated by the changing nature of the university, the increasing diversity of our students, cross-disciplinary nature of academic research, and development of new knowledge. Within this evolving context, we are committed to supporting the highest quality graduate supervision practices consistent with our world-class research university.

While the vast majority (85%) of our graduate students are satisfied with their supervision at UBC,* surveys also reveal that many would like more consistent and meaningful interactions with their supervisors. Indeed, a healthy, productive supervisory relationship results not only in a successful academic program and outcomes, but also contributes to students' wellbeing and to supervisors' teaching and research excellence.

*(data from the 2016 Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey)

This guide outlines seven flexible, interrelated and research-informed principles that characterize high quality graduate student supervision.

Read the complete guide at:
<https://www.grad.ubc.ca/principles-graduate-supervision>



1

Students' learning benefits from individualized supervisory approaches

Students learn more effectively when supervisors' interactions with them are responsive to their unique learning styles, passions, questions, knowledge, abilities, experiences, and long-term/career interests. They also benefit when these interactions reflect an awareness of any personal, cultural, and structural challenges students may face.

Student learning develops with both dialogue and guidance
Students develop critical thinking abilities, creativity, and adaptability when supervisors listen to, question, challenge, and guide them, prompting students to reflect on and critically examine their thinking and decision-making processes.

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Students' multi-faceted growth as scholars is supported by supervisors

Supervisors play an important role in fostering the development of students' independence, their ability to ask important questions, their professional competencies, and their scholarly identity, which includes the development of habits of heart and mind.

Students learn from role models
Students gain deep intellectual, ethical, and practical knowledge of their field and of the scholarly profession through exposure to outstanding role models.

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Communication is key to teaching and learning and to relationship-building

The supervisory process and student learning are enhanced when mutual expectations about the process are communicated clearly and regularly; and when all communication is done with sensitivity, empathy and recognition of boundaries.

Scholarly and other communities are central to students' development
Outstanding supervision incorporates, and is supported by, strong communities that assist in shaping students' scholarly identities, model scholarly integrity, and share the norms of fields, in addition to promoting diversity, inclusivity, intercultural understanding, and equity.

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Reflection makes one a better mentor

Reflecting on and clearly articulating one's own supervisory and scholarly beliefs and practices can strengthen supervisory abilities.