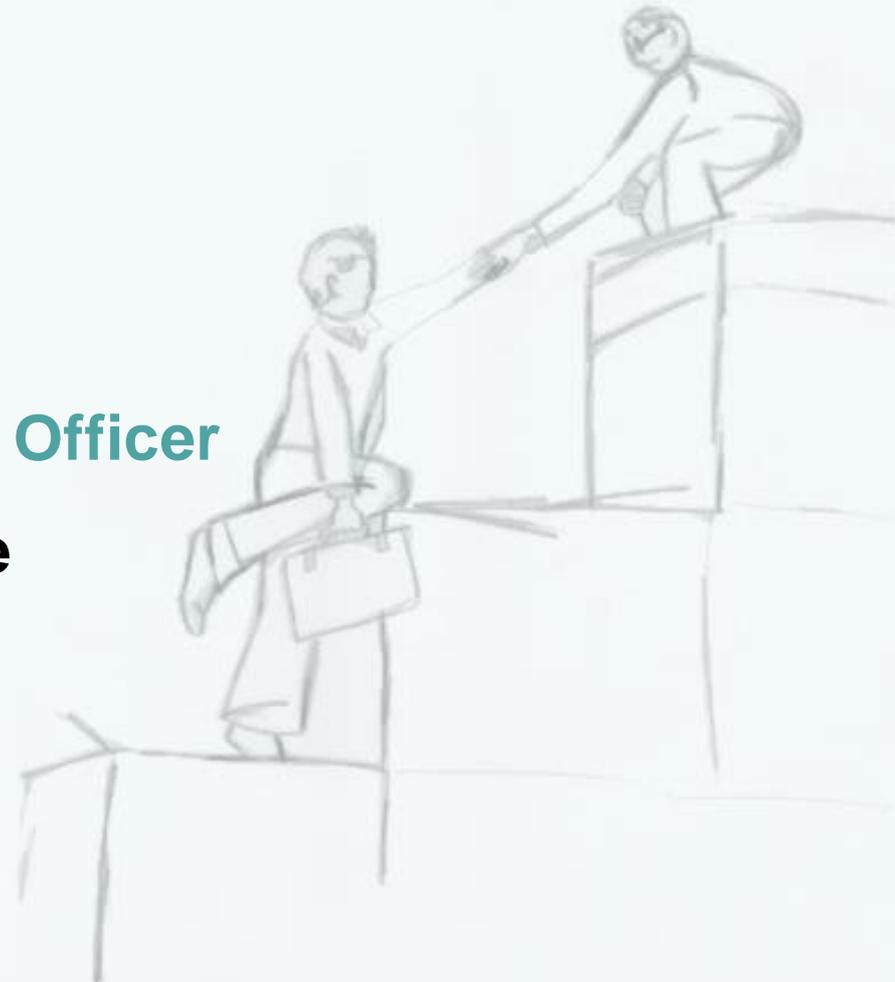


The Supervisor-Student Relationship

Martin John McAndrew

Postgraduate Student Support Officer

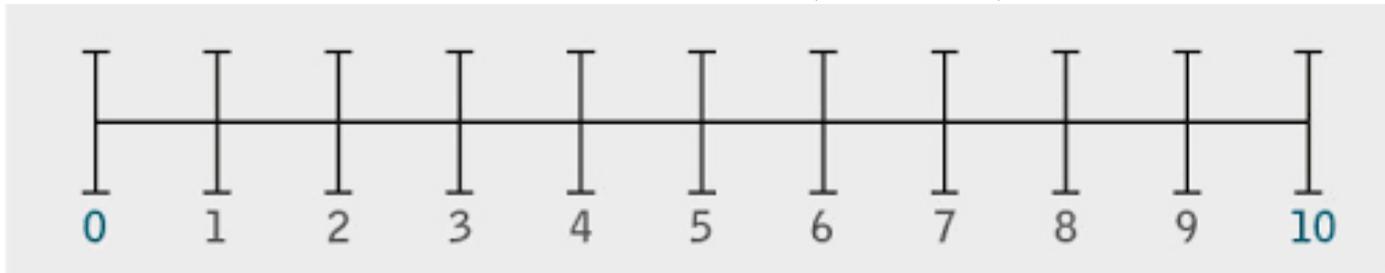
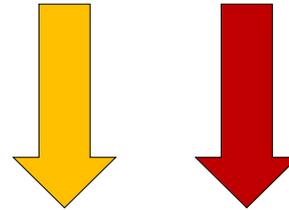
Postgraduate Advisory Service



What's different about supervision?

What are the common concerns around supervision?

Is there a power imbalance in the supervision relationship?



What's different about supervision?

A new type of learning requires a new type of academic relationship

Remember:

- **Supervisor is a guide, not a travel companion**
- **Supervision is academic and professional, not pastoral and personal**
- **Supervisor is not the expert in your topic: you are!**

Let's build the ideal supervisor



Let's build the ideal supervisor

Provides constructive feedback

Patient

Good communicator

Available

Friendly

Knowledgeable



Supervisor's Responsibilities

- **Guidance throughout**
- **Advise on standards & academic quality**
- **Maintain regular contact and meet regularly**
- **Find a suitable sabbatical replacement**
- **Provide constructive feedback on written work**
- **Guidance on presentation of research**
- **Guidance on writing and format of thesis**
- **Read the final thesis**

Are you the ideal student?



Are you the ideal student?



Your Responsibilities

- Undertake full responsibility for work submitted
- Undertake training as agreed
- Produce written work as agreed
- Stay in regular communication
- Ensure compliance with regs/ ethics
- Come prepared to meetings
- Ask questions
- Manage time effectively
- Seek support early



But...

These are the high-level guidelines

Structure and quality of supervision varies

So...

How do you ensure that you get the most from your Supervisor?

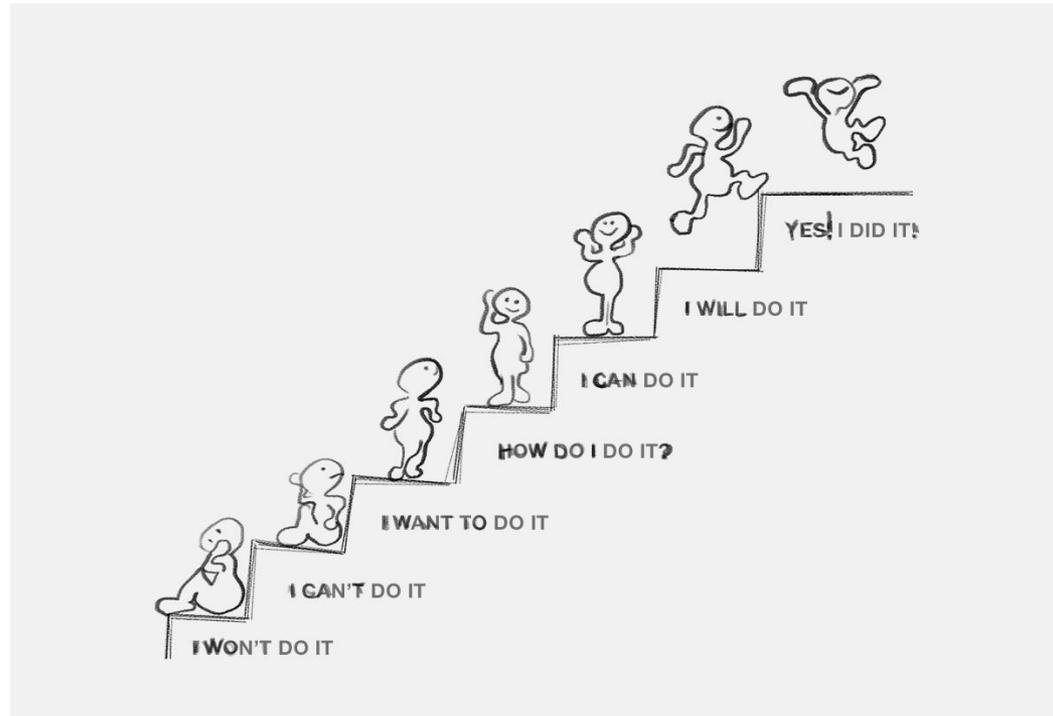
What do you do if things aren't going to plan?

Empower yourself



Empower yourself

1. Change your perspective on supervision
2. Be proactive
3. Know your supervisor
4. Know yourself
5. Smarter meetings
6. Communicate needs
7. Project Manage
8. Seek support early



Change your perspective



View the supervisor as a hired consultant

Paid to guide you and answer your queries

Use their expertise

Make the most of their time

**The supervisor is not the expert in your field:
you are!**

Be Proactive

1. find out what to expect **from them**
2. find out what is expected **of you**
3. organise and agree **process, timelines, diaries**
4. tackle academic, interpersonal, personal concerns **early on**



Know Your Supervisor

Before the first/ your next meeting find out:

Research Interests/ Recent publications

Experience supervising

During the first/ your next meeting find out:

How much time they will have?

What kind of role does your supervisor expect to have?

After your next meeting decide:

What do you need to do to work within this paradigm?

Know Yourself

What are you good at?

What areas need improvement?

e.g. Communication style?

Organisation?

Training?

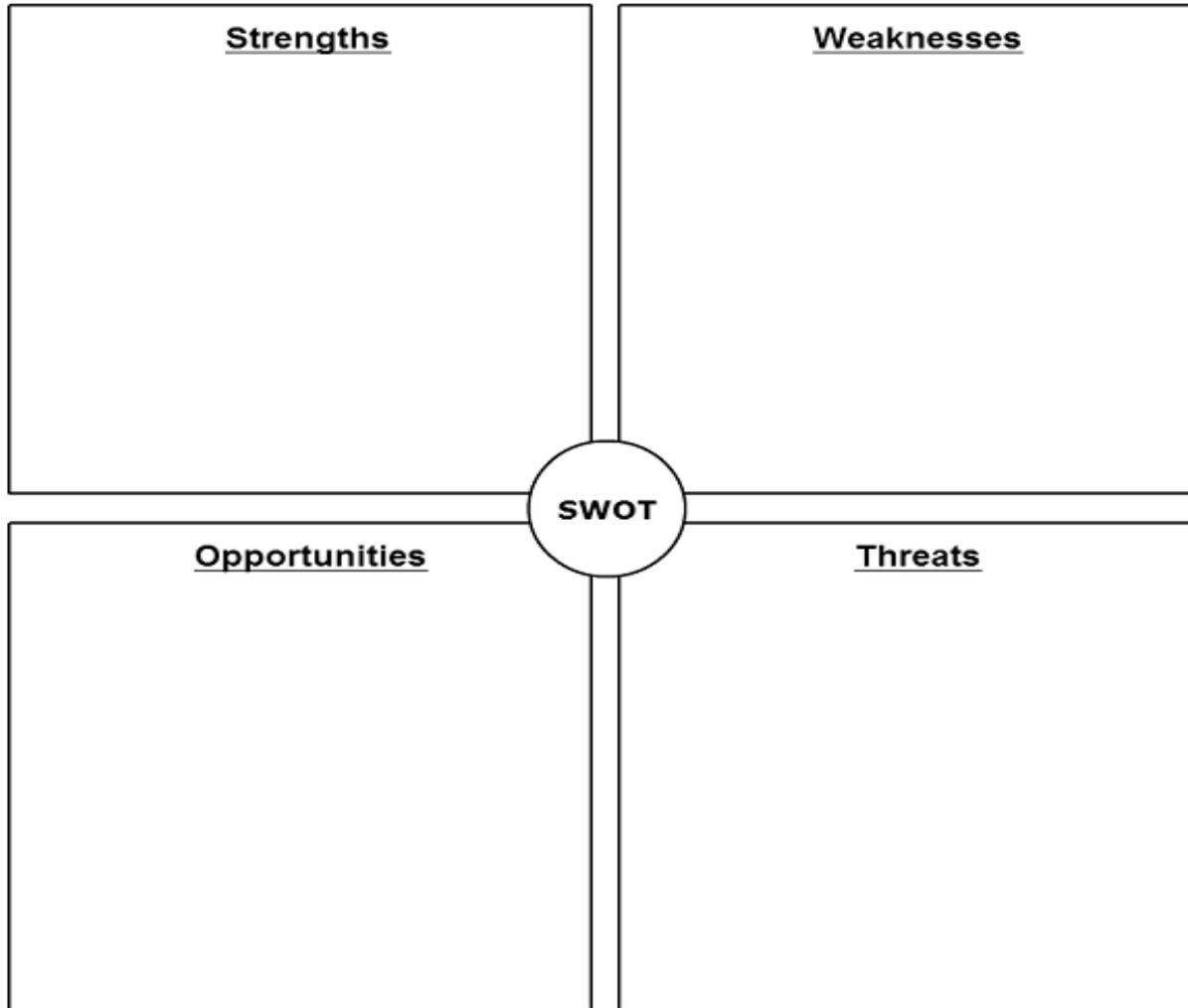
SWOT analysis:

Strengths, Weaknesses,

Opportunities, Threats



SWOT Analysis



Empowered meetings

Set the agenda beforehand

....ask if they have other topics they'd like to agree

Agree the date of next meeting at the meeting

....Put it in both diaries

Send a written recap

....Issues discussed, actions agreed, timelines for delivery

Invite them to comment

Communicate professionally



- ❖ Remember, this is YOUR degree: be assertive (but not rude!)
- ❖ You can question/ disagree with your supervisor
- ❖ Some academics avoid giving ‘harsh’ criticism, so be sure to ask “is there anything else you think I need to know/ do at this stage?”
- ❖ Remember, some academics take good research/ writing for granted
- ❖ Try not to be disheartened

Communicate professionally

Things it's ok... and important... to ask:

" I want to make sure I understand you completely, can you repeat that last bit about X again?"

"Can you tell me a little more about what you mean when you say...X"

"I'm not sure I agree with that, let me tell you why..."

"Is there anything else you think I need to know about the progress in general? Is there anything that I should have asked that I didn't?"

"Thanks again for your time, can we schedule our next meeting now, while I'm here?"

Project-Manage your research

Set realistic goals – What do I want to achieve?

Set deadlines – when will I have it completed?

Set measures – How will I know I have completed it?

Build contingencies – I need ‘just in case’ time

Ask for help when needed – who should I contact?

Talk to others – Who can I talk to?

Read the Calendar (!) – what are the regulations?

Seek support early —you are not alone

Postgraduate Advisory Service – the frontline service

www.tcd.ie/seniortutor/students/postgraduate/

Graduate Student's Union

www.tcdgsu.ie/

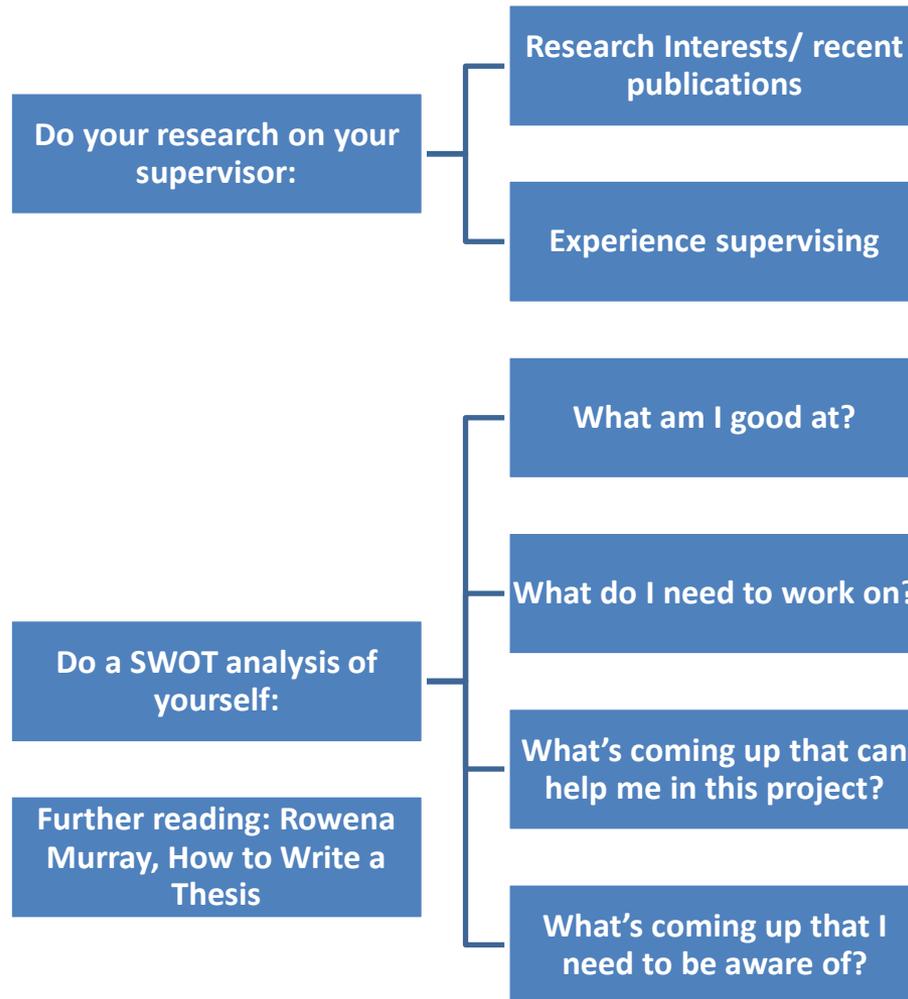
Student Counselling Service

tcd.ie/Student_Counselling/

Student Learning Development

tcd.ie/student-learning.tcd.ie/

So, for homework



Postgraduate Advisory Service

Contact us at pgsupp@tcd.ie

Or phone us on (01) 896 1417

See our website on tcd.ie



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

Thank You

