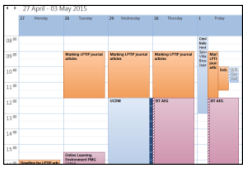
Top tips for supervision (UG & PGT)

1. **Define communication boundaries**. At the beginning of the supervision relationship agree forms of address, modes of communication and the frequency of contact. It may also be useful for individuals to share any relevant personal aspects which could be impactful e.g. religious or family obligations which may result in someone being unavailable at certain times of the year

2. **Structure the supervision meetings.** Shaw[1] (1987) suggests an eight stage structure to meetings; a) Establish rapport b) Review current progress c) Define the purpose and scope of the meeting d) Explore problems/results e) Clarify decisions f) Set goals and identify tasks g) Conclude and summarise h) Agree the notes of the meeting

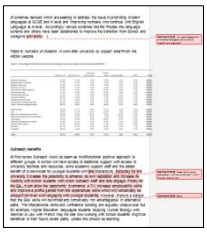
3. **Task delegation and regular deadlines**. Agree regular deadlines to help your student manage their time and workload. As part of the recording process, ensure that your student promptly emails you after each meeting providing a brief summary of the discussion and listing the agreed tasks and deadlines



4. **Structure the learning.** Try not to overload your students with large amounts of complex reading at the beginning; identify a few core texts/articles/studies and then discuss the main ideas

5. **Guide their research skills.** Determine your student's previous experience of using research databases, literature searching or critical analysis and if necessary guide them to resources and helpful information (e.g. iSPY tutorials, reference management software, guidance on what is plagiarism)

6. **Provide early feedback.** Encourage your student to start writing early; a literature review or summary of key methodologies can provide an opportunity for you to give feedback on structure and organisation



7. **Introduce students to the research community.** Promote opportunities for your student to attend, and/or present at, seminars/conferences enabling them to engage in discourse and to develop their confidence in the language of the discipline

8. **Supervisory team.** If you are part of a supervisory team, ensure that the student is not receiving mixed messages and that differences in opinions are openly discussed

9. **Ask for support.** If you are struggling with your student (e.g. they are not engaging in their research or are demanding too much of your time) speak with a colleague/line manager and seek guidance

10. **Keep a meeting log**. Maintain an accurate record of meeting dates and attendances in case there are any future supervision issues

[1] Shaw, M (1987) The tutorial: An analysis of skills. Unpublished PhD, University of Nottingham. Cited in *Effective Teaching in higher Education.* Routledge, London. P. 133