Workshop on Group Supervision

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Context

Activity/Milestone	Deadline/date spring semester	Deadline/date Autumn semester
Registration for the course as for other courses	Standard deadline for course registration	Standard deadline for course registration
Information meeting	Around the time for course registration	Around the time for course registration
Register for allocation of supervisor before	1 November	1 May
Supervisors allocated at the latest	1 December	1 June
Supervisor agreement approved	15 January	15 August
Thesis report submitted	1 June or the first weekday thereafter.	2 January or the first weekday thereafter.
Defence at the latest	30 June	31 January

- Total time for supervision, granding and defense is 15 norm hours

- On-time handing and passing is key to our income

- The Cand.merc and Cand.negot programs structure the master's thesis proces by mandatory deadlines, cf. Course description and info at the home page for the study programs

Source: Cand.merc. Master's thesis ho,epage:
https://mitsdu.dk/en/mit_studie/kandidat/candmerc_odense/speciale/table_deadlines

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Why do group supervision?

- Economize time for meetings, scheduling and emails
- Students show up for pre-scheduled supervision
- Less repetition of content:
    - Students ask similar (basic) questions
    - Themes covered at supervisions are often the same
- Students can learn from and inspire each other – learning from role models and failuires of others
- Prevent loneliness in the writing process
- Good students can pull weaker students forward
- Social connections – may prevent writer's block
- Better time management: Get the process moving and ensure more on-time submissions
- …

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Welcoming letter

Dear all,

Welcome to the master's thesis supervision with me, your supervisor, Mette Lund Kristensen from Department of Business & Management (in Danish: Institut for Virksomhedsledelse).

You are invited to the first supervision meeting on **Thursday 8th of December 2022 at 15.15-16.00**. This first meeting will be **online**. You will receive a calendar invite separately, which I kindly ask you to respond to.

The supervision will be a combination of individual and collective sessions starting with this first collective meeting where I will present the concept of my supervision and we will make arrangements for the coming supervision. Further, at this first collective meeting, we will focus on the next important step: the supervisor agreement containing the problem statement and a supervision plan. This agreement has to be uploaded in the master's thesis form system by January 15th 2023.

I will create and invite you to join a team in Microsoft Teams called *Master's thesis supervision Spring 2023*, where I will upload slides and other documents. Here you can also pose questions, which can benefit all.

I look forward to meeting you all and to work with you on your projects.

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Process

Early December: Supervision process and general information

- Formalities, milestones, course descriptions, home page
- Supervision process/ approach and supervisor agreement
- How to narrow down research topic and write up RQ?
- Scheduling of group supervision dates

Early January: Supervisor agreement (Individual meetings)

- Preparing supervisor agreement before submission on January 15th.
- Research idea: Formulating RQ / narrowing down topic
- Supervision plan

Late January: Lit.review and theory part

- How to search for, choose and delimit theory?
- How use theory to investigate, analyze and solve **academic problems**

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Process

Late February: Data collection and methods

- Recap of methodology. Based on methods courses

- Research design and tactics

- Data collection

Late March: Analysis and Findings

- What is an analysis in an academic paper?

- The purpose of the analysis

- How to analyse and interpret data?

- What is a finding?

- How to write up the findings?

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Process

Late April/early May: Discussion and conclusion

- What is the essense of a discussion in academia?

- What does the discussion include?

- What part does theory play in the discussion?

- What to avoid in the discussion

- The function of the conclusion

Before the defense: Q & A

- How to go about the defense

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Supervision approach

Collective meetings

- Five supervisor scheduled collective meetings. Online for people abroad or at longer distances

- I set up meetings and send invitations

- Collective meetings are a mix of my advice/recommendations, students' questions either sent before the meeting or raised during the meeting and peer discussions

- Cover the essential parts of the master's thesis

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Supervison approach

Individual meetings:

- We schedule bilateral meetings in between collective meetings

- I suggest a first individual meeting in week 1 or 2 to agree on problem statement and supervision plan.

- Shorter meetings

-> You contact me for an appointment

Ad hoc supervision

- I have invited you to a Teams group, where we can have conversations and exchange files

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Supervision approach

- I will strive to answer within 2 working days – otherwise please remind me

- I am willing to read shorter excerpts of your work, so be critical as to what you want me to read

- If you wish to pose a question or send material, please be precise as to what you want me to give feedback on.

- I urge you to have conversations between you as your fellow students often have the same problems and wish to spare with you

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Structure and content of group meetings

- Round the table. Since last time / status quo

- Supervisor lecturing on the theme of the day. Including examples from student's topics

- Q & A

- Student peer questions and advise

- Planning ahead towards next topic and for the individual theses

- Confirming individual meetings in between collective meeting

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Group supervision example
Anna Lund Jepsen

- F20/F21: Online (Covid-19)

- Round the table. Status on student projects

- Supervisor lecture/talk about a specific topic

- Plan for an ItsLearning course where the students can book meetings

- Supervisor planned meetings (1 hour) with suggested themes. On the same day students can book individual meetings. Students book in doodle the day before if they wish individual supervision

Structure of meetings

Dato	Tidspunkt	Emne	Forberedelse/medbring
1.2	10.15 – 11 + booking af tider indtil 14	Rapportstruktur, problemformulering og metodologi	Udkast til problemformulering med undersøgelsesspørgsmål samt forklaring på relevans og et meget foreløbigt udkast til struktur og tanker om valg af metodologi (survey, case, interviews, litteraturstudium
15.2	10.15 – 11 + booking af tider indtil 14. 12	Situationsanalyse og litteratur/teoretisk baggrund	Første udkast til referencer og gerne noget situationsanalyse
22.2	10.15 – 11 + booking af tider indtil 14	Opsamling ovenstående og lidt om metode	Referencer og tanker om metode
8.3	10.15 – 11 + booking af tider indtil 14	Mere om metode	
22.3	10.15 – 11 + booking af tider indtil 14	Analyser og præsentation af samme i rapporten	Udkast til analyse(metode)r – husk at planlægge inden dataindsamling
12.4	10.15 – 11 + booking af tider indtil 14	Afventer	Spørgsmål
26.4	10.15 – 11 + booking af tider indtil 14	Præsentation og validering af resultater. Diskussion.	Udkast til præsentation
10.5	10.15 – 11 + booking af tider indtil 14	Endelig rapport og forsvar	Spørgsmål

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Virtual/Semi-virtual Thesis Groups and Their Process Management -Perspectives and Best practices

Maria Elo
Associate professor, SDU

Reference: WIP paper 2019 with Joan Löfgren, Aalto University, Finland

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Thesis process as a group

- Physical presence groups: time and space specific limitations for participation, but highly intensive when that works

- Hybrid (virtual and local presence) groups: combines the best of both systems, glocal

- Virtual groups: well-functioning system for international groups and working students

Elo & Löfgren, 2019 WIP

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Thesis process system: a more collective "component delivery"

1. Idea and research development phase
2. Theoretical review and framework development
3. Selection of an appropriate research approach and methodology
4. Empirical work and analysis
5. Writing the thesis
6. Final submission
7. Final turnitin control and assessment

Elo & Löfgren, 2019 WIP

Continuous control

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Thesis management -process owner 1 (supervisor)

1. Electronic dashboard (real time overview)
2. All instructions, materials and processes in one place
3. Monitoring of deliveries, deadlines and input
4. Phase-based individual e-commenting and personal (on-line) supervision
5. Elimination of drop-outs and writer's block situation, fast intervention in case of illness/unexpected life events
6. Multiple control of plagiarism and expected quality (Turnitin)
7. Intra-group comparison
8. E-rubrics and assessments

Elo & Löfgren, 2019 WIP

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Thesis management process owner 2
(peer group coordinator)

1. Organizes virtual/local group sessions according to the phases, or on demand, also independently
2. Informal "coffee table" groups, voluntary participation but highly visited due to the perceived benefits and fun
3. Groups meet, present and discuss their ideas, plans and ways forward
4. Key idea: solidarity, benefit for all, cooperation and socialising, creation of collective "we", sensitivity
5. Self-evolving care-taking, thesis development and problem solutions

Elo & Löfgren, 2019 WIP

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Management of supervision- simple, clear and practical for accreditation

- Process management by the supervisor who is the process owner for the thesis group

- A designated student with the appropriate qualifications as the process owner for peer group management

- Clear and visible tasks for all students (full independence and tasks ownership for the thesis)

- Easy to use (and administrate) system (e.g. mycourses) with transparency and fairness

Elo & Löfgren, 2019 WIP

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Thesis management process: benefits of a peer-group system

1. Supervisor and group coordinator teams ➡️ training (mngt)
2. Task division ➡️ work efficiency
3. Two way communication, learning, sharing both sides ("what is up") ➡️ real time
4. Self-organising groups, low level problem solution, better outcomes ➡️ less supervision needed, lower costs
5. Emic perspectives with peer group, level-improving cooperation (cf. Finnish education principle) ➡️ life learning/employability

Elo & Löfgren, 2019 WIP

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Peer group coordinator:

"…all have been super-satisfied – they have got responses fast, comments have been good…"

"…have succeeded in giving faith [in the process] and encouraging the group in a great way. Fantastic!"

Empowerment ☺

Program leader:

"…[name of coordinator] has exceeded all expectations."

"…[name of coordinator] has been an excellent leader in the XXX course…..then **enhancing the performance of others** would definitely be a criterion…."

Elo & Löfgren, 2019 WIP

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Development of thesis group options & systems

- Administration and accreditation needs
- Different needs and settings at different groups – different forms/options to be available
- Development of thematic areas (per supervisor) for allocation of students
- Development of student wellbeing and empowerment (CSR/SDGs)

Maria Elo, Associate Professor, SDU and Joan Löfgren, Program Director, Aalto University

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