

Pathways for Dealing with Problems in Supervision

Supervision, just like independent research, is a complex process. Sometimes we can feel overwhelmed, out of our depth, beset by problems or just plain frustrated by the supervisor or student we are working with. These kinds of situations are not unusual in working life.

When they arise, there *are* pathways available.

Before turning to any of the options below, consult the University's policy, *Resolution of Research Problems: Postgraduate Research Students*. The policy recommends that student and supervisor try to resolve difficulties through informal processes in the first instance. This document does not override the policy in any way but, along with the *Self-Help Options* document, it provides more detailed suggestions for how to handle informal dispute resolution processes.

Self-Help Pathway

The first pathway is to try self-help processes: see *Self-Help Options for Dealing with Supervision Problems*. When self-help strategies do not seem possible, or they have not worked, there are further options that involve other people helping.

Pathways That Involve Advice from Others

Which pathway you choose will depend on the particular situation and the impact of the problem on you. There are no right or wrong answers and all of the options have some benefits.

Start with self-reflection: Give yourself some quiet time and space to think about what is happening and to write it down. (See *Self-Help Options for Dealing with Problems in Supervision*, Pt 1 Meditating on the problem, for some suggestions as to how to structure your thinking process.)

Talk the situation over with one or more of the following people (in no particular order). Make sure you ask anyone you talk with to keep the discussion confidential and not to take any action on your behalf without your consent.

- A friend or someone in your family or community whose advice you trust
- A University Counsellor if you are a student or the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) if you are a staff member
- A University Chaplain
- Graduate Centre
- Student Learning Centre or (Students) or Centre Professional Development (Staff)
- A WAVE network (AUSA) representative if you are a student, or an AUS / ASTE representative if you are a staff member
- The Mediator
- Your HOD, Departmental Graduate Adviser or Faculty Associate Dean (Postgraduate), all of whom are named in the policy as potential sources of help