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Agreements between supervisors of PhD candidates at the start of a project

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The supervision of a PhD candidate usually involves several people: one or two supervisors, one or two daily supervisors, and sometimes another external supervisor. Supervisors may, in addition to the common interest of the dissertation, have different interests and take on different supervisory tasks. Problems can arise when it is unclear who does what and who is responsible for what, or even worse, when interests are fought over the head of the PhD candidate. It is important at the start of the PhD program to jointly answer the questions below and to make clear agreements about everyone's responsibilities and tasks and the way decisions are made in the program.

Interests

- Who has what interests in the PhD track? For example: contributing to own research, co-publishing, solving a practical problem.

Input

- Who is responsible for which parts of the PhD track (PhD candidate, daily supervisor(s) and supervisor(s))?
- Who has what substantive input (steering the research)?
- Who has what methodological input?

Tasks

- Who carries out which tasks?
- How much time do the various supervisors spend on the research per week?
- How frequently do the supervisors see the PhD candidate?
- Are time investment and supervision frequency dependent on the research phase?
- Does everyone give the same type of feedback at the same time (think commenting on a paper)?
- Who is the first point of contact for the PhD candidate?
- Who will guide the PhD candidate within the department and the faculty?

Decision-making

- How is the decision-making process organized? Is someone's vote decisive? Does anyone have the right of veto? On which specific components?
- How often are meetings held with all involved?
- How do we record the decision-making process? How do we ensure that everyone knows, endorses, and abides by the crucial decisions?