



Training PhD Candidates in Supervision

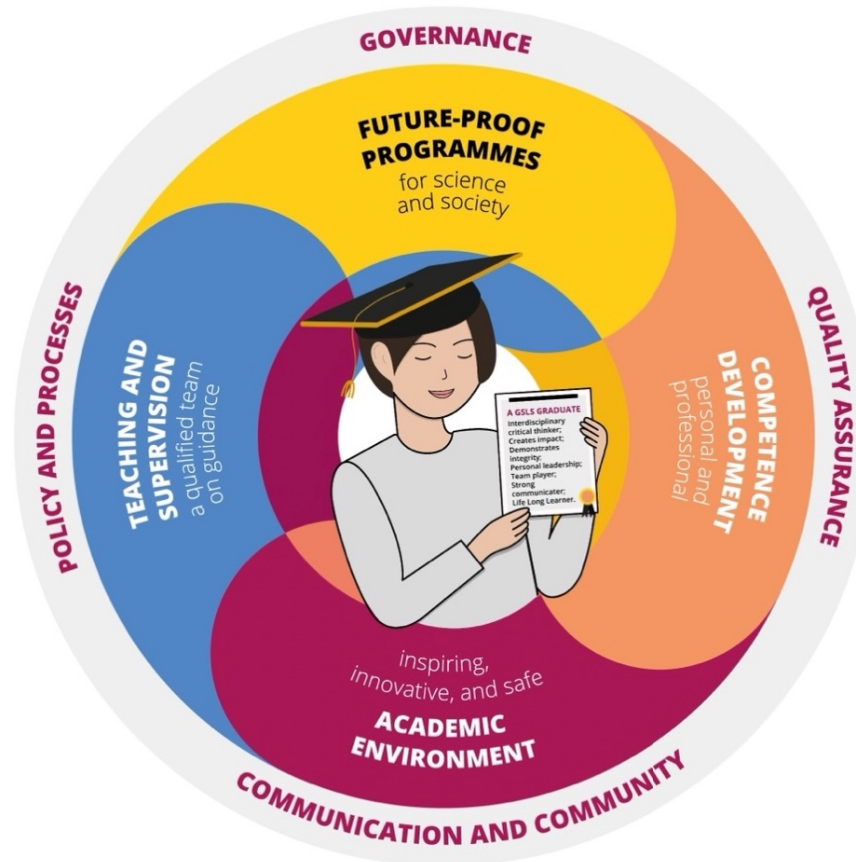
Balancing Responsibility and Future Leadership

Tania Morán Luengo & Pieter de Bordes

*“The crucial role of supervision and assessment:
arrangements for supervision and assessment should be
based on a transparent contractual framework of shared
responsibilities between doctoral candidates, supervisors
and the institution(s)”*

Vision at the Graduate School of Life Sciences – Utrecht University

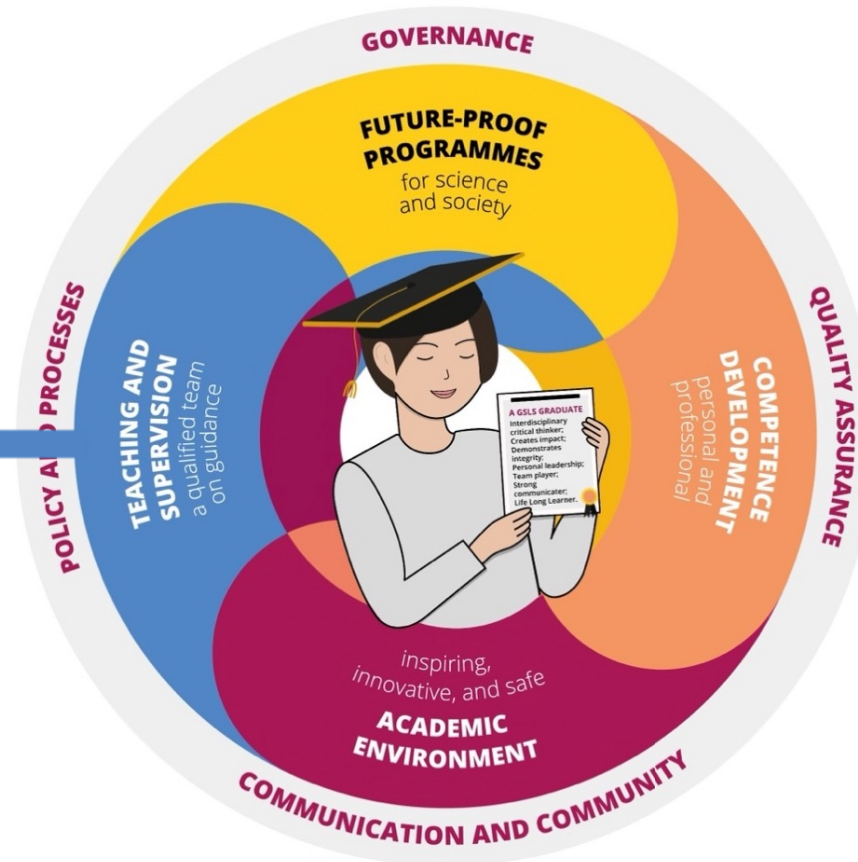
Vision & Mission



Attention to teaching and supervision

Vision & Mission

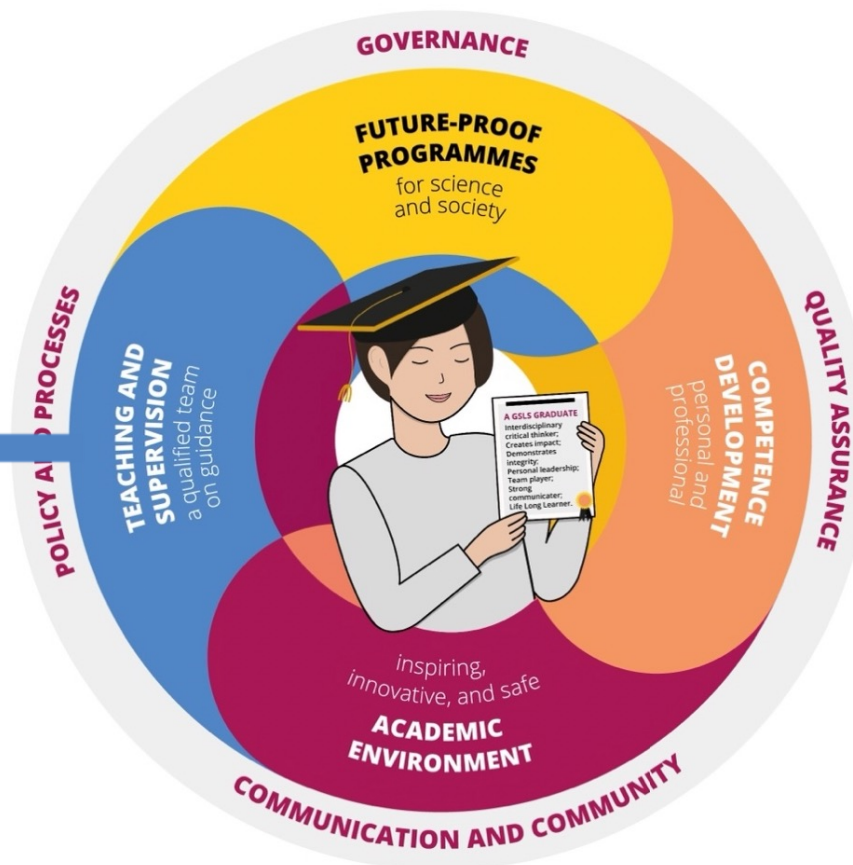
A qualified team actively and effectively facilitates academic and personal growth, ensuring state-of-the-art teaching and supervision



Attention to teaching and supervision

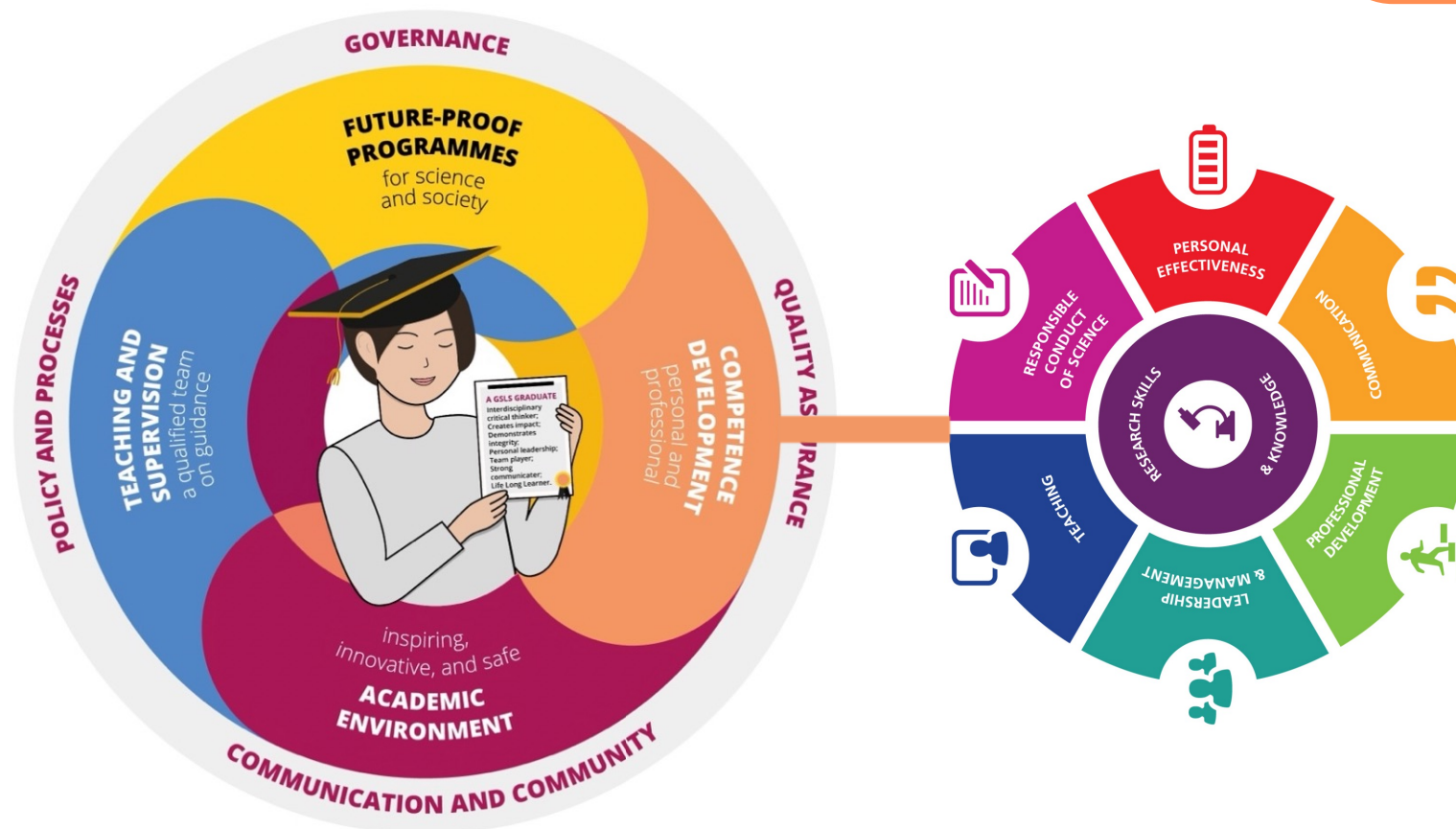
Vision & Mission

A qualified team actively and effectively facilitates academic and personal growth, ensuring state-of-the-art teaching and supervision



Attention to competence development – the PhD Course Center

Vision & Mission



Attention to competence development – the PhD Course Center

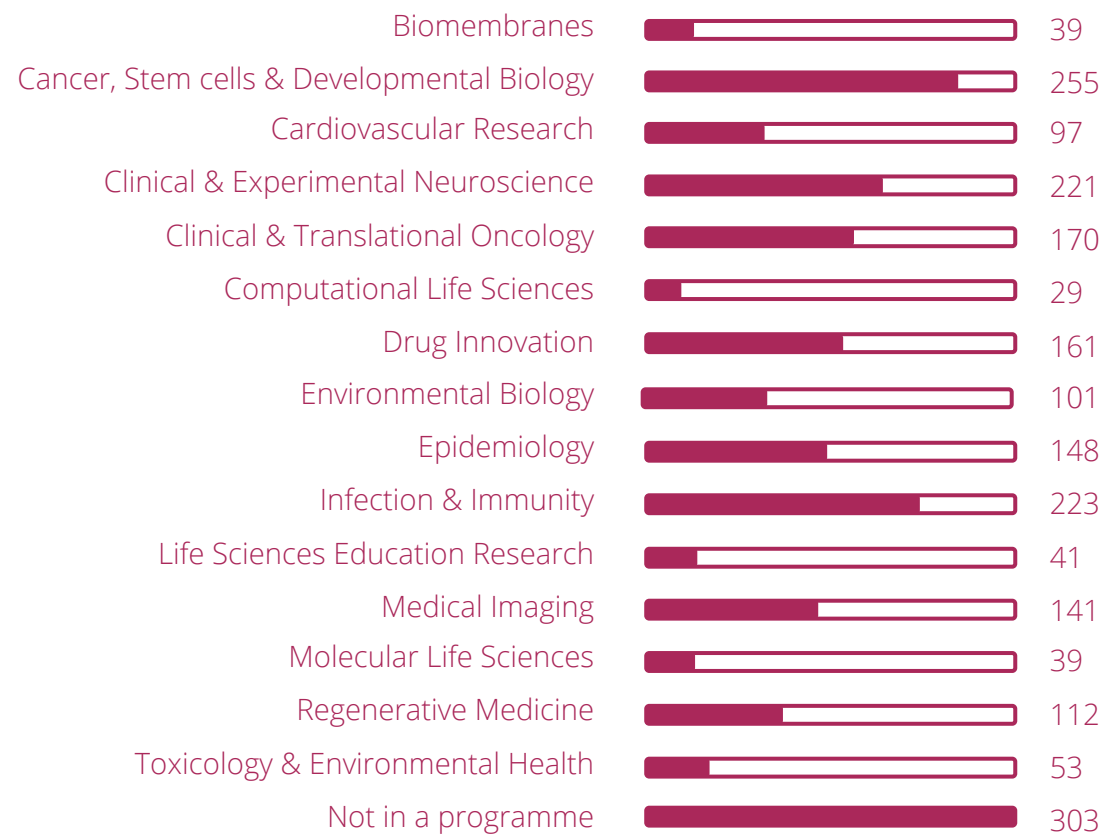
Vision & Mission

A qualified team actively and effectively facilitates academic and personal growth, ensuring state-of-the-art teaching and supervision



Numbers – Graduate School of Life Sciences

15 PhD programmes | 2133 active PhD candidates



General Utrecht University regulations



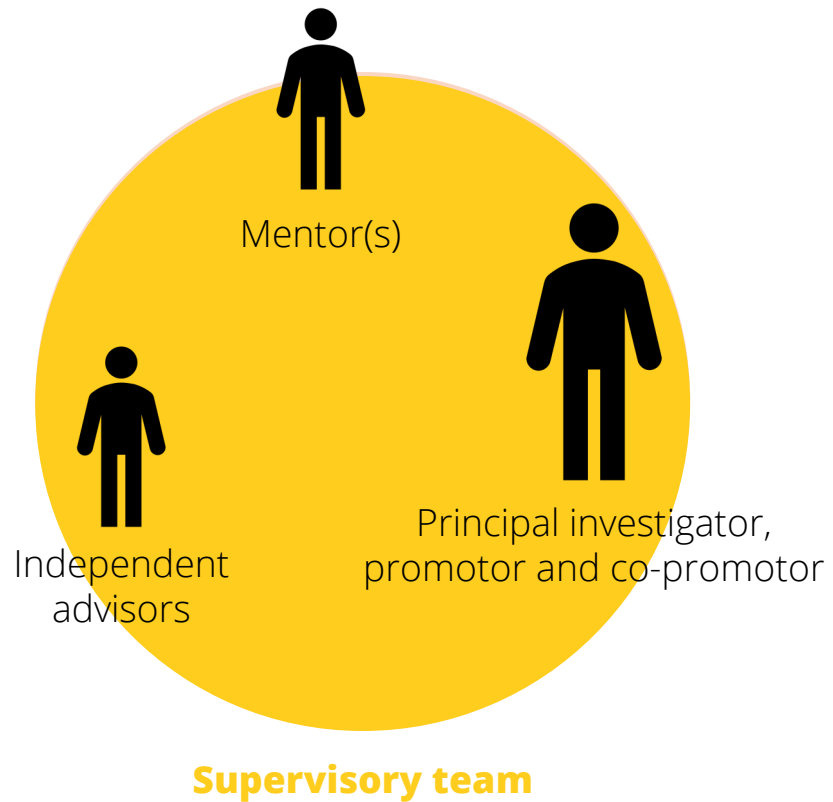
PhD candidate

Balancing responsibility and future leadership

PhD candidate

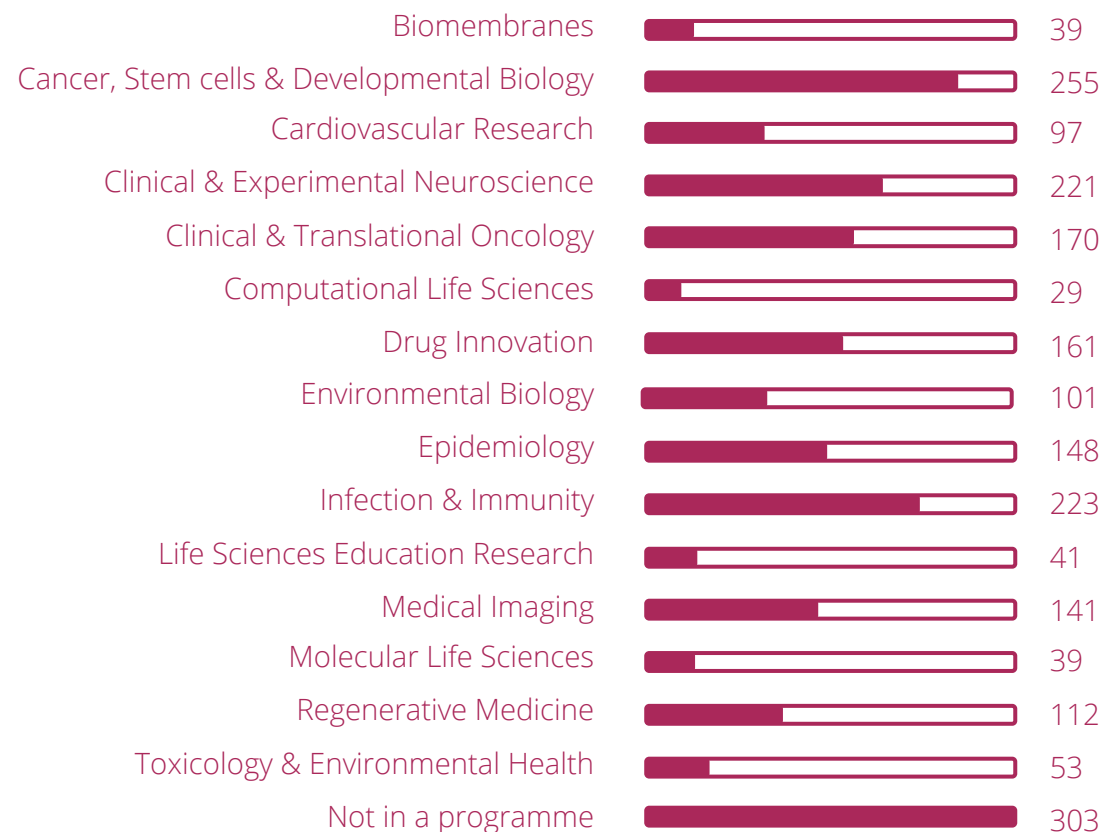
The GSLS also trains the Supervisory team

PhD candidate

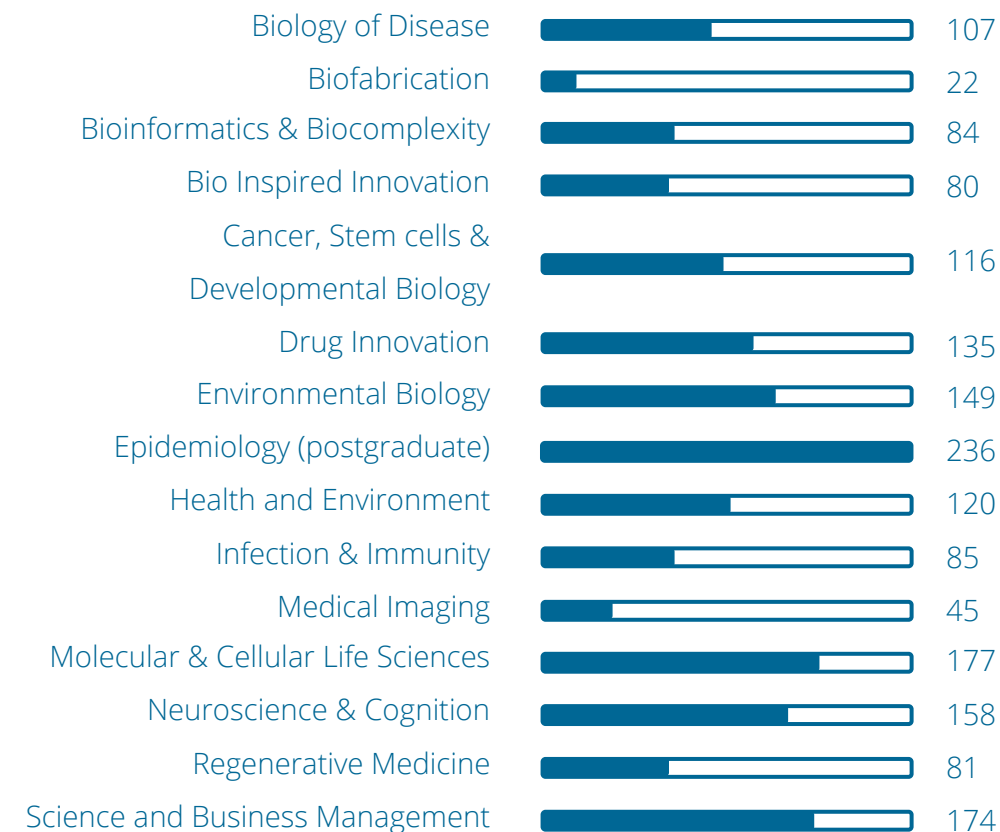


Numbers – Graduate School of Life Sciences

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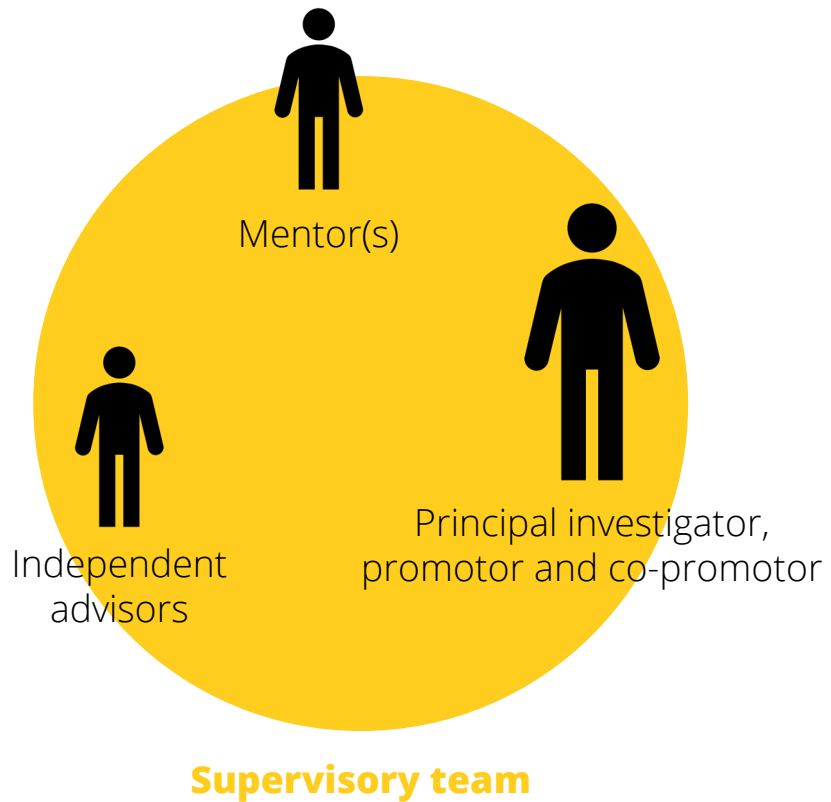


16 MSc programmes | 1739 active MSc students



PhD candidates also have supervisory functions themselves

PhD candidate



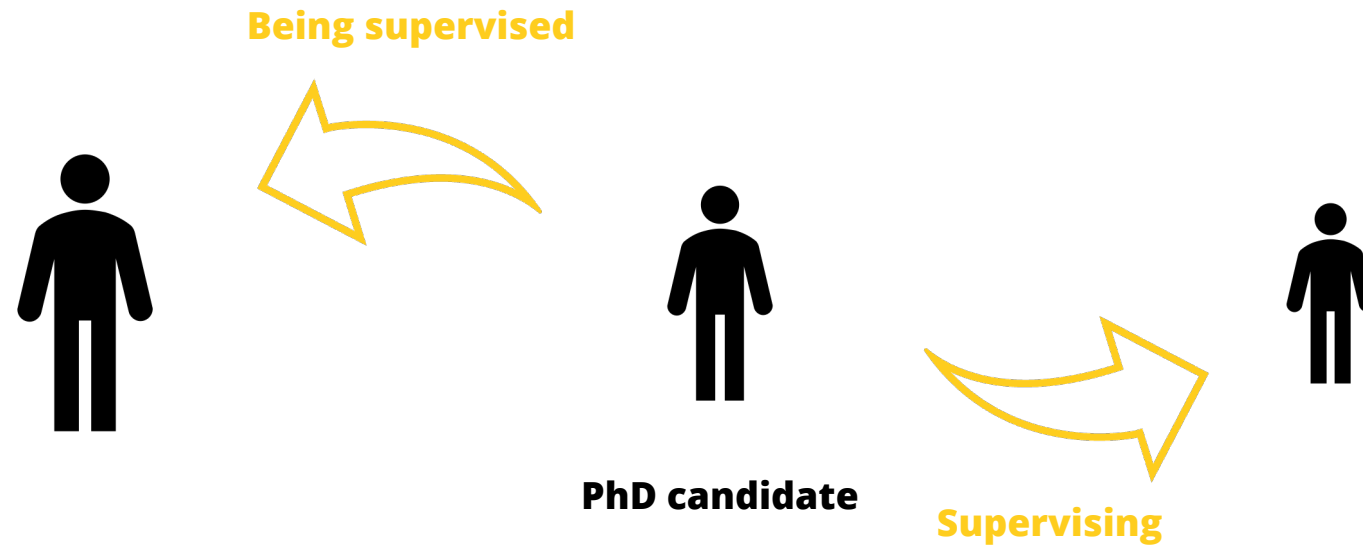
PhD candidate

**Master's (or bachelor's)
student**



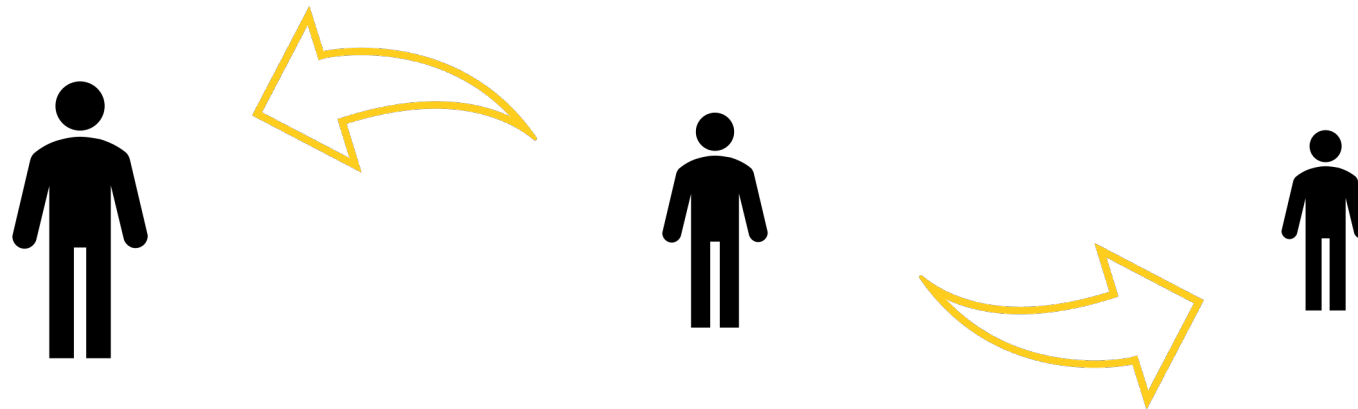
PhD candidate in the spotlight

PhD candidate



PhD candidate in the spotlight

PhD candidate



By teaching them

- How to supervise
- What is their role
- What is their responsibility (and what isn't)
- What can they expect

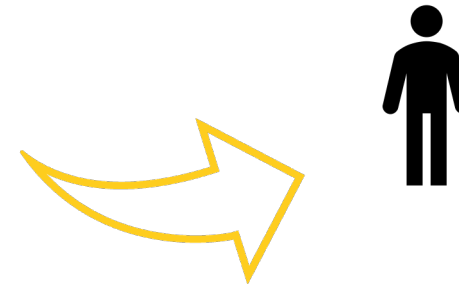
PhD candidate in the spotlight

PhD candidate



They also learn:

- How to be supervised
- What is their role
- What is their responsibility
- What can they expect

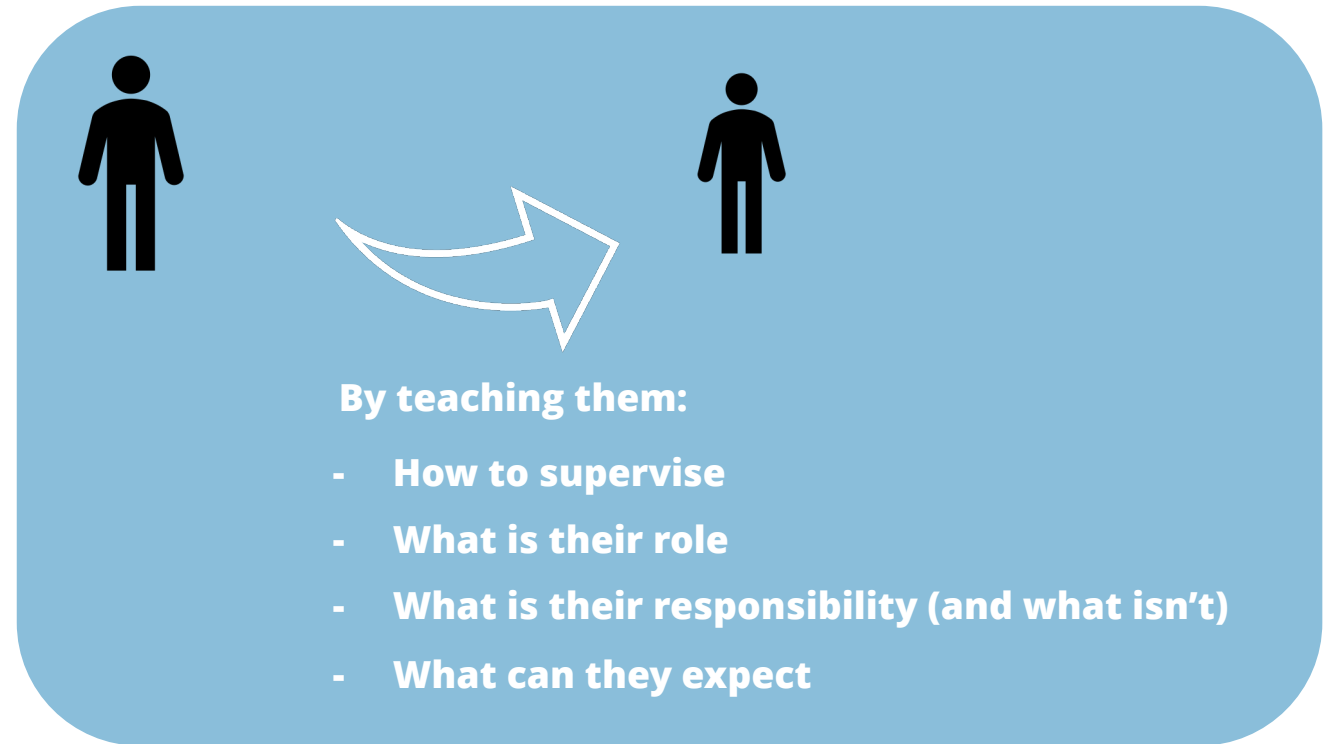
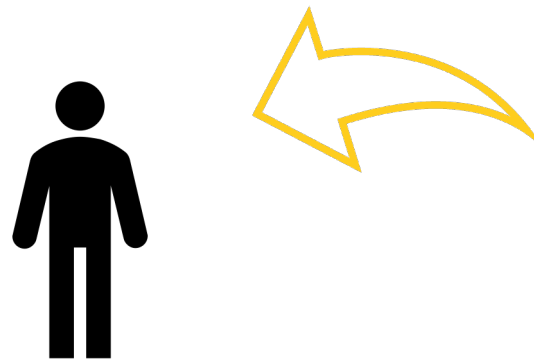


By teaching them:

- How to supervise
- What is their role
- What is their responsibility (and what isn't)
- What can they expect

Cultural changes happening bottom-up

PhD candidate



Goal setting & expectation management

Expectations

In terms of:

- **Content:** research question, skill development, techniques, etc.
- **Process:** deadlines, deliverables, communication
- **Relationship:** needs, balance and mental wellbeing



Expectation management & feedback culture – students' initiative

Expectations

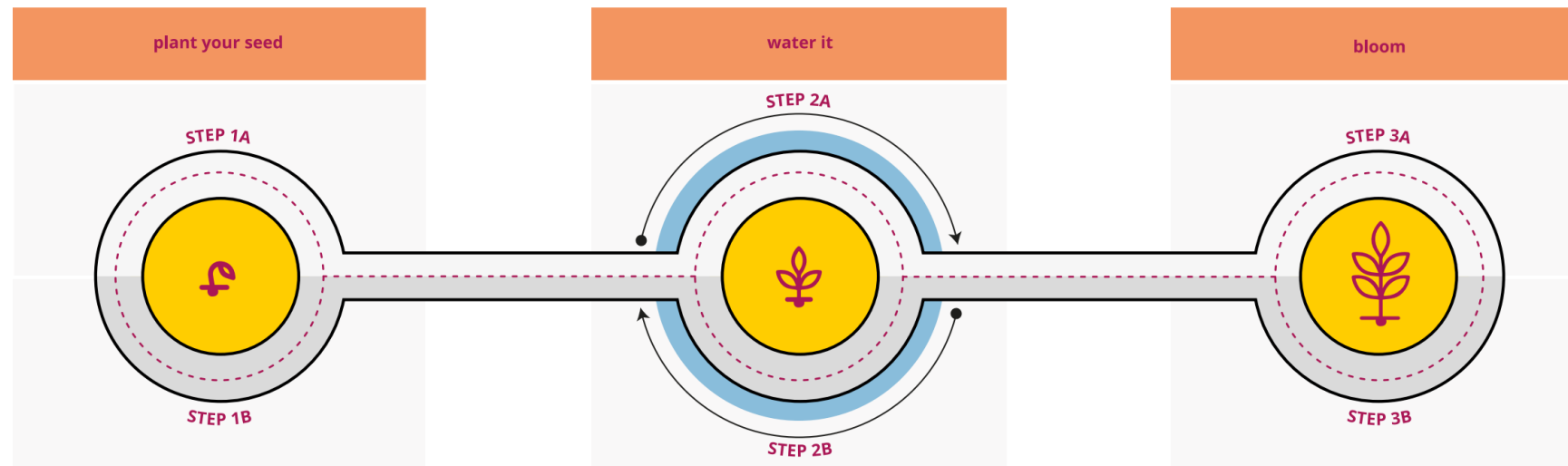


SEED Tool

*Supervision Expectations
& Evaluation Dialogue*

Expectation management & feedback culture

Expectations



Start of the project – setting expectations

Expectations



SEED Tool

*Supervision Expectations
& Evaluation Dialogue*

Reflect on guidance:

- How much experience do you already have in research?
- Your independency level – how much guidance will you need?
- What feedback style works best for you (e.g., direct, requested, etc.)?
- How do you deal with deadlines? Do you need extra deadlines for the different milestones (time management)?

Reflect on communication:

- What are your professional communication standards?
- What does a professional attitude look like for you?
- What is your communication style and what should your supervisor be aware of (e.g., (im)patient, friendly, motivational, quiet, etc.)?
- Did you receive feedback previously and how did you react to it?
- Which communication styles did (not) work well for you in previous experiences?

Reflect on professional development:

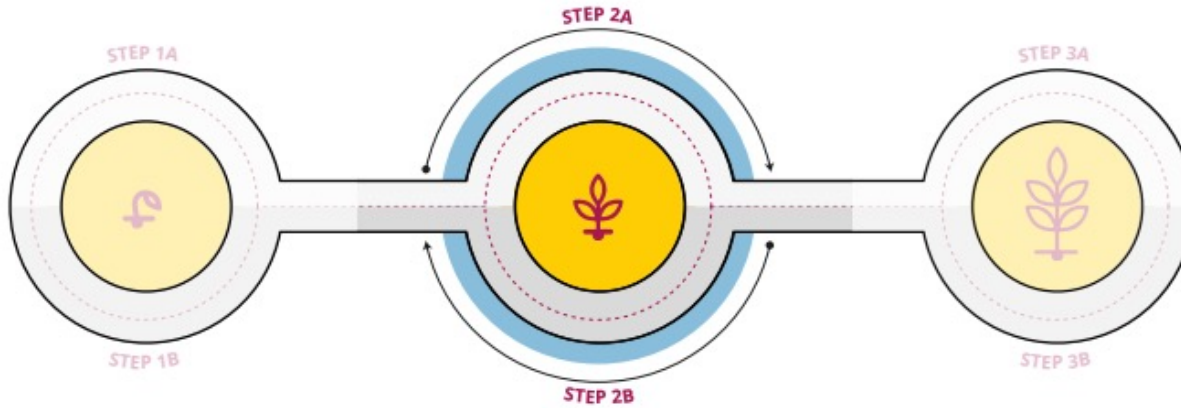
- What are your strengths/weaknesses?
- What future developments do you see for yourself? How can you work on that and how can your supervisor help you with this?
- Is there any (additional) help or support you would want from your supervisor and/or examiner?

Reflect on environment:

- What would be your preferred working hours (flexible or not, restrictions)?
- What is your preferred working culture (supported, independent, hierarchical, etc.)?

Throughout the project – evaluating expectations = recalibration

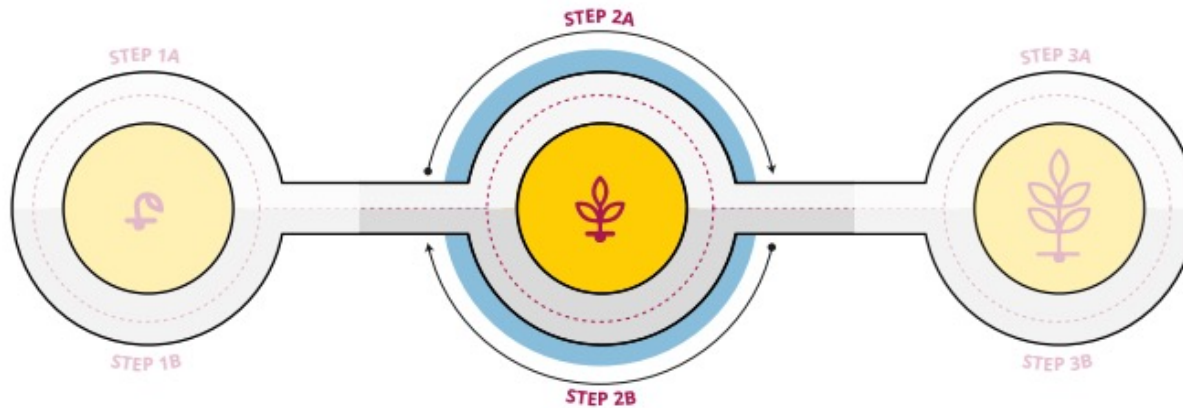
Expectations



- Asking for feedback
- Providing feedback

Throughout the project – evaluating expectations = recalibration

Expectations



- **Asking for feedback**
- Providing feedback

◀◀◀ I'm stuck. What can I do?

- ▶▶▶ **P**ROBLEM What is my problem at the moment?
- ▶▶▶ **O**PTIONS Which options have I tried already? Do I have any other ideas?
- ▶▶▶ **W**EIGHING UP What pros and cons do these options and ideas have?
- ▶▶▶ **E**LECT What would I choose to do if I wouldn't get any feedback?
- ▶▶▶ **R**EQUEST FEEDBACK What's your feedback?

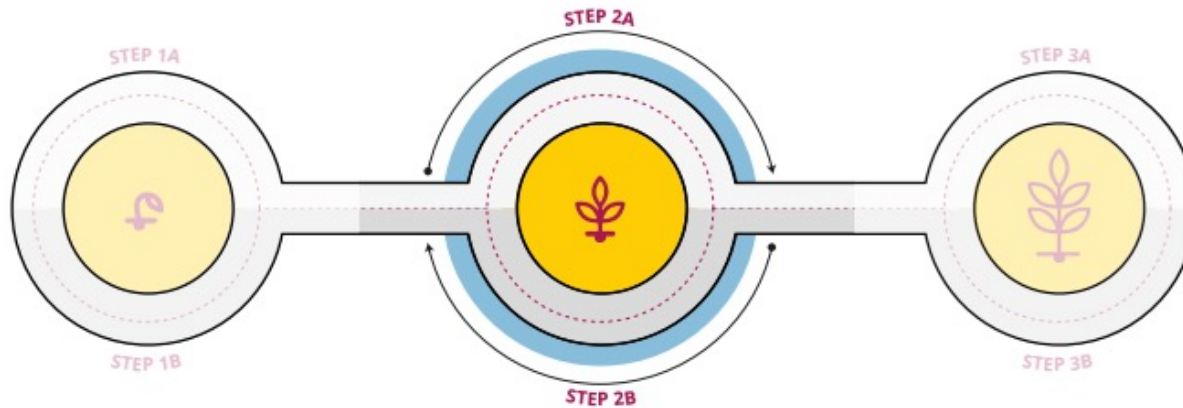
◀◀◀ Is it good (enough)?

- ▶▶▶ **C**ONTEXT Is this my best version? How much time and energy have I spent on this already?
- ▶▶▶ **L**EARNING/**O**BJECTIVE Which part do I want feedback on exactly?
- ▶▶▶ **S**ELF-**E**VALUATION What do I like already, and what do I want to improve, and why?
- ▶▶▶ **R**EQUEST FEEDBACK What's your feedback?

◀◀◀ Is it good (enough) now?

- ▶▶▶ **S**UMMARY What feedback have I had already?
- ▶▶▶ **U**SE How did I understand and use that feedback?
- ▶▶▶ **P**RODUCT/**P**ERFORMANCE How can one see that I changed this product/performance?
- ▶▶▶ **E**MOTIONAL IMPACT Did I have to deal with any emotions and if so, how did I?
- ▶▶▶ **R**EQUEST FEEDBACK Did my work really improve due to how I used the feedback?

Throughout the project – evaluating expectations = recalibration



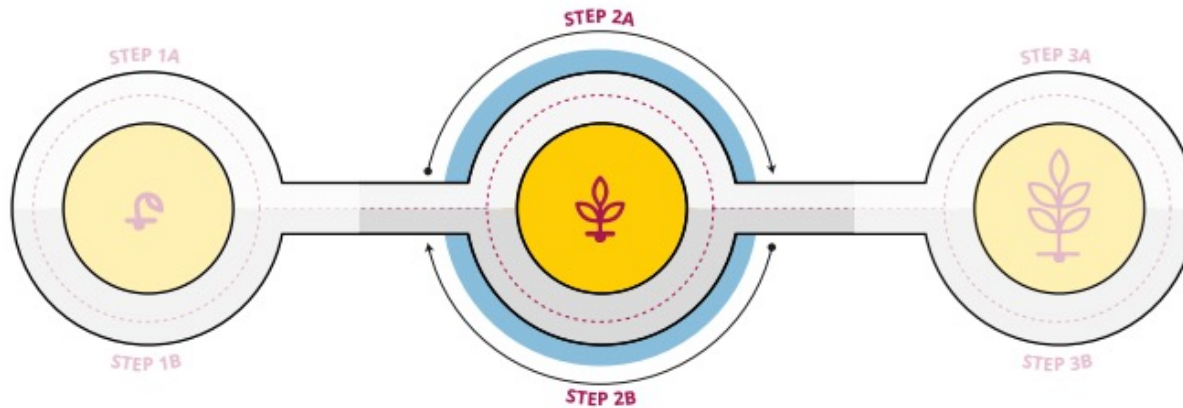
- **Asking for feedback & reacting to feedback**
- Providing feedback

Pitfall	
 NO QUESTIONS ASKED	Passively waiting for feedback ↓ obtaining no, little, or unspecified feedback
 I DID WELL, RIGHT?	(Not) asking for feedback, for the wrong reasons ↓ obtaining no points of improvement
 WHAT DO YOU KNOW?	Only seeking feedback from your superiors ↓ obtaining a narrow perspective on performance
 BUT, BUT, BUT...	Reacting defensively ↓ feedback analysis and use are hindered
 AS YOU WISH	Not (thoroughly) analyzing feedback ↓ no (deep) learning occurs
 CHAPTER CLOSED	Not acting on feedback ↓ performance does not improve

Expectations

Throughout the project – evaluating expectations = recalibration

Expectations



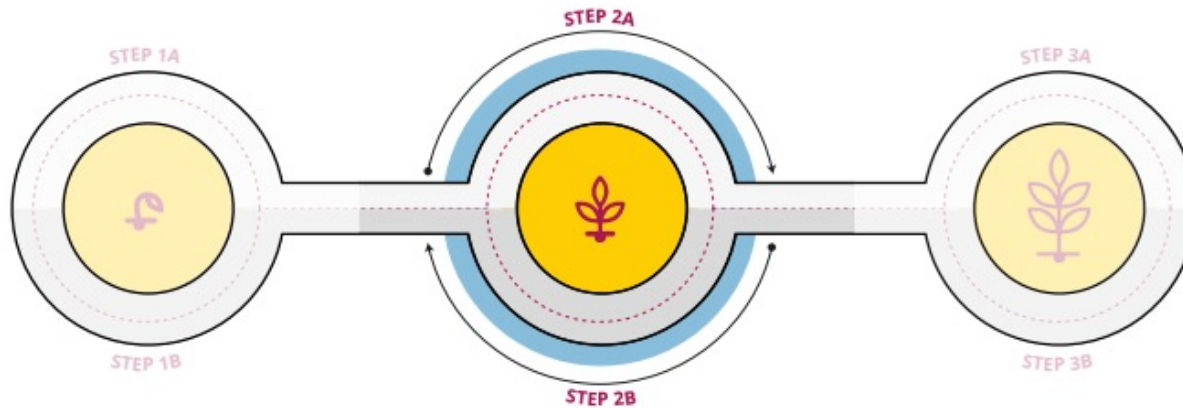
- Asking for feedback
- **Providing feedback – bidirectionally (based on previous agreements)**



PhD candidate

Throughout the project – evaluating expectations = recalibration

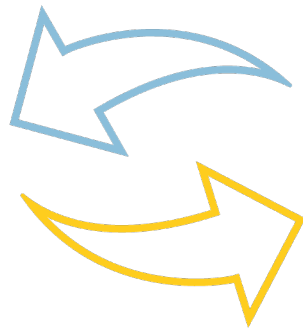
Expectations



- Asking for feedback
- **Providing feedback – bidirectionally (based on previous agreements)**



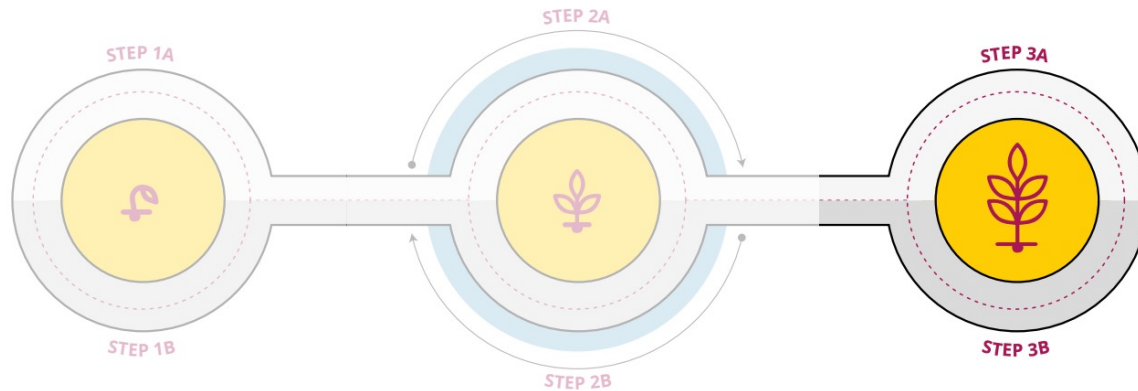
PhD candidate



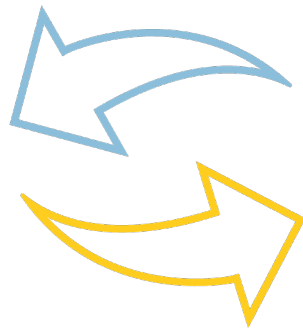
- What I would need from you to reach this milestone is...
- We agreed on doing... how do we still like this?
- We thought it would work well like this but in practice it would be better...
- With the current experience, I would prefer...

End of the project – final bidirectional feedback round

Expectations



PhD candidate



- **(Optional) Providing feedback - bidirectionally**

Guidelines for requesting feedback from your supervisor:

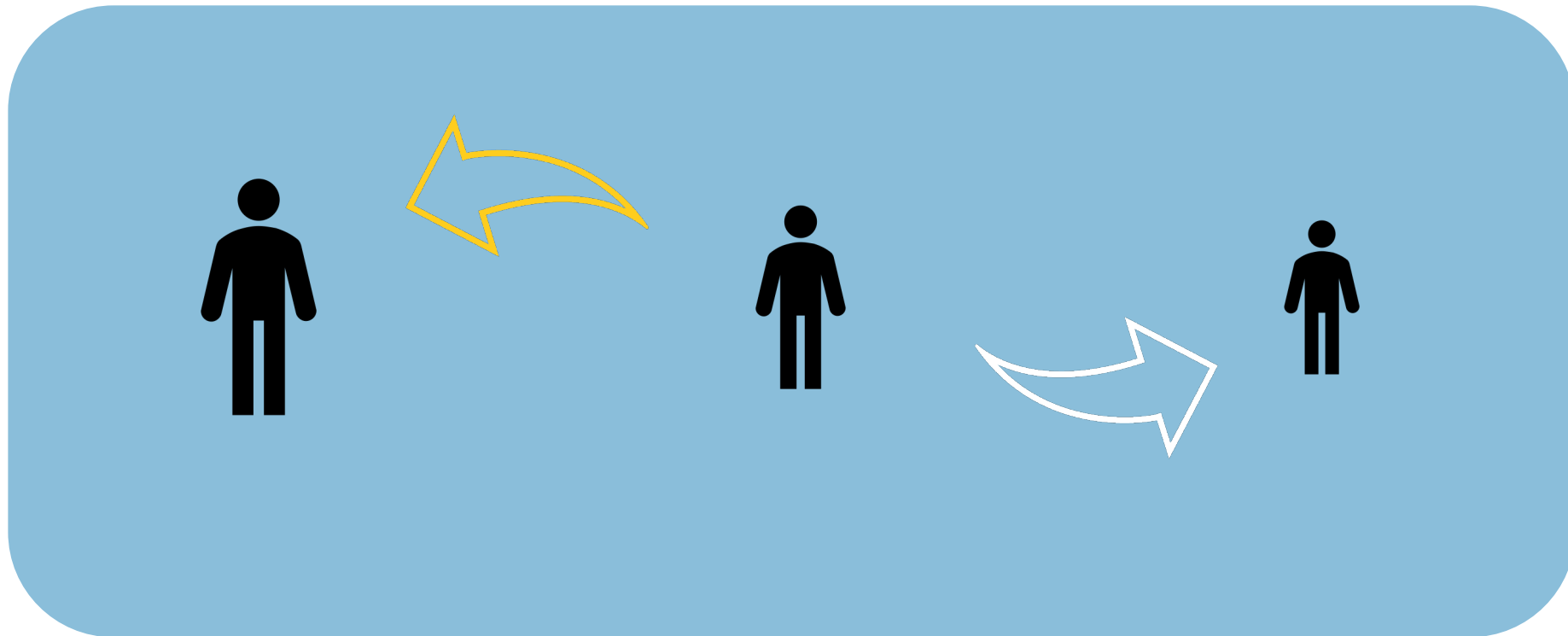
- Ask specific questions.
- Bring up some moments of situations of your project in which you could have done things differently and ask for advice/opinion

Guidelines for feedback to your supervisor:

- Try to relate your feedback to the agreements made. What agreements were kept? what worked best?
- Besides what is addressed in the agreements, are there any other topics that you want to give feedback on to your supervisor? Try to address both qualities of your supervisor as well as possibilities for improvement.
- You can also consider including skills that you admire and/or that you yourself could learn from your supervisor. In your wording try to be clear and unambiguously and substantiate your feedback with examples.
- If you find it difficult to come up with specific suggestions for improvement, you can think about what other strategies your supervisor could try out. Or what you personally would do differently and why. Or give suggestions you have seen from other supervisors.

Applying the same knowledge to their own supervision experience

PhD candidate

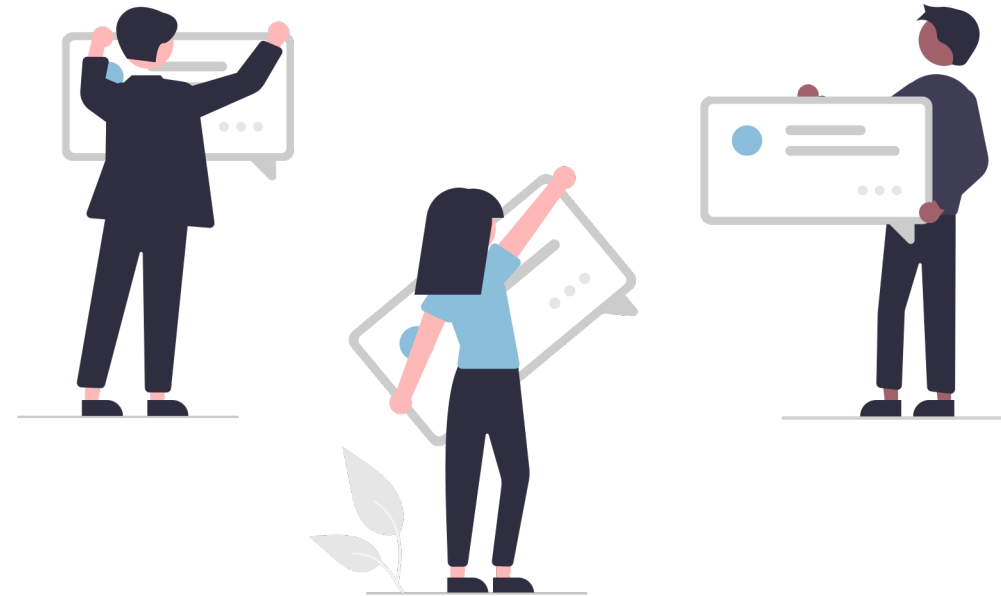


Peer-feedback – intervision

Intervision

Aims:

1. Resolve issues that they are currently dealing with
2. Get aware what the problems are not personal but related to the nature of the work
3. Learn to reach out and collaborate on solving problems



Responsibility – Accountability - Ownership

Ownership



Responsibility:
Given



Ownership:
Taken, personal
decision



Accountability:
External

Supervision training directed towards ownership

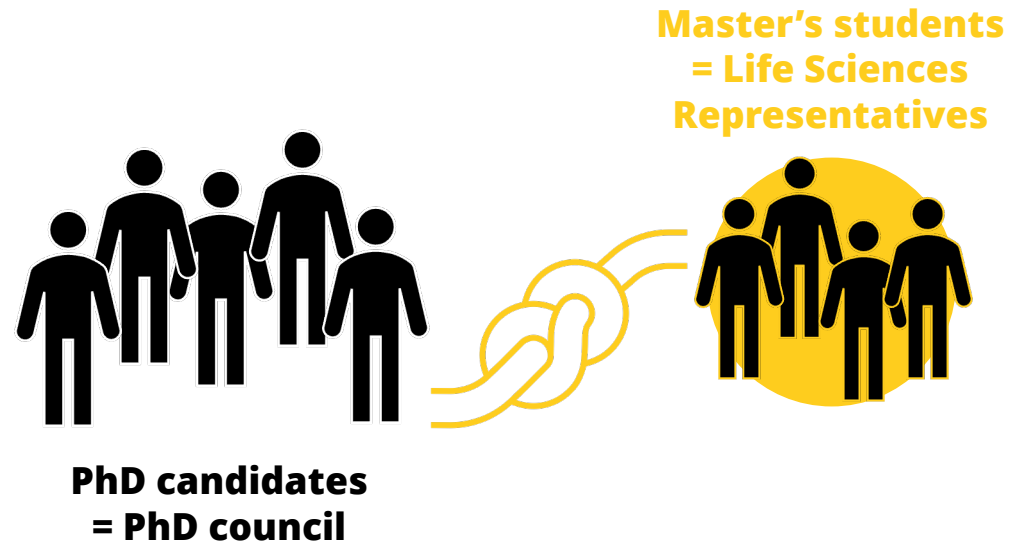
Ownership



Ownership:
Taken, personal
decision

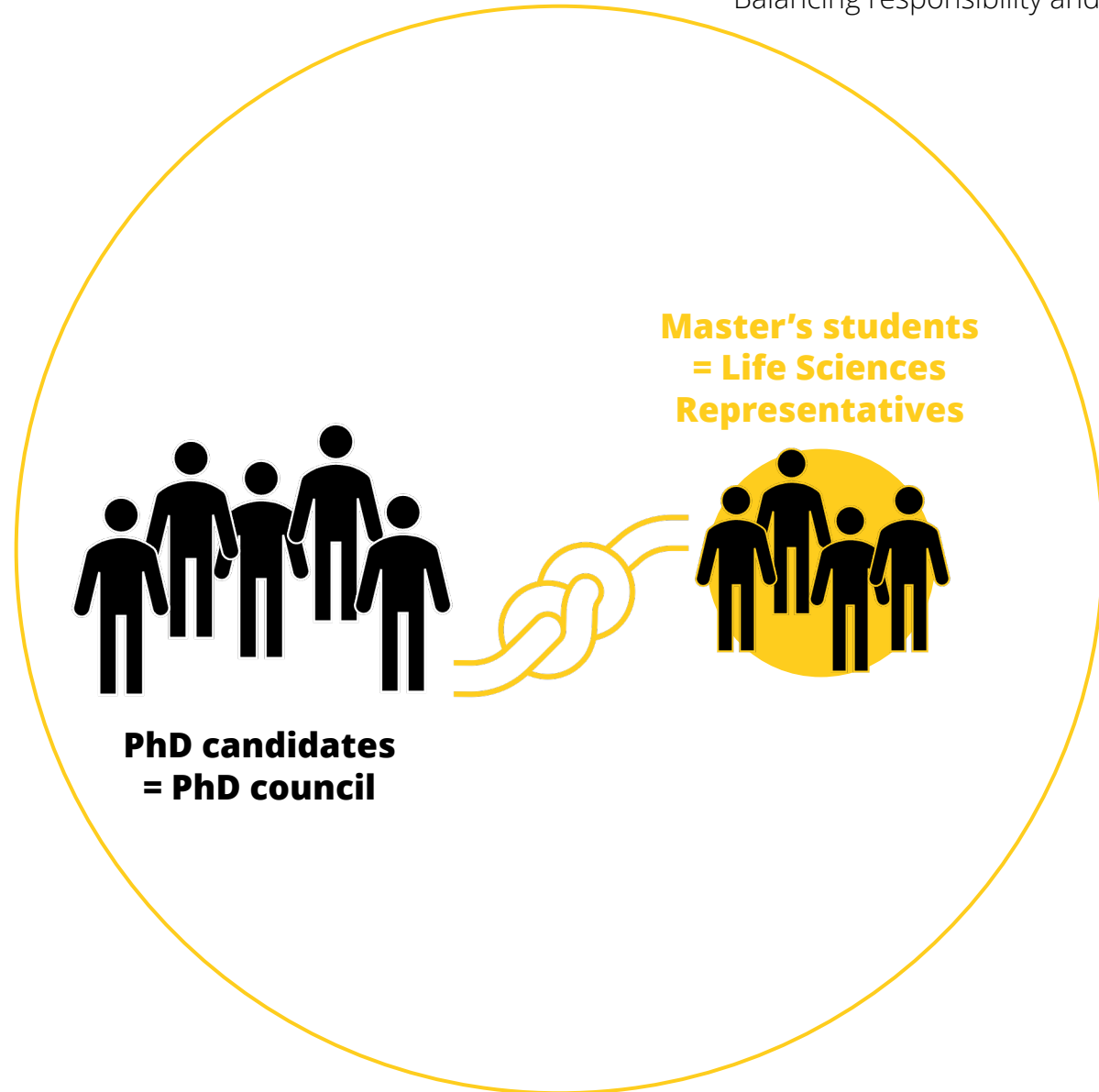
- ✓ Clarity
- ✓ Resources
- ✓ Freedom
- ✓ Security

Joining forces



Joining forces – bottom-up approach

GSLS action
Both at Master's and PhD level



*“(...) shared responsibility between doctoral candidates,
supervisors and the institution(s)”*