Effective Supervision of Research Students: A Study of University Practices and Foreign Students’ Experiences

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the support and practices on supervision and the experiences of foreign PhD students study in the Manchester, United Kingdom from three major disciplines of study namely Arts, Science and Social Sciences. It reviews the major findings of the research through a synthesis of the results of the in-depth interviews. The findings relate to four topics, namely, supervisory patterns and practices, the responsibilities of the supervisor, the responsibilities of the student and the responsibilities of the school. The findings are grouped into two, the new findings and findings found from the literature. There are several aspects of this research which it is hoped will contribute significantly to the development of higher education and be useful to the people involved, whether they are academics, students, sponsors, departments/schools, universities, researchers or trainers in order to improve practices in supervision. Key words: Student; Foreign; Supervision; Supervisor; Responsibility

INTRODUCTION

One factor driving the decision to do a PhD is the consideration that this qualification is needed in order to become an academic. As the doctorate is the highest grade, completing a PhD is seen as a substantial investment in human capital (Mangematin 2000). Often, starting a research degree marks a transition in the lives of students. For some, it is a transition from recent undergraduate work where learning was structured and directed to a situation where the learning is more self-directed. For others, starting a research degree may be a return to study after a lengthy break. Some students may already be employed in a university and be switching back from the role of teacher to that of a student. Whatever the situation, the student will need time and help to adjust to the new role. All foreign students have a lot of challenges to overcome, such as cultural differences, language, families, money etc. which may lead to lower achievements by them (Graves and Varma 1999). These challenges are much greater if the student is doing postgraduate education, which really consumes time, effort, patience and enthusiasm. Furthermore, those mature students coming from overseas together with their families may face many more challenges than those who are younger and single. Many factors can contribute to foreign students being unable to successfully complete their programme within the given time frame. One of the most important factors contributing to this is the kind of supervision they receive. Of course, all other aspects need to be taken into account in studying the foreign student’s experience of supervision. These include the support of the department or school, as well as the fact that the students should properly know their own responsibilities.

A research degree is about research training as well as contributing to knowledge and, although it is not impossible to find ways of training oneself, the whole process is designed to be guided by a supervisor (Cryer 2000). Both student and supervisor must wish the relationship to succeed. Otherwise, the problems in the relationship can affect the student’s progress. Buckley and Hooley (1988) show that only highly unusual students successfully complete their research degrees if the relationship with their supervisor is poor. Besides, much research has found that there is a high number of PhD students who fail to complete their studies in the UK, with the most frequently cited problems being the
nature of the supervision given (Delamont and Eggleston 1983; Marsh 1972). In preparing for PhD research, a supervisor and student must have a very good relationship. Furthermore, the learning system for PhD programmes in the United Kingdom is not examination oriented, but thinking oriented. At the end of the programme, the students are required to submit their theses. This underlines that the student-supervisor relationship is very important in ensuring that the student makes consistent progress and successfully manages to present his/her thesis on time and to standard (Sayed et al. 1998).

The objective of this study was to understand more about the supports and practices in the supervision of foreign PhD students studying in Manchester, United Kingdom. Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the support systems that foreign PhD students have?
2. What are the support systems that foreign PhD students need?
3. What are the student’s, the supervisor’s and the school’s responsibilities?
4. What issues are similar and different for science, social science and arts discipline PhD students, in relation to supervisory practices?

**METHODOLOGY**

Twelve foreign PhD students from various fields of study and years were interviewed. There were all from three main universities in Manchester, namely University of Manchester, UMIST and University of Salford. Based on the distribution of subjects available in these universities, they were divided into three groups namely arts, science and social science. Those groups were built based on the nature of the field itself. In this connection it was seen that arts courses involve research into human, materials and language and science courses involve laboratory and studio based work, while social science courses are more investigation into human ecology. These in-depth interviews were based on an interview schedule, consisting of open-ended questions. They were conducted based on a semi-structured interview schedule and using tape recorder to ensure accuracy. The objective was to obtain information in relation to the research questions. One of the data sources for qualitative research is direct speech of the people (informants) about their experiences, opinions, feelings and knowledge (Maykut and Morehouse 1994). Therefore, the interviews were managed to obtain the real views of the interviewees. Probing questions were asked whenever necessary to clarify and explain details related to important issues. The interview process was similar for all informants. All interviews were held at mutually agreed appointment times. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed manually. All the data have been checked with the subjects to ensure accuracy. The interview, which had been recorded in the recording machine were transcribed directly into a personal computer. In order to simplify the categorising work, all interviews were produced in hard copy. The researcher had to read the transcribed data repeatedly to build up the categories. The mind mapping method was used in building the categories. The researcher tried to understand the relationship or categories as they arose up till the point where the final results were reflected in overall themes. To assist in targeting and formulating the questions, the researcher also referred to the literature. All the questions asked were related to the research questions.

**THE FINDINGS**

There were four main issues have been dealt with it namely the student’s responsibilities, the supervisor’s responsibilities, supervisory patterns and practices and the school’s responsibilities. There are twelve themes that derive from the four issues mentioned above which is supported the literature. On the other hand, there are three themes that derive from the findings that have not been found in the literature. Figure 1 above summarises all the fifteen themes deriving from the findings from the interview programme.
DISCUSSION

The findings on these issues have been divided into two main groups for the purpose of presentation: those that support the literature and those that have not been found in the literature.

Themes that Support the Literature

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<th>Student’s Responsibility</th>
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<td>1. The students have to be independent in their study in order to get full benefit from doing a PhD</td>
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<td>2. The students should produce regular written work to make progress</td>
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<td>3. The students should have regular meetings with their supervisor at an agreed frequency in order to make progress</td>
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<th>Supervisor’s Responsibilities</th>
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<td>4. Guidance and advice are the main roles of the supervisor</td>
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<td>5. An effective supervisors must have good knowledge and experience in his/her respective field of study</td>
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<td>6. An effective supervisor should supervise students according to their ability</td>
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<td>7. A good supervisor should give personal support to student</td>
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<th>Supervisory Patterns</th>
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<td>8. A research planner, diary or tape recorder is important for future reference and timetables are essential for better planning</td>
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<td>9. Talking things over with someone can solve students’ problems and develop their thinking</td>
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<td>10. Students cannot complete their study within the time given because of failure to accomplish the experimental work, lack of supervision, family commitments and the language barrier</td>
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<th>School’s Responsibilities</th>
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<td>11. A good school should have good supervisory support systems</td>
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<td>12. A good school should have good and advanced facilities</td>
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Themes that have not been Found in the Literature

1. Personal recommendation and having a professor as a supervisor influenced students in choosing the University
2. The technicians is important for science students dealing with equipment and technical aspects
3. Variations in supervision patterns and practices according to individuals and disciplines

Figure 1: Summaries of the Themes that Emerged from This Research

The Findings that Support the Literature

Supervisory Patterns and Practices

The results show that students tend to reduce the frequency of their meeting with their supervisor only when they are already clear about what to do and feel they can be independent. In the Student Handbook of the University of Manchester, it is also mentioned that the frequency of meetings may vary according to the stage of student’s studies, the progress being made and whether studies are undertaken on a full-time or part-time basis. The results show that typically, full-time students meet their supervisor once a week in their first year and meet every two weeks to once a month in their second year. In the third year, the meetings depend on the stage the student’s research has reached, however once a month should be the norm. This means that the further students progress, the fewer meetings they have with their supervisor. The results from this study are also similar to those in McQueeny (1996). The results also reveal that students prefer to see their supervisor more frequently to check their understanding of the progress in their work.
This result is similar to the evidence found by Guppy and Trew (1995), who report that international students are more likely to meet regularly with their supervisors to establish a good relationship. The findings also show that there are no significant differences in frequency of meeting between arts, science or social science disciplines.

The findings also suggest that talking things over with someone can often solve students’ problems and develop their thinking. This result fits the Hall of Mirrors Model developed by Schon (1987), where it is stated that, by talking to each other and working together, students can overcome confusion and doubts. All of the informants indicated that they referred to their friends a lot if they found difficulties in their research or other related problems. Most informants said that they only seek their supervisor’s help when the problems cannot be solved in their circle. This confirms the judgements of Arksey et al. (1994) who mention that if students share apprehensions, this can help to resolve problems. Phillips and Pugh (2000) state that students are also advised to talk to experts in the field, if possible and other postgraduates about their experience of their role as well as their work.

The results have shown that a research planner/student log, diary or tape recording of supervision sessions is important for future reference. Students choose these methods of recording their meeting with their supervisor according to what suits them or what he/she recommends to them. By having this log, students can be directed as to ‘where to from here’. This result closely matches those in Yeatman (1995), who suggests that the graduate supervision log can help student to manage the supervision relationship towards the successful production of a PhD thesis.

The findings also suggest that timetables are essential for better planning. Phillips and Pugh (2000) suggest that the students should expect to work to deadlines, so they need a proper plan in order to organise their study. Students develop a timetable to make sure that their time is well managed and occupied. They believe that they have to set up deadlines in order to make progress or work according to a plan. The findings suggest that students normally have two timetables, one short-term and one long-term. The short-term timetable is more detailed than the long-term one. Generally, the long-term timetable includes the activities and time to complete certain tasks throughout the PhD studies.

Doing a PhD requires a constructive relationship between the student and supervisor and this can be seen as one of most important factors in a student’s work progressing according to plan. Both of them should play their role effectively and maintain a good relationship during the period of the programme (Cullen et al. 1994). The findings reveal that most of the students agree that it is necessary to have a good relationship with their supervisor and that otherwise their study could be affected. This result also find that other main reasons for students being unable to complete their study within the time given include failure to complete their experimental work, lack of supervision, family commitments and language barriers. In this connection, Buckley and Hooley (1988) conclude that the single most important problem in the eyes of many respondents is the quality of supervision and the effective supervision of research students can lead to the student’s successful completion of the PhD.

The findings reveal that other factors besides supervision contribute to delays in progress. Science students, in particular, have pointed out that unforeseen circumstances, like changing their research material or getting unexpected results from their experimental work, can affect their progress. These findings support the literature, which mention that, besides supervision, the student can experience ethical, technical and methodological problems in doing the research (Brown and Atkins 1988; Brown and Krager 1985). Having to work in the English language is also one of the factors that make a student’s work slower. In addition, some students have brought their families with them during their study, and they also have responsibilities towards them. Being a foreign student is not easy, since many problems arise throughout the period of study, and these need to be solved rapidly, since, as Graves and Varma (1999) point out, they can lead to lower achievement by the student.
Responsibilities of the Supervisor

The results show that the main responsibility of a supervisor is to guide and advise on the student’s research especially on how to obtain the literature and how to prepare the methodology. This result is similar to Russell (1996). The results from this study also indicate that, at each stage of research, students are likely to need different forms of guidance. According to Donald et al. (1995), many tasks of the supervisors to research students are related broadly to guidance and advice which relates to direction, completeness, clarity, methodology, topic selection and data collection and also involves giving feedback on the progress of written work. Moreover, in the findings, students emphasised that they need guidance and advice because it is important for them to know whether they have clear ideas about their research and whether they are on the right track.

This study has also revealed that an effective supervisor should supervise students according to their ability and individual requirements. Welch (1980) said the same things and identifies three styles of supervision. The first is a highly directive approach, which is very structured with the student being given a lot of advice in the early stages. When the student gains in confidence and ability, this level of control is diminished. The second approach is highly directive at the beginning and at the end of the project, with a highly non-directive period in between. The third approach is described as highly directive with close monitoring of the student throughout the whole project. The reason why there are three approaches is that students are not homogenous in terms of academic ability, personality attributes, motivation or attitude.

The results have found that some foreign students have language problems and others face difficulties in research as they do not initially have sufficient knowledge of the background to it. Therefore different styles of supervision can be seen as more appropriate to them. In the literature, Haksever and Manisali (2000) suggest that the student’s requirements from a supervisory relationship are as follows: (1) personal help: support, motivation, socialising, help in organising accommodation and other things which are unrelated to the research; (2) indirect research related help: providing contacts, both industrial and academic, providing equipment and initial help in locating references; and (3) direct research-related help, namely: critical analysis of work, help with methodological problems, precise direction and help with the management of the project. A combination of these three approaches can be used in the supervision of research students depending upon the situation and requirements.

This study also found that a good supervisor should give personal support to students. Salmon (1992) states that the supervisor should support students by placing appropriate emphasis on pastoral care and providing advice, sympathy and encouragement. Informants mentioned that, if supervisors are not in a position to help them solve their problems, they should at least be able to refer them to another individual that can help them. These findings reflect those of Zuber-Skerrit (1994), who states that, at the very least, the supervisor should know where to refer students when serious personal problems begin to affect their work.

It has also been found that an effective supervisor must have significant knowledge and experience in the field of study. This is emphasised by Powles (1993). This current study has also found that student will be have more advantages if the supervisor is an active researcher who has written books or journal articles that can be drawn on in the research. This is supported by Brown and Adkins (1988), who suggest that, to supervise effectively, one has to be a competent researcher and to be able to analyse knowledge, techniques and methods. Furthermore, the students stated that they want their supervisor to give them up-to-date sources for their study references, the best ones being unpublished working papers.

It has been found that students who have a supervisor who is not very good in their research area face problems in their relationship. This result match the literature, in which it is stated that an effective supervisor who is knowledgeable and has skilled in the research field is expected to establish a quality relationship with students (Ballard and Clanchy
Donald et al. (1995), point out that the factors such as the supervisor’s inability to manage a research group effectively, an inadequately prepared supervisor or a supervisor whose research interests are different from those of the student have been found to affect the relationship and are not conducive to effective research student supervision.

The findings from this study also suggest that another main responsibility of supervisors is to provide critical feedback on students’ written work. This result is also supported by Russell (1996). On the other hand, Spear (2000) found that a major student complaint is that supervisors are slow in reading thesis drafts and other written material. The results in the current thesis reflect Spear’s finding to a degree, for a few students in this study indicated that their supervisor was very busy with other things and that this could delay the checking of their written work. Supervisors require structured training in supervision as an integral part of their professional development (Styczynski 1980). However, in these contexts, it is usually carefully and promptly arrange, so perhaps academic supervision practice can learn from this.

Responsibilities of the Students

As the student is the ‘owner’ of the research, he/she has the ultimate responsibility for the decisions taken. The findings in this study suggest that students should develop independence throughout their study as they can be considered as mature students who have had a lot of experience, having taken undergraduate and Master’s courses, and most of them are married and have their own families. Therefore, students have to take responsibility for managing own learning. They are responsible for determining what is required, as well as for carrying it out, while keeping in touch with supervisors through regular meetings (Moses 1992). Among other tasks, students need to identify their own topic and familiarise themselves with the literature related to it. From this study, it has been found that students in science disciplines are normally ‘given’ a specific topic for their PhD, whereas in the social science and arts, they have to develop their own questions. These findings closely match those of Moses (1992) and Phillips and Pugh (2000). They mention that the procedure for defining a research topic differs according to the discipline involved. Holdaway et al. (1995) also report that in education, social sciences and humanities, graduate students choose their thesis topic themselves more frequently than students in other disciplines.

In this research, it has also been found that students indicate that they are responsible for submitting written work in order to make progress. The results also show that students use a variety of methods to submit their work. Some use a diskette, on which the supervisor will correct their work. Some send by e-mail for the attention of their supervisor, who will correct it in an attachment file. These may be considered fortunate, as, while supervisors should comment closely on the students’ work, they cannot be generally expected to make the necessary corrections for the student. This is also mentioned by Spear (2000) that the regular submission of work is essential so that writing problems can be recognised and addressed as soon as possible. Students are also expected to develop their skills by doing the PhD research. The results show that foreign students tend to improve their language skills as well as their computer skills. Several students mentioned that they can improve their communication skills by talking to other people in their study area. The results suggest that the students know that they have developed a skill when they can do their work faster, when they can communicate better in English and also when their computer skills have improved. These findings are supported by Brown and Adkins (1988). The findings suggest that a good student should grasp the opportunity to develop professionally. This is matched in the literature, where Brown and Krager (1985) mention that students should develop professionally and that this professional development should include attending conferences, perhaps writing papers for publication, attending seminars and workshops, making presentations, networking with other researchers and working as research assistant. Most of the students indicated that they had experience of presenting papers in seminars or conferences. Some have even been given an opportunity to write a journal article.
Responsibilities of the School

The results show that the main responsibility of the school is to ensure that the facilities provided are appropriate. This finding is supported by Phillips and Pugh (2000) which mentions that the school should provide good facilities, which include common rooms and a desk in a small shared room, similar to those used by staff member. The interviewees said that the facilities provided by their school, especially in the laboratories, are very up-to-date. However the general facilities, such as postgraduate study rooms, photocopying service and printing, all needed to improve, so that they are equivalent to the amount of the tuition fees paid by their sponsors. Overall, most science students were satisfied with the facilities provided by their school, while most social science and arts students were not. According to Spear (2000), the benefit in having good facilities is that it can be a factor in students choosing the school to pursue their study. The message here is that students are increasingly looking for a high quality work environment, and not just a high quality supervisor.

The findings suggest that a good school should have good supervisory support systems. This supervisory support includes procedures for appointing an adviser from among the faculty members. During their studies, some students may find problems in the relationship with their supervisor. To solve these, they should be able to go to someone else, like an adviser, who has a professional relationship with them to talk about their problems. This closely reflects the results of Selby and Woods (1966), who found that the most important people foreign students encounter in solving their problems belong to three groups: the faculty, the community and other foreign students, although the faculty was the major source of academic guidance for them as they go to an academic adviser if they have academic problems.

This study suggests that the school has to provide care for foreign students, who may need frequent contact, advice and have language problems. Its findings confirmed that foreign students may encounter difficulties in adapting to the new life and environment like language barriers, culture differences and inadequate supervision. These findings are similar to Donald et al. (1995). The findings suggest that other important support that the school should give includes providing a substitute supervisor in the absence of the student’s supervisor from the university for a certain period of time. The absence of a supervisor for a longer period of time, say a few weeks, can affect students’ work as they need someone who can advise and guide them. This is supported by Cryer (2000) who points out that, before selecting an institution for further study, a student should check its supervisory support system.

The Findings that have not been Found in the Literature

Science students dealing with equipment and technical aspects depend a lot on technicians, especially in their first year when they are doing their experimental work. However, while technicians are useful and helpful, they can normally only assist students in practical work and do not know much about ‘theory’. It follows therefore that, whether students receive help from a technician depends on the kind of research area that they are involved in. Computer science students, for example, do not have to do all their work in the laboratory, because they can do it at home. Therefore, they do not really depend on technicians, while quite the opposite is true of students of engineering and biological sciences.

The results also show that there are various patterns and practices in supervision, some of which are not found in the literature. In particular, informants explained how their supervisor supervises them and what goes on during their meetings with him/her. The results from this study provide the basis for a model for supervisor and student meetings that will establish a good relationship and offer benefits for the student. The model includes the following stages which illustrate in Figure 2 below. Though the various stages of this model are all fairly simple, such simple guidelines would greatly help both students and supervisors if they were the published policy of the school, or used as an ‘advice sheet’ to new students.
Figure 2: Model for a Supervisor and PhD Student Meeting

The findings suggest that various types of method are used by students to send their written work to their supervisor. Some students send their work or communicate their problems by e-mail. Therefore, this study also suggests that e-mail can play an important role in speeding up communication between the supervisor and student. This at least reduces the students’ problems without them having to wait to fix an appointment. On the other hand, some students submit their work on a diskette and the supervisor will comment on it. Although it can make the student’s work faster, the disadvantage is that students do not learn much or gain many skills through it, as they are getting too much help from their supervisor.

Students doing interdisciplinary research are generally given two supervisors. Normally, students who have two supervisors tend to rely on their first supervisor who, they said, has a stronger influence on them than their second supervisor or co-supervisor. However, the results reveal that there are students who see their second supervisor more frequently than their first one. For science students, it is more useful to meet the co-supervisor before going to see the first supervisor because, normally, the former is the one with expertise in technical matters. These students revealed that they find a lot of benefits from doing this because they can give themselves a clear idea about technical matters and then seek advice from the main supervisor who is always ‘good at theory’. Similarly, students from the arts and social sciences who have two supervisors also gain benefits from the second supervisor. They also see the second supervisor more frequently, because, as they said, he/she is normally quite new to the department or to the supervision of...
postgraduate students and so has more time to see students than the first one. In fact, it is clearly stated in the Student Handbook that the first and co-supervisor actually has an equal role and equal responsibilities towards the student with respect to the supervision of work, although it is normally the principal supervisor's task to deal with the administrative aspects of supervision, such as applications for concessions and ensuring that monitoring forms are completed.

This study has found that informants are attracted to a supervisor with the title Professor, as they believe that this indicates that a person is expert in their area of research. However, the literature merely mentions that students go to a well-known supervisor. Students normally look at the credibility of the supervisor in terms of his/her expertise and the history of the students under his/her supervision, since they need to know whether there are any serious problems that have occurred in his/her relationship with other students. The findings reveal that a further reason why students choose a university to study at is because they have personal recommendations from their friends or other people that have studied there.

CONCLUSION

The findings have been divided into those that support the literature and those that have not been found in it. The interview used in this study has provided rich information regarding research student supervision. One of the contributions relates to the improvement of practice is the supervision of students. The literature shows that, in supervising students, a supervisor needs to adopt different modes of supervision depending on individual requirements, which are influenced by the attributes of the students (Hockey 1996). Supervisors tend to generalise the supervision given to each student under their supervision. Also, if guidelines exist, the supervisor may choose to follow them, choosing the most suitable one. The information in the guidelines should then ensure that the supervision is well arranged and managed. In fact, a model for supervisor and foreign student meetings proposed earlier is useful as a guideline for such meetings which illustrates in Figure 2 above.

Each stage of this model has it’s own advantages. So, if students follow these stages, they may get benefits in their personal and professional development. Stage one is very useful if the student found that his/her supervisor is not very easy to meet. By fixing the appointment, students don’t have to waste their time waiting for their supervisor to become available. If necessary, students can also list their concerns about their research before the meeting so that they can express their opinion or ask their supervisor a question during the meeting. Stage two is also useful to each student for the purpose of recording the meeting agenda so that it can be reviewed when necessary. For foreign students whose English language is not very good, tape-recording the meeting can be meaningful as students can review it to determine exactly what the content of a meeting was. Stage three is useful in order to maintain a good relationship between a student and a supervisor. If the student and supervisor can also talk about social or personal matters for a few minutes in the meeting, the meeting will be more meaningful as the supervisor will be seen as taking care of the student, who, in turn will feel that there is someone who cares about him/her. Stage four begins with the student talking about his/her work. The findings from this study suggest that talking things over with someone can often solve students’ problems and develop their thinking. Besides, students can become more familiar with their research as well as improving their English language skills if they can do more talking to explain their work to their supervisor. Some students submit their written work a few days before the meeting, and some bring the written work at that time. So, in stage five, supervisor should comment on the student’s work and they should discuss the work together. By stage six, most of the student’s problems or enquires should be answered. If students make a list of their concerns or problems before attending the meeting, by this stage they have to make sure that all the questions on the list have been answered. Some supervisors suggest that a student has a research planner/log, and some students take the decision to use it because they find that it is
useful and suits them. As mentioned, the purpose of this log is to know what the meeting is all about and what is next. Both student and supervisor should sign the student log. In the last stage, if necessary, the supervisor and student can fix the next meeting. The advantage of this stage is that students know their working deadlines so that they can work towards them. They are responsible for their PhD studies, so it can be seen that their work is more organised and well-managed if they are setting certain deadlines.

Secondly, the study has revealed that, in science disciplines, it is best to have two meetings with the supervisor, known as laboratory and personal meetings. It would, in fact, be very practical to put this guideline into Student Handbooks. Thirdly, this study also reveals that some expectations of PhD students are misguided. It should clear up any misunderstandings for the person involved, in particular, the supervisor and the students. An example relates to a student who stated that their supervisor has corrected their work on a diskette. This student may be lucky because he/she gets great help from his/her supervisor. However, another implication is that the students may learn less than other students who do their work with minimal guidance from their supervisor. As mentioned, most PhD students are mature people as they have working experience and an undergraduate and Masters degree. Therefore, they suppose they should be treated as mature students whose aims in doing the PhD are to gain as many skills as possible to benefit their personal and professional development. Regarding the above matter, training is necessary for supervisors. In the research student policies, mention is also made of the responsibility of the school to provide training to supervisors. Therefore, the training should also highlight this matter. In other words, the supervisor should clearly state their responsibility or what should they do and should not do in the supervision of PhD students. Supervisor should get information through this training about their actual responsibilities. This would not only benefit supervisors, but also students and the schools. Sponsors may collect data from students who complete their study. This data should include the relevant information about students’ experiences during their studies. If the students cannot finish their study within a given period of time, the sponsor should ask why. The data should also include the students’ perception of the university, the supervisor and the school in particular. By doing this, the sponsor may get some information about the problems or difficulties that the students have encountered during their study and other related information. So, by getting this data, sponsors could do proper planning about which universities their students go to in order to further their studies. This data will be very useful as a record and may be very helpful in future.

Finally, the findings of this research reveal that all three parties: the students, the supervisor and the department/school are responsible for the success of a student’s research. As the foreign students have paid a lot of money in tuition fees, they ought to get very good facilities and support. The respondents in this study, have complained about the lack of postgraduate rooms and the absence of related facilities. These problems most frequently occur in the case of social science and arts students. Therefore, the university generally and departments/schools in particular need to make an effort to improve facilities.

REFERENCES


