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A Guide for Supervisors

Supporting doctoral writing: *He ara tika mā ngā kaiārahi*

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AKO AOTEAROA NATIONAL CENTRE FOR TERTIARY TEACHING EXCELLENCE

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Introduction

Good supervision is key to higher degree research students' successful completion: a commitment to provide ongoing subject-specific research guidance and oversee production of the written thesis. Demands for timely completion and the burgeoning diversity of Aotearoa/New Zealand's postgraduate enrolments increasingly require supervisors to move beyond their areas of research expertise into writing-related matters.

New Zealand's education environment privileges Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and supervisors need to take account of the cultural expectations and aspirations that Māori and Pasifika doctoral students bring to their studies. Likewise, supervisors need to acknowledge the wealth of different cultures, languages, academic backgrounds and understandings, both their own and that of international students, when supervising the writing process.

Supervising doctoral students means managing thesis production: supporting students so they time-manage, self-manage, gain fluency, and meet discipline conventions and generic expectations. For supervisors as well as students there are challenges in terms of skills and personal development, yet few institutions provide academic development for supervisors on how to best support doctoral writing.

Accordingly, this guide draws on our own research and experience as supervisors and academic advisors, offering practical advice on how to give useful feedback on writing. The goal is successful and timely thesis completion. See our longer report for the research behind this booklet: literature and research findings from online surveys of 226 supervisors and 80 doctoral students.

Additionally, insights from two hui (attended by Māori, Pasifika and international supervisors and students) and Māori and Pasifika colleagues inform this guide. We offer strategies on how to convey feedback to best effect at each stage of the writing process. These are grounded in the understanding that culturally sustaining practices such as *whanaungatanga* (making a family-like relationship with similar responsibilities) and *va* (the relational space between people and things that needs to be maintained) underpin good supervisory feedbackrelationships with, not only Māori and Pasifika, but all doctoral students in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Developing this Guide

Our recommendations for good practice arise out of typical concerns expressed by supervisors and doctoral students:[1]

***Supervisor**: "I use track changes on every bit of writing I receive. Occasionally the material is so misconceived, careless, or disorganised that dealing with it takes a long time."*

***Student**: "I was a bit taken back with the amount of feedback from one of my supervisors that was framed as "your ideas are bad" as opposed to "here's how to make your ideas better"*

***Student**: "Although I know there is a certain degree of subjectivity in making comments, when my supervisor's and my co-supervisor's feedback contradicts each other, I feel very confused."*

***Supervisor**: "[There's] tension between giving honest feedback and not wanting to be too discouraging."*

***Supervisor**: "Some students seem reluctant to produce written work, which makes it very difficult to assess progress."*

***Student**: ""I was surprised when version 2 came back with just as many 'rewrite/restructure/don't understand/what's this mean?' comments as the first time round."*

***Student**: "Feedback […] that overwhelms me with changes needed or suggested all at once can be really stressful and upsetting."*

***Supervisor**: I have students who defer to supervisory comments rather than engaging with them. I find this quite frustrating: I want debate, especially as the thesis is being refined".*

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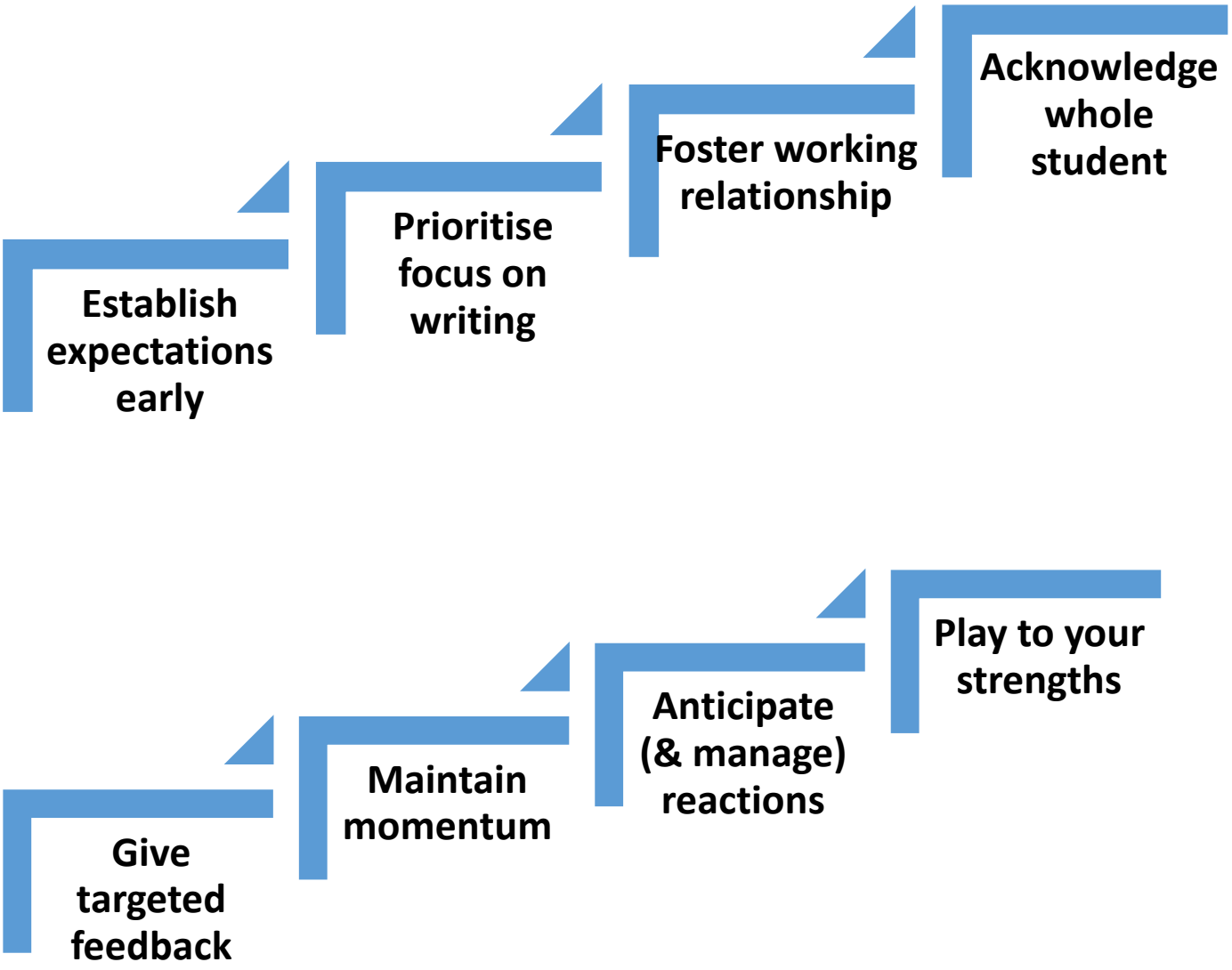
1 Responses taken from 2015 online survey of University of Auckland supervisors (n=226) and doctoral students (n=80). See *Research Report on the 'Supporting Doctoral Writing: He ara tika mā ngā kaiārahi' Project* for more details.

Effective feedback: key stages and opportunities

The following stages— while not strictly linear— offer useful stepping stones to building an effective feedback relationship. These tips for managing the duration of the doctorate can be adapted and applied according to individual students' needs.



Establish expectations early

"I try my best to stay on top of things by setting deadlines for myself as well as for the student" (2015 survey respondent: Supervisor)

While allowing for flexibility, it is important to establish clear expectations from the outset. Supervision typically comprises a notional workload of about 50 hours annually; supervisors need to explain to students the limitations and etiquette around writing feedback. Students can be naïve about how long it takes to give feedback.

This may take some form of contractual agreement, which— while not binding —delineates roles and responsibilities (see **Appendix 1** for sample checklist). Foreground 'the way things are done here' and be prepared to accommodate different pathways. Although thesis writing exhibits generic characteristics across all disciplines, good doctoral support requires awareness of the specific needs of individual candidates.

Student-centred handbooks on how to get a PhD generally recommend students initiate this discussion at the first meeting. However, in reality, perceived power imbalances and gender or cultural differences may require the supervisor to take the lead in the first instance.

When and how to write — and the associated feedback stages— should form part of the negotiation alongside research-related and administrative matters. Make your preferences overt and create opportunities for students to do the same (their confidence may well take time to develop).

Negotiating roles & responsibilities (from Day One)

- Get to know student's academic background, family, commitments, interests, etc; share your own story as appropriate;
- Negotiate expectations around availability, writing deadlines & feedback turnaround, formal/ informal meetings, follow-up actions, etiquette with feedback, etc. [see Appendix 1 for sample checklist].
- Invite student to share their feelings about their writing skills (to highlight strengths, foreshadow areas for skills-development);
- Be alert to potential barriers (gender, age, culture, personality, etc) — canvass possible 'what if?' scenarios
- Negotiate procedural matters: appropriateness of seeking 'just-in-time' feedback (work-in progress/outlines/bullet points) versus submitting more polished drafts for detailed review
- Revisit goals and expectations as necessary.

Prioritise focus on writing

"Nothing prepares you for writing a thesis like writing a thesis. It's just something the student needs to deal with, and be better for it once it's done" (2015 survey respondent: Supervisor).

Supervisors and students should view writing as a crucial tool for trialling, testing, articulating, organising and clarifying thought processes throughout the entire research journey rather than as 'writing up' at the end of the project. Students can be unaware of how many revisions are required to produce good academic writing, how important it is to be guided by readers' responses (particularly those that indicate 'this doesn't make sense'), and how a significant aspect of doctoral research training involves self-management. Receiving and responding to supervisory feedback will sit within this sometimes-discomforting developmental growth.

For this reason, we encourage supervisors to call for evidence of writing early and often, beginning with summaries of literature and outlines of proposed sections, which— over time — form the basis of larger extracts. At the same time, feedback can be tailored to suit — brief initial comments on 'big picture' ideas, followed, as thinking becomes developed, by closer attention to stylistics and crafting. This way, the thesis remains a living document, with ongoing development of writing and thinking skills (giving, receiving, and responding to feedback) integral to the doctoral process as a whole.

Establishing good writing habits

- **Initiate writing early**: call for short pieces in first weeks of candidature to gauge student's writing ability; introduce familiarity with academic conventions, establish writing as integral part of research journey.
- Highlight **different types and purposes**: *writing-to-think* and *writing for self* (brainstorming, journaling, free-writing) as precursor to *writing for audience* (who?)
- **Share your own experience** as a writer (working drafts, peer-review comments, etc)
- **Acknowledge iterative nature of thesis-writing**: discuss relationship between ongoing drafting & subsequent revision (promote clarity, refine logic & structure, address audience needs, foster development of 'voice', rework Lit Review in light of Findings, etc.);
- Ask student to write **after supervision meetings** when you both plan methods; this writing is likely to capture the reasons for choice needed in the methodology.
- It can be helpful for students to write up **brief notes** after meetings recording what was agreed to be done next [see appendix 2 for sample template].

Foster relationships

"One supervisor […] would gather all his supervisees at least once a month for people to share experiences, and I thought this was brilliant! [P]ractices like this should be more encouraged so that people feel like they belong" (2015 survey respondent: Doctoral student).

You and your student will be working together intensively for a considerable period of time.

Paying attention to relational space (as encompassed by the Pasifika concept of *va*) and interpersonal connectedness (the Māori *whanaungatanga*) is particularly important when supervising Māori or Pasifika students, but the need for mutual understanding and respect transcends cultural boundaries.

Getting to know your student (as a person first and scholar second), as well as understanding who is sharing their doctoral journey alongside them, will help enhance the feedback relationship as a whole.

'He aha te mea nui i te ao?

Māku e kī atu, "He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata"'.

Whanaungatanga:
"knowing you're not alone and that you have a wide sense of acquaintances that provide support, assistance, nurturing guidance and direction when needed"
—Ngaroma Williams & Mary-Elizabeth Broadley

Va:
"between-ness; not space that separates but space that relates, that holds separate entities, things and people in unity"
–Albert Wendt

Te whare tapa wha:
-*Te taha wairua* (spirituality)
-Te taha hinengaro (thoughts/ feelings)
- Te taha tinana (physical)
- Te taha whānau (family/ connections)

Nurturing sense of belonging

- Find ways to get to know the **whole person** (strengths, areas to work on, cultural background, family commitments, etc.)
- Be open to learning about other "**ways of knowing"** and of "**'being**"
- Balance meetings: with **less formal *"how are things going?"*** catch-ups
- Share your **own experience** of being a thesis student
- Begin meetings by asking about student's daily life and family before moving to thesis-related matters
- Encourage students to engage with departmental **social & academic networks;**
- Encourage students to **share their research** (and their writing) on a regular basis: peer-writing groups, departmental seminars, writing retreats; take part yourself
- look to students' **wider community** for guidance on culturally-related matters
- acknowledge the array of actors (**whanau** and others) who contribute to doctoral journey as a way of grounding doctoral writing within student's own world

Acknowledge the whole student

International doctoral writers

"I have shared the piece of writing with a sort of fear [but] the feedback are very constructive and encouraging!" (2016 survey respondent: International Doctoral student)

Students for whom English is an additional language (EAL) bring previous knowledge and experience as they embark on writing a thesis in English. EAL students appreciate receiving feedback on grammar and stylistics, but primarily look to supervisors for guidance on ideas-development related to the research itself. Most can—with guidance from outside supervision—improve language skills, but their voice may include some less-than-perfect English. There are more than 75,000 websites offering "thesis-writing help" of varying quality and ethics; ensure you know what sort of help your EAL students are accessing in order to balance style and substance.

Linguistics aside, rhetoric is culturally-bound: EAL students may be initially reluctant to challenge authorities in the field and require guidance in 'critiquing the literature' and paraphrasing. Likewise, they may well need scaffolding in the deductive (Anglo-style) of argumentation that presents its 'thesis' at the outset.

Supporting students with English as additional language

Empower students to take responsibility for **personal skills-development**

- **Emphasise strengths** over potential weakness in writing or critical thinking
- Encourage **skills appraisal (checklist of postgraduate expectations, ways of 'knowing')**

Establish priorities:

- read primarily for meaning & structure rather than errors
- be prepared to accept less-than-perfect English during early stages of thinking & writing

Focus on ideas-development:

- ask for '**structural outline'** or 'summary' to accompany each draft
- Encourage **talking about ideas** with you (and others), lest attempts to produce 'academic written English' obscure meaning
- Consider encouraging use of **1st-person** ("I") or **different-coloured fonts** to signal opinion in their drafts, as way to help students learn to demonstrate criticality

Focus on language:

- highlight importance of good English (both written and oral)
- be alert to recurrent patterns; distinguish between errors to eliminate and stylistic quirks that can (possibly) remain.
- draw attention to available **resources**:
  —well-written articles and exemplars, templates
  —academic learning advisors, English language sites, research skills seminars & workshops
  —reputable websites such as *Grammerly.com*; *Writefull*; *Thesis Whisperer*; *DoctoralWriting SIG* and academic phrasebanks compiled by universities and available online
- **Establish lines of communication** with academic learning advisors, to ensure appropriate responses to feedback, with all parties working towards same goal.
- Make provision for **polishing** final draft**:** sources of funding/recommended proof-readers?

Māori & Pasifika doctoral writers

"If the supervisor shows an interest in the student's world then the student can value the supervisor's world" (Supervisor [from Solomon Islands])

Supervising Māori or Pasifika students means understanding where they come from, their family dynamics and motivation. Some may be studying primarily to improve their community. Some may not have a strong sense of culture at all; others employ indigenous frameworks founded on cultural values or want to write in *te reo*. Supervisory discussions need to be open-ended to best support each student (particularly with the decision to write the thesis in *te reo*, which needs careful consideration in terms of supervision and examination). Cultural aspects of their research may fall outside a supervisor's expertise, calling for whānau and community involvement in the doctoral relationship as well.

Māori and Pasifika cultures have strong oral traditions and regard harmonious and reciprocal relational "space" between oneself and others as crucial. Supervisors should employ a holistic approach, acknowledging students' cultural backgrounds, as well as helping develop the requisite language and critical thinking skills for academic success. You can adapt these strategies to apply to all students.

Supporting indigenous students

Acknowledge importance of oral feedback (korero):

- encourage students to (tape-)record thoughts-in-progress
- always discuss feedback face-to-face; encourage students to record meetings for later reflection
- pose questions to help students articulate their views

Tone down power relations:

- allow time and space for personal connections (family, life events, etc.) before turning to study-related matters
- acknowledge own positionality (personal and academic)
- balance formal meetings with informal, department-based, social gatherings

Acknowledge student's prior learning and experience in *te ao Māori* or *Pasifika*:

- share own (lack of) knowledge and willingness to learn
- seek guidance on pronunciation, concepts, etc

Pay attention to whole person:

- acknowledge cultural and family commitments and life events;
- set firm deadlines — but be prepared to be lenient on occasion
- link with support networks (counselling, funding, learning centres etc.) where necessary

Foster networks:

- Māori and Pasifika learning is inextricably linked with the voices of others — knowledge may require input or approval from experts outside the academy
- some students will thrive in Māori- or Pasifika-only support groups; others will want to be part of 'mainstream' cohort groups; some may want a bit of both
- look to members of wider community for guidance and advice

Provide targeted feedback

"My supervisor doesn't like to read unpolished writing, whereas I don't like to waste time polishing my writing before I've had my supervisor's input on the ideas it contains and the way it is structured." (2015 survey respondent: Doctoral student]

Feedback on writing often entails commenting on grammar and stylistics as well as higher-level concepts and structural logic. While all feedback is both useful and necessary, it can be counter-productive to overwhelm students with too many points at once. Feedback needs to be appropriate to the stage of writing (e.g. first thoughts on potentially useful literature demand a different approach to a Research Proposal or conference paper). Consider whether matters of style obscure meaning and need to be addressed immediately or can wait until ideas are more fully-formed. Most importantly, feedback needs to clearly signal what actions you expect students to undertake in response.

Providing 'bite-sized' feedback.

- **Discuss different purposes** (ideas-development / organisation & structure/ stylistics & grammar) and when it's appropriate to attend to each**.**
- **Foster two-way communication**: talking about thoughts as they arise— particularly when and why writing progress seems to have stalled—is more productive than students waiting to complete large whole chunks of (possibly ill-formed) text before seeking feedback
- Always allow time and space to **talk** over feedback in person
- Read through **whole draft** first (or use track-changes, so you can refine comments if necessary before returning to student)
- **Provide clear action points:** what should students do first '*correct spelling mistakes'* or *'find more literature to support argument' or 're-organise structure'*?
- Negotiate **priorities,** particularly with EAL students (ideas first, language second?) lest they waste time polishing text that still needs conceptual work
- Encourage students to **specify the sort of feedback** they'd like at each stage *(e.g. 'I know I need to tidy up grammar, but please look at overall structure first: should section 3 come earlier?'*)
- Direct students to relevant **self-help resources**: handbooks [see **Reference List**], sample theses, skills-workshops, peer-writing groups, learning centres…

Recognise (and manage) reactions to feedback

"Although I have cried at the feedback I've received (once or twice and only in the privacy of my own home!) I've always dusted myself off, taken a deep breath, considered a different perspective and made my writing better" (2015 Survey respondent: Doctoral student).

Writing is inextricably bound with sense of self. For students who submit what they consider their best effort, anything less than a glowing reception will be met with dismay. Criticism is hard to take at the best of times; students need to recognise that successful doctoral completion is largely based on the merits of the written thesis. Honest feedback is "essential for producing work of the correct standard". Acknowledging the highs and lows of the doctoral journey, focusing on strengths, can help your students to move forward.

Fostering resilience

Highlight nature of feedback relationship:

- warn that doctoral study means learning to accept criticism
- stress not taking feedback personally—or, if they do, to tell you how they're feeling
- emphasise your role as supervisor (i.e. to guide towards successful thesis submission)

Emphasise that critique is not the same as criticism:

- couch feedback in terms of "big picture" (examiner) expectations
- foster open communication that enables students to express doubts, uncertainties, frustrations
- offer explicit guidance on how to improve—and/or direct students to appropriate resources

Respect students as potential future colleagues and role models:

- articulate expectations clearly; check for understanding
- acknowledge problematic areas, be prepared to switch focus in the short term
- encourage transparency and accountability (e.g. student writes up meeting action points, etc)

Promote a culture of excellence in communication:

- always discuss comments in person, working together to agree on "next steps"
- invite feedback on your feedback to help unpack misunderstandings
- organise opportunities for peer-feedback on fellow students' work
- empower students to take supervisory meeting minutes

Empower students' self-development:

- encourage self-reflection and skills appraisal of areas to work on
- highlight availability of academic learning centres, language support, librarians, online resources & software, training courses, peer-writing groups to develop writing and critical thinking skills
- present use of agencies such as Counselling as strategies for success rather than evidence of inability to cope

Managing progress to submission

"Resist saying 'just do …', show <u>how</u>. If you don't have time to show how, acknowledge this and direct your student to someone who can" (2015 survey: Doctoral student)

Doctoral students are colleagues in the making: your role as supervisor is to foster this transition from student to scholar. Three years will pass quickly, so writing needs to be foregrounded from the outset, with rough drafts, outlines, discussion pieces and ongoing revision as stepping stones to thesis completion. Accordingly, supervisors need to temper comments, identifying what is important at each particular stage, as well as encouraging students to make their wishes known.

Supervisors need to ensure purposeful writing begins early and encourage a writing schedule for steady production and revision over the doctorate. A plan for writing deadlines and responding to feedback is recommended, while maintain clear communication and maintenance of the va relationship at all times.

Early months

Setting initially low-stakes pieces of work establishes the value of writing to think, can lessen production delays from feeling they have to complete entire sections before seeking feedback and helps to identify errors or misunderstandings before they proliferate. Moreover, small pieces of writing segue into larger pieces. A thesis is the sum of its parts; acknowledging the formative nature of writing and all those involved in its production will help empower the student to craft their work bit by bit, iteration after iteration.

Feedback should be timely, concrete and as specific as possible, including comments on what works well and why, as well as what doesn't. Be prepared for emotional reactions or tendency to 'disappear' from students who have likely invested considerable time and personal expense into the production of a draft. Often students need guidance to understand that academic writing relies on ongoing constructive critical feedback to strengthen it.

Middle stages

Setting processes in place (1st six months):

- **Schedule regular meetings (using Outlook calendar?)**: insist on attendance – even having an opportunity to talk about lack of progress <u>is</u> progress. Endeavour to foster environment in which student feels comfortable: informal chats over coffee might be more appropriate on occasion, for example, rather than always meeting in your office.
- **Set regular *manageable* tasks:** encourage students to produce regular summaries, mind-maps, chapter outlines or oral progress reports, rather than allowing weeks to pass without (evidence of) written output.
- **Foreground relationship of parts to whole**: establish provisional heading levels, Table of Contents, formatting, referencing and stylistic conventions sooner rather than later.
- **Foster students' self-awareness of developmental needs:** encourage students to conduct a skills appraisal, and acquaint themselves with available avenues of support
- Forewarn that each new draft likely to result in as much (different) feedback as previous versions

‘Writing’ does not only entail formal drafts. ‘Thinking’ documents such as mind-mapping, bullet-points, tables or diagrams showing relationships all have their place. Similarly, word-processing functions such as comments and auto-correct can signal ideas that are less fully-formed or require particular attention.

Supervisors and students should negotiate what types of feedback are most useful at each stage (and when and whether to involve other parties such as learning advisors or professional proof-readers). This may mean prioritising actions (through a meeting plan such as **Appendix 2**, perhaps), deferring aspects, such as finalising the literature review, until after draft Findings and Discussion chapters have been completed.

Proofreading and editing are both crucial to successful thesis completion, and sufficient attention must be paid to both — but writers can tackle only one task at a time. Remaining alert to the fluctuating rhythms of thesis production can make it easier for students to acknowledge occasional set-backs, false starts or uncertainties as signs of progress in themselves.

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Staying on track (6-30 months)

Acknowledge process:

- regard all drafts as 'work-in-progress' towards the end goal
- encourage students to 'save' everything (track changes or 'leftovers' folder)
- allow for '*this is what I'm thinking'* updates as well as submission of written work

Triage feedback (according to stage of candidature):

- determine when to focus on writing fluency: when on 'big-picture' thinking
- vary meeting formats (formal/ just-in-time chats over coffee)
- agree, if necessary, to leave section x for a time and move to section y

Distinguish between 'writing for self' & 'writing for a reader':

- encourage meta-language (e.g. '*need to find more literature on x*') to signal desired feedback
- encourage sharing of written work with learning advisors, peer-group members, etc.

Negotiate 'voice': using first person ("I") – which can always be reworked later, if necessary –can help students take 'ownership' of ideas and develop confidence in their writing.

Uphold deadlines:

- return comments in timely manner;
- if expected work not forthcoming, follow up in person, rather than by email or ignoring.

Encourage ongoing field notes or journalling of process decisions (why this particular method, how participants selected, how data analysed, deviations from anticipated plan, etc) as grist for final thesis

Vary modes of production to help students find their voice:

- brainstorming, tables, PowerPoints, 3-Minute Thesis competition, etc.

- **Keep an eye on 'big picture':**
  - call for chapter outlines *before* full drafts;
  - encourage bullet-points or summaries -- "*what do I want to say?*" –as basis for discussion of text as a whole

- **Share the load:**
  - direct students to available resources —exemplars, learning centres, peer-writing groups, workshops, online resources, etc —at all stages of the doctoral journey

Final months:

The ultimate aim is to produce a stand-alone thesis that clearly expresses the student's thoughts in written form — for an unfamiliar readership of examiners. Now is the time to bring everything together. Inconsistent presentation or omissions colour readers' perceptions of the merits of the research as a whole. Challenge students to pre-empt examiners' questions, and present themselves in writing to best advantage.

Pulling everything together (final 6 months):

Revisit research question(s):

- review (and revise if need be) to ensure thesis does what it set out to do
- make answers overt
- challenge students to consider broader "so what?" implications.

Focus on examiners' expectations:

- address audience needs; foreground implicit details: e.g. student's positionality; research context (political/ social); cultural influences on data-gathering, etc.
- anticipate potential questions and defend choices in the thesis.

Bring all chapters together into single document, looking for (in)consistencies:

- relationship between works cited in Lit Review and in Discussion
- remove repeats
- opening and closing passages of whole thesis (and each section and subsection)
- structural signposts
- topic sentences
- terminology ('the researcher'/'I'; 'Chapter 1'/'chapter two', etc)
- formatting; bibliographic details; copyright approval for images
- data: tables and graphs

Allow sufficient time for polishing (months not weeks):

- provide 'big picture' feedback in good time
- encourage editing in 'waves' from greatest to smallest: i.e. all introductions, then all conclusions, then all heading levels, then all citations, then spelling, etc —rather than endeavouring to tackle all items on each page at once
- if professional proofreading is required, ensure all parties aware of relevant ethical parameters
- draw attention to institutional formatting and submission requirements
- prepare student for likelihood of further 'revision' in light of examiner feedback

Final words

This guide offers practical suggestions for overseeing the doctoral research writing project, based on the voices of New Zealand Aotearoa supervisors and students, as well as authors' years of experience working with both groups. Good feedback practice begins with relationship-building based on mutual trust and respect, and ranges from higher level guidance on clarity and critical thinking to basic grammar, punctuation and syntax, managing reactions to feedback; and ensuring steady output along the way. Often these practices are neither easy nor straightforward: supervision often requires learning afresh with each student what works and what doesn't. Supervisors need to provide scaffolding and encouragement and overall 'big-picture 'guidance. You cannot expect to be an expert in all aspects of writing: direct students, where appropriate, to resources outside the supervisory relationship, supporting and empowering them to take responsibility for their own development as independent researchers.

Play to your strengths:

Empower students to identify & address their own needs:

- ask what type(s) of feedback they are seeking;
- ask them to appraise their own progress: What is the purpose; what were you trying to achieve in this piece of writing; what are its strengths; what are it weaknesses?
- conduct a research skills audit = what do students know, what do they need to know;
- direct them to exemplars (other theses, model articles, your own work, etc);
- get students to set meeting agendas, write 'minutes', determine next steps.

Make use of opportunities to enhance writing proficiency:

- fellow-students, writing groups;
- research seminars and guest presentations;
- learning advisors, language advisors, subject librarians;
- online resources (Grammerly, Writefull, Thesis Whisperer, DoctoralWriting SIG);
- professional proof-readers

Foster 'fellow-researcher-in-the making':

- share your knowledge of the field;
- recommend seminal readings [for subject and style],
- pose questions that encourage higher level thinking,
- discuss relevant methodologies/epistemologies/paradigms,
- compare and contrast methods and analytic techniques;
- inform about conferences, funding opportunities, post-doc and career directions

Our team

Dr Susan Carter, Senior Lecturer, Centre for Learning and Research in Higher Education (CLeaR), University of Auckland

Susan coordinated the Student Learning Doctoral Programme from 2004-2012, and now facilitates the Art of Supervision and the supervision seminar series within CLeaR. Understanding gained from years of working with doctoral students, including individual consultation and supervision, translates into support for academics.

Dr Deborah Laurs, Senior Learning Advisor, Student Learning *Te Taiako*, Victoria University of Wellington

Based at Victoria University since 2001, Deborah provides one-on-one support for doctoral students at all stages of the thesis journey. She also oversees campus-wide PG research skills seminars and thesis-writing workshops and contributes to supervisor training.

Dr Lisa Chant (Ngati Whatua), Senior Education Consultant & Senior Lecturer, Tai Poutini Polytechnic

Lisa is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (UK) and obtained her PhD in Community Health from University of Auckland. Her teaching expertise includes Medical Humanities, Politics and Public Policy, University Teaching & Learning; Indigenous and Māori, and Media.

Professor Rawinia Higgins (Tūhoe), DVC Māori, Victoria University of Wellington

Rawinia completed a Tohu Māoritanga and a BA in Māori Studies at Te Kawa a Māui. She is Deputy Vice Chancellor Māori with a particular interest in academic writing in *te reo*. She co-led Te Kura Roa, a Ngā Pae o Te Māramatanga Pae Tawhiti Initiative for Te Reo Māori, and is currently leading the Whaihua-Community Responsiveness project in collaboration with Te Ataarangi and Te Kōhanga Reo.

Dr Jen Martin (Te Rarawa), Lecturer, Māori Studies, University of Auckland

Jen's research interests include Māori language revitalisation and development, academic writing in te reo Māori, and Māori achievement and advancement through education. She graduated from Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Hoani Waititi Marae in West Auckland, did undergraduate degrees at the University of Auckland, and wrote her PhD from AUT in te reo Māori.

Dr Teresia Teaiwa (i-Kiribati), Senior Lecturer & Director, Va'aomanu Pasifika, Victoria University of Wellington

Teresia was raised in Fiji, and is of Kiribati, Banaban and African American heritage. Teresia holds a Bachelor of Arts from Trinity College, Washington, DC; a Masters of Arts from the University of Hawai'i and a PhD from the University of California, Santa Cruz. Her research and writing spans political analysis, cultural commentary and literary criticism, historiography, feminist theory, pedagogy and poetry.

Dr 'Ema Wolfgramm-Foliaki (Tongan), Lecturer, CLeaR, University of Auckland

'Ema contributes her Pasifika pedagogy to staff development. 'Ema's thesis highlighted literacy practices underpinned by Tongan cultural values and beliefs. Her current research centres on widening participation for first-in-the-family students. Funded by the World University Network

(WUN) and partner universities, the project closely aligns with national and institutional strategic aims for improved Pasifika success.

Suggested Readings

Supervisory relationships

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Appendix 1: Sample 'Supervisory Expectations' Checklist

Consider where you (and your student) stand in relation to each of these pairs of statements…							
	Admission:						
1	It is the responsibility of the School to ensure that any student who is admitted can be adequately supervised and equipped in the student's chosen area of research.	1	2	3	4	5	It is up to the student to thoroughly investigate the School before accepting a place as a research student to ensure adequate supervision and appropriate facilities are available.
2	The School should appoint the Supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5	The student should be able to choose the Supervisor.
	Getting Started:						
3	It is the Supervisor's responsibility to select the topic.	1	2	3	4	5	It is the student's responsibility to select the topic.
4	In the end, it is up to the Supervisor to decide which theoretical frame of reference is most appropriate.	1	2	3	4	5	Students have a right to choose their own theoretical standpoint, even if it conflicts with that of their Supervisor.
5	The supervisor should direct the student in the development of an appropriate programme of research and study.	1	2	3	4	5	The Supervisor should act mainly as a sounding board for the student's ideas, and give advice only when called upon
	Making Progress:						
6	Staff-student relationships are purely professional and personal matters should not intrude.	1	2	3	4	5	Close personal relationships are essential for successful supervision.
7	The Supervisor should initiate frequent meetings with the student.	1	2	3	4	5	It is up to the student to decide when s/he wants meetings with the Supervisor.
8	The Supervisor should know at all times what the student is working on.	1	2	3	4	5	Students should have the opportunity to find their own way without having to account for how they spend their time.
9	The Supervisor should terminate supervision if s/he thinks the project is beyond the student's capability	1	2	3	4	5	The Supervisor should support right through until the thesis has been submitted, regardless of his/her opinion of the work.
	The Thesis:						
10	The Supervisor should insist on seeing drafts of every section of the thesis in order to review them.	1	2	3	4	5	It is up to the student to ask for constructive feedback from the Supervisor when s/he is ready.
11	The Supervisor has direct responsibility for conveying expected standards and ensuring that the thesis meets them.	1	2	3	4	5	The Supervisor advises only, and leaves all decisions concerning content, format, and standards to the student.

Consider where you (and your student) stand in relation to each of these pairs of statements…							
12	The Supervisor should assist in the actual writing of the thesis if the student has difficulties.	1	2	3	4	5	The Supervisor should be very wary of contributing too much to the thesis.
13	The Supervisor should ensure that the thesis is finished not much later than the minimum period.	1	2	3	4	5	As long as the student works steadily, s/he can take as much time as s/he needs to finish the work.

(Student Learning *Te Taiako*, Victoria University of Wellington, adapted from materials from the University of Canterbury and the University of Queensland.)

Appendix 2: Sample 'Meeting progress' template:

		Date:
Since last meeting		**Outcomes**
1.	Things I was going to do:	
2.	Things supervisor was going to do:	
3.	Other developments:	
4.	Show & Tell : drafts, results, hypotheses	
5.	Feedback from supervisor: • Comments on last draft • Comments on research	
6.	Questions, issues that need clarifying: • My questions • Supervisor's questions	
Next steps:		
7.	Things I will do	
8.	Things supervisor will do	
9.	Are we on-track? What is the next milestone?	
10.	Date of next meeting:	
11.	THE NEXT MOST IMPORTANT THING IS…	

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