

Maintaining and Enhancing Supervision Quality: Managing Expectations

Director of Studies

A key academic relationship while at Cambridge will be with your Director of Studies. Throughout your undergraduate course your Director of Studies will advise you on course choice options and arrange supervisions, which are the small-group teaching sessions provided by Colleges that characterise a Cambridge undergraduate education. He or she will also monitor and support your academic progress.

Your Director of Studies' Commitment to You

During your time as an undergraduate, you may generally expect your Director of Studies to do the following.

- At the beginning of your first year (or if you have recently changed course) provide an induction into your new course by:
 - supplying introductory material in advance of your arrival;
 - meeting you at the beginning of your first year to explain teaching and learning at the Collegiate University in detail; and
 - advising you on how to get the most out of supervisions, lectures, seminars and practicals, and from available learning facilities and materials
- Throughout your course, advise you on courses options, academic facilities and examinations
- Arrange supervisions for you with suitably qualified supervisors
- Read and approve your supervision reports
- Discuss your supervision reports with you and give you feedback and guidance
- Warn you if you appear to be neglecting your studies or if your supervision reports give your Director of Studies cause for concern
- Seek feedback from you on your supervisors and, where appropriate, act on feedback you supply
- Be available to meet and advise you on subject-related matters, particularly if you are experiencing academic difficulties
- Discuss and explain the detailed published information available concerning your examination results
- Respond promptly to all your correspondence (including email)
- Appreciate the value of the wider Cambridge experience, including your extra-curricular activities
- Advise you on possible future study and postgraduate courses
- Normally, be able to write references for you if given sufficient warning of the deadline

Your Commitment to Your Director of Studies

In return for the efforts of your Director of Studies, you are normally expected to:

- Attend promptly all scheduled meetings with your Director of Studies, unless there is a compelling reason why you cannot, and give as much notice as possible of any unavoidable absence or delay
- Discuss your interests and plans with your Director of Studies, and take note of his or her advice and guidance on academic matters
- Attend relevant University lectures, seminars and practicals, and make use of the available learning facilities and materials
- Attend supervisions arranged for you, and give as much notice as possible to both the supervisor and the Director of Studies of any unavoidable absence due to illness or other grave cause
- Pro-actively discuss with your Director of Studies any concerns you may have about your supervisions, in particular when they seem not to be working satisfactorily or there is a problem
- Respond to requests for feedback on supervisions and supervisors
- Deal promptly with all academic correspondence (including email) and with College and University administrative requests, such as enrolling for examinations, completing teaching questionnaires, etc.
- Give the maximum possible notice when requesting a reference from your Director of Studies

Supervisions

Supervisions are at the core of the educational provision of the Cambridge Colleges, as a medium through which students learn to work autonomously, to argue and to present arguments, to handle problems, to learn with and from others, to question their own assumptions, and to meet deadlines. They rely on mutual respect between supervisors and students.

Your Supervisor's Commitment to You

If you engage with the spirit of supervisions set out above, you may generally expect the following from your supervisors:

- You will be taught in an appropriately sized group in which you have the opportunity to participate fully
- Your supervisions will be scheduled with a good and appropriate length (typically one hour) and will normally last the full scheduled time
- Your supervisor will be aware of the content of the course, and will provide teaching that is relevant to it
- You will be set sufficient work, of a challenging but reasonable nature, within an appropriate time-frame
- If your work has been handed in on time, it will be marked within a reasonable time-frame (ordinarily in advance of the supervision)
- You will receive constructive feedback
- Your supervisor will respond to questions that you raise during the supervision
- Your supervisor will show consideration and respect for your opinions
- You will have the opportunity to discuss in private with your supervisor any problems with the supervisions if you request it
- Your supervisor will respond promptly to all your correspondence (including email)

Your Commitment to Your Supervisor

For supervision teaching to work effectively as a key part of the Cambridge experience, you are normally expected to:

- Hand in all set work, completed to the best of your ability within the time-frame available, by the agreed deadlines
- Attend supervisions promptly, and give as much notice as possible to your supervisor of any unavoidable absence or delay
- Note and respond to the advice and guidance given by your supervisor on your work
- Engage pro-actively with questions and discussion during supervisions
- Show consideration and respect for the opinions of both your supervisor and other students
- Respond promptly to all correspondence (including email) from your supervisor