

# Working successfully with your Advisory Panel

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HELENE MARSH

# Qualities of excellent advisors: what candidate's say

- Appreciative of individual differences
- Available
- Collegiate
- Committed to academic renewal
- Encouraging
- Enjoys supervision
- Enthusiastic about student, discipline & project
- Excellent communicator and teacher
- Flexible
- Mentor for life
- Reliable , respectful, punctual
- Sensitive to personal and professional needs & circumstances
- Supportive of others including those outside sphere of responsibility
- Unselfish: lacks intellectual jealousy

- Displays capacity to build critical mass people, ideas resources
- Contributes to discipline through publications
- Experienced in discipline
- Knowledgeable
- Provides direction and structure
- Provides sustained practical support

What's the difference between the two groups?

What does that tell you about the composition of the ideal panel?

3 salient questions for each HDR candidate to ask advisors before enrolling or early in candidature

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- What have you published in the last 3 years and can I read it?
- What are you doing in the next 3-3.5 years?
- What is the name of one of your other HDR candidates and can I speak to him/her?

# Secrets of highly successful HDR candidates

1. Care for and maintain a good relationship with their Advisory Panel
2. Write and show as they go
3. Be realistic
4. Say no to distractions
5. Treat their degree as a job
6. Get help
7. Remember a doctorate is 10% intelligence and 90% persistence
8. Remember that the most important outcome of a HDR degree is the graduate not the thesis (or the publications)

# Try to avoid style mismatches

## ADVISORS

Spoonfeeder



Deep-ender

- The relationship is satisfactory when expectations are similar
- Try to become more independent during candidature
- Remember –you may sometimes need to regress!

## CANDIDATE

Dependent



Independent

# Develop a mutually satisfactory relationship with your Advisory Panel

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Clarify expectations; develop an advisors- research higher degree candidate agreement

Develop an agreed modus operandi

Remember both you and your advisors have a life



Check-out 6 week  
check-in

# 12 practices of effective advisors of HDR candidates

(modified from James & Baldwin 1999)

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1. Ensure the partnership is right for the project
2. Get to know the candidate and carefully assess their needs
3. Establish reasonable agreed expectations
4. Initiate regular contact
5. Work with the candidate to develop a strong conceptual structure and research plan
6. Encourage the candidate to write early and often

# 12 practices of effective advisors of HDR candidates

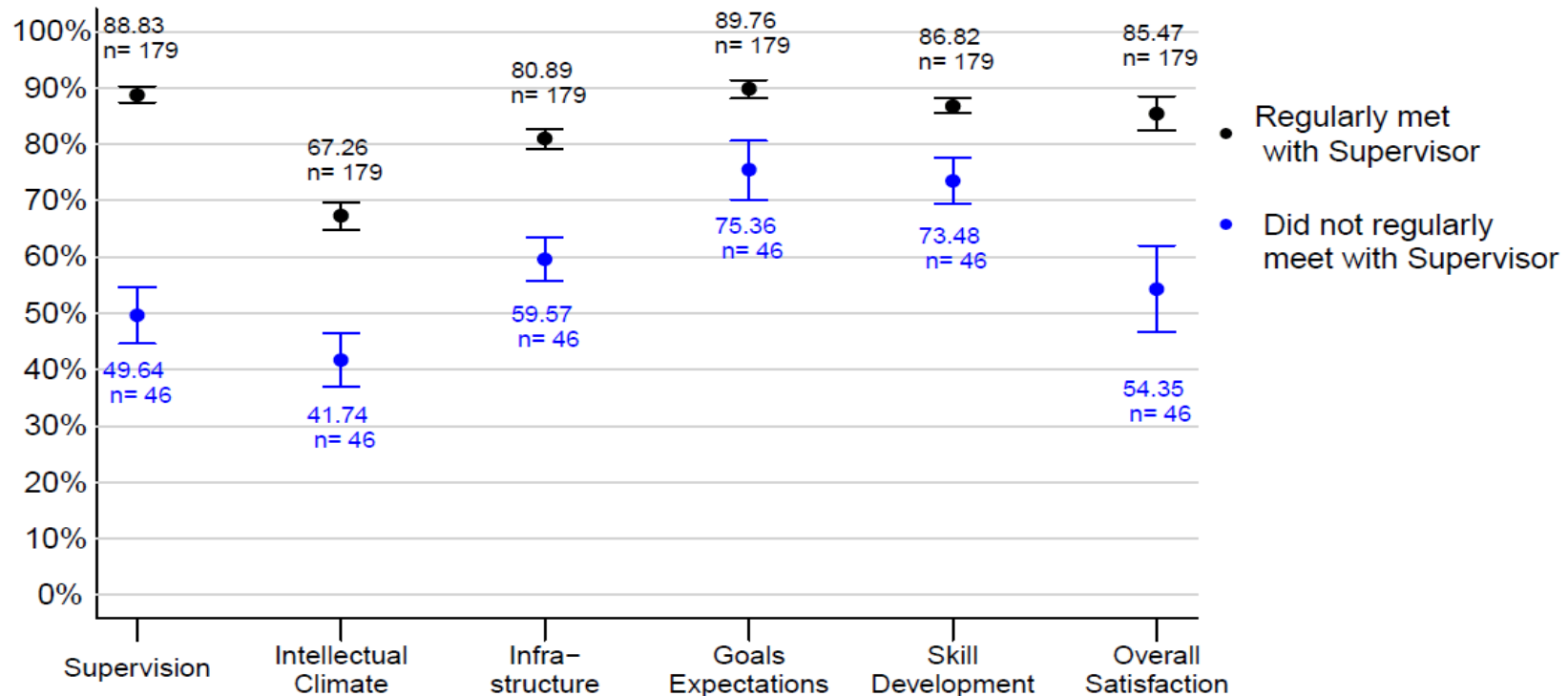
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7. Provide timely and high quality feedback
8. Involve the candidate in your group and school
9. Inspire and motivate
10. Provide appropriate and sensitive help if academic and personal crises crop up
11. Carefully monitor the final production and presentation of the research
12. Take an active interest in the candidate's future career



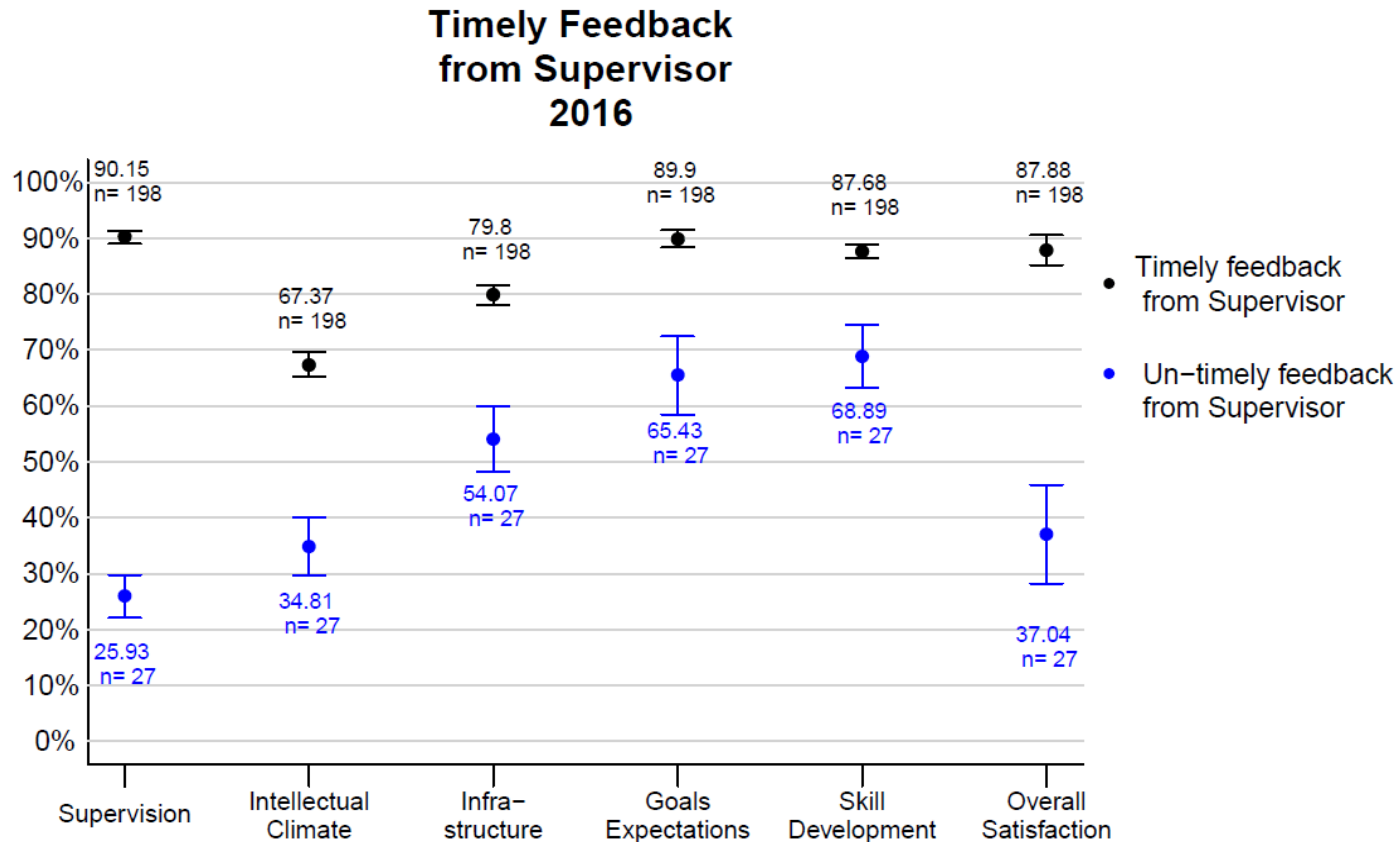
# Relationship between meeting frequency and candidate satisfaction

## Fortnightly Meeting with Primary Supervisor 2016



Comparison of satisfaction levels (y axis) for the various PREQ scales for current JCU HDR candidates in 2016 who met at least fortnightly with their advisor with those who did not. Results are presented as means + standard errors.

# Relationship between timely feedback and candidate satisfaction



Comparison of satisfaction levels (y axis) for the various PREQ scales for current JCU HDR candidates in 2016 who considered that their principal supervisor provided timely feedback on written work with those who did not. Results are presented as means + standard errors.

# Maintain a good relationship with your Advisory Panel

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Meet regularly with your Advisory Panel (even if they don't think it necessary)

Don't be a carrier pigeon between your Advisors

Discuss and negotiate your progress regularly

Understand your different (or similar) styles

If your relationship is not working do something about it

# Get help with difficult conversations

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[http://studentconflict.org.au/modules/advisor/advisor\\_intro.php](http://studentconflict.org.au/modules/advisor/advisor_intro.php)

# Clarify ambiguities



POSSIBLE MEANINGS OF "AT SOME POINT":

- 1) NEVER
- 2) PROBABLY NEVER
- 3) MAYBE IN A MILLION YEARS
- 4) WHEN I HAVE LESS IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO (see #2)

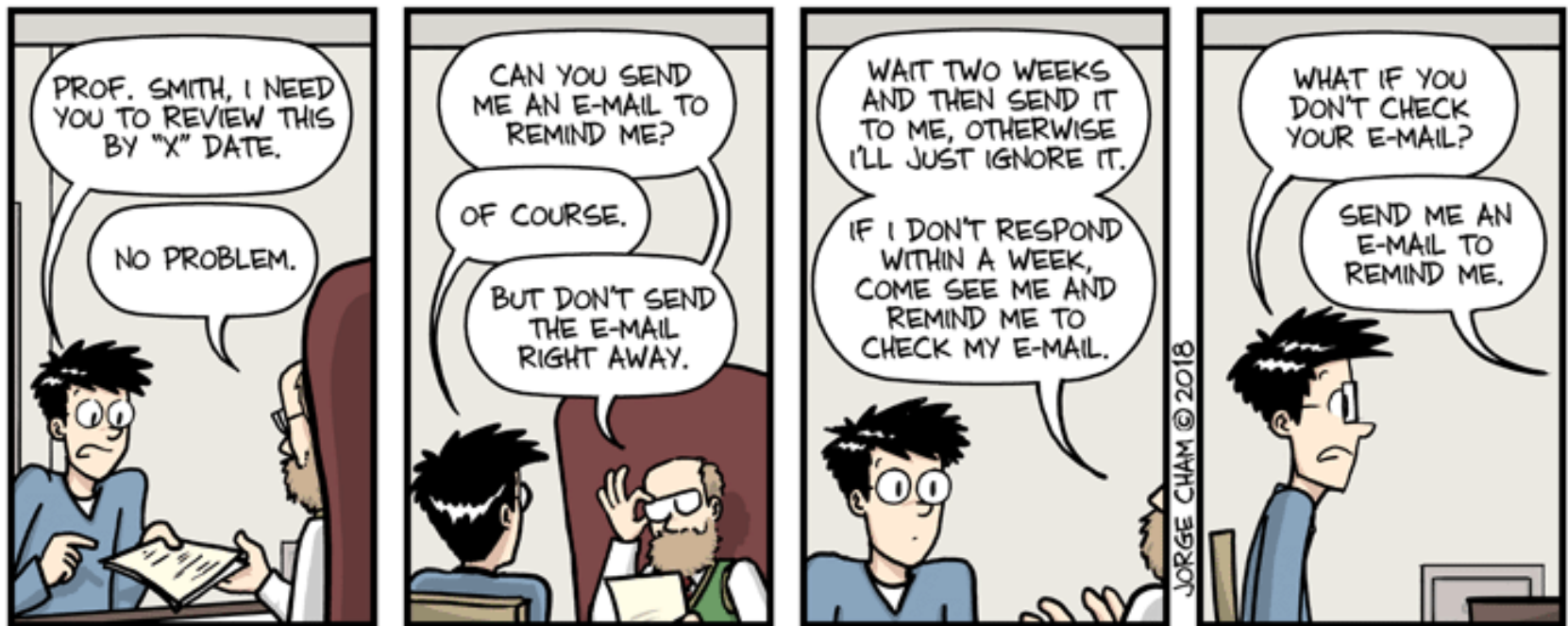


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# Be definite about deadlines

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Expect to  
have  
to write and  
rewrite

# "FINAL".doc



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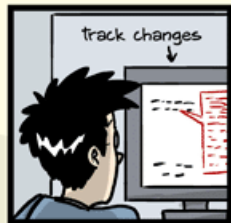
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# Group work 1

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What are you going to talk about with your Advisory Panel at your next meeting?



# Group work 2

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What topics are you going to (re)negotiate in your Advisory Panel Agreement?

# Group 3

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How are you going to ensure that you get what you want out of each meeting with your Advisory Panel?

# Group work 4

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What are you going to do if you consider that your relationship with your Advisory Panel is floundering ?