


 KATHOLIEKE UNIVERSITEIT
LEUVEN

Faculty of Science
 Assistentenvorming
 Educational Programme for PhD students

Session 18 November 2011
 Guidance of theses or training periods



Programme

- 12h00: Introduction
- 12h10: What is good guidance?
- 12h30: Getting started
- 12h40: Progress during the year
- 13h00: BREAK
- 13h10: Progress during the year: tips and tricks
- 13h20: End phase / evaluation
- 13h45: Conclusions / background / training periods
- 13h55: Round up / portfolio

Introduction

- Session mainly about guidance of theses
- Supervisor has end responsibility
 - Good communication with supervisor essential!
 - Who does what?
- Credits
 - Standard master's thesis Faculty of Science: 30 → 23-27h/week
- Guiding students is a challenging didactical task
 - Especially master students who already have their own insights and goals but still need guidance

What is good guidance?

- Mentor's point of view
- Student's point of view

Discuss this first in groups of 2 – 3

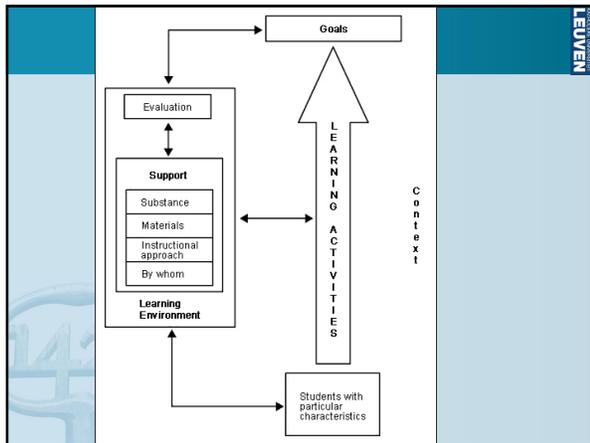
What is good guidance?

What is good guidance?

- Mentor – student should be a good match
- Two types of students and mentors
 - Intuitive persons who handle everything ad hoc
 - Analytic persons who plan more
- What type are you?
 - Both types have (dis)advantages
 - E.g. Analytic mentor can stimulate intuitive student to plan more

What is good guidance?

- No under or over guidance
 - Students have the right to be guided sufficiently and get feedback on their learning process
 - ↑↓
 - Students must get the opportunity to develop themselves independently to reach objectives independently
- Objectives / goals of thesis / programme!
- Difference in guidance of bachelor student and master student
 - Bachelor student not as independent



Guidance through time

- Moments on which guidance is needed
 - Defining the subject (programme specific)
 - **Getting started** (Sep-Oct)
 - Formulation of the problem statement
 - Determination of the research plan
 - **Progress** (during the year)
 - **End phase** (May)
 - Reading the report
 - **Evaluation**
- Inform students well during each phase

Getting started

What is the task of the mentor at the beginning?

CASE During the introductory meeting you notice your student is far too ambitious, not to say reckless.

Getting started

- Communication with supervisor!
- Prior knowledge of student?
 - Detect gaps, give instructions and information
 - Be aware of what a student should know regarding his prior education
 - Preparation during the rest of the programme
- Formulation of the problem statement (with supervisor)
 - Students tend to go too broad → limit the subject
 - Be realistic
- Determination of the research plan (with supervisor)
 - Define research steps - based on activities not products
 - Select information (literature, research technique and data, ...)
 - Overview!!

Progress during the year

What is the task of the mentor during the year?

CASES It is the end of November and...
 ...one of your students doesn't seem to realise that a regular visit to the lab is necessary to work on his thesis.
 ...all experiments of your student seem to fail.
 ...one of your students is still too shy to talk to you about his problems.

Progress during the year

CASES You have a brief weekly meeting with each of your students, but one of them visits you daily to ask you questions and for advice.

Your student quickly learns you have a hard time saying 'no'.

During every meeting your student waits passively until you say something.

BREAK



Progress during the year

- Be available for the students
 - Fixed moment every week or every two weeks on which you are available – with or without subscribing
 - Inform students in time if you're unavailable (conference, ...)
 - Ask students to prepare for a meeting
 - Ask students to take notes during meeting
 - Keep track of each student by taking notes yourself
 - Prepare each meeting based on your notes
 - If documents are handed in, read them before the meeting



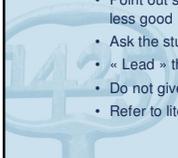
Progress during the year

- During a meeting
 - First discuss agenda of conversation
 - Student informs you about progress
 - Compare with research planning
 - Documents that were handed in on forehand are discussed
 - Give instructions for next step
 - Set date for next meeting



Progress during the year

- Give feedback
 - Do not only give negative remarks
 - Do not correct errors yourself but stimulate the student to formulate the solution himself
 - In the end: thesis = student's responsibility
- Motivate students
 - Point out strong and weak points and explain why these are good or less good
 - Ask the student to explain how he came to a certain conclusion
 - « Lead » the student to certain parts that need attention
 - Do not give the answers but give suggestions and instructions
 - Refer to literature where students can find solutions



End phase

What is the task of the mentor during the end phase?

CASES You are revising a chapter and it is full of language errors. What do you do?

Just one week to deadline your student hands in his writings for revision.



End phase

- Reading the end report
 - Maximum once for language, after this feedback on content may still be given regarding previous slides
- Plagiarism
 - If detected: inform supervisor as soon as possible
 - Students should know how to refer correctly
 - <http://www.kuleuven.be/plagiaat> (NL)
 - <http://www.kuleuven.be/plagiarism> (EN)
 - Turnitin
- Layout: faculty regulations
 - <http://wet.kuleuven.be/onderwijs/masterproef/vorm> (NL)
 - <https://wet.kuleuven.be/onderwijs/mastersthesis/form> (EN)



Evaluation

- Mentor gives no marks, but should know the criteria
- Master's thesis: **assessment roster**
- Criteria can be used to give feedback during the year
- Process important!
- Good communication with supervisor about process
- Oral defence

Conclusions

- Every student is different but keep in mind general concepts → no over or under guidance!
- Good communication with supervisor!

- Programme specific information (especially bachelor's thesis): **Inform yourself!**
 - Coordinator of bachelor's/master's thesis
 - Supervisor
 - Experienced PhD students

Background

- K.U.Leuven
 - "Begeleiden van een masterproef" (Herman Loos - DUO) (NL)
<http://wet.kuleuven.be/onderwijs/assistenten/MaproefDUO>
- Faculty of Science
 - <http://wet.kuleuven.be/onderwijs/bachelorproef.PDF> (NL)
 - Working Group Master's thesis 2009-2010
 - **Concept note** (visietekst) + website
<http://wet.kuleuven.be/onderwijs/masterproef> (NL)
<https://wet.kuleuven.be/onderwijs/mastersthesis> (EN)
 - Profile of a good mentor
 - Profile of a good master's student

Training periods

- Most discussed issues can be extrapolated to guidance of training periods
- E.g. students need opportunity to obtain knowledge, skills, attitudes → give constructive feedback

- Different timing
- Good contact with place of training period (company) and local mentors
- Inform local mentors on objectives, criteria, didactical and theoretical background, ...

Portfolio

- Thesissession completion form

→ Download form at

- Toledo
- Website

Which tips discussed in this session will you use when guiding students with their bachelor's/master's thesis and/or training period?

- **Upload before 26th November!**

Portfolio

REMINDER

- Form introsession: **Upload before 21st October!**
- Observation form: **Upload before 24th December!**
- Questionnaire form: **Upload before 31st December!**

Contact: Wim.VanDessel@ees.kuleuven.be

Questions?

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Success!

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