

## **FACTSHEET: DEALING WITH FEEDBACK FROM SUPERVISORS ABOUT CHAPTER AND THESIS DRAFTS**

### **1. When should I receive feedback about chapters or components of my thesis?**

You should discuss with your supervisor(s) how often and when they would like to see your chapters/thesis. It is important to receive feedback on your writing as early as possible in your PhD candidature. Writing a thesis is different to writing anything you have written before.

### **2. How long does it take to provide feedback?**

Your supervisor may have several PhD students, in addition to a teaching and research responsibilities. They may also be away or on leave. Therefore, it is vital that you discuss feedback timeframes with your supervisor in advance. The time it takes to provide feedback will vary, dependent on the content, stage of your studies and the volume of your work. Supervisor feedback is critical to your success, so it is important your supervisor has had sufficient time.

### **3. I am waiting for feedback and it is taking a long time, what should I do?**

If your supervisor has not provided you with feedback in the timeframe discussed, you should feel comfortable politely asking them how this is progressing. You should be working on other things whilst your supervisor is reviewing your work. Unless unavoidable or having already discussed with your supervisor, don't work on the content your supervisor is reviewing.

### **4. I have received feedback and it contradicts what was previously agreed or discussed**

Writing a thesis is a journey. You may change an approach or even something as small as one sentence several times - it may feel like you are going around in circles. In reality, what you are going through a process - to decide on a final stance, that will hold up to scrutiny. This is a normal.

### **5. Will my supervisor edit my chapters or thesis?**

Generally speaking, no. The thesis is your work. Your supervisor will provide general guidance on grammar or spelling problems encountered. Editing services are available.

### **6. The feedback I received has highly critical, what should I do?**

Supervisors will provide different levels of feedback at different stages of your PhD studies. At times, this may appear critical. Some tips include taking a break and coming back to it later; triage comments (deal with the most important); ignore anything personal; identify constructive/positive feedback. If you are unsure what something means, discuss this with your supervisor.

### **Resources:**

The Thesis Whisperer is a blog newspaper dedicated to the topic of doing a thesis. Many PhD students post questions or blog experiences related to their PhD on this moderated site – including dealing with thesis feedback. <http://thesiswhisperer.com/>