SEED Tool

Supervision Expectations & Evaluation Dialogue

version **07.26**

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

We aim to stimulate an open working atmosphere and safe environment in which you can discover who you are, who you want to be and how to get there professionally; in short, we want you to fully develop your professional identity.

What is the SEED tool about?

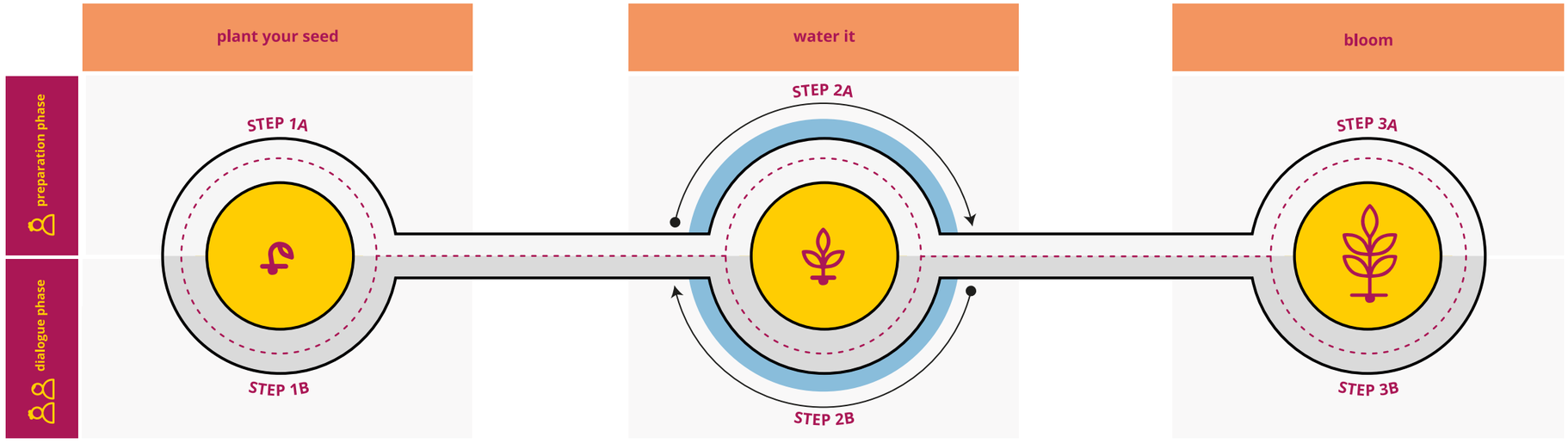
The SEED tool focuses on facilitating Supervision Expectations & Evaluation Dialogue. Using this tool, you are encouraged to reflect and proactively discuss with your supervisors about the optimal conditions for a good learning environment.

This document contains guidelines and space to serve as a base for reflection, discussion, and revision of previous agreements. You can always go back to your SEED form at any point of your research project.

SEED Tool

***S**upervision **E**xpectations*
*& **E**valuation **D**ialogue*

Student | Supervisor



Step 1A
Prepare dialogue
Before starting the discussion with your supervisor, think what your own needs and requests are, what kind of environment you need to thrive and what is your preferred supervision style. You can also think about earlier experiences with supervisors and what worked very well for you and what did not. Write down some important points for discussion in the next step.

Step 1B
Expectations dialogue
This meeting at the start of the project is the perfect moment to set expectations between you and your supervisor. What does your supervisor expect from you? How will they assess you? And what do you expect from your supervisor? The agreements that come out of this meeting should be written down in this form for future evaluation.

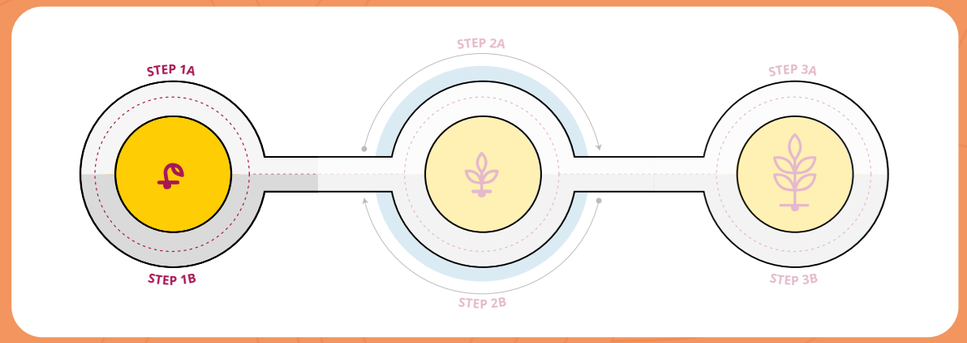
Step 2A *(repeat if needed)*
Prepare evaluation
Look back at previous agreements, what goes well? What should you change?

Step 2B *(repeat if needed)*
Evaluation dialogue
During this meeting you and your supervisor will evaluate how things have been going, look back on previous agreements from the expectations meeting and make new agreements to move forward. This meeting gives you a new opportunity to realign with your supervisor, what were the initial expectations, what has changed from both sides, what are your needs to keep progressing in your project. You can repeat this meeting several times if you find it useful. The agreements that come out of this meeting should be written down in this form for possible future reference.

Step 3A
Prepare feedback
You managed to let your seed bloom into a plant. Take on the best practices and learned lessons!

Step 3B *(optional)*
Feedback dialogue
Optional moment at the end of your project to look back at the trajectory. You can receive feedback and provide feedback to your supervisor about how you both experienced the supervision process and the project as a whole.

Phase one



Step 1A *Prepare dialogue*

WHY

The start of the project is a key moment to set a solid ground with your supervisor and start a productive collaboration setting off in the right direction, looking at your own interests first. Using this tool, you will be able to discuss and agree on working conditions that are helpful to you. Knowing this, you will be able to quickly identify possible arising problems later on.

HOW

Start by looking at yourself and what you have learned from earlier experiences. Take some time to put on paper the expectations you have about this project, your ideal working culture, the feedback style that you prefer, etc. Think of other situations of your early career where you have been very productive or not at all; which factors would you like to take to this project? What do you value in a supervisor and what not?

WHAT

In the next page, you have space to write your self-reflection. This is only for yourself, and you do not need to share it with your supervisor. It will help you choose discussion topics that you want to tackle during the expectations meeting.

You can use some of the topics below to guide your self-reflection:

Reflect on guidance:
- How much experience do you already have in research?
- Your independency level – how much guidance will you need?
- What feedback style works best for you (e.g., direct, requested, etc.)?
- How do you deal with deadlines? Do you need extra deadlines for the different milestones (time management)?

Reflect on communication:
- What are your professional communication standards?
- What does a professional attitude look like for you?
- What is your communication style and what should your supervisor be aware of (e.g., (im)patient, friendly, motivational, quiet, etc.)?
- Did you receive feedback previously and how did you react to it?
- Which communication styles did (not) work well for you in previous experiences?

Reflect on professional development:
- What are your strengths/weaknesses?
- What future developments do you see for yourself? How can you work on that and how can your supervisor help you with this?
- Is there any (additional) help or support you would want from your supervisor and/or examiner?

Reflect on environment:
- What would be your preferred working hours (flexible or not, restrictions)?
- What is your preferred working culture (supported, independent, hierarchical, etc.)?

Are there issues that could affect your performance (chronic disorders, family situation, stress levels, etc.) that you feel that your supervisor should know about?

Write down your self-reflection

1) Pick some topics from your reflection that you would like to address in the expectations meeting
2) Schedule the expectations meeting with your supervisor at the start of the project (e.g., during one of the first meetings in which you also discuss the content of the project).

Step 1B *Expectations dialogue*

WHY

The role of your supervisor is to guide you throughout the project, to teach you essential research skills and ALSO to support you in your professional development. Setting an open communication environment from the start will help you achieve your goals. On top of that, this meeting will contribute to:

- Clarifying what your supervisor expects from you and what you need from them.
- Making clear agreements and writing them down, so you can get back to them at any time during your project.
- Discuss the assessment criteria and rubrics together *(find them on the student's site)*

And yes, this meeting will take some of your and your supervisor's time, but it will surely save you both time in the near future.

HOW

In this meeting, you will be sharing the topics chosen in your self-reflection and asking for your supervisor's view on those topics. You can decide for yourself if you want to send the full reflection to your supervisor before this first meeting or to discuss only your chosen topics together using your reflection as a base. Leave room for additional topics that might be of importance for your supervisor as well.

WHAT

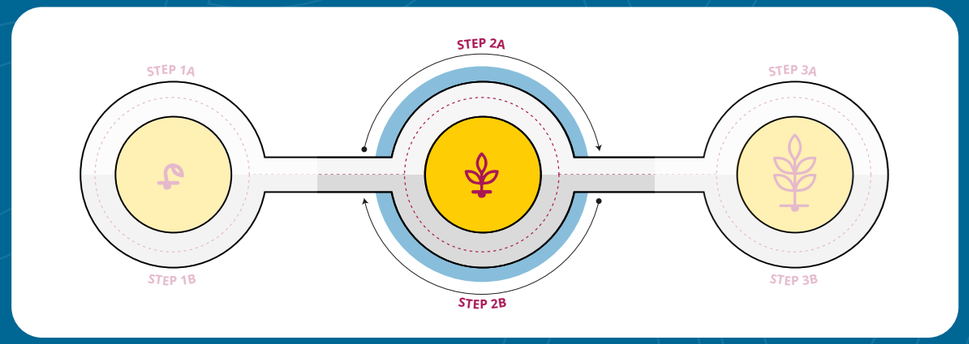
This meeting takes place in the first days/weeks of the project. You and your supervisor will reach agreements during this dialogue, and you should write them down in the space available below. You will go back to these written agreements in preparation for future meetings; make sure they are clearly expressed and that they convey the whole message.

Write down agreements with supervisor

1) After this meeting, it is important that you send your summary of the agreements to your supervisor. Agreeing on the expectations that you both have for the rest of the project will help you having the most productive time.
2) Schedule the next meeting with your supervisor in 2 or 3 months from now. This next meeting can take place around the time of your interim assessment.

Save the date *Write down the next date to meet up with your supervisor*

Phase two



Step 2A *Prepare evaluation dialogue*

WHY

Two or three months from the start of the project is a great moment to look back on your and your supervisor's expectations. Therefore, your interim assessment meeting takes place around this time. Also, check with yourself, how are you feeling at this point and do you know where to find support? Go to the contact page of the student's site.

HOW

Prepare for this meeting. Start by looking back on your previous agreements and check your initial reflection. Now you know more about the research group and about each other; how is it going? Is the supervision process and your research project going according to plan? What is different? Identify and write down (text box in the next page) some new topics that are of interest for discussion in this new meeting and perhaps new agreements are needed.

WHAT

During this meeting, you can request feedback from your supervisor at the start of the conversation. Together you can look back at the past months and set new goals and milestones for the rest of the project.

SPECIFIC AND OPEN FEEDBACK QUESTIONS

POWER

Try to ask (at least) one specific feedback question. You can use the POWER-format for doing so.

- **P**roblem - *your struggle*
- **O**ptions - *you have tried/could try to tackle the problem*
- **W**eighing - *pros and cons of these options*
- **E**xpress preference - *what option you chose without feedback*
- **R**equest feedback - *ask for advice from supervisor*

Blind Spot

You can also decide to ask for Blind Spot feedback. A blind spot is something that you might not yet be aware of, that you can improve or maybe tend to overdo. This can be unexpected and a bit more difficult to deal with. Still, blind spots can also be talents that you are not yet aware of and can exploit even more.

Write down main points for evaluation dialogue

Step 2B *Evaluation dialogue*

Reflection and new agreements evaluation dialogue

After the meeting with your supervisor, write a summary of the feedback provided and new goals. Align this feedback with the assessment criteria and rubrics (find them on the student's site)

Save the date *Write down the next date to meet up with your supervisor*

Optionally, you and your supervisor can repeat the evaluation meeting several times. Here you have space for one extra round of the evaluation meeting. Feel free to schedule additional ones with your supervisor if you find it valuable.

Write down main points for evaluation dialogue

Write here the main points for discussion that you would like to bring to this meeting:

Reflection and new agreements evaluation dialogue

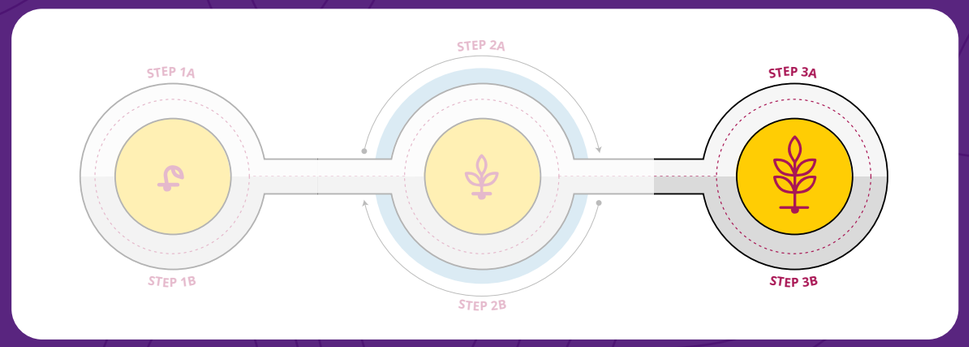
Optionally, you and your supervisor can repeat the evaluation meeting several times. Here you have space for one extra round of the evaluation meeting. Feel free to schedule additional ones with your supervisor if you find it valuable.

Write down main points for evaluation dialogue

Write here the main points for discussion that you would like to bring to this meeting:

Reflection and new agreements evaluation dialogue

Phase three



Step 3A (optional) *Prepare final feedback dialogue*

During your Master's degree, we hope to teach you how to ask for feedback, react to feedback and provide feedback. We hope that the SEED tool has provided you with insights and support for it. Your supervisor is likely being supervised as well, thus feedback on supervision can possibly be applied to their own situation.
In this last part of the cycle, we encourage you to look at your initial reflections, the feedback received, and your next steps. Discussing it with your supervisor can bring you additional new valuable insights.

This meeting is **optional**. In order to give and receive feedback openly and effectively, both counterparts should be willing to do so. Ask your supervisor whether they would be willing to participate in this last meeting.

Below there are some guidelines on how to request and provide feedback that you can use with your supervisor.

Guidelines for requesting feedback from your supervisor:
- Ask specific questions.
- Bring up some moments of situations of your project in which you could have done things differently and ask for advice/opinion

Guidelines for feedback to your supervisor:
- Try to relate your feedback to the agreements made. What agreements were kept? what worked best?
- Besides what is addressed in the agreements, are there any other topics that you want to give feedback on to your supervisor? Try to address both qualities of your supervisor as well as possibilities for improvement.
- You can also consider including skills that you admire and/or that you yourself could learn from your supervisor. In your wording try to be clear and unambiguously and substantiate your feedback with examples.
- If you find it difficult to come up with specific suggestions for improvement, you can think about what other strategies your supervisor could try out. Or what you personally would do differently and why. Or give suggestions you have seen from other supervisors.

There are two main goals suggested for this meeting:
1) Receiving feedback from your supervisor and providing them with your feedback
2) Looking at how this project has helped you achieve your goals and what your next steps will be; discussing this with your supervisor can be helpful.

Step 3B (optional) *Discuss with your supervisor*

Write down your goals and action plan

Provide feedback to your supervisor

This form is for your own use; you can decide whether you want to share it completely or partly with your supervisor. If you decide to contact the academic counsellors during your project, this form can function as supporting information.

You can choose whether to share the complete document with your supervisor at any point during the project or keep it for your own reflection.

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GRADUATE SCHOOL OF LIFE SCIENCES

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