



Hello Graduate friends,

If you are writing a thesis or dissertation, you may think of this process as a road stretched out in front of you, with many twists and turns and likely a variety of obstacles. As you think of this trip, imagine the number of pit stops along the way that will be necessary to successfully arrive at your destination. These pit stops, a crucial part of the journey, represent a pivotal aspect of your work and likely some of the most important steps of your thesis process: **meetings with your supervisor.**

Regular meetings with your supervisor are an important and essential element of the research and writing process. In order for your supervisor to be an asset in helping to develop your ideas, they must be consistently informed on where you are and where you are headed.

Make the most of your time with your supervisor:

- A student and supervisor should plan to meet regularly whether or not the student has any finished work.
- Prepare in advance for a meeting by making notes of the issues you would like to discuss. Prioritize these issues in advance in case you end up having less time with your supervisor than anticipated. Making notes ahead of time will allow you and your supervisor to have a focused and intentional discussion about the direction or challenges concerning your research and/or writing.
- Meetings will be most productive when you accept responsibility to 'running the meeting.' Your role will be to raise important issues, ask for clarification and seek necessary guidance along your dissertation process.

If a major meeting is necessary, craft a proper agenda beforehand or prepare a brief report on the issues, you would like to discuss and what may have been discussed in the weeks preceding the meeting. This is especially helpful if you have more than one supervisor and other collaborators assisting with your research. A typical agenda might include:

- A summary of the purpose of the meeting.
- A review of what was discussed at a previous meeting and what has been accomplished to date.
- A discussion and clarification of the current topics and issues.
- Specific issues needing input to allow for immediate goals to progress.
- If your supervisor is facing a work crisis at the time of your meeting, offer to reschedule the meeting, shorten it, or handle the meeting over email. Be flexible, but committed to getting what you need in a respectful manner.

- If you have to cancel a meeting unexpectedly, make sure your message reaches your supervisor(s). If possible, do not solely rely on email, as it may be out-of-reach at busy times of the week.

It is important to be productive at these major meetings but it is also crucial to keep in touch with your supervisor(s). If you have not met with your supervisor for a month or longer, send an email and drop by their office to let them know how you are doing.

Need some help on how to make the most of your meetings with your supervisor? We are here to help. To book an appointment with a Learning specialist, visit our webpage.



Aldean Ellis (he/him), from your [Learning Development & Success](#) team!

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