

Department of Art History and Communication Studies, Faculty of Arts McGill
Letter of Understanding for Supervisees and Supervisors

After reviewing the supervisory expectations outlined below, doctoral students and supervisors should sign and date this letter and it should be uploaded by the student to the myProgress website by the end of their second year in the program (the Document Upload option is in the top navigation bar of the myProgress worksheet).

For most graduate students in Arts, writing the dissertation is the most demanding part of the program. Given the pressures and challenges of the process, it is important to enter into and maintain a supervisory relationship that both student and supervisor feel comfortable with, and that enables the student to work as constructively as possible towards his or her deadline.

Expectations of all Supervisees. It is the student's responsibility to:

1. stay informed about program requirements and deadlines;
2. communicate any absences or interruptions in the program and dissertation process in a timely manner;
3. let the supervisor know of any program or subject changes as the work evolves, including a possible change of supervisors and/or supervisory committees;
4. report any additional work and/or commitments that may interfere with the timely completion of their program of study.

Expectations of all Supervisors. Supervisors should:

1. where possible meet face-to-face or otherwise communicate with the student regularly and provide supportive guidance and feedback;
2. return the student's submitted work with constructive comments, preferably within three weeks;
3. provide professional guidance and advice that may extend beyond the scope of the dissertation.

Defining particular work styles and the boundaries of your supervisory relationship

In addition to discussing the above expectations, please also make sure that you are clear about the following questions:

- What is the expected means of communication with your supervisor (email and/or phone during the regular work week; anticipated timeframe for responses; drop-in versus scheduled appointments)?
- How often will meetings take place?
- Will the supervisor assess work outside of the dissertation (e.g., a conference proposal or a CV)?
- Does the supervisor copy-edit the student's writing (i.e. punctuation, spelling, sentence structure) or only respond to the concepts and organization?
- Is the student expected to generate and shape the thesis topic more or less independently, or does the supervisor play a role in its conceptualization?
- Has there been a discussion about how the supervisory committee will work?

Signatures

Student signature:

Date:

Supervisor signature:

Date:

Supervisor signature:

Date:

Supervisor signature:

Date: