

20+1 Questions to Manage Your Relationship: Assessing Your Research Mentor’s Supervisory Ability and the Functionality of Your Relationship

Effective supervision has been positively correlated with productivity and high morale. Since part of your research mentor’s role includes supervisory responsibilities, one way to evaluate the ‘health’ of your relationship with your research mentor is to assess your relationship every 3-6 months through the lens of their supervisory role. Supervisors are focused on productivity, and other hiring/firing they have seven main responsibilities, listed below. If you rate less than a 7 in any area, it can help to reach out to other mentors for perspective and guidance. They can help you develop strategies to proactively fill in the gaps in your training or address issues in your relationship and achieve your goals.

Responsibilities		Criteria	Disagree			Agree									
1	Set Expectations	1	I can articulate my mentor’s performance/productivity expectations for me <i>(What you should do, e.g.: work hours, key milestones on a project; if there are any timelines regarding training, etc.)</i>			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		2	I can describe my mentor’s conduct/behavioral expectations for me in the lab <i>(How you should act, e.g.: how you should address people in the lab; how you should communicate, etc.)</i>			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		3	I can describe my mentor’s expectations for me when we interact/communicate <i>(e.g.: How you should prepare for/behave in 1:1 meeting; how frequently you communicate; how they want you to communicate bad news, etc.)</i>			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		4	My mentor’s conduct/behavior towards me is appropriate/professional			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	Teach/Train and Delegate	5	I can describe my mentor’s teaching/training approach			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		6	My mentor’s approach to teaching/training is effective with the way I learn			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		7	My mentor clearly delegates tasks and projects to me			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3	Give Kudos and Corrective Feedback	8	My mentor regularly gives me kudos feedback <i>(e.g.: You did X correctly/well. Well done! Keep doing X this way because...)</i>			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		9	My mentor regularly gives me corrective feedback <i>(e.g.: Please stop doing X this way. Do X way instead. Here’s why this is important...)</i>			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4	Recognize Progress and Reward Achievement	10	My mentor acknowledges my progress towards stated goals <i>(e.g.: with private or public recognition, etc.)</i>			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		11	My mentor has rewarded me when I excel <i>(e.g.: nominated you for awards, access to new opportunities or resources, etc.)</i>			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5	Articulate and Enforce Consequences	12	My mentor has articulated clear consequences to me if I do not meet performance/productivity expectations			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		13	My mentor has articulated clear consequences to me if I do not meet behavioral/conduct expectations			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		14	My mentor fairly enforces poor performance and behavioral/conduct consequences with me			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		15	My mentor fairly enforces poor performance and behavioral/conduct consequences with others in the lab			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6	Manage Conflict	16	My mentor has demonstrated an ability to effectively manage conflict in the lab			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		17	My mentor has demonstrated an ability to effectively manage conflict between us			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7	Provide Support	18	My mentor has offered me support when I face challenges			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		19	My mentor actively supports my training goals			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		20	My mentor clearly supports my career goals			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		21	I feel good about my relationship with my mentor			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10