Meetings PhD candidate and mentor – Example questions

To guide the individual meeting between mentor(s) and PhD candidate, please find below example questions. This is a starting point for the conversation and lists important topics, depending on the stage of the PhD track. The candidate’s needs will be leading when choosing topics to be discussed in more detail.

Important general questions

- Are you satisfied with the progress of your PhD journey? Is the progress as you had expected?
- How would you assess the interaction and communication between you and your supervisory team?

Overall progress and supervision

- What are your expectations from the PhD project and from your supervisory team?
- Are you satisfied with your assessment (e.g., UU: B&O, UMCU: P&G) and progress meeting with your supervisory team?
- What are your achievements of last year? Can you reflect on these?
- Is there a clear plan established between you and your (co-)supervisor(s) regarding research, teaching (if applicable) and training for the upcoming year? And for the full 4 years?
- Are there any foreseen difficulties or expected bottlenecks? How will you manage them?
- Is it clear to you what you can expect of each (co-)supervisor, and vice versa? Is the division of supervision tasks between the members of your supervisory team clear?
- Is the quality (length, frequency, content) of meetings between you and your (co-)supervisors adequate?
- Are the research facilities adequate?

Research progress

- Is your (sub)project realistic and feasible within the timeframe planned?
- Do you think you can finish your PhD project within the four years?
- Is the available funding adequate to complete your PhD?
- Do you have a timeline for writing your thesis (thesis chapter ideas, chapter titles, start writing)?
- What results need to be obtained to finish the thesis? What do you need to achieve that?

Followed training and personal and scientific development

- What are your personal strengths and weaknesses? (knowledge gaps, skills required, specific interests)
- How could you improve weaknesses by following training?
- What training have you followed last year/will you follow coming year? Have you updated the Individual Training Plan of the TSA?
- What conferences/meetings did/will you attend?
- Do your supervisors stimulate you to follow courses?

Career

- What are your personal ambition and interests?
- Do you know what you would like to do after your PhD?
- Have you talked about your plans with your supervisors?
- What actions do you plan to take to get the job you want? Do you need to follow training?

Mental health

- Would you like to share how your general well-being is?
- How is work-life balance?
- Is it clear who you could talk to if problems would arise?